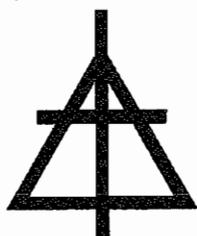


1976
AGENDA
FOR
SYNOD

1976
AGENDA
FOR
SYNOD

JUNE 8 TO 18, 1976

To meet at the Fine Arts Center Audi-
torium of Knollcrest Campus, Calvin
College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.



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Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church
2850 Kalamazoo Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan, U.S.A.

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PREFACE

The special prayer service for the Synod of 1976 will be held on Monday evening, June 7, 1976, at 8:00 p.m. in the Calvin Christian Reformed Church, located at 700 Ethel Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Calvin Church has been designated as the convening church of the Synod of 1976, and its pastor, the Rev. Clarence Boomsma, will be in charge of the prayer service.

The synod will begin its sessions Tuesday morning, June 8, at 9:00 a.m. in the Fine Arts Auditorium on the Knollcrest Campus of Calvin College, located on the East Beltline, two blocks north of Burton Street, S.E. The pastor of the convening church will serve as president pro-tem until the Synod of 1976 is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected.

Our congregations are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers in their worship on Sunday, June 6. Let us pray that God may bless his church and use our denomination for his honor and a blessing to all men.



Stated Clerk
2850 Kalamazoo Ave., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49508

DELEGATES PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

1. Delegates who travel by automobile are reminded of the decision of synod, that traveling together of one or more delegates will effect considerable savings to the church (Acts of Synod 1962, p. 102).
2. Plane travel is the most economical for delegates, since expenses for lodging and meals are not incurred. We encourage delegates coming by plane to plan ahead and make reservations in advance to gain the advantage of the "Freedom Fares for 1976."
3. Bring with you your copy of the Agenda for Synod 1976 and other supplementary materials that have been sent you.

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DELEGATES TO THE SYNOD OF 1976

Delegates		Alternates	
Classis Alberta North			
Ministers.....	J. Joosee R. Stienstra	Ministers.....	N. B. Knoppers J. D. Pereboom
Elders.....	J. Tuininga N. Greidanus	Elders.....	G. Dykstra J. H. Debbink
Classis Alberta South			
Ministers.....		Ministers.....	
Elders.....		Elders.....	
Classis British Columbia			
Ministers.....	J. Tuininga D. Pierik	Ministers.....	N. Nicolai S. Greidanus
Elders.....	J. Bandstra J. Wind	Elders.....	G. Nyboer J. Dykstra
Classis Cadillac			
Ministers.....	G. Compaan K. Van Wyk	Ministers.....	W. Vanden Bosch M. Vander Vliet
Elders.....	G. Koster J. Quist	Elders.....	
Classis California South			
Ministers.....	J. Howerzyl H. Sonnema	Ministers.....	D. J. Negen B. Niemeyer
Elders.....	A. Heemstra J. Wilson	Elders.....	J. Koen J. Japin
Classis Central California			
Ministers.....	V. Vander Zee H. Wigboldy	Ministers.....	E. Marlink H. Bajema
Elders.....	C. De Vries J. Swier	Elders.....	N. Asma G. Visser
Classis Chatham			
Ministers.....	J. J. Hoytema M. Pool	Ministers.....	J. Nutma A. VandenBerg
Elders.....	C. Overgaauw H. Mulder	Elders.....	Langeveld C. Feyen
Classis Chicago North			
Ministers.....	L. Wolters G. Vanderhill	Ministers.....	A. A. Mulder J. T. Ebbers
Elders.....	Dr. A. Kort E. Tiesman	Elders.....	H. R. Schaafsma S. Rattliff
Classis Chicago South			
Ministers.....	R. M. Hartwell N. Punt	Ministers.....	G. P. Hutt A. D. Menninga
Elders.....	S. J. Koster C. Christians	Elders.....	S. J. Slagter C. Dykstra

Classis Columbia

Ministers.....	J. M. Moes	Ministers.....	J. L. Alferink
	R. L. Fynevever		G. W. VanDenBerg
Elders.....	G. Cole	Elders.....	L. A. Schilperoort
	S. W. Vandenacre		J. Groen

Classis Eastern Canada

Ministers.....	M. D. Geleyne	Ministers.....	J. Quartel
	A. Vanden Ende		W. Gritter
Elders.....	J. Oegema	Elders.....	J. Mulder
	J. Drost		C. Meerman

Classis Florida

Ministers.....	E. Tamminga	Ministers.....	C. Van Ens
	W. Hofman		E. Heerema
Elders.....	Dr. W. Hendriksen	Elders.....	W. Wichers
	A. Geertsma		A. Bleeker

Classis Grand Rapids East

Ministers.....	W. L. De Jong	Ministers.....	T. E. Hofman
	W. Timmer		
Elders.....	D. F. Oosterhouse	Elders.....	J. DeBie
	Dr. C. J. Sinke		C. Plantinga

Classis Grand Rapids North

Ministers.....	M. Doornbos	Ministers.....	C. Werkema
	E. Knott		M. Groenendyk
Elders.....	Dr. J. T. Daling	Elders.....	R. Koll
	J. DeMeester		R. Griffioen

Classis Grand Rapids South

Ministers.....	A. Brink	Ministers.....	T. J. Lapinsky
	A. J. VanderGriend		M. Goote
Elders.....	L. LeFebre	Elders.....	Dr. D. Hoitenga
	H. De Young		B. Diekema

Classis Grandville

Ministers.....	L. Van Drunen	Ministers.....	J. Uitvlugt
	H. DeWolf		A. Bultman
Elders.....	P. Ritsema	Elders.....	W. Gritter
	W. Van Zalen		W. Ganzevoort

Classis Hackensack

Ministers.....	J. Kruis	Ministers.....	A. Van Zanten
	J. VanderArk		L. Vander Zee
Elders.....	J. Winkle	Elders.....	R. Rozema
	F. Style		

Classis Hamilton

Ministers.....	J. De Jong	Ministers.....	J. Kuntz
	J. Geuzebroek		J. G. Klomps
Elders.....	K. Terpstra	Elders.....	C. Tigchelaar
	W. Spoelstra		T. Hunse

Classis Holland

Ministers.....	W. Vander Haak	Ministers.....	H. J. Baas
	J. Houseward		E. Bradford
Elders.....	D. Vander Ark	Elders.....	W. De Mots
	H. Bratt		E. Ribbens

Classis Hudson	
Ministers.....D. Wisse	Ministers.....J. P. Vosteen
G. Cooper	W. H. Kooienga
Elders.....O. R. Remein	Elders.....G. Baker
J. W. Kuiper	A. Snope
Classis Huron	
Ministers.....J. Kerssies	Ministers.....P. Breedveld
J. Van Dyk	J. Koole
Elders.....E. Tuintjer	Elders.....J. Veenema
W. Eelkema	
Classis Illiana	
Ministers.....L. Bazuin	Ministers.....H. Arnold
H. Vanderwell	E. Cooke
Elders.....Dr. R. Prince	Elders.....R. Meyering
A. Vanden Bosch	R. Wunderink
Classis Kalamazoo	
Ministers.....H. Vander Kam	Ministers.....S. Draayer
W. Buursma	H. Bouma
Elders.....F. Bishop	Elders.....J. W. Hennink
R. T. Scheffers	C. Fletcher
Classis Lake Erie	
Ministers.....R. Opperwall	Ministers.....G. Vander Weit
C. Bajema	W. De Vries
Elders.....E. Schaap	Elders.....A. Van Bruggen
F. Klomparens	
Classis Minnesota North	
Ministers.....N. J. Gebben	Ministers.....C. J. Toeset
G. D. Mouw	G. H. VandeRiet
Elders.....J. deJong	Elders.....J. Kreps
L. Dams	J. VanEps
Classis Minnesota South	
Ministers.....L. Zoerhof	Ministers.....P. W. Brouwer
T. Heyboer	B. Den Herder
Elders.....E. DeVries	Elders.....H. Luinenberg
F. Feikema	W. Burgers
Classis Muskegon	
Ministers.....E. De Vries	Ministers.....D. Van Beek
G. Postema	J. L. Meppelink
Elders.....A. Heyboer	Elders.....C. Vriesman
L. Van Rees	L. Hager
Classis Northcentral Iowa	
Ministers.....J. Elenbaas	Ministers.....M. Davies
K. VanDeGriend	J. Stoel
Elders.....A. Cooper	Elders.....H. O'Kones
H. Brower	L. Bakker
Classis Orange City	
Ministers.....P. Holwerda	Ministers.....J. Boot
H. De Groot	J. Hellinga
Elders.....M. Breems	Elders.....P. DeVries, Sr.
J. Kuiper	P. Bosma

Classis Pacific Northwest

Ministers.....	J. A. Wesseling	Ministers.....	R. Slater
	O. Duistermars		S. Pastine
Elders.....	J. E. Heutink	Elders.....	G. Folkerts
	E. Berkompas		O. VanderGriend

Classis Pella

Ministers.....	F. Van Houten	Ministers.....	G. Erffmeyer
	G. VanderPlaats		R. Jipping
Elders.....	Dr. J. Hall	Elders.....	H. Slings
	H. Vermeer		C. Vos

Classis Quinte

Ministers.....	G. Corvers	Ministers.....	H. Katerburg
	R. W. Popma		C. H. Salomons
Elders.....	W. Piersma	Elders.....	J. Bulten
	B. Stam		T. Marcus

Classis Rocky Mountain

Ministers.....	A. Mulder	Ministers.....	J. Hekman
	J. R. Kok		L. Stockmeier
Elders.....	O. Bitsie	Elders.....	C. VanEck
	J. Hooyer		C. Grit

Classis Sioux Center

Ministers.....	P. E. Bakker	Ministers.....	H. VandenHeuvel
	W. Verhoef		
Elders.....	J. B. Boogerd	Elders.....	H. Haak
	H. VanderLuit		W. De Weerd

Classis Toronto

Ministers.....	L. Tamminga	Ministers.....	C. Tuyl
	J. W. Postman		C. T. Fennema
Elders.....	J. Cooper	Elders.....	Snippe
	Dr. A. Wolters		VanderVeen

Classis Wisconsin

Ministers.....	A. Cammenga	Ministers.....	J. Olthoff
	B. DeJong		L. W. VanDellen
Elders.....	J. Rooze	Elders.....	H. Kok
	G. Joosse		J. Lammers

Classis Zeeland

Ministers.....	K. Havert	Ministers.....	B. Mulder
	G. W. Sheeres		M. Jorritsma
Elders.....	S. Kroll	Elders.....	M. Styf
	A. Sterken		W. E. Bareman

REPORTS OF BOARDS

REPORT 1

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

Involvement in the work of The Back to God Hour on a day-by-day basis creates among us a curious mixture of doxology and sense of pressure and even of frustration. For the nature of the work is such that one is continuously buoyed up by the excitement that accompanies the privilege of participating in delivering the gospel message to the very ends of the earth while at the same time this very opportunity generates necessities and obligations that actually threaten one's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. It is the testimony of each of us, I believe, that the elements of this work that fortify our life of faith are sufficiently dominant to provide us with resolve and strength that only occasionally falters. It is also encouraging to be assured frequently that the prayerful concern for the work of The Back to God Hour continues within our denomination and among many other Christians who consider this ministry important.

English Language Programs The English language ministry of The Back to God Hour is heard throughout North America and around the world as well. The chart that accompanies this report indicates that the following English language programs are being distributed: The Back to God Hour; Radio Today, a 1/2-hour daily magazine format program sent to India and the Far East; Insight, a 4 1/2-minute daily program; and radio and television spot announcements. These programs are produced in the new International Communications Center.

English Language Network The English language network represents a denominational investment in some of the top stations in North America. Continual examination of station effectiveness insures that those retained within the network are performing well, and such evaluation of stations led the Radio Committee to discontinue using NBC and Intermountain Network in February of this year. The decision to do so was historic, since it was the offer to The Back to God Hour of a contract by Mutual Broadcasting that launched the ministry as we know it today and enabled it to achieve an international reputation. Mutual was dropped several years ago, and with the leaving of NBC and Intermountain, The Back to God Hour now works exclusively with major stations on an individual basis. The broadcast type program format, adopted by the program three years ago, has opened some of the finest stations in the country to the broadcast, among them such industry giants as WSB in Atlanta, Georgia; and WTIC in Hartford, Connecticut.

Competition The English language ministries are carried on in a highly competitive environment on the North American continent. Awareness of this dominates much of what is done in The Back to God Hour program. The competitive context demands that we maintain the highest possible broadcasting quality so that our program releases are of recognized reliability within the industry. Moreover, the necessity of competing for the listener's ear demands that each program be carefully put together. Around the first of this year, certain production procedures were introduced that made possible the strengthening of the coherence and flow of each half hour program. A half hour is an exceptionally long time to maintain listener attention on radio, but greater emphasis on achieving a truly broadcast sound insures a significant degree of success. Letter response indicates that people are listening, and indications from a variety of other sources do as well.

Competition Overseas If the competitive dynamic on the North American continent is somewhat disadvantageous for our English language ministry here, it is encouraging to remember that the foreign language ministries of The Back to God Hour are heard in a climate in which radio is often the primary medium of mass communication.

Arabic Ministry Four of these foreign language ministries are headquartered within the new International Communications Center. The Rev. Bassam Madany's Arabic language ministry has been carried on since 1958, and it blankets North Africa and the Middle East at least thirty-two times during the course of each week, using stations located in Monte Carlo; the Seychelle Islands; Monrovia, Liberia; Cyprus, and Scituate, Massachusetts. Each of these stations has its own target audience. The new Trans World Radio station on Cyprus is clearly heard in Aman, Jordan, and Kuwait. The Rev. Mr. Madany received more mail during 1975 than ever before—4500 letters, and most of them came from Muslims. Some came from behind the Iron Curtain, even from Moscow.

Spanish Ministry In 1966, the Rev. Juan Boonstra began to develop the Spanish language ministry of The Back to God Hour. This ministry, headquartered too in the International Communication Center, now employs 140 stations throughout Latin America to bring programs that are geared to the religious and political climate of the target area. In addition, our Spanish programs are broadcast in some of the major Spanish speaking centers in the United States. The Rev. Mr. Boonstra held several evangelistic meetings in Miami near the end of December as a means of follow-up for his work and as a means of integrating his work with our Spanish speaking Christian Reformed people in that area. In addition to his weekly 15-minute program, called *La Hora De La Reforma (En Torcha Spiritual, in Mexico)*, the Spanish language ministry of The Back to God Hour also releases Radio 316, a daily half hour broadcast from the island of Bo-

naire; *Reflexion*, a 5-minute daily broadcast; Spanish spot announcements; and *Reflexion-TV*, a 5-minute television program.

Spanish Staff The Rev. Mr. Boonstra is assisted in his work by a Spanish speaking staff who also work in our offices. Together, the Spanish radio team of The Back to God Hour services millions of Spanish speaking people with radio broadcasts, literature, and countless letters of personal, pastoral counsel.

Our Spanish ministry is also heard in Spain.

Chinese Ministry Another ministry headquartered in the International Communications Center is that of the Rev. Isaac Jen (pronounced Run), a Chinese language ministry, expressed in two of the main dialects of China: Mandarin and Cantonese. This ministry, developed initially for daily penetration into China from station HLDA in Korea, has now expanded to include releases from Manila; KGEI, San Francisco; and very soon from Guam as well. In addition, the Cantonese version of the program is heard in Vancouver and the Mandarin program is also broadcast in Swaziland. Scripts for these programs are produced in our office, and the Rev. Mr. Jen supervises the production of the broadcasts that are done in Hong Kong and Singapore. He is assisted in his work by Mr. Carl Chan, recently from Hong Kong, who works with the Cantonese programs.

Chinese Mail Response Because Communist China is closed, it is impossible to receive direct mail response from mainland China to our office. However, the Rev. Mr. Jen is able to assess the effectiveness of his ministry by means of letters received from "overseas" Chinese in Burma, the Republic of China, and from Vancouver. Because of the small amount of letters received, a ministry such as this is somewhat discouraging, until one remembers that the present network of stations we are using guarantees that the Chinese ministry of The Back to God Hour is now available to practically all the Chinese in the world. Given the power of the gospel, we have faith that God is using this ministry according to his great purposes for the great nation of China. One out of every four babies born at present is Chinese—surely our responsibilities in this ministry are extremely impressive.

Foreign Based Ministries In addition to the foreign language ministries headquartered here, several foreign language ministries have been developed over the years that have their own offices overseas. They conduct their work under the supervision of the North American office. They are, in the order of their beginning, the French language ministry, the Portuguese ministry, the Indonesian ministry, and the Japanese ministry.

French Ministry At the urging of our Canadian classes, The Back to God Hour began the development of a French language ministry in 1968. The Rev. Aaron Kayayan has been associated with

this work from the outset, and in September 1975, it became possible for him to become involved in this ministry on a full-time basis.

French Office Because of the attention that the Rev. Mr. Kayayan can now give this work, the broadcast has been expanded in Europe and is heard over powerful stations. The letters received and personal contact made with the Rev. Mr. Kayayan indicate that there is a great hunger for Reformed Christianity there. This ministry is geared to the thoughtful French speaking European, and fills a vacuum on the continent. The program is also heard on several stations in Canada.

Portuguese In South America, more people speak Portuguese than Spanish, since it is the language spoken in Brazil. Preliminary investigation into the possibility of starting this ministry occurred in 1963, but it was not until the Christian Reformed Church began broadcasting from Bonaire in 1969 that it became possible to develop a Portuguese language ministry.

Radio 7316 Radio 7316 is the daily 30-minute broadcast from the island of Bonaire. This program was developed using production people of Trans World Radio, the work of the Rev. Luiz Pierre, a pastor in the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, and the work of other pastors of that church. We would not have been able to coordinate all these efforts and set up the necessary follow-up machinery if it had not been for the work of the Rev. William V. Muller, who acted as consultant to The Back to God Hour for this program for seven years. The Rev. Mr. Muller was honored for his essential role in the establishment of this ministry by The Back to God Hour Committee in February of this year.

Rev. Wilson Castro Ferreira During 1975, it became possible to secure the services of the Rev. Wilson Castro Ferreira, a veteran minister of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, as the full-time director of this ministry, working under the Rev. Juan Boonstra in our office. The Rev. Mr. Ferreira has served a Portuguese speaking congregation in Newark, New Jersey, and has studied in the United States. Recently he completed a lectureship at Calvin Seminary. Having been a professor in the seminary at Campinas, and one time secretary of his church, the Rev. Mr. Ferreira is well equipped to integrate the Portuguese language ministry into the life of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil. He has set up an office for this ministry in the seminary in Campinas.

A Radio Ideal These new developments in the Portuguese ministry create a situation in which radio can function ideally in a foreign country. The official interest of a Brazilian denomination creates the possibility of establishing meaningful follow-up and listener service. We view the Rev. Mr. Ferreira's entrance into this work as a special answer to prayer and expect that the Portuguese

ministry will be beneficial, under the blessing of the Lord, to the cause of Reformed Christianity in Brazil.

Indonesian Ministry About the same time the Portuguese ministry began in 1969, the Rev. Junus Atmarumeksa, a native of Indonesia, completed his studies at Calvin College and Seminary, and, with the encouragement of The Back to God Hour, returned to his country to establish a radio ministry there. This ministry has developed well through the years, and now brings the gospel in the Indonesian language using several program formats. The office in Djakarta, set up in cooperation with the Far East Broadcasting Company, is well equipped both to produce programs and service listeners who respond. As this ministry matures, it is hoped that it will be possible to achieve greater integration of this ministry into the work of the Geredja Kristina Indonesia, and, in order to achieve this, the Rev. Mr. Atmarumeksa's responsibilities with Far East Broadcasting are gradually being decreased. The broadcast is heard on many local stations throughout the country and blankets the entire land as well as Indonesian speaking parts of Malaysia, by means of powerful FEBC transmitters located in Manila, the Philippines.

Japanese Ministry The Japanese language ministry of The Back to God Hour demonstrates the way two agencies of the Christian Reformed Church are able to work together to conduct a significant ministry. The Japanese language programs are supervised on behalf of The Back to God Hour by the veteran foreign missionary, the Rev. Henry Bruinooge, who is part of our Foreign Mission Board force in Japan. At the beginning of this year, arrangements were completed for The Back to God Hour to include among its Japanese language programs, *Asa no Kotoba*, a radio ministry of the Foreign Mission Board in Japan since 1964.

Japanese Programs At present The Back to God Hour has the following programs for Japan: *Asa no Kotoba*, a daily 10-minute program aired on powerful Tokyo stations and in Okinawa, and *Asu e no Mado*, a 15-minute daily program broadcast from HLDA in Korea, that covers much of Japan. The program, *Asu e no Mado*, is also broadcast by HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, for Japanese people in South America.

Listener Service The opportunity the Christian Reformed Church has of ministering to a people as influential and as thoughtful as the Japanese by means of this well developed radio ministry is a very important one. Through the efforts of the Rev. Mr. Bruinooge and the Tokyo office which has existed already for many years through the work of the Foreign Mission Board, it is possible to service listener response with great efficiency and also to bring listeners into the Reformed Church of Japan.

Relationships with Foreign Churches In addition to the ongoing foreign language ministries of The Back to God Hour, we feel we have a responsibility to stimulate radio work in churches that approach

us regarding this from time to time. The Radio Committee has agreed to assist the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka in setting up an audio/visual department. We made contact with the Rev. Regnald Ebenezer of the Dutch Reformed Church while he was in the United States, opening the way for us to work with this church. The committee is also investigating the possibility of helping the Javanese speaking Reformed churches in Indonesia develop a radio capability. The Rev. Sularso Sopater contacted us about this possibility while he was completing work at Calvin Seminary.

Australia and New Zealand Along with the many foreign language releases of The Back to God Hour, the regular Back to God Hour program is heard throughout the world and is, as such, a foreign mission tool of our church. Programs that are meaningful only within North America are not released overseas, but others are. This program is released regularly in Australia and New Zealand as the official denominational broadcast of the Reformed churches there.

Radio Today And the daily half hour broadcast called Radio Today continues to be received overseas, especially in India. This is broadcast from Bonaire and the Seychelle Islands, and we now plan to transfer the Bonaire transmission to the new TWR station in Sri Lanka.

Engagement with Non-Christian World Views To think intelligently about the impact of Back to God Hour ministries one must move beyond a fascination with mere numbers of people and think about the fact that by means of our broadcasts our church has an opportunity to effect significant engagement with anti-Christian world views. This is true on the North American continent. For example, in connection with the idealization of the revolutionary principle that mars the American celebration of the Bicentennial, it is possible to use our program to sound a more reflective and critical note relative to some of the theologies and philosophies of the founding fathers. Hopefully, our program can also express an alternative to the rampant labor unrest that threatens Canada and to the socialism that gripped the province of British Columbia until the recent elections. Moreover, our programs are also an attack upon the prevailing materialistic humanistic world view that has captured the unexamined allegiance of so many of our fellow countrymen. From time to time it is possible to direct material to specific problems, though this must be done with a certain amount of caution because of the restrictions that surround the use of the airwaves. Abortion is a case in point. And the emphasis upon covenantal Christian day school education that has marked the program for years has borne rich fruit. It was extremely gratifying to participate last September in the dedication of a new Christian high school in Montreal which was the direct result of a public school teacher, Neville Bennington, listening to a Back to God Hour message dealing with Christian education about four years ago.

Islam It is impossible to imagine what is happening in this respect— in terms of engagement with other world views — when we think of the world-wide ministries which the Radio Committee carries on. Take the Middle East, for example. There we not only observe the reality of growing Arab nationalism, but also (and this is seldom highlighted in the popular press) the vigorous advance of a militant faith—Islam. This is happening, though, precisely when Islam's structure is weakening because of attacks from within. That right now it is possible for our work in that part of the world to expand, is an event of great kingdom significance.

Revolutionary Thought And in South America, that vast continent that has languished beneath the influence of a highly deficient form of Christianity and which is now riddled as well with the treacherously appealing falsehood of revolutionary thought, we have the opportunity to speak the message of the Reformed faith in both languages of that great land mass. It is highly significant that the long standing work of Juan Boonstra is complemented by a Portuguese ministry which is developing into an ever more efficient mission tool.

Encounter in Asia Turning to Asia and thinking of the great countries that dominate it and the subcontinent of India, we are amazed as we remind ourselves that we are there with not just one, but several ministries that are designed to speak to the people in languages they can understand. In each case, the ideological profile of the target audiences is somewhat different, but we believe that the gospel is the one message that is able to strip the thoughts of man of their pretensions and bring them into captivity to our Savior. Our Chinese ministry, now expanded to include two dialects, Mandarin and Cantonese, for all practical purposes covers the entire nation of China besides reaching millions of overseas Chinese. The way the Japanese program has found its way into the hearts of citizens of that island empire has been demonstrated by substantial mail response, much of which has been very moving and impressive. In Indonesia, Junus Atmarumeksa continues a ministry that is marked by careful organization and great attention to making programs especially suited for that country.

Literature Ministries The many broadcast ministries of The Back to God Hour are supplemented with literature ministries as well. The *Today (Family Altar)* publication is well known, and its circulation, now in a new bi-monthly format, is approximately 230,000 a month. The *Radio Pulpit* which contains a month's radio messages is sent to 40,000 each month as well. Each of the other languages has its own literature, in some instances adaptations of materials that appear in English, but mostly, like the Rev. Mr. Madany's extensive Arabic language offerings, especially designed for a specific part of the world. Copies of the Rev. Mr. Boonstra's Spanish material are circulated widely throughout South America and within the United States.

Financial Policy The Back to God Hour continues to carry on its work with the policy of using up monies sent to it, almost immediately. Both 1973 and 1974 ended with somewhat of a balance, but the level of Back to God Hour activity, along with general inflationary pressures, caused us to end 1975 with a deficit. The proposed budget for 1977, therefore, reflects these financial realities. It has been carefully worked out, and expresses a large commitment on the part of The Back to God Hour to work hard at fund raising. It is our hope that the denomination will respond positively to the needs of this ministry.

Roseland Ministry Center We are also pleased to report that The Back to God Hour Committee has carried out synod's instructions described in the Acts of Synod, 1974, Article 54-B-7, p. 53, relative to the disposition of The Back to God Hour building located at 10858 South Michigan Avenue. Synod at that time instructed us to "give first preference to CRC denominational agencies," and we were pleased that a special organization called the Roseland Christian Ministry Center was set up which enabled us to respond fully to synodical preferences. The statement of purpose of this organization is: "The purpose of the Roseland Christian Ministries Center is to become a Reformed and Christian witness for the purpose of making, by God's grace, new men and women in Christ. This purpose is to be accomplished through the faithful ministry of the Word of God and the development, from the foundation of our Reformed world and life view for all men, of ministries which reveal God's love by Christian witnessing in order to promote the spiritual, physical, emotional, social and academic well-being of the community, as such needs become apparent."

This ministry center is a joint venture of Classes Chicago South, Chicago North, and Illiana, and is administered by a board made up of representatives of these classes. In their work, the classes enjoy the support of SCORR, the Home Mission Board, and CRWRC, Christian Reformed agencies which are participating in the funding of this project.

At its meeting in February of this year, the Radio Committee turned over the use of this building to the new organization. With our vacating it and occupying our new facilities on the 15th of April, the way was opened to the carrying on of an extremely significant word and deed ministry in an area of Chicago where the need is very great.

With this report, then, we present our church with an overview of what is being done in radio broadcasting and literature by The Back to God Hour. Its scope is large. Its message is the need of the hour. This ministry proceeds with the knowledge that the night is coming when no man can work. It is still day. We are a people who have been richly blessed. Our responsibility is clear.

The entire Back to God Hour staff, ministers and lay people alike, ask your prayers on behalf of this expanding ministry. The work is demanding for all involved. Not only does it require arduous application to the many jobs that need doing, but it is accompanied by an

awesome sense of responsibility before God and obligation over against those who must still hear the gospel. God has blessed this ministry mightily. How privileged we all are to be a part of it!

Our help stands in the name of the Lord who has made the heavens and the earth.

MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION

1. The Radio Committee requests that Dr. J. Nederhood and either the president, the Rev. R. Venema, or the secretary, the Rev. N. Punt, be given the privilege of the floor when Back to God Hour matters are discussed.
2. The Radio Committee requests the Rev. Bassam Madany be given permission to address synod on behalf of The Back to God Hour.
3. The Radio Committee requests approval of the Indonesian ministry through June 1979.
4. The Radio Committee requests approval of the Japanese language ministry through June 1979.
5. Nominations

Eastern area.....	John Kooreman Robert Struyk
Michigan area.....	Rev. Eugene Bradford Rev. Eugene Los
Chicagoland area.....	Rev. John De Kruyter Rev. Howard Vander Well Norman Ozinga Dr. Ray Seven
6. The Radio Committee requests that the proposed budget for 1977 be approved and the quota of \$24.00 be adopted.
7. The Radio Committee requests that synod recommend The Back to God Hour for one or more offerings for above quota needs.

The Back to God Hour Radio Committee,
Dr. Joel Nederhood, Director

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR
Financial Report - January 1 through December 31, 1975

Receipts

Synodical Quotas	989,840.17	
Churches - Special Offerings	189,617.39	
Organizations	14,525.68	
Individual Gifts	431,866.54	
Foreign Designated	239,529.70	
Station Sponsorship	13,509.59	
Other Income	<u>46,108.67</u>	
Total Receipts		1,924,997.74

Disbursements

Broadcasting		767,378.40
Domestic		
Foreign		
English	131,969.48	
Arabic	92,435.88	
Spanish	147,000.96	
French	66,460.75	
Indonesian	16,024.52	
Portuguese	83,192.63	
Chinese	51,475.68	
Japanese	43,652.40	
TV	15,872.13	
Recording & Duplicating	53,665.04	
Research & Development	<u>1,034.61</u>	

Administration

Audit	2,370.30	
Employees Pension Plan	8,972.32	
Committee Expense	6,825.06	
Data Processing	18,179.32	
Equipment	17,090.07	
Insurance	14,540.08	
Maintenance and Repair	7,235.81	
Minister's Pension	3,800.00	
Salaries	213,823.79	
Social Security Expense	8,594.47	
Supplies	16,093.28	
Travel	33,420.40	
Utilities	<u>12,807.67</u>	
Family Altar	155,528.38	
Sermons	56,382.93	
Literature	62,079.86	
Minister's Housing and Allowances	21,800.00	
Music Production	298.09	
Other Printing	63,566.48	
Professional Services	13,313.15	
Other Expenses	3,320.45	
Interest	<u>2,856.44</u>	
Total Disbursements		2,212,860.83

THE BACK TO GOD HOUR TENTATIVE BUDGET - 1977

Receipts

Synodical Quotas	1,378,000	
Churches - Special Offerings	225,000	
Organizations	25,000	
Individual Gifts	550,000	
Foreign Designated	540,000	
Station Sponsorship	18,000	
Other Income	57,000	
Total Receipts		2,793,000

Disbursements

Broadcasting		
Domestic	798,000	
Foreign		
English	178,000	
Arabic	125,000	
Spanish	188,500	
French	100,000	
Indonesian	25,000	
Portuguese	125,000	
Chinese	60,000	
Japanese	140,000	
Recording & Duplicating	63,000	

Administration

Audit	2,500	
Employees Pension Plan	13,000	
Committee Expense	8,000	
Data Processing	18,000	
Equipment	20,000	
Insurance	22,000	
Maintenance & Repair	20,000	
Minister's Pension	4,000	
Salaries	321,000	
Social Security Expense	13,000	
Supplies	32,000	
Travel	26,500	
Utilities	20,000	
Family Altar	148,000	
Sermons	80,000	
Literature	113,000	
Minister's Housing & Allowances	22,000	
Other Printing	83,000	
Professional Services	20,000	
Other Expenses	4,500	
Total Disbursements		2,793,000

City	Station	Time	KHz	City	Station	Time	KHz
ALABAMA				GEORGIA			
Huntsville	- WAAY	8:30 a.m.	1550	Atlanta	- WPCH-FM	8:00 p.m.	94.5
Montgomery	- WCOV	9:30 p.m.	1170	Atlanta	- WSB	8:05 a.m.	750
Ozark	- WOAB-FM	8:30 a.m.	104.9	Augusta	- WBJA	9:30 p.m.	1230
ALASKA				Columbus	- WPNX	10:30 p.m.	1460
Anchorage	- KYAK	8:30 a.m.	650	Savannah	- WSAV	10:30 p.m.	630
Nome	- KICY	8:30 a.m.	850	GUAM			
North Pole	- KJNP	4:00 p.m.	1170	Agana	- KUAM	8:30 a.m.	610
ARIZONA				HAWAII			
Flagstaff	- KCLS	8:30 p.m.	600	Honolulu	- KAIM	4:00 p.m.	870
Nogales	- KFBR	7:30 p.m.	1340	IDAHO			
Phoenix	- KHEP (Sat.)	11:30 a.m.	1280	Boise	- KGEM	9:00 a.m.	1140
Phoenix	- KOOL	8:30 a.m.	960	Boise	- KIDO	10:30 p.m.	930
Prescott	- KYCA	8:30 p.m.	1400	Pocatello	- KSEI	9:30 a.m.	630
Tucson	- KOPO	8:30 a.m.	1450	Twin Falls	- KLIX	9:00 a.m.	1310
CALIFORNIA				ILLINOIS			
Bakersfield	- KGEE	7:30 p.m.	1230	Carbondale	- WCIL	9:30 a.m.	1020
Fresno	- KMJ	10:00 a.m.	580	Chicago	- WEFM	10:00 a.m.	99.5
Los Angeles	- KHJ	8:00 a.m.	930	Chicago	- WFYR-FM	4:00 a.m.	103.5
Modesto	- KTRB	12:00 Noon	860	Chicago	- WLAK-FM	8:00 a.m.	94.5
Modesto	- KTRB-FM	12:00 Noon	104.1	Chicago	- WMAQ	7:00 a.m.	670
Redding	- KQMS	9:30 p.m.	1400	Chicago	- WMBI	4:30 p.m.	1110
Sacramento	- KEBR-FM	4:00 p.m.	100.5	Lansing	- WLNK-FM	8:30 a.m.	106.5
San Bernardino	- KMEN	8:30 a.m.	1290	Rockford	- WQFL-FM	7:30 p.m.	100.5
San Diego	- KSDO	9:30 p.m.	1130	Rockford	- WROK	9:00 a.m.	1440
San Francisco	- KABL	8:30 a.m.	960	Urbana	- WCCR	9:05 a.m.	1580
San Francisco	- KEAR-FM	4:00 p.m.	97.3	INDIANA			
Santa Cruz	- KSCO	9:30 p.m.	1080	Crown Point	- WFLM-FM	8:30 a.m.	104.5
Santa Maria	- KUHL	8:30 a.m.	1440	Fort Wayne	- WLYV	11:00 a.m.	1450
COLORADO				Indianapolis	- WNDE	9:00 a.m.	1260
Alamosa	- KGIW	9:00 a.m.	1450	Lafayette	- WXUS-FM	8:30 a.m.	92.5
Denver	- KOA	8:30 a.m.	850	Terre Haute	- WAAC	11:30 a.m.	1300
Fort Collins	- KCOL	9:00 a.m.	1410	Terre Haute	- WTHI	9:30 p.m.	1480
Greeley	- KYOU	8:30 p.m.	1450	IOWA			
Morrison (Denver)	- KWBI-FM	9:00 p.m.	91.1	Ames	- KASI	9:30 a.m.	1430
Pueblo	- KPUB	9:00 a.m.	1480	Ames	- KASI-FM (Sat.)	6:00 p.m.	107.5
CONNECTICUT				Cedar Rapids	- KHAK	11:30 a.m.	1360
Hartford	- WTIC	8:30 a.m.	1080	Des Moines	- WHO	11:00 p.m.	104.5
Middletown	- WHS-FM	2:30 p.m.	104.9	Iowa City	- KXIC	9:00 a.m.	80.5
DELEWARE				Knoxville	- KTAV-FM	9:30 p.m.	92.5
Wilmington	- WDEL	10:30 p.m.	1150	LeMars	- KLEM	8:30 a.m.	1410
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA				Mason City	- KRIB	8:30 a.m.	1490
Washington	- WGMS	8:00 a.m.	570	Ottumwa	- KBIZ	8:30 a.m.	1240
Washington	- WGMS-FM	8:00 a.m.	103.5	Sioux Center	- KDRC-FM	8:30 a.m.	91.5
Washington	- WWDC	8:30 a.m.	1260	Sioux City	- KWSL	8:30 p.m.	1470
FLORIDA				Waterloo	- KXEL	8:30 a.m.	1540
Fort Lauderdale	- WAFG-FM	6:00 p.m.	90.3	KANSAS			
Fort Meyers	- WINK	9:30 p.m.	1240	Colby	- KXXX	8:30 a.m.	750
Jacksonville	- WJAX	10:30 p.m.	930	Topeka	- WIBW	8:30 p.m.	580
Lake Worth	- WLIZ	9:30 a.m.	1380	Wichita	- KFDD	10:00 p.m.	107.5
Melbourne	- WMMB	9:00 p.m.	1240	KENTUCKY			
Miami	- WGBS	8:30 a.m.	710	Louisville	- WVEZ-FM	8:30 a.m.	107.5
Miami	- WLYF-FM	8:00 a.m.	101.5	Paducah	- WDXR	9:30 p.m.	1500
Miami	- WCMU-FM	11:30 a.m.	89.7	LOUISIANA			
Orlando	- WKIS	8:30 a.m.	740	Alexandria	- KSYL	10:30 a.m.	97.5
Orlando	- WHOO-FM	11:30 a.m.	96.5	Monroe	- KMLB	10:30 a.m.	1400
Palm Beach	- WPBR	10:30 p.m.	1340	New Orleans	- WWL	8:00 a.m.	870
Sarasota	- WKZM-FM	3:00 p.m.	105.5				
Tampa	- WDAE	10:05 p.m.	1250				

City	Station	Time	KHz	City	Station	Time	KHz
MAINE				NEW JERSEY			
Portland	WDCS-FM	1:30 p.m.	97.9	Franklin	WSUS-FM	8:00 a.m.	102.3
MARYLAND				Newark	WFME-FM	3:00 p.m.	94.7
Baltimore	WLIF-FM	9:00 a.m.	101.9	Rio Grande	WRIO-FM (Mon.)	7:30 p.m.	120.3
Hagerstown	WJEJ	9:30 a.m.	1240	NEW MEXICO			
MASSACHUSETTS				Albuquerque	KOB	9:00 a.m.	770
Boston	WCOP	10:00 a.m.	1150	Gallup	KGAK	9:30 a.m.	1330
Waltham	WCRB-FM	8:30 a.m.	102.5	NEW YORK			
West Yarmouth	WOCB	9:30 a.m.	1240	Beacon	WBNR	9:30 a.m.	1260
MICHIGAN				Buffalo	WWOL	10:30 p.m.	1120
Battle Creek	WBCK	10:30 p.m.	930	New York City	WOR	8:30 p.m.	710
Cadillac	WWAM	12:00 Noon	1370	Rochester	WHAM	9:30 a.m.	1180
Detroit	WCAR	8:30 a.m.	1130	Schenectady	WGY	8:30 p.m.	810
Detroit	WNIC	9:30 a.m.	1310	Syracuse	WSOQ	11:00 a.m.	1220
Flint	WFDF	10:30 p.m.	910	NORTH CAROLINA			
Fremont	WSHN (Sat.)	5:30 p.m.	1550	Charlotte	WSOC	10:30 p.m.	930
Grand Haven	WGHN	4:00 p.m.	1370	Morganton	WMNC	10:30 p.m.	1430
Grand Rapids	WFUR	4:30 p.m.	1570	Plymouth	WPNC	9:00 a.m.	1470
Grand Rapids	WFUR-FM (Mon.)	11:30 p.m.	102.9	Raleigh	WPTF	10:00 a.m.	680
Grand Rapids	WOOD	8:30 p.m.	1300	Rocky Mount	WFMA-FM	8:30 a.m.	100.7
Holland	WHTC	4:00 p.m.	1450	Winston-Salem	WSJS	10:30 p.m.	600
Holland	WJBL	8:30 a.m.	1260	NORTH DAKOTA			
Jackson	WKHM	9:00 a.m.	970	Grand Forks	KRAD	9:00 a.m.	1590
Kalamazoo	WKZO	8:30 a.m.	590	Jamestown	KSJB	9:30 p.m.	600
Lansing	WJIM	8:00 a.m.	1240	OHIO			
Lapeer	WMPC	9:00 a.m.	1230	Akron	WAKR	9:30 a.m.	1590
Manistique	WTIQ	8:30 a.m.	1490	Cincinnati	WKRC	9:00 a.m.	550
Mount Pleasant	WCEN	8:00 p.m.	1150	Cincinnati	WWEZ-FM	8:00 a.m.	92.5
Muskegon	WKBZ	9:00 a.m.	850	Cleveland	WJW	8:30 a.m.	850
Saginaw	WSAM	11:30 a.m.	1400	Columbus	WTVN	8:30 a.m.	610
Saulte Ste Marie	WSOO	11:30 a.m.	1230	Dayton	WHIO	8:00 a.m.	1290
Ypsilanti	WYFC	2:00 p.m.	1520	Toledo	WCWA	8:30 a.m.	1230
MINNESOTA				Toledo	WSPD	9:30 p.m.	1370
Duluth	WDSM	10:30 a.m.	710	Youngstown	WBBW	9:30 a.m.	1240
Minneapolis-St. Paul	KSTP	10:30 p.m.	1500	Zanesville	WHIZ	10:30 p.m.	1240
Minneapolis-St. Paul	KTIS	4:00 p.m.	900	OKLAHOMA			
Minneapolis-St. Paul	WLOL	8:30 a.m.	1330	Bartlesville	KYFM	8:30 a.m.	100.1
Morris	KMRS	1:00 p.m.	1230	Hobart	KTJS (Sat.)	8:30 a.m.	1420
St. Cloud	KFAM	8:30 a.m.	1450	Oklahoma City	KLPR	8:30 a.m.	1140
Wilmar	KWLM	1:00 p.m.	1340	Tulsa	KAKC (Mon.)	2:00 a.m.	970
Worthington	KWOA	12:00 Noon	730	OREGON			
MISSISSIPPI				Albany	KWIL	9:30 p.m.	790
Columbus	WMBC	9:30 p.m.	1400	Medford	KMED	9:30 p.m.	1440
Greenwood	WGRM	9:30 p.m.	1240	Portland	KXL	8:30 a.m.	750
Hattiesburg	WFOR	10:30 a.m.	1400	PENNSYLVANIA			
Hattiesburg	WXXX	8:30 a.m.	1310	Danville	WPGM	8:30 a.m.	1570
Jackson	WJDX	8:00 a.m.	620	Harrisburg	WCMB	8:30 a.m.	1460
MISSOURI				Johnstown	WJAC-FM	8:30 a.m.	95.5
Kansas City	WHB	9:00 a.m.	710	Oil City	WKZZ	10:30 p.m.	1340
St. Louis	KXOK	7:30 a.m.	630	Philadelphia	WFLN	7:30 a.m.	900
MONTANA				Pittsburgh	WWSW	8:30 a.m.	970
Belgrade	KGWV	12:30 p.m.	630	Scranton	WSCR	10:30 p.m.	1320
Bozeman	KBMN	8:30 a.m.	1230	Washington	WJPA	9:30 a.m.	1450
Butte	KBOW	9:00 a.m.	550	Williamsport	WRAK	10:30 p.m.	1400
Butte	KXLF	9:30 a.m.	1370	York	WZIX	10:30 p.m.	1350
Great Falls	KARR	8:05 p.m.	1400	PUERTO RICO			
Great Falls	KMON	9:00 a.m.	560	Vieques	WIVV	9:00 p.m.	1370
NEBRASKA				RHODE ISLAND			
Omaha	KOIL	8:00 a.m.	1290	Providence	WEAN	9:00 a.m.	790
Scottsbluff	KNEB	9:00 a.m.	960	NEVADA			
NEVADA				Las Vegas	KORK	9:30 p.m.	1340

City	Station	Time	KHz	City	Station	Time	KHz
SOUTH CAROLINA				CANADA			
Charleston - WOKE		10:30 p.m.	1340	ALBERTA			
Greenville - WFBC		10:30 p.m.	1330	Brooks - CKBR		9:00 a.m.	1340
Greenwood - WCRS		10:30 p.m.	1450	Calgary - CHQR		8:30 p.m.	810
SOUTH DAKOTA				Camrose - CFCW		8:00 p.m.	790
Rapid City - KIMM		9:00 a.m.	1150	Edmonton - CHQT		8:30 a.m.	1110
Vermillion - KVRA		7:30 p.m.	1570	Edson - CJYR		10:00 a.m.	970
Winner - KWYR		4:00 p.m.	1260	Fort McMurray - CJOK		9:00 a.m.	1230
Yankton - WNAX		10:15 p.m.	570	Lethbridge - CHEC		8:30 p.m.	1090
TENNESSEE				Peace River - CKYL		7:00 p.m.	610
Kingsport - WKPT		10:30 p.m.	1400	BRITISH COLUMBIA			
Knoxville - WETE		10:30 p.m.	620	Abbotsford - CFVR		11:30 a.m.	1240
Memphis - WREC		9:30 a.m.	600	Burns Lake - CFLD		9:15 a.m.	1400
Nashville - WSIX		8:00 a.m.	980	Duncan - CKAY		7:30 p.m.	1500
TEXAS				Langley - CIJC		10:05 p.m.	850
Dallas - KRLD		8:00 a.m.	1080	Osoyoos - CKOO		8:30 a.m.	1240
El Paso - KHEY		9:00 a.m.	690	Penticton - CKOK		8:30 a.m.	800
El Paso - KTSM		10:30 p.m.	1380	Smithers - CFBV		9:15 a.m.	1230
Houston - KPRC		8:30 a.m.	950	Summerland - CKSP		8:30 a.m.	1450
McAllen - KVMV-FM (Sat.)		11:30 p.m.	96.9	Vancouver - CJVB		9:00 a.m.	1470
San Antonio - WOAI		9:00 p.m.	1200	Vernon - CJIB		10:00 a.m.	940
UTAH				MANITOBA			
Brigham City - KBUH		8:30 a.m.	800	Altona - CFAM		9:30 a.m.	950
Logan - KVNU		9:00 a.m.	610	Boissevain - CJRB		9:30 a.m.	1220
Ogden - KLO		9:00 a.m.	1430	Steinbach - CHSM		9:30 a.m.	1250
Provo - KOVO		9:00 a.m.	960	Winnipeg - CKJS		9:15 a.m.	810
Salt Lake City - KALL		9:00 a.m.	910	NEW BRUNSWICK			
Salt Lake City - KSL		9:30 p.m.	1160	Fredericton - CFNB		10:30 a.m.	550
Vernal - KVEL		9:00 a.m.	1340	Newcastle - CFAN		9:30 a.m.	790
VERMONT				NOVA SCOTIA			
Rutland - WSYB		8:30 a.m.	1380	Digby - CKDY		5:00 p.m.	1420
VIRGINIA				Halifax - CJCH		8:00 a.m.	920
Charlottesville - WCHV		8:30 a.m.	1260	Kentville - CKEN		5:00 p.m.	1490
Martinsville - WMVA		10:30 p.m.	1450	Middleton - CKAD		5:00 p.m.	1350
Norfolk - WTAR-FM		8:00 a.m.	95.7	Sydney - CJCB		10:15 a.m.	1270
WASHINGTON				Windsor - CFAB		5:00 p.m.	1450
Bellingham - KGMI		9:00 a.m.	790	ONTARIO			
Bellingham - KISM-FM		9:00 a.m.	93.0	Brantford - CKPC		10:00 p.m.	1380
Kennewick - KOTY		9:00 a.m.	1340	Cornwall - CJSS		8:00 a.m.	1220
Lynden - KLYN-FM		8:30 a.m.	106.5	Ft. Frances - CFOB		10:30 a.m.	800
Seattle - KGDN		2:30 p.m.	630	Hamilton - CKOC		7:00 a.m.	1150
Seattle - KIRO		9:30 p.m.	710	Kingston - CKLC		11:30 a.m.	1380
Spokane - KHO		9:00 p.m.	590	Ottawa - CFGO		8:30 a.m.	1440
Spokane - KMBI		4:30 p.m.	1330	Owen Sound - CFOS		1:30 p.m.	560
Sunnyside - KREW		8:15 a.m.	1230	Pembroke - CHOV (Wed.)		10:30 p.m.	1350
Tacoma - KTNT		8:30 a.m.	1400	Sarnia - CHOK		8:30 a.m.	1070
Yakima - KIT		10:00 p.m.	1280	St. Catharines - CHSC		8:30 a.m.	1220
WEST VIRGINIA				St. Thomas - CHLO		4:30 p.m.	1570
Bluefield - WHIS		12:05 p.m.	1440	Stratford - CJCS		1:00 p.m.	1240
Morgantown - WAJR		10:30 a.m.	1440	Thunder Bay - CFPA		9:30 a.m.	1230
Wheeling - WTRF-FM		11:30 a.m.	107.5	Toronto - CHIN-FM		8:00 a.m.	101.0
WISCONSIN				Toronto - CKFH		9:30 a.m.	1430
Berlin - WISS		9:00 a.m.	1090	QUEBEC			
Cornell - WWIB-FM		9:30 p.m.	103.7	Montreal - CFCF		9:30 p.m.	600
Madison - WIBA		9:30 p.m.	1310	Montreal - CFOX		8:00 a.m.	1470
Marquette - WMAM		9:30 p.m.	570	SASKATCHEWAN			
Milwaukee - WEZW-FM		8:30 a.m.	103.7	Estevan - CJSL (Mon.)		9:30 p.m.	1280
Plymouth - WPLY		8:30 a.m.	1420	Regina - CKRM		10:30 a.m.	980
Waukesha - WAUK		8:00 a.m.	1510	Saskatoon - CFQC (Sat.)		8:00 p.m.	600
Wisconsin Rapids - WFHR		10:30 a.m.	1340	Weyburn - CFSL (Mon.)		9:30 p.m.	1190
WYOMING				NOTE: Due to daylight saving time in some areas, the program is heard one hour earlier during the summer months.			
Casper - KVOG		9:00 a.m.	1230	11-75			
Cheyenne - KFBC		9:30 p.m.	1240				
Sheridan - KWYO		9:00 a.m.	1410				

The program is heard on Sundays unless otherwise indicated.

NOTE: Due to daylight saving time in some areas, the program is heard one hour earlier during the summer months.

ENGLISH OVERSEAS/THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

AFRICA

ELWA—Monrovia, Liberia
 14:00 GMT. 25 Meter Band
 3:30 PM LST 710 KHz and 60 Meter Band
 Music Radio - Swaziland (Sat.) 9 P.M. MW1376

ASIA

Radio Sri Lanka—Colombo (Tues) 9:45 p.m.
 19, 25, 41 Meters
 BEP22—Taipei, Formosa 8:00 a.m. 910 KHz
 BEP24—Changhua, Formosa 8:00 a.m. 780 KHz
 BEP25—Kao-Shiung, Formosa 8:00 a.m. 1120 KHz
 BEP26—Hsin-Chu, Formosa 8:00 a.m. 1120 KHz
 HLKX—Inchon, Korea 3:30 p.m. 1060 KHz
 KLKP—Pusan, Korea 9:30 a.m. 1400 KHz

The Philippines

DYRH—Bacolod City 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DRYM—Dumaguete 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DYRS—San Carlos 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DYRP—Pauay 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DYRO—Roxas 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DYPR—Palawan 3:30 p.m. 1200 KHz
 DZAS—Manila (Wed.) 7:00 p.m. 680 KHz

FEBC—Manila at 0500 hours GMT on 13, 16 and 19 meters,
 Sundays — beamed to Indo-China, India, Australia and
 New Zealand.
 In the Phillipines at 1 PM
 In Hong Kong at 1 PM
 In Vietnam at 1 PM
 In Singapore and Malaysia at 12:30 PM
 In Thailand at 12 noon
 In Burma at 11:30 AM
 In India and Ceylon at 10:30 AM
 In Australia at 3 PM
 In New Zealand at 5 PM
 FEBC—Manila at 1200 hours GMT, on 25 and 41 meter
 bands, Tuesdays — beamed North and South.
 In Japan and Korea at 9 PM
 In Mainland China and Taiwan at 8 PM
 In Indonesia and Malaysia at 7 PM
 In Australia at 10 PM

Seychelles (Indian Ocean)

FEBA—Victoria at 1615 GMT on 19 Meters (9:15 p.m. India)
 FEBA — Radio Today - Daily Broadcast Service at 1:30 P.M.

AUSTRALIA

Radio 2KY Sydney 8:30 p.m.
 Radio 2MG Mudgee 6:30 p.m.
 Radio 3BO Bendigo 9:20 p.m.
 Radio 3CS Colac 7:30 p.m.
 Radio 3SR Shepparton 8:00 p.m.
 Radio 3UL Warragul 7:00 p.m.
 Radio 3YB Warrnambool 8:00 p.m.
 Radio 4KQ Brisbane 8:30 p.m.
 Radio 4WK Warwick 8:00 p.m.
 Radio 6BY Bridgetown 9:00 p.m.
 Radio 6MD Meredin 9:00 p.m.
 Radio 6WB Katanning 9:00 p.m.
 Radio 7AD Devonport 12:45 p.m.

Radio 7HT Hobart 7:30 a.m.
 Radio HCJB (Quito, Ecuador)
 Sydney (1020 KC) 5:30 p.m.

CARIBBEAN

PJA—6—Oranjestad, Aruba 9:30 p.m. 925 KHz
 TWR—Bonaire, N.A. 8:00 a.m. & 11:30 p.m. 800 KHz
 TWR—Bonaire, N.A. RADIO TODAY — The Daily
 Broadcast Service of the Christian Reformed
 Church broadcast on the 25 Meter Band at
 0100 GMT.
 USA: EST: 8 p.m. CST: 7 p.m. MST: 6 p.m. PST: 5 p.m.
 INDIA: 6:30 a.m.
 RADIO DOMINICA, Roseau, Dominica (Fri.)
 8:30 p.m. 590 KHz

EUROPE

TWR—Monte Carlo, Monaco (Thurs) 0815 GMT 31 Meter Band
 Monday MW 2200 GMT 205 Meters 1466 KHz

LATIN AMERICA

TIFC—San Jose, Costa Rica 10:00 p.m. 1075 KHz
 6.037 and 9.645 MHz
 HRVC—Tegucigalpa, Honduras 10:00 p.m. 1380 KHz
 HOXO—Panama City, Panama 7:45 p.m. 760 KHz
 HCJB—Quito, Ecuador 0730 GMT
 19, 25 and 31 Meter Band — (Australia, New Zealand)
 49 Meter Band — Europe and India.

MIDDLE EAST

CBC — Nicosia, Cyprus
 Friday at 2045 GMT on 498 Meters (602 kHz)
 TWR — Cyprus to Middle East
 Friday at 2045 GMT on 240 Meters (1232 kHz)
 at 1945 GMT during Summertime

ARABIC/SAATU-L-ISLAH

WYFR — Scituate, Mass., U.S.A.
 Daily to Europe & North Africa
 at 1715 GMT on 16 Meter Band
 FEBA — Seychelles, Indian Ocean
 Daily to Middle East at 1845 GMT
 & Sundays at 1830 GMT on 25 Meter Band

ELWA — Monrovia, Liberia

Daily to North Africa & Europe
 at 0745 GMT & Sundays at 0715 GMT
 on 25 Meter Band

TWR — Monte-Carlo, Monaco
 Thursday & Friday at 2200 GMT
 on 205 Meters (1466 kHz)
 Friday & Sunday at 1800 GMT
 on 41 or 25 Meters
 to Europe, N. Africa & M. East

TWR — Cyprus to Middle East
 Sunday, Monday & Tuesday
 at 2015 GMT on 240 Meters (1232 kHz)
 at 1915 GMT during Summer Time

CBC — Nicosia, Cyprus to M. East
 Sunday, Monday, Tuesday & Thursday
 at 2045 GMT on 498 Meters (602 kHz)

CHINESE/GOOD NEWS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

DWRF-AM—Iba, Philippines	10:15 p.m.; Tu., Th., Sa.	Mandarin
DWRF-AM	9:30 p.m.; Tu., Th., Sa.	Cantonese
HLDA-AM—Cheju, Korea	10:15 p.m.; We., Fr., Su.	Mandarin
KGEI-SW—San Francisco	9:45 p.m.; We., Fr., Su.	Mandarin
Manila-SW—Philippines	Tu., Th., Sa.	Mandarin
CJVB-AM—Vancouver, B.C.	10:30 p.m.; Sunday	Cantonese
CJVB-AM	10:45 p.m.; Sunday	Mandarin
TWR-SW—Swaziland	8:45 p.m., Daily	Mandarin

FRENCH/PERSPECTIVES REFORMEES

TWR — Monte-Carlo, Monaco
 Tuesday on 41 Meter Band
 at 1:00 P.M. on 205
 Meters at 8:45 P.M. CET

Europe No. 1 to Europe & N. Africa
 Sunday at 5:45 A.M. CET
 on 182 kHz (1647 Meters) Long Wave

Radio Luxembourg
 Friday on 1271 Meters (236 kHz)
 Long Wave at 5:00 A.M. CET

WYFR — Scituate, Mass., USA
 Daily to Europe & Africa
 at 2015 GMT on 13, 16
 and 19 Meter Bands

CANADA

CFML—Cornwall, Ont.	9:30 a.m.	1170 kHz
CFCL—Timmons, Ont.	9:30 a.m.	620 kHz
CHRD—Drummondville, Que.	10:15 p.m.	1480 kHz
CJLM—Joliette, Que.	8:30 a.m.	1350 kHz
CHRS—Montreal, Que.	8:00 a.m.	1090 kHz
CKLM—Montreal, Que.	9:00 a.m.	1570 kHz
CKCV—Quebec City, Que.	7:15 a.m.	1280 kHz
CJSO—Sorel, Que.	8:30 a.m.	1320 kHz
CHLN—Three Rivers, Que.	7:45 a.m.	550 kHz

**INDONESIAN/WORD FOR TODAY and
THE MAJESTIC PLAN**

Broadcast daily and weekly on 70 local Indonesian stations in Jakarta, Surabaya and many other leading cities.

FEBC — Manila, the Philippines via short wave beams the programs back to Indonesia to cover the nation.

JAPANESE/WINDOW TO TOMORROW

Broadcasting Every Day
 HLDA — Cheju Island, Korea
 on a 250,000 watt AM Transmitter
 HCJB — Quito, Ecuador - Daily on SW Transmitter

PORTUGUESE/RADIO 73-15

From Trans World Radio on the Island of Bonaire beamed daily to Brazil.

Every Sunday local Brazilian stations carry it in Ponta Grossa, Castro and Jaguariava.

SPANISH/LA HORA DE LA REFORMA

LU 10	.....	Azul, Argentina
LR 3	.....	Buenos Aires, Argentina
LU 4	.....	C. Rivadavia, Argentina
CP 63	.....	La Paz, Bolivia
CP 114	.....	Beni, Bolivia
CP 112	.....	Yacuiba, Bolivia
CP 108	.....	Quillacolla, Bolivia
CB 93	.....	Santiago, Chile
CD 111	.....	Temuco, Chile
CD 141	.....	Loncoche, Chile
CD 134	.....	Pitrufuquen, Chile
CD 151	.....	Lebu, Chile
CD 156	.....	Villarrica, Chile
CA 82	.....	Pueblo Hundido, Chile
HJHE	.....	Malaga, Columbia
HJLE	.....	Armero, Colombia
HJCB	.....	Barranquilla, Colombia
HJIT	.....	Quibdo, Colombia
HJZW	.....	Riohacha, Colombia
HJJO	.....	Tumaco, Colombia
HJCU	.....	Bogota, D.E., Colombia
HJIW	.....	Bogota, D.E., Colombia
TIFC	.....	San Jose, Costa Rica
HICK	.....	Santiago, Rep. Dominicana
HIZ	.....	Sto. Domingo, Rep. Dominicana
HCJD6	.....	Ambato, Ecuador
HCWN1	.....	Santo Domingo, Ecuador
HCJB	.....	Quito, Ecuador
HCGM7	.....	Shell, Ecuador
HCRG1	.....	Quito, Ecuador
HCRJ5	.....	Riobamba, Ecuador
HCRS4	.....	Pichincha, Ecuador
HCB2	.....	Cardena de 8 Emisoras, Ecuador
HCAD4	.....	El Carmen, Manabi, Ecuador
HCSP1	.....	Quito, Ecuador
TGN	.....	Guatemala, Guatemala
TCAX	.....	Guatemala, Guatemala
TGMQ	.....	Guatemala, Guatemala
HRVC	.....	Tegucigalpa, Honduras
HRU	.....	Tegucigalpa, Honduras
HRCP	.....	El Paraiso, Honduras
HRIC	.....	El Paraiso, Honduras
TWR	.....	Bonaire, Ant. Holandesas
YNVOZ	.....	Managua, Nicaragua
YNOL	.....	Managua, Nicaragua
YND	.....	Managua, Nicaragua
YNMS	.....	Leon, Nicaragua
HORS6	.....	Panama, Panama
HORS9	.....	Panama, Panama
HOXO	.....	Panama, Panama
ZP-30	.....	Filadelfia, Paraguay
OBX-7F	.....	Ayaviri, Peru
OAZ-4V	.....	Huancayo, Peru
OAX-4M	.....	Cerro de Pasco, Peru
OAX-2B	.....	Trujillo, Peru
OAZ-4K	.....	Lima, Peru

OAX-5S	.....	Huanta, Peru
OCZ-4J	.....	Tarma, Peru
WAPA	.....	San Juan, Puerto Rico
WCCB	.....	Ponce, Puerto Rico
WFID-FM	.....	Hato Rey, Puerto Rico
WIVV	.....	San Juan, Puerto Rico
WUPR	.....	Utua, Puerto Rico
EAJ39	.....	Barcelona, Esp.
TWR-MC	.....	Monte Carlo, Mor.
CX 16	.....	Montevideo, Urug.
CX 36	.....	Montevideo, Urug.
CW-33	.....	Florida, Urug.
YVMR	.....	Barquisimeto, Venez.
KGEI	.....	Belmont, Venez.
KLOC	.....	Ceres, Venez.
KALI	.....	Hollywood, Venez.
WYFR	.....	Oakland, Venez.
WFAB	.....	Miami, Venez.
WADO	.....	New York, Venez.
KGBT	.....	Harlingen, Venez.
KVMV	.....	McAllen, Venez.
WFAN-FM	.....	Washington, Venez.

MEXICO/LA ANTORCHA ESPIRITUAL

XEACD	.....	Acapulco, Mex.
XEBI	.....	Aguascalientes, Mex.
XECAM	.....	Campeche, Mex.
XERPAC	.....	Chihuahua, Mex.
XESA	.....	Ciudad Juarez, Mex.
XEBN	.....	Cd. Delicias, Mex.
XEHO	.....	Cd. Obregon, Mex.
XEBJ	.....	Cd. Victoria, Mex.
XECK	.....	Durango, Mex.
XEDK	.....	Guadalupe, Mex.
XIEDL	.....	Hermosillo, Mex.
XERPIL	.....	Laredo, Mex.
XETK	.....	Mazatlan, Mex.
XEZ	.....	Merida, Mex.
XED	.....	Mexico, Mex.
XERED	.....	Mexico, Mex.
XEXU	.....	Monterrey, Mex.
XEFB	.....	Monterrey, Mex.
XEI	.....	Moravia, Mex.
XEFE	.....	Nuevo Laredo, Mex.
XEOA	.....	Oaxaca, Mex.
XEJS	.....	Panama, Mex.
XEPR	.....	Pozos de Huelmo, Mex.
XEPOP	.....	Perote, Mex.
XERT	.....	Reynosa, Mex.
XETU	.....	Tampico, Mex.
XEKQ	.....	Tapachula, Mex.
XEC	.....	Tijuana, Mex.
XETB	.....	Torrón, Mex.
XEVE	.....	Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mex.
XEFN	.....	Uruapan, Mex.
XEU	.....	Veracruz, Mex.
XEVA	.....	Villahermosa, Mex.
XEQL	.....	Zamorora, Mex.
XEQG	.....	Queretaro, Mex.

PROGRAM-BY-PROGRAM REPORT OF THE BACK TO GOD HOUR'S WORLD-WIDE BROADCAST SCHEDULE

Program	Language	Length in Min.	Format	at	Freq'cy.	Coverage	Cost Basis	No. of Stations	Total Hrs. Broadcasting (weekly)
1. The Back to God Hour	E	30	a		Wkly	USA & Canada	Paid *	249	124½
2. The Back to God Hour (Overseas Release)	E	30	a		Wkly	Overseas	Paid *	30	15
3. The Back to God Hour (Australian Release)**	E	30	a		Wkly	Australia	Paid	13	6½
4. Radio Today	E	30	b		Daily	India, SE Asia	Paid	3	10
5. Insight	E	4.5	c		Daily	USA	Free	16	3½
6. Racom Spots (Radio & TV)	E	1	d		NA	USA & Canada	Free	NA	NA
7. Saatu-L-Islah	A	30	a		Wkly	Arab World	Paid	2	1
8. Saatu-L-Islah	A	30	a		Wkly	Arab World	Free	1	½
9. Saatu-L-Islah	A	15	c		M-Sat.	Arab World	Paid	5	5¼
10. Saatu-L-Islah	A	15	c		M-Sat.	Arab World	Free	1	1½
11. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a		Wkly	USA	Paid	6	1½
12. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a		Wkly	Latin America	Paid	29	7¾
13. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a		Wkly	Latin America	Free	47	11¾
14. Antorcha Espiritual	S	15	a		Wkly	Mexico	Paid	35	8¾
15. Radio 316	S	30	b		Daily	Latin America	Paid	1	14¾
16. Alfa y Omega	S	30	b		Daily	Latin America	Paid	1	3½
17. Reflexion	S	5	c		Daily	Latin America	Paid	2	1
18. Reflexion	S	5	c		NA	USA	Paid	2	¾
19. Reflexion	S	5	c		NA	Latin America	Free	35	8¾
20. Radio 73-15	P	30	b		Daily	Brazil	Paid	1	3½
21. Local Portuguese	P	15	b		Daily	Brazil	Paid	4	2
22. Perspectives Reformees	F	15	a		Wkly	Canada	Paid	9	2¼
23. Perspectives Reformees	F	15	a		Wkly	Europe	Paid	3	1
24. Perspectives Reformees	F	15	a		Daily	Europe & Africa	Free	1	1¾
25. Majestic Plans ***	I	5 & 15	NA		NA	Indonesia	NA	NA	NA
26. Window to Tomorrow	J	15	a/b		Daily	Japan	Paid	2	3½
27. Good News for the Whole World	C-M	15	a		Tu-Th-Sa	China	Paid	2	1¼
28. Good News	C-M	15	a		We-Fr-Su	China	Paid	2	1¼
29. Good News	C-M	15	a		Sunday	Vancouver	Paid	1	¼
30. Good News	C-M	15	a		Mon-Sat	SE Africa	Free	1	1½
31. Good News	C-M	30	a		Sunday	SE Africa	Free ****	1	½
32. Good News	C-C	15	a		Sunday	Vancouver	Paid	1	¼
33. Good News	C-C	15	a		We-Fr-Su	S. China	Paid	1	¾

CODE:

E - English
 A - Arabic
 S - Spanish
 P - Portuguese
 F - French
 I - Indonesian
 J - Japanese
 a - Music/Sermon Format
 b - Magazine Format-Music-Message
 c - Talk Only
 d - Spot Announcements
 NA - Not applicable

* A sizable portion of The Back to God Hour network is provided by stations on a free public service basis
 ** Produced and Financed in Cooperation with The Reformed Church in Australia
 *** Produced in Cooperation with Geredja Kristen Indonesia and Indonesian Broadcasting Foundation
 **** Paid by Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk of South Africa

SPECIAL BACK TO GOD HOUR TELEVISION REPORT

Synodical Action The Synod of 1975 passed the following regarding The Back to God Hour television ministry: "That synod instruct the Back to God Hour Committee to study the principles behind and implications of the proposed expansion of a television ministry of the Back to God Hour, and present guidelines in their report to the Synod of 1976.

Grounds:

- a. The nature and formats of television broadcast are significantly different from radio broadcasting, as indicated by the report.
- b. The substantial expenses involved in the method of broadcasting outreach makes it a matter of good stewardship to examine the principles on which any Reformed television programming is based."

—*Adopted* (Acts of Synod 1975, Art. 35-4, a, b, p. 30).

Radio Committee Study At its meeting in October 1975, the Radio Committee reviewed a lengthy, in depth report that covered the matters referred to by synod. In response to the synodical decision, therefore, the following report is presented. It shows the background of The Back to God Hour's current interest in broadcasting and indicates possible directions that should be examined. In addition to the material now presented, the Radio Committee has a yet broader study that can be supplied the committee that examines this matter. Possibly this committee may also wish to visit the new facilities and include an on site investigation as an element of their study.

Initial Television Attempts The Back to God Hour interest in television over the years has been if anything conspicuous by its absence. The major venture into this field occurred in 1956 and 1958 when two series of thirteen programs featuring Peter Eldersveld were produced and released. The second series was in color. These programs enjoyed success which certainly justified their production and distribution, but even then received rather limited exposure. It is instructive to observe that the second series, though better than the first and in color, did not achieve significant industry penetration. This was because the competitive realities that now dominate the television situation were already gathering momentum at the turn of the decade and religious television was becoming less attractive to broadcasters. Moreover, the straightforward presentation, set in a pastor's study, was already becoming less effective in gathering an audience.

Spot Announcements Since then, The Back to God Hour ventures into television have been extremely limited. The production of 30-second television spots in 1972, however, a foundation funded project, and the development of marketing instruments for this material marked The Back to God Hour's awakening of interest in the possible use of this medium for gospel communication. This project enjoyed public service exposure worth an estimated \$650,000, and this could most likely have been increased if greater resources had

been committed to marketing this material. Yet those involved in this project could not help but feel some disappointment because of the necessity of presenting a message that had been "shaved down" to the point where explicit Christian truths could not be expressed. This was caused by the brevity of the presentation, to a certain degree, but was especially caused by the demands of the industry which was willing to give the spots good exposure only if their message was very general.

Spanish Television The most substantial television production which The Back to God Hour has engaged in has been the 26-program Spanish series REFLEXION, now being distributed. REFLEXION is a 5 minute program that presents a biblical message, accompanied by highly developed visual materials. Though the Rev. J. Boonstra is not on camera continuously, the material presented is not unlike that which he presents in his regular program LA HORA DE LA REFORMA. The commitment of personnel, money, and time to this project occurred because of the special funding and encouragement of Classis Central California, and because it is felt that this material, prepared for a special market, can be assured of distribution. Initial reactions to the broadcasts from stations in Ecuador and in California indicate that the program has a high degree of acceptability within the industry, and letters from listeners indicate that audience response is positive.

Constituent Interest When one considers the dominance of television in electronic communication, The Back to God Hour involvement appears remarkably inappropriate. The lack of The Back to God Hour interest in television has certainly not reflected apathy among the constituency. The question, "Does The Back to God Hour have any plans for television?" has been one of the most persistent questions staff members have heard as they have traveled in North America and even in Australia. Throughout most of the 1960's this question was answered negatively. There were several reasons for this.

Television as Entertainment The basic reason was a principal one that related to theoretical problems involved in communicating the gospel. As television developed during the 1950's and 1960's it became a marketing medium rather than a communication medium. The marketing potential of television was reinforced by presenting programs that were essentially entertaining. Since The Back to God Hour ministries traditionally expressed communication of the gospel by means of preaching, an attempt to fit our ministry into television's entertainment mosaic seemed intrinsically contradictory.

Usefulness of Radio Closely related to this was the increasing serviceability of radio for the achievement of the goals of our ministries. While television became more and more an entertainment medium, radio became more and more a service medium, a highly transportable companion which provided conversation, news,

and background music. In addition, radios became less expensive and universally available. This, along with some of the problems inherent in television, naturally inclined The Back to God Hour to invest practically all of its resources in radio programming.

Cost and Policy In addition to these somewhat theoretical considerations, television also presented practically insurmountable problems to The Back to God Hour in terms of cost because of the organization's fund raising policies. Certain religious celebrities have been able to make television pay for itself. Their success, however, demands either a deliberate conformation to the entertainment factor that dominates much of television, or a very strong pitch for funds and selling of merchandise on their program, and usually a combination of both. Since The Back to God Hour policy prohibits moving into either of these directions, television presented us with a conundrum. In order to penetrate the market, we would be strapped with astronomical production and time purchase costs which could hardly be passed on to the denomination, even if the church was willing to pay them, nor could the audience be expected to provide the funds.

Development of Present Situation Against the background of this material, it may appear rather strange that The Back to God Hour Radio Committee now proposes to enter this field and that it has built a studio and equipped it in such a way that our church will be able to enter television on a sustained basis. And, indeed, it must be said that the development of the rationale that has led up to this event has been somewhat erratic.

Neurological Changes There are several specific developments that have demanded that The Back to God Hour enter television. They are the following:

1. The impact of television on culture has been such that those who are the object of the church's mission have been radically affected by this medium. The most important studies of television in this connection have underscored some of the neurological changes that accompany prolonged exposure to television. Children in North America are now exposed to 12,000 to 15,000 hours of television by the time they finish high school. We must assume that this influences the very way they perceive reality.

Print Orientation It is hard to take this development sufficiently seriously, for The Back to God Hour and the church, generally, and certainly those of us who have the responsibility for gospel communication, are deeply impressed by the print media. The spoken word as expressed in preaching is also closely related to the print media in the sense that it can be directly transposed to print, and idea development in preaching is logical and sequential. Because we are print oriented people, we tend to be reluctant to adjust our message so that it can effectively use a visual medium.

Necessity of Realism In spite of our fundamental reluctance, however, we must now recognize that a growing percentage of the people we are responsible to reach are accustomed to receiving information which they consider important by means of television. In addition, it is possible that prolonged youthful exposure to television may well condition people so that they will be able to receive information only in this way. However much we may deplore this trend, as those who have a missionary responsibility, we are obligated to analyze our target audiences realistically and respond in terms of what we know to be true about them.

The New Mission Situation Therefore, it is becoming clear that The Back to God Hour will not responsibly express its mission/communication task unless it expresses every effort necessary to develop a capability of gospel communication by means of visual media. It is an awareness of these new mission realities that has compelled the Radio Committee to move forward aggressively in preparation of such a capability. Our radio outreach must be maintained, to be sure, but if it continues to be our only major means of communication, there is every reason to question whether we are responding adequately to our mission/communication mandate.

Effect of Network Dominance 2. There have also been developments in the television industry which, providentially, now make it reasonably possible for us to make plans to enter this field. In the past, the dominance of the networks and large independent stations in the markets has limited the availability of television time to broadcasters like us. With the cost of spot announcements running as high as \$25,000 for half a minute in some instances, the possibilities for purchasing large blocks of time for our organization were virtually non-existent. Moreover, the network dominance tended to force all television programming into the same mold, and expensive, slick, well-produced and sensational material tended to set the standards for all television offerings.

Changing Station Patterns It now appears as if the development of cable systems and film and cassette systems that can be programmed through home television sets is already bringing a new configuration to the television market, and the new directions can be expected to fragment the industry over the next several years so that by 1985 the television station profile for a given community will begin to approximate that of radio today. There will be many more options available to the viewing public.

"Narrow-casting" This will result in greater opportunities for distribution of products from organizations like ours at relatively low cost. In addition, the presence of more programs will tend to influence the directions which specific programs will take. There may be less emphasis on simply building a mass audience and a considerably greater attention to the development of loyal followings among the total

television audience in a community. Thus television will move from "broadcasting" somewhat more in the direction of "narrowcasting" which is what most radio stations now do, and this fundamental change in the television industry creates a situation favorable for the Christian Reformed Church.

New Generation Equipment 3. With the development of systems which transmit a signal by coaxial cable which is directly attached to a receiver, there has been the development of a new generation of equipment which is able to produce material which is as good as regular broadcast equipment can produce, but at considerably lower cost. Whereas broadcast television equipment which is designed to prepare a signal for transmission through the airwaves involves cameras that cost \$80,000 to \$100,000, the cameras which are installed in The Back to God Hour studio cost \$33,000. The difference in camera cost between a broadcast and cable system is reflected in all the equipment needed to produce a finished picture.

Southern Baptist Convention This means that whereas the costs of a full-blown studio designed for the production of broadcast type materials would run millions of dollars—the Southern Baptists have just signed a \$4 million contract to build one in Fort Worth —The Back to God Hour studio has been equipped for \$350,000.

Initial Summary To summarize then, there are three developments in the television industry itself which have impelled The Back to God Hour to reevaluate its relationship to television and move forward with plans that can put our church into this field within the next year or two. They are:

1. The cumulative impact of television on the audience we are responsible to reach.
2. The changing patterns of the television market.
3. The availability of a new generation of comparatively low cost equipment.

SYSTEM CAPABILITIES DEFINED

System Capability Conversations with the operators of more than twenty facilities that are involved in the continued operation of production units similar to The Back to God Hour's provided the committee with the following capability standards which we feel are necessary and reasonable for the system that has been installed:

- Picture and Format**
1. The system must be able to produce a stable, strong, clean, and sharp video picture that can be duplicated for the following types of distribution:
 - a. One inch tape (cable systems and educational institutions)
 - b. ¾ video cassettes (cable systems, institutions, home)
 - c. Film (especially important for Latin American television)
 - d. Two inch broadcast tape copies (out of house duplication)

- Program Processing** 2. The system must have the following performance capabilities:
- a. It must not only allow for straight through program recording, but also for the insertion of both video and audio material later.
 - b. It should provide for in-house duplication of programs for the two dominant tape formats we will be working with—1-inch and ¾-cassette.
 - c. It should provide full-scale rehearsal potential for whatever broadcast production the staff might be involved in.

- Technical Elements** 3. The system should have the following technical characteristics:
- a. It must be field tested, latest state-of-the art equipment, with a good record of reliability and performance.
 - b. It must require minimum maintenance and adjustments that can be performed by one engineer.
 - c. It must produce impressive, competitive programming with a minimum production staff.

Capabilities and Product Distribution This description of system performance represented the considered judgment of the staff developed over many months of researching television production and equipment. The system which we now have fulfills these requirements and enables The Back to God Hour to function in television in a manner similar to the way it now functions in connection with radio. In radio we have the capability of producing a finished product that can be distributed directly to stations without the use of a middle man. The Back to God Hour television equipment has the same capability with respect to most cable systems in North America and many in South America. Furthermore, this system is also compatible with regular broadcast television (such as NBC, ABC, etc.) since the product it produces can be adapted for such distribution.

Economy Factors The Back to God Hour system has been selected in terms of the relatively small amount of people required to produce programs with it and to maintain and adjust it. Several elements of the system which might have been eliminated in order to keep initial costs down were retained because field interviews with users revealed that the absence of these items would require more personnel and a more complex operation. Thus, whatever savings would have been realized initially would be removed by higher costs of system operation. This thinking, for example, dictated the installation of a three camera system rather than a two camera system. Just as it might be possible to produce our radio programs with one tape recorder, we now use at least three, and this enables one man to do the job in a reasonable period of time. The same principle applies to equipping for television production.

Ready to Enter Television None of The Back to God Hour equipment is extravagant or superfluous. On the other hand, it is not an absolutely minimal system, either. This equipment will put our de-

nomination in the television business in a serious, sustained, and important way.

MARKET POTENTIAL

Compatible Systems In determining whether or not the expenditure in initial cost and continuing production and maintenance is justified, it is necessary to survey the possibility of marketing whatever The Back to God Hour equipment can produce. In terms of the capabilities of The Back to God Hour system, the materials it could produce would be potentially compatible with the following audio, visual outlets: cable systems, video cassette systems, 16 mm. film, and regular broadcast television.

Importance of CATV The system would be most directly related to cable television systems, and thus the strength of the cable market is significant for us. We must examine this market carefully.

CATV Demographics For our purposes now, it is significant to note that CATV is found in fifty states, several United States territories, and large parts of Canada. Seven states have a cable saturation of more than 25%. In the United States, ten million homes are served by CATV. Frost & Sullivan, Inc., an independent research firm, has published a survey that predicts that by 1983, twenty-two million homes will be served by CATV. The Canadian Radio Television Commission has reported that the growth of cable in that country has occurred as follows: in 1963, 31% of the households were served by cable; in 1974, 71.5%, with an estimate of 82% by the end of 1975.

Survey For our purposes, we canvassed 158 representative CATV stations in the United States and Canada, located in some instances in municipalities where our churches were found. Seventy-eight respondents, representing CATV systems ranging from 750 families to 111,000, favored us with helpful replies. The questions asked and the responses were as follows:

1. Do you carry religious or public affairs programming?
 Yes 70 No 8
2. What are the sources of your religious and public affairs programs?
 National syndication15 Others 3
 Local groups only22 No answer 8
 Programs with local tie-in30
3. What tape formats are used in your system?
 1 inch black and white only 1 Video cassette, 1 inch and
 1 inch color only 9 16 mm. color and black and
 Video, cassette, color only white 1
 1/2 inch black and white 1 No response 8
 Video cassette, 1 inch and
 16 mm. color33

4. How many hours of public affairs or religious programs are you broadcasting weekly?
- | | | | |
|------------------|----|------------------------|---|
| 1-5 hours | 47 | 10 hours or more | 8 |
| 5-10 hours | 15 | No response | 8 |
5. Do you prefer public affairs and religious programs to be in color?
- | | | | |
|-----------|----|-------------------|---|
| Yes | 68 | No response | 8 |
| No | 2 | | |
6. What program lengths for religious programs do you prefer?
- | | | | |
|----------------------------|----|---------------------|----|
| 1 minute spots | 5 | 30 minute | 41 |
| 5 minute inspiration | 3 | No preference | 5 |
| 15 minute | 10 | No response | 24 |
7. What type of religious or public affairs programs would you prefer?
- | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-----------------------|----|
| Variety | 30 | Worship service | 9 |
| Documentary | 25 | No preference | 27 |
| Lectures | 15 | No response | 8 |
| Spots | 17 | | |
8. Thirty-one of the respondents indicate that they carried religious programs free of charge. Of the thirty-eight who indicated they charged, their rates for a half hour were as follows:
- | | | | |
|-----------------|----|--------------|---|
| \$25-\$35 | 12 | \$100 | 1 |
| \$40-\$50 | 13 | Varies | 4 |
| \$55-\$80 | 4 | | |

The above survey suggests the following conclusions:

CATV Market Vast 1. By far the majority of CATV systems carry the type of program we will be able to produce—roughly 80% of the stations covered in this survey. When we think of this in terms of the 3,240 systems in the United States, plus many stations in Canada, we are obviously confronted by a significant market.

Time Cost Low 2. The cost of air time would be very low. The highest cost figure—\$100—is charged by the largest system in North America, Cox Cable in San Diego, a system with 110,000 subscribers. All Canadian releases would be free of charge.

Color Preferred 3. Color productions are the preference of all systems which are able to transmit a color signal.

Formats 4. Existing CATV systems could use the formats we would be able to produce, especially $\frac{3}{4}$ video cassette.

Competition In addition to the conclusions supported by the above responses, we have also drawn another general conclusion based on the material sent us: the success of our use of cable will depend fully on our ability to produce high quality material that will compete for the viewer's attention not only with the best cable provides, but also with the best regular broadcast television provides. The competitive dynamic we will be entering as we go into this field will be extremely intense and our response will demand great discipline, ingenuity, and application.

General Effect of Cable Obviously some of the above data reflects the fact that cable television is in a relatively early state of development vis a vis regular broadcast television and we should expect that such matters as cost of airing and the like will change as cable stations become increasingly established in their markets. Nevertheless, the present state of affairs offers us an exceptionally fine possibility for broad distribution of a visual message, and we should make use of this opportunity which conceivably may change or be modified within the next ten years.

At the same time we should also remember that it is most likely true that CATV will never develop to the point where it will be like broadcast television in terms of cost. CATV introduces into the television situation an entirely new mosaic of relationships; for it will tend to fragment the television industry in the future. We must also expect that CATV will have a direct effect upon broadcast television as well. The day may come when large communities like Chicago will be served by as many as thirty television outlets, each competing with the others in much the same way radio outlets do today.

Institutional Television Before leaving this discussion of the cable market as such, it should also be noted that The Back to God Hour equipment is able to produce programs that can be used in industrial, educational, and institutional settings. Given the development of appropriate marketing instruments these outlets are also an important factor in insuring that materials produced in our studio would enjoy broad exposure.

Cassettes and North America The recommended system will have the capability of producing finished products in $\frac{3}{4}$ inch video cassettes. Seventy percent of the cable systems in North America use this now and many more will in the future. Video cassettes are very stable, easy to duplicate, and can be adapted to two inch tapes for regular broadcast television.

Latin American Distribution The television programs the Rev. Mr. Boonstra has produced have already been shipped to Ecuador in $\frac{3}{4}$ inch color cassette. At present most broadcasting in Latin America uses this medium. Latin America presents us with an extremely large market, one in which there is, so far as we know, a relative dearth of programs, and one in which we can expect to achieve substantial distribution of whatever we produce. The development of the Portuguese language ministry also figures into our plans for Latin American television, since Brazil is wide open for programs as well.

Other Cassette Distribution Three-quarter inch video cassettes are also the main medium for industrial, institutional, and educational systems as well as home television sets that will, in the future, be equipped to receive such cassettes. The development of cassette programs for hospital use, for example, could be a significant ministry. Programs dealing with church history, even catechism materials,

and Sunday school materials could be produced for schools and for churches and possibly even for small groups that may want to become Christian Reformed churches.

Cooperation with Other Agencies The development of such specialized programs, for somewhat restricted but very specific distribution situations, would involve our working with other agencies of the church, possibly with colleges, and the like. In this connection the positive interest of the denomination's Education Department in working with us is very significant.

BROADCAST TELEVISION

Adaptability of Our Programs Broadcast television, in contrast to cable television, transmits the signal through the air, rather than by coaxial cable. This element of the industry, which obviously dominates the North American continent today, uses equipment that is not directly compatible with Back to God Hour equipment. Nevertheless, the products of our studio can be adapted to the broadcast television scene by means of readily available technology. The relation of our studio to the broadcast television field is as follows:

Time Base Corrector 1. Programs produced in our studio on $\frac{3}{4}$ inch video cassette can be adapted to broadcast equipment by using a time base corrector.

A company like **TELEMATION** in Chicago does this at a current cost of \$150 per hour. The finished product in this case, however, might not be fully acceptable for large stations operating in very competitive markets. We expect that it will be acceptable in medium size markets, and certain stations in large markets most likely would accept it as well.

Rehearsal 2. Our studio also enables us to do full scale rehearsal for materials which we can record directly for broadcast on two-inch quad, using a studio like **TELEMATION**. We would be able to do a complete tape of the program, with full attention to color and every other detail. This would cut down our outside studio use time significantly, which is important considering that the hourly cost of an outside broadcast studio is \$300-\$700.

Idea Generation 3. We can also expect that the continual work in television in our studio will produce program ideas and pilot programs that can be adapted to the broadcast field. Such programs, or series, might conceivably be lifted entirely out of our organization and produced elsewhere, but our television environment will have been conducive to developing the idea.

The three major categories, then, so far as market is concerned, are these: cable television systems, video cassette distribution, and regular broadcast television. These market possibilities insure that The Back to God Hour equipment will be used to the full. This will involve, to be sure, the cooperation of a number of agencies. And it will demand that

highly sophisticated and effective marketing and distribution instruments be developed. In the light of the potential before us, it is clear that The Back to God Hour television capability marks the beginning of a new chapter in the Christian Reformed Church's communication of the gospel to our world.

PROGRAMS

Sensitivity With the installation of its television equipment The Back to God Hour is now able to begin program production. There are several immediate projects that will occupy our attention. Moreover, the release of actual materials for distribution will be determined by principles of television production that will be developed as we go along. At present, we know what we are doing in connection with our radio ministries, but as we move into the area of the television communication of the gospel, we realize that we are moving into an uncharted area. It will be necessary to proceed with caution and with great sensitivity.

In assessing how the equipment will be employed, the following categories can be distinguished: "Immediate and Obvious Use," "Tentative Possible Use," and "Non-Back to God Hour Use."

IMMEDIATE AND OBVIOUS USE

Spanish Programs The Back to God Hour television equipment can be used at once in the production of our Spanish television series, *Reflexion*. The $\frac{3}{4}$ inch cassette capability of the system would enable the Rev. Mr. Boonstra to distribute this program and any others he might develop directly to countries like Ecuador.

Spot Announcements We are ready to resume our production of television spots. We can produce directly for cable systems and can expect good distribution especially in Canada. Such distribution will also allow us to produce more explicitly Christian material than we have been able to do before.

TENTATIVE POSSIBLE USE

Adapting Existing Programs In addition to continuation of present television offerings, The Back to God Hour is now in a position to use its equipment to develop new programs for television. In the nature of the case, the first order of business will be adapting existing radio materials to television. Programs such as *Insight* and the regular Back to God Hour program must be examined to see if we can develop production techniques that will enable us to accomplish regular television distribution of programs like these.

A Counterpart of The Back to God Hour Because of The Back to God Hour's long tradition of communicating the historic Christian faith by means of the English language program by which we have become known throughout North America and the world, the Radio Committee has decided to proceed with the produc-

tion of a television program that will function as the counterpart of our well-known Back to God Hour. While this program will not simply be a televised version of our radio program, it will be thirty minutes long, will appear regularly, and will be designed to communicate the truths of the Scripture in such a way that the viewer will have the opportunity to turn to Christ and enter his kingdom.

Status of The Back to God Hour Counterpart Preliminary consultations within the staff and production planning for such a series are already underway at The Back to God Hour. The program elements will have to capitalize on the special ability of the visual medium to communicate our message. This will mean that the actual quantity of spoken copy in these programs will be somewhat less than what we now have in our English radio program. Nevertheless, the force of proclamation will be maintained, and the final impact of the programs in this series will be that which occurs when the Word of God confronts men.

Developing New Programs The new Back to God Hour equipment also provides the possibility of developing programs that would embody concepts that differ from what has been done thus far in radio. In this report, I discussed the modifications of human perception that have occurred because of television, and it will be necessary for us to meet the new needs that have, consequently, been created. This will demand the development of special program ideas.

Locusts and Wild Honey An example of a new program idea that falls within the scope of projected production capabilities is the series called *Locusts and Wild Honey*. This is a series that begins with an interview with John the Baptist. This program, perhaps thirty minutes long, would be carefully dramatized by both the interviewer and the person playing John the Baptist. There would be great attention to detail. By means of questions and answers much biblical material could be communicated. Film strips of the Baptist's ministry from some of the biblical epics might be shown and he might be asked to comment on this material. In much the same way, other biblical characters could be treated. The man born blind, in John 9, is a natural. Paul is another.

Possible Series Use This series could be expanded in a number of directions. It could become a weekly program. It could also be put together in a series of thirteen that would be distributed on cable systems, adapted to broadcast systems, and marketed to the educational divisions of various denominations on film for church education programs.

Specialized Presentations In addition to the modification of present radio presentations for television and the development of new programs, we would expect that The Back to God Hour studio can be used for the production of specialized presentations de-

signed for home, institutional, educational, and church television systems that are compatible with our equipment. Materials for hospital use would fall into this category, as well as religious training video cassettes which could be used for catechizing children of Reformed families in communities where regular catechism instruction is not available. Materials of this kind should be developed in close cooperation with the Education Committee of the church. Similar materials could be developed for the Home Mission Board. Moreover, we can expect that many foreign areas, and Nigeria is a case in point, will be in a position to use television cassettes and tapes. Possibilities of this kind will have to be explored carefully, once we have developed the capability of using the recommended equipment efficiently.

NON-BACK TO GOD HOUR USE

Qualifying Missionaries Beside using The Back to God Hour equipment to produce materials directly related to its own communication task, an important use for it is that of qualifying other Christian Reformed broadcasters through training in the studio. Many ministers and home missionaries have opportunities to use television locally. We have a responsibility to train such people for more effective use of television. It is possible that the seminary will want to arrange for mini-courses in television at the studio.

Other Organizations There may also be opportunities to use The Back to God Hour by making it available to other organizations that want to make their own programs. At this point we would function as any other studio that provides services for others. Obviously, we would be able to work only with religious and educational institutions which share the same non-profit, tax free status we enjoy, and payment for our services would have to be expressed accordingly. Becoming involved in such activities would insure full use of the equipment, and would also insure that the staff would have ample opportunity to develop versatility and a high level of skill.

* * * * *

Back to God Hour Counterpart At the time synod considers this report, the final installation and shakedown of the equipment in the studio is occurring, and during the next several months The Back to God Hour staff, which includes several full time people with television experience, will begin to work on the first program series. Consequently, the Radio Committee has decided to make 1977 the year of first regular Back to God Hour television distribution by introducing a program that will function as the counterpart to The Back to God Hour in the television field. This program, which has been described in this report, is the logical beginning of our regular television work, since it represents an adaptation of our regular Back to God Hour ministry, which has achieved a high degree of acceptance within the industry.

Spots and Reflexion In addition, as reported elsewhere in this report, we are now in a position to continue production of spot announcements and of our Spanish program *Reflexion*.

Cost Factors In order to launch this work, financing of the following operations will have to be provided:

1. Operational production costs
2. Duplication and processing costs
3. Distribution costs

As has been indicated within this report, the cable market provides us with a ready-made outlet for our materials. This market will go untapped, however, unless an extensive and extremely efficient marketing capability is developed. The distribution of tapes is costly, even if the cost of broadcast time itself is relatively low.

Basic Broadcast Network In addition to the cable market, your committee feels that it must move forward with the establishment of a basic network that uses regular broadcast outlets—like WOTV, for example. Already preliminary cost studies have been carried on for a network that would give the program exposure on regular broadcast stations in sixteen markets, some of them major, and some of them secondary.

Quota At the time of the submission of this report, preliminary cost studies which have considered the cost of a basic broadcast network and production and distribution for the cable market suggest that it is necessary for the Radio Committee to ask synod to fund this project with a quota base of \$10.00 per family. This, along with other funds raised for this work, would supply revenue that would insure a significant entrance into television, and meaningful exposure for our programs could be achieved during 1977.

Ongoing Cost Study We are now engaged in a comprehensive and detailed cost study that we will submit to synod by way of our supplementary report. In the nature of the case, precision in cost estimates can be achieved only after serious contact has been made with suppliers and station owners. We are now in the process of making such contacts.

Considerations In evaluating the cost of this new venture, several things should be remembered. First of all, the television studio and its equipment, as part of the new International Communications Center, have been made available to our church because of a large fund raising drive that left our regular Back to God Hour operational budget intact, and did not involve any denominational quota whatever. Thus, we have already made significant progress, without quota support. Secondly, we may reasonably expect that once we are established in television, we will attract support from other churches and individuals who will make this ministry a part of their own giving.

Asking for Funds In this connection, it is important to emphasize that it is the intention of the Radio Committee to continue the policy of not asking for funds, a policy which has helped our radio program immeasurably. Without denying that it is the right of one who preaches the gospel to invite support from his listeners, it is felt that the exercise of this right in our case would seriously encumber our television ministry with elements that would abridge its effectiveness. The purpose of our television work is to minister to the deepest needs of those who view the program, and it would be unfortunate if our television work would become a fund raising instrument.

Expectation of Funds Television being what it is, however, we can expect that those who are benefited from the program will not be satisfied until they have joined their gifts with ours so that the ministry can continue. Our radio ministries already benefit from gifts from listeners that amount to tens of thousands of dollars each year. There is no reason why the same would not happen in connection with television. So we can expect that God will move many to help us with this work. But we must get it started. Once it is available and visible, we can expect help from others.

God's Leading With this report, we have described the movement of God within our church that has gradually taken us from a position of relative disinterest to one of great desire to confront our fellow countrymen with the Reformed faith by means of the dominant visual medium which is so important in our time. We at the Back to God Hour feel that it has been God alone who has compelled us to become involved in the great amount of work that has already gone into this project. Now we wait on him for leading as we continue to move forward.

We are bold because of him. His promises are sufficient. And we are bold, too, because of the Christian Reformed Church which so marvelously has encouraged us in the past and fortified us with its prayers. We know these prayers will continue.

May God be with us! May he use us to accomplish his purposes!

The Back to God Hour Radio Committee
Dr. Joel Nederhood, Director

REPORT 2

BOARD OF TRUSTEES—CALVIN COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

This report covers actions of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary from June 1975 to February 1976. A supplementary report will follow after the May 1976 meeting of the board.

I. INFORMATION

A. *The Board of Trustees*

1. The board of trustees, composed of forty-six members, held its winter semiannual meeting February 2-6, 1976 at the Knollcrest Commons. There are thirty-five ministers and two laymen who represent classes, and nine lay members, one of whom is a woman, representing the following districts: Eastern, one delegate; Central, six delegates; Midwest, one delegate; and Far West, one delegate.

2. The following are presented as members of the board of trustees:

Classis	Delegate	Alternate
Alberta North.....	Rev. James Jooose.....	Rev. Henry De Moor, Jr.
Alberta South.....	Rev. Lambertus Mulder.....	Rev. Gerrit Bieze
British Columbia.....	Rev. Peter Van Egmond.....	
Cadillac.....	Rev. Berton Van Antwerpen.....	Rev. Marvin Vander Vliet
California South.....	Rev. Jacob Hasper.....	Rev. Sydney Cooper
Central California.....	Rev. Homer Wigboldy.....	Rev. Harold Petroelje
Chatham.....	Rev. Mel Pool*.....	Rev. J. J. Hoytema
Chicago North.....	Rev. Alvin A. Mulder.....	
Chicago South.....	Rev. John Vander Lugt.....	Rev. Henry Vellinga
Columbia.....	Rev. Herman Leestma.....	
Eastern Canada.....	Rev. Martin D. Geleynse.....	
Florida.....	Rev. Robert Tjapkes.....	Rev. Garrett Stoutmeyer
Grand Rapids East.....	Rev. Wilbur De Jong*.....	Rev. John Medendorp
Grand Rapids North.....	Mr. Richard Hoekstra.....	Rev. Clarence Werkema
Grand Rapids South.....	Rev. John M. Hofman*.....	Rev. Arnold Brink
Grandville.....	Rev. Leonard J. Hofman*.....	Rev. Peter Vander Weide
Hackensack.....	Rev. David Zandstra.....	Rev. Anthony Van Zanten
Hamilton.....	Rev. Raymond Sikkema.....	Rev. Alvin Venema
Holland.....	Rev. William Vander Haak*.....	Rev. John Leugs
Hudson.....	Mr. George N. Monsma.....	Rev. B. A. Van Someren
Huron.....	Rev. Adrian Van Geest.....	Rev. Peter Breedveld
Illiana.....	Dr. Edwin Roels*.....	Rev. Harry Arnold
Kalamazoo.....	Rev. Hessel Bouma, Jr.....	Rev. Floyd De Boer
Lake Erie.....	Rev. Roger Van Harn.....	Rev. Clifton Bajema
Minnesota North.....	Rev. Arie Van Eek.....	Rev. Roger Kok
Minnesota South.....	Rev. Nicholas Roorda.....	Rev. Laryn Zoerhof
Muskegon.....	Rev. Robert De Vries*.....	Rev. Donald Van Beek
North Central Iowa.....	Rev. Mark Davies.....	Rev. John Entingh
Orange City.....	Rev. John Hellinga.....	Rev. Harold Hiemstra
Pacific Northwest.....	Rev. Jay Wesseling.....	Rev. Arie Leegwater
Pella.....	Rev. Henry Petersen.....	Rev. Siebert Kramer
Quinte.....	Rev. Gysbertus Corvers.....	Rev. Dick Los
Rocky Mountain.....	Rev. Jacob Boonstra.....	Rev. Rolf Veenstra
Sioux Center.....	Rev. John Engbers.....	Rev. Henry Vanden Heuvel
Toronto.....	Rev. Louis Tamminga.....	Rev. Robert Malarkey
Wisconsin.....	Rev. Henry Exoo.....	Rev. Louis Baker

Classis	Delegate	Alternate
Zeeland.....	Rev. Theodore Brouwer.....	Rev. Alfred Hannink
Eastern District.....	Dr. Theodore Wiersma.....	Mr. Herbert Van Denend
Central District.....	Mr. Berton Sevensma*.....	Dr. T. Vanden Berg
	Mr. William Post.....	Mr. Jay Van Houten
	Dr. Glenn Niemeyer*.....	Dr. Henry Triesenberg
	Mr. Stewart Geelhood*.....	Dr. Wesley De Young
	Mrs. Karen De Mol*.....	Mr. Arthur Bultman
	Mr. Norman De Graaf*.....	Mr. Marvin De Boer
Far West.....	Mr. Martin Hekman.....	Mr. Harm Te Velde
Midwest.....	Mr. Wesley Geurkink.....	Mr. Loren Veldhuizen

*Indicates members of the Executive Committee

3. Officers: At the February board meeting the following officers were elected:

President	Rev. William Vander Haak
First Vice President	Dr. Edwin Roels
Second Vice President	Mr. Norman De Graaf
Secretary	Rev. Leonard J. Hofman
Treasurer	Mr. Stewart Geelhood
Assistant Secretary	Mr. Berton Sevensma

4. Class visits were assigned and were carried out in keeping with regular procedure that the classes of college and seminary faculty members eligible for reappointment be visited.

5. A board restructure committee was appointed to consider various matters pertaining to board structure, and serve the body with advice and/or recommendation.

6. Faculty-Board Conference. The board of trustees made provision in its Wednesday, February 4, 1976 schedule for members to attend the Sixth Annual Faculty-Board Winter Conference. The conference committee was composed of members of the faculties and a representative of the board, Mr. Stewart Geelhood. Following a coffee and inspection of the newly-constructed seminary facilities, the conferees assembled in the seminary auditorium for a brief dedicatory service. In addition to representatives of the architectural and construction firms, participants in the service included President Kromminga, the Rev. William Vander Haak, to whom the keys were presented, and Dr. Andrew Bandstra. The conferees then proceeded to the Gezon Auditorium to hear speeches by Professor Henry Zwaanstra, entitled "BKK," and Professor Herbert Brinks, entitled "One of Us," which exhibited careful research, interesting formulation, and served to shed light on one of our church fathers and somewhat humorously on ourselves. The Centennial sight-sound presentation was viewed by the delegates and faculty, and the final act of the "Impossible Possibility" involved all who attended in a spirit of unity and celebration. The members of the committee, including Mr. Geelhood, were recognized at the dinner closing the conference.

B. Seminary Matters

1. Faculty and Staff

a. General Information

The faculty for 1975-76 is constituted of Professors Andrew J. Bandstra, Anthony A. Hoekema, Fred H. Klooster, Carl G. Kromminga,

John H. Kromminga, Theodore Minnema, J. Marion Snapper, Bastiaan Van Elderen, Marten H. Woudstra, and Henry Zwaanstra; and Associate Professors Harold Dekker, David Engelhard, Melvin Hugen, Robert Recker, and John H. Stek.

Peter De Klerk is Theological Librarian, Vernon Geurkink is Coordinator of Field Education, and Richard De Ridder is Registrar and Lecturer in Missiology. Additional auxiliary teaching services are or have been rendered by Melvin Berghuis, Delwin Nykamp, and Thomas Ozinga in Speech and Sermon Criticism; David Holwerda in New Testament; Henry Stob in Apologetics; and Wilson Ferreira in Missiology.

Professor Dekker is on academic leave for the year. His bid for the mayor's position in Grand Rapids was unsuccessful. He is pursuing a study program in the area of Church and Society and will be available to the seminary again next year on a 2/3-time basis. Professor David Engelhard is serving a one-year term as Academic Dean and Professor Fred Klooster is Faculty Secretary.

Professor T. Minnema was formally installed into office as Professor of Moral and Philosophical Theology during the morning worship service on November 9, 1975 at the East Paris Christian Reformed Church, his calling church.

b. Appointments and/or Reappointments (cf. II, Recommendations, for the appointments of Dr. Richard De Ridder and Dr. David Engelhard).

c. The board of trustees appointed the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven to part-time service in the seminary to assist in sermon evaluation and criticism during the third quarter of the current (1975-76) academic year.

d. Sabbatical Leaves. The board approved the request of Dr. Marten Woudstra for a sabbatical leave for the 1976-77 academic year, and also approved the request of Dr. Bastiaan Van Elderen for a sabbatical leave for the 1977-78 academic year.

e. Position in Church Order-Church Administration. Following authorization by the Synod of 1975, the faculty pursued the task of making a nomination to the newly-authorized post in Church Order and Church Administration. A large number of responses were received to the invitation extended to consistories and classes to submit names. They were carefully screened by the members of the Church and Ministry Division, and the faculty held interviews with some of the candidates for the position.

In the faculty's judgment the nomination for this position came down to a single nominee, Dr. Richard De Ridder. By way of academic training, church experience, teaching experience, and personal qualifications he is, in their estimate, clearly superior to other possible nominees.

It was the faculty's desire and intention that Dr. De Ridder, presently being recommended as registrar for next year, be phased out of the registrar's position in no less than one and no more than three years, if he were to be appointed to the new position. In the meantime,

he could continue to teach Church Polity (as he is already doing), could begin immediately to work with the division in the development of the Church Administration curriculum, and could consider, with the division and the seminary administration, what training in the area of Church Administration might be available to him.

The board of trustees approved the recommendation of the faculty and decided to submit the name of Dr. Richard De Ridder as a single nominee for appointment to the chair of Church Polity and Church Administration to the Synod of 1976, with the following grounds: (cf. II, Recommendations)

- 1) This candidate has proven ability in the area of Church Polity as demonstrated by his teaching in this area at the seminary.
- 2) This candidate holds reasonable promise in the area of Church Administration as demonstrated by his successful performance as registrar.
- 3) This candidate has wide experience in church administration at various levels.
- 4) This candidate holds two advanced degrees in the area of Church and Ministry.
- 5) No person known to the board is presently trained academically in Church Administration or more trained than Dr. De Ridder in Church Polity.
- 6) Several other possible candidates have withdrawn their names from consideration.
- 7) The urgent demand for instruction in church administration as noted in the report of the Advisory Committee on Seminary Program makes further delay inadvisable.

It was agreed that, in keeping with required procedure, a rationale for the presentation of a single nominee to synod be prepared for distribution to the churches.

The board of trustees approved the faculty's recommendation that Dr. De Ridder be reappointed for the remainder of the current academic year and that he serve again as registrar for the academic year, 1976-77.

f. President's Travel. In the period between September 1 and December 13, Dr. J. Kromminga made two trips to three foreign countries, involving a total of about eight weeks' absence from the campus. One of these visits was on behalf of the school, when he visited the city of Potchefstroom, South Africa, for a conference on Christian higher education. The other two visits were ecclesiastical in nature and were carried out in the interests of the interchurch relations of the Christian Reformed Church. The first was a visit to various Reformed bodies in the Netherlands in the company of three other members of the Interchurch Relations Committee. Particular attention was paid to the Gereformeerde Kerken. The second was attendance as delegated observer at the Fifth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, held in Nairobi, Kenya. Dr. Kromminga reported that he benefited from these experiences, and he believed that they were beneficial also to the parties which commissioned them.

g. Faculty Discussions. The faculty has been following the practice of holding informal discussions with each other once each week. Various subjects are discussed at these meetings. Special attention has been given this year to the problems of biblical hermeneutics. The discussions have thus far been pleasant and fruitful.

2. Academic Matters

a. Revised Admission Profiles. For a number of reasons including the increasing variety of programs to which students are admitted and the new regulations regarding confidentiality of material in the admission folders, a revision in the format of the admission profiles prepared for the board of trustees was approved as recommended by the seminary faculty.

b. Field Education Assignments for Students at Other Seminaries. The strict requirements of Calvin Seminary's M.Div. program (which will soon be a requirement for candidacy for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church) have given rise to some problems relative to students who transfer to Calvin Seminary from other seminaries. This is particularly true with respect to those students who complete their undergraduate work at another seminary and then seek to qualify for ministerial candidacy by one year spent at Calvin Seminary. The Field Education Office has been concerned to establish procedures by which students following such a course of action can work in advance on their field education requirements. With the cooperation of the Admissions and Standards Committee and the approval of the faculty, the following rules have been devised, and were approved by the board of trustees:

"Policy Governing Field Education Assignments of Students of Other Seminaries who wish to qualify for Candidacy for the Christian Reformed Ministry.

"A. All students enrolled at seminaries other than Calvin seminary and intending to seek candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church shall be required to meet the overall standards for candidacy which have been officially established for those who follow the regular course of study at Calvin seminary. At least three quarters in residence at Calvin seminary are required. These, in combination with all previous study, must form an acceptable equivalent to the total pre-seminary and seminary program required of Calvin seminary graduates as preparation for the Christian Reformed ministry.

"B. Only those field education assignments which are supervised through the Field Education program of Calvin seminary or through an accredited program with equivalent standards shall be counted toward meeting the requirements for candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church. What portion of the requirement has been met shall be determined by the Admissions and Standards Committee upon recommendation of the Field Education Office which shall take into consideration *inter alia* what amount of field experience a student has had in churches governed by Reformed polity.

"C. A student who desires to begin fulfilling his field education requirements by being assigned and/or supervised through the Field

Education Office of Calvin seminary while he is still in attendance at another seminary must be pre-enrolled in the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy in the Christian Reformed Church and must be licensed by the board of trustees of Calvin college and seminary to conduct worship services in the Christian Reformed Church. The admission requirements for pre-enrollment in this Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy are the same as those for admission to candidacy for the M.Div. degree, and the academic requirements for licensure to conduct services are the same as those that apply to students in residence at Calvin seminary. (In administering these regulations the Admissions and Standards Committee shall act as nearly as possible according to the standards which it applies to students in residence.)

"Procedure to apply for pre-enrollment and for licensure:

"1) The student shall submit an application for pre-enrollment which includes a college transcript, a transcript of his current seminary program and all other materials normally required of prelicentiate applicants.

"2) The student, through the Admissions and Standards Committee of the Calvin seminary faculty, shall submit to the board of trustees by March 15 an application for licensure for the period of his assignment, and shall submit to an interview at the May meeting of the board of trustees (the board of trustees or its executive committee may decide to waive the required interview in the case of students who have been interviewed and licensed by a classis of the Christian Reformed Church).

"D. The provisions for field education assignments that apply to students in residence at Calvin seminary shall also apply to these applicants from other seminaries. These provisions include assignment procedures, supervision, reporting and evaluation, remuneration, and fees.

"E. Final determination of admissibility to courses of study at Calvin seminary for those pre-enrolled in the Special Program for Ministerial Candidacy will be made just prior to their period of residence at Calvin seminary."

c. Rules Governing Transfer Students. The board of trustees approved the following recommended "Rules and Procedures for Degree Candidates (B.D. and M.Div.) who transfer to Calvin seminary from other seminaries:"

"a. Course Requirements

1) Candidates for the B.D. or M.Div degree at Calvin seminary who transfer from other accredited seminaries must meet all the requirements for the degree specified by Calvin seminary.

2) Transfer credit will be given for those courses which are equivalent to Calvin seminary's requirements.

3) The student must complete his last year of residency, at least 45 quarter hours of course work, at Calvin seminary.

"b. Field Education Requirements for the M.Div. Degree

1) The student must demonstrate all of the competencies for min-

istry that are required in the Field Education program for the M.Div. degree. This must be done through the required practicums (units of concurrent F.E.) or their equivalent.

2) The student will be required to complete at least 15 of the required 45 units of Field Education for the M.Div. degree under the supervision of the Calvin seminary office of Field Education. (More than this minimum may be necessary to qualify for candidacy for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.)”

d. New Licensure Provisions. The board of trustees approved the following licensure provisions:

“Licensure for students who have not yet completed all the requirements for regular licensure:

“While it is recognized that no one receives regular licensure without having completed the academic requirements for such licensure, the Admissions and Standards Committee has discretionary power to recommend for licensure a student who meets the following conditions:

“a. He must have had summer licensure before applying for this special consideration.

“b. He must have the status of DCPL.

“c. He must have begun work in and demonstrated adequate performance in all sequences of courses required for licensure.

“d. He must have earned at least 50 units of credit.”

e. The following new 3-hour elective courses were approved:

- 1) Human Development and Church Education: Dr. Snapper
- 2) Church School Curriculum: Dr. Snapper
- 3) Theology of Prayer: Dr. Klooster
- 4) The Life and Thought of Augustine: Dr. Zwaanstra
- 5) Authority in Preaching: Dr. C. Kromminga

3. Student Matters

a. Licensure and Changes of Status. The board of trustees approved changes of status for eight students, changes of status involving licensure for two students, extension of licensure for five students, suspension of licensure for two students, and reinstatement of licensure for one of those whose licensure had been suspended.

b. Committee on Examination of Candidates. After hearing a progress report from a committee appointed to study this matter, the board of trustees is asking for an additional year for study so that a meaningful report can be prepared.

c. The following enrollment totals were reported at the beginning of the 1975-76 academic year: 50 seniors (including 9 interns), 41 middlers (including 4 interns), 64 juniors (92% opting for the M.Div.), 14 unclassified, M.C.E. (five of whom are full time), 4 ecclesiastical, 18 graduate students, (7 of whom are full time), 1 auditor, and 1 Calvin college student, for a total of 202.

4. Plant

The new seminary facilities have been completed within a year of the time that the bids on the construction of the expanded facilities were opened. It was also decided to undertake the remodeling that was

planned concurrently with the new construction. Although it involved considerable inconvenience for members of the seminary staff, students, and building contractors, there was a consistently fine spirit of cooperation on the part of all parties concerned. The new and enlarged quarters are especially pleasing to all those making use of them, and it is the considered opinion of the administration and board that the Centennial Memorial seminary building should serve the needs of the denomination's theological school very well indeed.

5. Special Study Committees.

The Advisory Committee on Seminary Program, the Committee on Psychological Testing and Counseling, and the Committee on the Examination of Candidates are all continuing to study, serve, and report to the board of trustees. Recommendations from the board resulting from the committee studies and recommendations will be reported and /or presented to synod as they arise.

C. College Matters

1. Administration

a. Dr. William Spoelhof was present at the sessions of the meeting of the board of trustees. At the appropriate time in the agenda the following preamble, expressing the sentiments of the members of the board, introduced the following action of the board: "Mr. Chairman and Dr. Spoelhof: It is with a deep sense of gratitude, marked by feelings of regret, that I offer the following motion: It is with gratitude for . . .

"25 years of selfless sacrifice for the cause of Christian higher education,

"25 years of undying devotion for developing a highly committed Christian faculty and staff,

"25 years of 'furthering' your faculty through the annual meetings of the board,

"25 years of developing a scholarly institution acknowledged throughout our nation as one of the best,

"25 years of the heights and depths of the struggles of administration, always in the Christian spirit;

"This gratitude is tempered with the sober regret of realizing that an era has come to a close. 'Emeritus' does not mean the end of academic and scholarly pursuit. It does mean becoming free of the administrative confines to which you have been accustomed—truly, I judge, which have been molded into your very bloodstream. While the rising star awaits on the horizon, the brilliance of your light shall long be with us. In that spirit, therefore, I would move that the board of trustees grant Dr. William Spoelhof retirement from the Presidency of Calvin College as of February 9, 1976 and that the board confer upon him the title of President of Calvin College, Emeritus."

The motion carried. Note: The motion was offered in the above form by the reporter of the College committee, the Rev. R. De Vries.

On Thursday evening, February 5, 1976, a testimonial dinner was held in honor of Dr. and Mrs. William Spoelhof. An excellent dinner

was enjoyed by the members of the board and a number of invited guests. Testimonials were presented by the Rev. B. Nederlof, Judge J. Feikens, and Dr. J. Kromminga. A framed resolution of appreciation, composed by Dr. W. Radius, handwritten on parchment by Prof. C. Overvoorde, and signed by all the board members present at this session, was presented to Dr. Spoelhof, along with a gift of money contributed by various donors. Dr. Spoelhof responded appropriately. The resolution of appreciation composed by Dr. Radius read as follows: "To William Spoelhof upon the occasion of his retirement after twenty-five years as President of Calvin College . . .

"St. Paul tells us, 'Now you are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.' And again, 'Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them.' Use them you did, and stimulated board, faculty, and students to do the same, to the end that all together we might bring into reality an effective educational instrument to show forth the 'excellency of His grace.' As both wise leader and trusted servant, you provided the essential link between the board and the school, and the board and the church. You advised us openly and fully about the needs of the institution, and you faithfully administered the policies of the board. You were always generous in praise of your colleagues, entering with genuine feeling into their sorrow and failings, and rejoicing with them in their accomplishments and successes. You never spared yourself in promoting the welfare of the college, ever aware that it was nothing less than the Body of Christ which you were called to serve on this campus. Sensitive to the church that supports us with prayer and gifts, you mediated between the generations, explaining the students to the church and church to the students. Therefore we shall always hold you in grateful remembrance and thank God for your work on our behalf. The board of trustees of Calvin College and Seminary. February 5, 1976."

b. Dr. Anthony Diekema was present at all the sessions of the board of trustees throughout its meetings. His inaugural as president of Calvin College is scheduled to take place on March 2, 1976, at the Fine Arts Center on campus. The board of trustees decided to declare the inaugural to be a matter of official business, and invited all its members to be present for that important event in the history of Calvin College.

2. Faculty

a. The Teaching Faculty. President Spoelhof reported that for the first semester of 1975-76 the teaching faculty was composed of 157 regular members plus 12 members on temporary or terminal appointments, for a total of 169. In addition to the 169 teachers employed on a full-time basis, Calvin also employed 49 persons on a part-time schedule, whose full-time equivalent faculty load corresponds to 19 persons. The total full-time equivalent teachers, therefore, was 188. On this full-time equivalent basis the 1975-76 student-faculty ratio is actually 17.9 to 1. (On the basis of head count of students, rather than full-time student equivalent, the ratio is close to 20 to 1.) The distribution in rank of the regular teaching faculty shows the follow-

ing: 83 Professors, 38 Associate Professors, 30 Assistant Professors, 4 Instructors, and 2 Assistants. Of the 169 full-time teachers 116 have earned doctorates. Of this same number (169), 93 members of the teaching faculty have tenure. Several important policy-influencing implications behind these statistics were called to the attention of the board. President Spoelhof listed factors operative in increasing teaching staff needs, listed departmental teaching staff needs, and made observations concerning these needs in his report to the board.

b. Leaves of Absence. General leaves of absence were approved for five faculty members, and sabbatical leaves of absence were approved for seventeen faculty members.

c. Retirements from the Staff. The board of trustees calls to the attention of synod the retirement of the following members of the faculty or staff: Dr. John Bratt, Professor James De Jonge, Professor Winifred Holkeboer, Dr. G. Roderick Youngs, Professor Mildred Zylstra, and President William Spoelhof, emeritus. The board recommends that synod take appropriate recognition of the services of these persons on the occasion of their retirement.

d. Reappointments and/or New Appointments. The board processed five new appointments, twelve reappointments with tenure and/or changes in rank, twenty reappointments of faculty, with some changes in rank, reappointment of one administrator, and five continuing appointments of administrators and librarians. (cf. II, Recommendations)

e. Special Recognition, Achievements, and Honors. President Spoelhof presented a list of the professional honors and achievements of faculty members, along with a list of the professional activities and contributions made to church, Christian education, teachers' associations, etc. in the past year. The board took note of this information and requested the president to express its appreciation to the various faculty members for the honors and extra achievements in their fields which have been accomplished during the past year.

f. Illnesses of Staff Members and Members of their Families. The president reported on serious illnesses and the board requested the president to convey to the persons and families mentioned its concern in connection with the illnesses endured and its thankfulness for the measures of recovery reported.

g. Bereavements Sustained by Members of the Staff and Deaths of Members of the Staff. The board requested the president to convey its condolences to the families who have been bereaved during the past year, and instructed the secretary to send letters of condolence and sympathy, as well as appreciation to the families of Miss Edith Kamper and Mr. John Heuker for the services these persons rendered to Calvin College.

3. Academic Programs

a. Accreditation of the Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree program by North Central Association. The board was happy to hear of the official action by NCA on the accreditation of Calvin College on the magisterial as well as on the baccalaureate degree level. The

NCA visiting team, one of the most competent review teams ever hosted, presented a very comprehensive report. It was extremely laudatory of the college, with some reservations expressed on the degree to which the MAT program had been developed. When this matter was clarified to the NCA team the response was extremely satisfying. They reported a long and significant list of strengths noted, and also some valid concerns. It was especially pleasing that the college and its new Master of Arts in Teaching degree program received a full ten-year approval rather than a limited authorization.

b. Master of Arts in Teaching Program - Elaboration of Guidelines. The board approved the guidelines for implementing the MAT degree program as presented in the president's report. The executive committee was empowered to take whatever action on faculty-approved administration matters and course proposals should be necessary between February and April, 1976.

c. New Courses. The introduction of the following new courses was approved:

- 1) Astronomy 201, Contemporary Astronomy
- 2) Economics 3xx, Intermediate Accounting II
- 3) Physics 113, Scientific Processes and Science Teaching
- 4) Psychology 201, Life-Span Developmental Psychology
- 5) Spanish 322, Advanced Spanish

d. Expansion of the Geology program was approved as recommended and outlined in the presidents' report.

e. Interim Program. From its beginning the interim program, operating under a clear mandate, was well structured. The interim committee has given vigorous and creative leadership to the program, contributing to its tremendous success. The popularity of the program among the students can be measured by the fact that, although only three interim courses are needed for graduation, 92.5% of the students enrolled for the second semester this year registered for the interim. The total enrollment for the 1976 interim was 3100-plus students.

f. Special Study and Research Fellowship. President Spoelhof presented some observations, advice, and a roughly-hewn plan in the form of a suggestion providing the occasion for producing a more finished or different proposal. The board of trustees referred the special study and research fellowship document, authored by and included in the president's report, along with previously adopted board resolutions related to a special studies concept, to the president of the college for reference to the proper offices or groups for study and action.

4. Student Affairs. In February the president of the college reported the following in reference to conditions on campus: "This is a phenomenally good year at Calvin College. In fact, it is in many respects the best of the twenty-five years which I have experienced as an administrator. There is an infectious spirit of good will and cooperation pervading the campus. Excellent rapport exists among the constitutive groups of the college community. Student leaders in government, publications, lecture and film arts council, and other groups have sought cooperation with faculty and administration. The presence of this spirit has been a pri-

mary source of satisfaction this year, for nothing could be more advantageous to the college in carrying out the many projects affiliated with our Centennial Year observance. This spirit is, of course, a blessing of God to all of us, and we are grateful to him for it."

a. Student Housing. The president reported that for the first time in years the college did not suffer from a student housing crunch at the opening of a new year. The purchase and availability for student occupancy of the Holiday Gardens Apartment complex was providential, for without these apartments (Knollcrest East) we could not have met student housing needs. The year began with 1818 students living on campus, of which number 278 lived at Knollcrest East. There appears to be a trend toward a return of popularity of on-campus housing. The increase in on-campus housing also required an increase in the number of residence hall staff personnel. Heading this staff of 95 persons are eight resident directors. The resident directors are all in the age 22-to-28 category. The selection and training of members of this staff is an important and significant matter in the educational concerns of this college. The dean of women and dean of men do an effective job of training the staff.

b. Student Support Services. Listed here are the following:

- 1) Upward Bound and Special Services, under the leadership of Mr. Eli Lumpkins
- 2) Academic Success Program, a service of the Broene Counseling Center, offering help to those students who need to develop skills and competences in such areas as textbook study and test-taking. This was of special help to the Vietnamese students on campus. (13 arrived from resettlement camps in September, 1975 and 11 additional were added from families resettled in the western Michigan area.)
- 3) The Broene Counseling Center. Over 20% of the student body has had some contact with the Center, either in individual or group sessions.
- 4) KIDS, a student volunteer community welfare program. This year 340 volunteers are serving in the name of Jesus Christ.

c. Religious Life. Attendance at the Knollcrest worship services, as well as student involvement in Woodlawn church, is the highest ever. Chapel attendance is up a bit, with about 1,000 students attending at least one chapel service somewhere on campus during the week. Student retreats, the existence of Bible study and prayer groups in residence halls, conversations with and among students, the testimony of guests on campus whose association with students qualifies them as valid observers, and many other sources, give evidence of the vitality and health of the religious spirit among our students.

d. Minority Student Conference. Suggestions issuing from such a conference have materialized into tutorial and remedial programs, a racial awareness conference for student leaders, a pre-college conference for college-bound students, an advisory council of black students, and the designation of the Rev. D. Klop as a contact in the city for all black students who enroll at Calvin College.

5. Student Personnel Services

a. Student Recruitment and Admissions

1) Review of 1975-76. The centennial year brought the record high enrollment of 3,674 students, with an enrollment of 1,122 first-time freshmen. Freshmen from public high schools numbered 357 this year compared to 283 last year. The registrar pointed out that 15% of our freshman enrollment is from non-Christian Reformed denominations. 274 transfer students were enrolled this year, an all-time high. Last year the number was 219.

2) 1975-76 recruitment program. The major dimensions of the program include off-campus representation, new materials and mailings, on-campus programs, advertising program and other special efforts.

b. Scholarships and Financial Aid. The number of students receiving aid has increased from 2,100 last year to 2,500 this year. In dollar amount the increase has been from \$2.8 million to \$3.8 million. The significant increase this year is due to three factors: 1) the expansion of the federal Basic Educational Opportunity Grant program, 2) a reduction in the amount parents are expected to contribute, as set by College Scholarship Service, and 3) an increase in funding in federal, state, and college programs. The number of students placed into jobs on campus by the financial aids office and off campus by the Michigan Employment Security Commission is worthy of note. 904 students are employed in on-campus jobs. The MESC made 310 job placements from September through mid-November of 1975.

c. Registration Statistics

1) Enrollment Statistics. The enrollment of 3,674 students this year marks the third consecutive year that our enrollment has increased. The previous high of 3,575 students was in 1968. Canadian enrollments increased for the fourth year to 235 students. The establishment of the King's College in 1976 is expected to have an effect. Although the number of Christian Reformed students at Calvin increased this year, the percentage in the total student body dropped from 85.0% to 82.7%. Combined curriculum students from the Baptist college and students from other denominations affect that percentage.

2) Graduation and Summer Session Statistics. The total number of 1975 graduates was 683. The summer session enrollment increased over the previous year: 1,115 course registrations compared to 859.

3) Registration for the interim and second semester took place in November. 3,339 students registered for the spring term. 3,090 registered for the interim. Late registrations ordinarily add to the figure.

d. Projected Enrollment for 1976-77. It is expected that the enrollment may be about 3,800 students next fall, though the growth is not expected to continue into the 1980's when the available number of college-age youth drops dramatically.

6. The Library

a. The following matters would be of interest:

- 1) Our book and bound-periodical holdings now exceed the quarter-million mark—263,420 volumes. Adding governmental documents and microfilmed periodical holdings, the total is 325,798.
- 2) Several hundred important books in children's literature have been added.
- 3) The library received gift books from the libraries of Dr. John T. McNeill, the great Reformation scholar, Dr. William Masselink, and Dr. Tony Brouwer.
- 4) Book circulation increased 8% over the book use of the previous year.
- 5) Librarian Stephen Lambers has completed his bibliography of Calvin alumni authors, listing a total of 408 writers and 1,381 works.
- 6) The Teaching Learning Center continues to grow at a rapid pace.

b. Library Staff Organization. The board of trustees approved the Library Staff Organization document as recommended by Drs. Kromminga and Spoelhof. The purpose of the document is to put in one document a full organizational and operational manual for Calvin librarians.

7. The International Conference on Christian Higher Education (cf. President's Travel in Seminary Matters above). In response to a request of the conference, the board of trustees decided that Calvin participate in and serve as host to the Second International Conference scheduled for 1978. Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, representing Calvin College, also attended the conference and served as one of those presenting a paper.

8. Property and Finance

a. At a special luncheon the board of trustees honored Mrs. Florence Wiebenga and Mrs. Wilma Ford who have both served at Calvin College as secretaries for fifteen years, and will retire August 31, 1976. The ladies were each presented a clock in appreciation for their services.

b. The board of trustees accepted the accountants' report as the official financial report of Calvin College and Seminary for the 1974-75 fiscal year.

c. Revised Budget for 1975-76. The revised operating budget for 1975-76, showing a surplus of \$98,000 for the year, was approved as the official operating budget for the current fiscal year.

d. Report of the Sources-of-Income Committee. The board of trustees concurred in the recommendations of the report; namely, that the matter of sources of income for the general college operating budget be referred to the college priorities committee, and that a similar committee be appointed for the seminary.

e. Tuition rates for 1976-77 as presented in the Schedule of the Preliminary Budget for 1976-77 were approved as follows:

	1975-76 Rate	Proposed for 1976-77	\$ Increase	% Increase
Non-Christian Reformed	\$980	\$1,030	\$50	5.1%
Christian Reformed -				
Michigan within 10 miles	880	930	50	5.7%
Michigan 10 to 150 miles	840	890	50	5.9%
Out-of-state within 300 miles	810	850	40	4.9%
Out-of-state 300 to 1,000 miles	770	810	40	5.2%
Out-of-state over 1,000 miles	730	770	40	5.5%

It was decided to eliminate the discount of \$25 that has been given when there is more than one student from a family, effective for the 1976-77 academic year.

Upon the request of Classis Wisconsin, dated October 8, 1975, and a review of the factors involved, it was decided to assign all of Wisconsin to the "out-of-state 300 to 1,000 miles" tuition category in view of their special circumstances of having to drive around Lake Michigan to get to Grand Rapids.

f. Request for Quota. The board of trustees decided to present to the Synod of 1976 a request for a 6% increase in the Calvin quota for 1977. (It is noted that the distribution of this increase among the various classes cannot be determined until the second semester enrollment has been analyzed geographically.)

g. Room and Board Rate for 1976-77. It was decided to increase the fee by \$70, from \$1,030 to \$1,100. This has become necessary to meet higher costs, especially that of the new minimum wage for student employees.

h. The Barnabas Foundation is a voluntary, non-profit Estate Planning service organization of Christian Reformed attorneys and trust officers located throughout the United States. It has the endorsement of the Synodical Interim Committee to serve the denominational agencies in the broad area of deferred and planned giving. Since the Synodical Interim Committee is prepared to ask synod for its financial support of this organization provided there is complete coordination between all agencies as to the acceptance of the Barnabas Foundation as the agency for combined deferred giving endeavors, the board of trustees decided to endorse this program and to encourage the administration of Calvin College and Seminary to make use of it.

i. A proposed Stewardship Services Organization in Canada is also being studied by the administration of the college in conjunction with the denominational financial coordinator with a view to eventual decision relative to participation.

j. The board authorized the executive committee to purchase a 2.5-acre parcel of land with a home on it at the southwest quadrant of the Burton Street-East Beltline intersection if this becomes advantageous in the development and sale of land which Calvin already owns in that area.

9. College and Alumni Relations, under the direction of Mr. James Hockenga.

a. College Relations. Eighty-three appearances, from coast to coast, of the centennial sight-sound presentation are being scheduled and organized. In a two-month period the goal is to bring the centennial project to most of the areas of our church.

b. Alumni Association. The *Calvin Spark* is sent to 18,200 addresses. Alumni contributions are 20% above those of last year. The book of Dr. Timmerman, *Promises to Keep*, was sent to all alumni who made a financial contribution to the association.

10. Development Programs.

Centennial Crusade Drive. In the interest of reaching a lofty goal for 1976, the development office intends to reach every family of our people, first of all through an attractive mailer, and second by telephone and personal calls wherever possible.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Seminary

1. The board of trustees recommends that Dr. Richard De Ridder be appointed as Associate Professor of Church Polity and Church Administration for three years. (cf. I, B, 1, e above)

2. The board of trustees recommends that Dr. David Engelhard be reappointed as Associate Professor of Old Testament for two years.

3. The board of trustees requests that synod take appropriate recognition of the fact that Dr. John Kromminga, as of June, 1976, has completed twenty years of service to Calvin Seminary as its president.

B. College

1. Retirements from the Staff. The board of trustees recommends that synod take appropriate recognition of the service of the following persons on the occasion of their retirement: Dr. John Bratt, Professor James De Jonge, Professor Winifred Holkeboer, Dr. G. Roderick Youngs, Professor Mildred Zylstra, and President William Spoelhof, emeritus.

2. Appointments. The board of trustees presents the following recommendations for appointment:

a. Mr. James Benthem, M.A. (expects to have his Ph.D. by Sept. 1976), as Assistant Professor of Psychology for two years

b. Mr. Henry Vander Goot, M.A. (expects to have his Ph.D. by Sept. 1976), as Assistant Professor of Religion and Theology for two years

c. Mr. David Dunbar, M.A. (expects to have his Ph.D. by Sept. 1976), as Visiting Associate Professor of Romance Languages (Spanish) for two years

d. Mr. John Van Engen, M.A. (expects to have his Ph.D. by Sept. 1976), as Assistant Professor of History for one year

e. Mr. David Diephouse, Ph.D., as Assistant Professor of History for one year

3. Reappointment with Tenure. The board of trustees presents the following recommendations for reappointment with tenure: (italic indicates change of rank)

- a. Helen Bonzelaar, M.A., Assistant Professor of Art
 - b. Samuel Greydanus, Jr., M.A., Assistant Professor of History
 - c. Ralph J. Honderd, M.A., Assistant Professor of Physical Education
 - d. Carl Huisman, M.F.A., Associate Professor of Art
 - e. Sanford C. Leestma, Ph.D., *Professor* of Mathematics
 - f. Clarence Menninga, Ph.D., Professor of Geology (Physics)
 - g. George N. Monsma, Jr., Ph.D., Professor of Economics
 - h. Richard Mouw, Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy
 - i. Delwin Nykamp, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Speech
 - j. Kenneth Piers, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry
 - k. Dale Topp, Ph.D., Professor of Music
 - l. John Van Zytveld, Ph.D., *Professor* of Physics
4. Reappointments. The board of trustees presents the following recommendations for reappointment:
- a. Faculty (*italic indicates change of rank*)
 - 1) Robert J. Albers, Ph.D., *Professor* of Chemistry for two years
 - 2) Henry Baron, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of English for two years
 - 3) Martin Bolt, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology for two years
 - 4) John Brink, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology for two years
 - 5) Elsa Cortina, *Doc. en Pedagogia*, Assistant Professor of Romance Languages (Spanish) for two years
 - 6) Gordon De Blaey, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology for two years
 - 7) Peter De Jong, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology for two years
 - 8) Paul Henry, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Political Science for two years
 - 9) Thomas Jager, Ph.D. *Associate Professor* of Mathematics for two years
 - 10) Wayne Joosse, Ph.D., *Professor* of Psychology for two years
 - 11) James Korf, M.A., Visiting Assistant Professor of Speech for two years
 - 12) Robert Medema, M.B.A., Instructor in Economics for two years
 - 13) William Sanderson, M.A., S.T.M., Associate Professor of Psychology for two years
 - 14) Donald Smalligan, M.B.A., M.S.W., Assistant Professor of Sociology for two years
 - 15) Roger Stouwie, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology for two years
 - 16) Robert Terborg, Ph.D., *Professor* of Psychology for two years
 - 17) James Timmer, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Physical Education for two years
 - 18) Ronald Vander Kooi, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sociology for two years
 - 19) Lambert Van Poolea, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Engineering for two years

- 20) John Worst, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Music for two years
Note: This is a two-year extension of present appointment.

b. Administrators

Kenneth Bootsma, Ph.D., Executive Director of College and Seminary Development for two years

The board took note of the continuing appointments which the president designated for the following administrative officers who have served beyond their second appointment period.

- 1) Mr. James Hoekenga, Executive Director of College and Alumni Relations
- 2) Mr. Wayne Hubers, Director of Student Financial Aid
- 3) Mr. Marvin Monsma, Director of the Library (recommended to the board jointly by Presidents Kromminga and Spoelhof)
- 4) Dr. William Stob, Dean of Student Life
- 5) Dr. Larry Teitsma, Counselor in the Broene Center

It was understood (is) by the board of trustees that these continuing appointments, awarded by the president and reviewed by the board, do allow the administration to engage in whatever administrative reorganization the new president may wish to propose through the existing channels of authority.

5. The board of trustees calls to the attention of synod the fact that Mr. Henry De Wit has completed twenty years of valuable service to Calvin College and Seminary as Vice President of Business and Finance.

The Board of Trustees of
Calvin College and Seminary,
Leonard J. Hofman, secretary

REPORT 3

CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

During 1975 Christian Reformed missionaries under the auspices of your Board of Foreign Missions brought the good news of God's kingdom to twelve countries overseas. Profound changes occurred during the year both in the flow of international events and in the life of our mission. Many of the world events were somber ones, and their influence upon some mainline missions has been frightening. Our conviction remains, however, that it is precisely in the desperate hours of turbulence and revolution that the message of salvation is crucial. It is precisely the time for bringing the words of liberation and hope for the oppressed. In the pages that follow this conviction will become clear.

A signal event in 1975 was the opening of a new field in the tiny nation of Liberia. Our first missionary couple is now on the spot in Liberia as that work is initiated by Mr. and Mrs. Larry Vanderaa. Your missionaries also labor in Africa in that continent's most populous nation of Nigeria. In Asia the ministry is carried on in Japan, Taiwan, Guam, and the Philippines. In Latin America our missionaries work in the countries of Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Puerto Rico.

The following pages will provide an account of the events of greatest significance for our churches and an overview of emerging currents and projections.

Section One

Organization and Personnel

A. *The Board*

The annual meetings of the board took place on February 3-5, 1976. The executive committee met regularly on the second Thursday of each month. The officers during 1975 were as follows: Rev. Henry Erffmeyer, president; Rev. Jerrien Gunnink, vice-president; Mr. Sidney De Young, chairman of the finance committee; Mr. Donald Zwier, treasurer; Rev. Henry Evenhouse, executive secretary.

The Rev. Jerrien Gunnink requested release from board obligations in December for health reasons, and the Rev. Henry Evenhouse retired at the year's end. Elections for new officers were conducted at the conclusion of the board sessions and the following were elected: Rev. Norman Meyer, president; Rev. Harvey Brink, vice-president; Mr. Donald Zwier, treasurer.

Dr. Eugene Rubingh was appointed by the Synod of 1975 as Executive Secretary and assumed his new responsibilities on January 1, 1976:

The board consists of the following members and alternates:

Classis	Delegate	Alternate	Term Expires
Alberta North.....	Rev. Cornelius Vriend.....	Rev. H. Salomons	1977
Alberta South.....	Rev. Edward Den Haan.....	Rev. D. Velthuisen	1979
British Columbia.....	Rev. Gerald Hogeterp.....	Rev. H. De Moor	1977

Classis	Delegate	Alternate	Term Expires
Cadillac.....	Rev. Kenneth Van Wyk.....	Rev. G. Compaan	1977
California South.....	Rev. James Howerzyl.....	Rev. J. Gray	1977
Central California.....	Rev. George Ebbers.....	Rev. P. Yang	1977
Chatham.....	Rev. Ralph Koops.....	Rev. L. Slofstra	1978
Chicago North.....	Rev. George Vanderhill.....	Rev. A. Walma	1976
Chicago South.....	Rev. Syburn Voortman.....	Rev. W. Boelkins	1978
Columbia.....	Rev. John Petersen.....		1978
Eastern Canada.....	Rev. Jacob Quartel.....		1977
Florida.....	Rev. Fred Diemer.....	Rev. C. Van Ens	1978
Grand Rapids East.....	Rev. Wesley Timmer.....	Rev. D. Stravers	1978
Grand Rapids North.....	Rev. Gerrit Veenstra.....	Rev. M. Doornbos	1979
Grand Rapids South.....	Rev. Herman Scholten.....	Rev. A. Vander Griend	1978
Grandville.....	Rev. Henry N. Erffmeyer.....	Rev. S. Cammenga	1976
Hackensack.....	Rev. Calvin Nieuwenhuis.....	Rev. A. Kuiper	1977
Hamilton.....	Rev. John De Jong.....	Rev. H. Vander Plaats	1976
Holland.....	Rev. Eugene Bradford.....	Dr. M. Essenburg	1979
Hudson.....	Rev. Isaac Apol.....	Rev. G. Cooper	1977
Huron.....	Rev. John Kerssies.....	Mr. J. K. Boersma	1977
Illiana.....	Rev. Alfred Lindemulder.....		1977
Kalamazoo.....	Rev. Harvey Brink.....	Rev. S. Bultman	1978
Lake Erie.....	Rev. John Steigenga.....	Rev. A. Hoogewind	1977
Minnesota North.....	Rev. Garrett Vande Riet.....	Rev. C. Toeset	1978
Minnesota South.....	Rev. Harry Vanderaa.....	Rev. H. Sponholz	1977
Muskegon.....	Rev. Norman Meyer.....	Rev. J. Morren	1977
Northcentral Iowa.....	Rev. Kenneth Van De Griend.....	Rev. R. De Young	1977
Orange City.....	Mr. Franklin Vogel.....	Mr. F. Hubers	1978
Pacific Northwest.....	Rev. Arie C. Leegwater.....	Rev. S. Workman	1976
Pella.....	Rev. Robert Holwerda.....	Rev. F. Van Houten	1978
Quinte.....	Rev. Repko W. Popma.....	Rev. A. Vanden Pol	1976
Rocky Mountain.....	Rev. Gordon Negen.....		1978
Sioux Center.....	Rev. John Kroon.....	Dr. P. Y. De Jong	1979
Toronto.....	Rev. Charles T. Fennema.....	Rev. J. Vos	1976
Wisconsin.....	Rev. John A. Hoeksema.....	Rev. P. Vis	1976
Zeeland.....	Rev. Otto De Groot.....	Rev. G. Sheeres	1977
Member-at-large.....	Mr. Donald Bratt.....		1978
Member-at-large.....	Mr. Sidney De Young.....		1977
Member-at-large (Canada).....	Mr. Sidney Harkema.....		1978
Member-at-large.....	Mr. Alvin Huibregtse.....		1976
Member-at-large.....	Mr. David Radius.....		1977

Members-at-large

Mr. Alvin Huibregtse has completed one term of service as a board member and is eligible for reelection. We are pleased to offer his name together with that of Mr. Robert Dykstra.

Mr. Alvin Huibregtse is a member of the Twelfth Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Jenison, Michigan. He served as a teacher for several years before his service in the office of the Board of Foreign Missions where he was, together with the Rev. Henry Evenhouse, engaged in mission administration. He is 69 years of age.

Mr. Robert Dykstra is a member of Haven Christian Reformed Church of Zeeland, Michigan. He is a public accountant and comptroller of five nursing homes and a plastics factory. He has served several terms as deacon, and as treasurer of the Accountants Association of Michigan. He is 41 years of age.

B. Executive Committee Organization

The members of the executive committee normally serve on two sub-committees, both on an "area" committee and a "business" committee. There are three area committees: Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and the following administrative committees: Officers, Finance, Promotion, and Recruiting:

C. Missionary Personnel

Argentina

Rev. and Mrs. Ramon Borrego
 Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Brinks
 Rev. and Mrs. W. Thomas De Vries
 Rev. and Mrs. John Hutt
 Rev. and Mrs. Jack Huttinga
 Miss Sylvia Kallemeyn
 Miss Janet Lindemulder*
 Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Rooy
 Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Stob
 Rev. and Mrs. Louis Wagenfeld

Rev. and Mrs. Donald Lagerwey
 Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kroeze
 Mr. and Mrs. Abe Marcus
 Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Nyenhuis
 Dr. and Mrs. Derk Oostendorp
 Rev. and Mrs. J. Lawrence Roberts
 Mr. and Mrs. Jack Roeda
 Rev. and Mrs. Robert Ruis
 Mrs. Rudolfo Silva
 Dr. and Mrs. Hans Weerstra

Brazil

Rev. and Mrs. Carl Bosma
 Rev. and Mrs. Willem Dirksen
 Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Oldenkamp
 Rev. and Mrs. Charles Uken

Nicaragua

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Teja
 Rev. and Mrs. John Van Der Borgh

Nigeria

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Achtyes
 Rev. and Mrs. Sidney Anderson
 Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Baas
 Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Baker
 Rev. and Mrs. Willem Berends
 Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bierling
 Dr. Harry R. Boer
 Rev. and Mrs. John Boer
 Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bremer
 Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Browneye
 Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Buys
 Dr. and Mrs. John Channer
 Miss Nancy Chapel
 Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cok
 Dr. and Mrs. David Daining
 Mr. and Mrs. Warren De Boer
 Mr. and Mrs. John De Jager
 Rev. and Mrs. Harold de Jong
 Miss Gremar De Koter
 Miss Neva De Vries
 Mr. and Mrs. David Dykgraaf
 Miss Margaret Dykstra
 Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich Evenhouse
 Mr. and Mrs. William Evenhouse
 Mr. and Mrs. Harry Faber
 Mr. and Mrs. Fred Feikema
 Miss Marjorie Franz
 Miss Nancy Friend
 Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Gabrielse
 Dr. and Mrs. Peter Greidanus
 Mr. Mark Hoekman
 Miss Angie Hoolsema
 Miss Mary Kaldeway
 Mr. and Mrs. Frank Kass
 Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Kiekover
 Miss Margaret Kooiman
 Mr. and Mrs. Robert Koops

Cuba

Cuba pastors

Guam

Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Bode
 Rev. and Mrs. Henry Dykema
 Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Douma

Honduras

Rev. and Mrs. G. Bernard Dokter
 Rev. and Mrs. Cornelius Persenaire

Japan

Rev. and Mrs. Henry Bruinooge
 Rev. and Mrs. Michiel De Berdt
 Rev. and Mrs. Ronald W. Hempel
 Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Hommes
 Mr. and Mrs. Jack Jones
 Rev. and Mrs. Gerrit Koedoot
 Rev. and Mrs. Dick Kwantes
 Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Norman
 Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Smit
 Rev. and Mrs. William J. Stob
 Rev. and Mrs. Richard D. Sytsma
 Rev. and Mrs. Richard E. Sytsma
 Mr. and Mrs. John Tenyenhuis*
 Rev. and Mrs. Maas Vander Bilt

Kenya

Dr. and Mrs. Peter Ipema

Liberia

Mr. and Mrs. Larry Vanderaa

Mexico

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Bergsma
 Mr. and Mrs. John De Young
 Rev. and Mrs. David Doyle
 Rev. and Mrs. Orlin Hogan

Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Korhorn
 Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Kotze
 Mr. and Mrs. Menno Kuiper
 Mr. and Mrs. William Lemcke
 Dr. Janet Lindquist
 Miss Mae Jerene Mast
 Dr. Ginny Meinhardt
 Miss Faith Nobel
 Dr. and Mrs. Dale Peerbolte
 Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Posthumus
 Dr. and Mrs. Ray Prins, Jr.
 Dr. and Mrs. Martinus Reedyk
 Miss Christine Roos
 Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rouw
 Miss Ruth Salomons
 Mr. and Mrs. Dick Seinen
 Rev. and Mrs. George Spee
 Miss Dorothy Sytsma
 Mr. and Mrs. Willem Termorshuizen
 Mr. and Mrs. Paul Theule
 Mr. and Mrs. Engbert Ubels
 Miss Jean Van Beek
 Miss Geraldine Vanden Berg
 Mr. and Mrs. Nolan Vander Ark
 Dr. and Mrs. John Vanderkooy
 Miss Julie Vander Laan
 Miss Ruth Vander Meulen
 Mr. and Mrs. Dick Vander Steen
 Miss Frances Vander Zwaag
 Rev. and Mrs. Lester Van Essen

Miss Tina Van Staalduinen
 Mr. Case Van Wyke
 Mr. and Mrs. Larry Van Zee
 Miss Ruth Veltkamp
 Miss Marina Verdun
 Miss Anita Vissia
 Mr. and Mrs. Abe Vreeke
 Miss Jean Zoet
 Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Zoet

Philippine Islands

Mr. and Mrs. Vicente Apostol
 Rev. and Mrs. Barry B. Blankers
 Rev. and Mrs. W. Keith Bulthuis
 Rev. and Mrs. Henry De Vries
 Rev. and Mrs. Robert De Vries
 Miss Nola Opperwall*
 Rev. and Mrs. Edward Vander Berg

Puerto Rico

Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker
 Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott
 Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Rumph
 Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Sprik

Taiwan

Rev. and Mrs. Carl Afman
 Rev. and Mrs. Dennis Mulder
 Rev. and Mrs. Peter Tong
 Rev. and Mrs. Mike Vander Pol

*Seminary Interns and volunteers

D. Office Personnel

Executive Secretary - Dr. Eugene Rubingh
 Africa Area Secretary - Rev. William Van Tol
 Asia Secretary - Rev. Edward Van Baak
 Latin America Secretary - Dr. Roger S. Greenway
 Treasurer - Mr. Donald Zwier
 Church Relations Secretary - Mr. William Schultze
 Accountant - Mr. James Tamminga

During part of 1975 Mr. Ellis Deters was employed in the area of promotions, and he has been given a further one-year appointment as the coordinator of our support services. Mr. Frank Speyers assisted in the area of media materials production on a part-time basis.

E. Area Secretaries

The Rev. Edward Van Baak serves as Asia Area Secretary and was appointed for a six-year period by the Synod of 1975.

Dr. Roger S. Greenway was first appointed as Latin America Area Secretary in 1972 and given a second appointment in 1974. He is at this time recommended to synod for reappointment for a period of six years.

The Rev. William Van Tol was asked to replace Dr. Eugene Rubingh as Africa Area Secretary. The Rev. Mr. Van Tol served as general secretary of the Nigeria Mission and has been a missionary in that coun-

try since 1967. He assumed his assignment on a provisional basis in December, 1975. He is at this time recommended to synod for a two-year appointment.

F. Representation at Synod

The board requests that its chairman, executive secretary and treasurer be permitted to represent the board on all matters relating to foreign missions.

G. Presentation of Missionaries

Missionaries on home service or under appointment are each year introduced to synod. In this manner greetings are brought from various fields and synod may personally meet representatives of the missionary enterprise. We would again request permission for this presentation.

H. Staff Appointments and Resignations

The following missionaries were appointed to a full term of service during 1975: Rev. and Mrs. Carl Afman, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Vanderaa, Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott, Dr. and Mrs. Dale Peerbolte, Mr. Mark Hoekman, Mr. and Mrs. Larry Van Zee, Dr. and Mrs. Peter Greidanus, Dr. Ginny Meinhardt. Those who left our service are noted here in order that we may thank God for their labors in the mission enterprise. During 1975 the following terminated from missionary service: Rev. and Mrs. Dick C. Bouma, Mr. and Mrs. Bauke Lodewyk, Rev. and Mrs. Paul Kortenhoven, Mr. and Mrs. Gerrit Ouwerkerk, Rev. and Mrs. Simon Wolfert, Dr. and Mrs. Sierd Woudstra, Rev. and Mrs. Alvin Machiela, Mr. and Mrs. John Van Ee, Rev. and Mrs. J. Jerry Pott, Miss Lois Pot-hoven, Mr. and Mrs. John Sjaardema, Mr. and Mrs. George Schutt, Dr. and Mrs. Donald Zeilenga, Miss Cecelia Drenth.

I. Executive Secretary Emeritus

In October of 1975, the executive committee accorded to the Rev. Henry J. Evenhouse the title of Executive Secretary Emeritus, the title to be effective upon his retirement on January 1, 1976. It is our hope to call upon the Rev. Mr. Evenhouse for advice and to avail ourselves of his services in the churches. It is also fitting in this way to recognize the services of one who has so profoundly influenced the life of the foreign mission work of the Christian Reformed Church.

Section Two General Matters

A. Mission Order Revision

Synod of 1975 recommended the revised mission order to the churches, agencies, and organizations for study for one year. Various responses were received and analyzed by a committee appointed for that purpose. These responses were generally very positive and endorsed the work done thus far. The annual board further considered the suggestions submitted and recommended the following two changes in the proposed order:

Previous Proposal

Article III, Section 3—

Membership of field councils.

a. All Christian Reformed Church personnel serving a field under synodical mandate shall be eligible for membership in the field council if they are on regular assignment and have completed language and/or orientation requirements for their position.

Article VII, Section I—

Definition

Missionaries are men and women called of God and sent out by the church to spread the Gospel in word and deed. Both husband and wife are recognized as missionaries. The wife serves by her work in the home and, where mutually acceptable to herself and the mission, by active participation in the program of the mission.

Revised Proposal

Article III, Section 3—

Membership of field councils.

a. All board personnel shall be eligible for membership in the field council if they are on regular assignment and have completed language and/or orientation requirements for their position.

Article VII, Section I—

Definition

Missionaries are men and women called of God and sent out by the church to spread the Gospel in word and deed. If married, both husband and wife are recognized as missionaries. The wife may serve when mutually acceptable to herself and the mission by active participation in the program of the mission.

We are once again pleased to submit this revision of our Mission Order. We ask synod to declare this Mission Order to be the official document under which we operate as an agent of synod.

THE MISSION ORDER OF THE BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS

THE PROPOSED ORDER

Introductory Statement

The mission of God from which the church derives her mission is that activity of the Triune God whereby he reconciles the world to himself through the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sent One (2 Cor. 5:19; John 20:21).

In this mission God vindicates his honor through the defeat of Satan who falsely claims the world as his own, and through the creation of a redeemed people who are the first fruits of his triumph over sin (Rev. 14:4). The Son, Jesus Christ, establishes the kingdom of God through his redemptive acts and sends the church as his body into the world (Matt. 28:18-20). The Holy Spirit empowers this church to disciple all nations (Acts 1:8). This community of sent ones heralds the Gospel of the reconciliation which will be fully realized at the consummation of his kingdom on the last day (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:17; Rev. 11:15).

The church of God as Christ's apostolate in the world is one community of the redeemed. The Christian Reformed Church shares both the privileges and the responsibilities of membership in this one body of Christ. Each member and every congregation of the Christian Reformed Church must be a witness for Christ in word and deed (1 Peter 2:9). In the conduct of her missionary enterprise, the church calls and commissions missionaries as her representatives (Acts 13:2-4).

Moreover, in order that unity and effectiveness may be promoted the churches also exercise this ministry collectively. The churches carry on their joint foreign mission work through the synod. The administration of this work has been assigned by the synod to the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions.

The Board for Christian Reformed World Missions is therefore appointed to serve the church and her missionaries and performs these services in accordance with God's Word and within the framework of the following rules and regulations.

Article I

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church

Synod, being responsible for the joint foreign mission work of the church, is committed to regulate the work in accordance with the Word of God and in fulfillment of its mandate in article 77 of the Church Order. Specifically, synod:

Section 1. Establishes and maintains a foreign mission program in which every aspect of the work undertaken is controlled by the standards of the Word of God for the attainment of the goal of carrying the Gospel to the world.

Section 2. Exercises jurisdiction over the foreign mission program and determines the fields in which work is carried on.

Section 3. Adopts the Mission Order for the regulation of the foreign mission program.

Section 4. Establishes the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions in order to administer the joint foreign mission work of the churches. (Hereafter the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions is called "the board").

Section 5. Appoints the members and alternates of the board.

Section 6. Appoints the Executive Secretary of Missions and the Area Secretaries upon recommendation of the board and arranges for their call and installation.

Section 7. Provides for the collective support of denominational foreign missions by stimulating interest, encouraging prayer, and authorizing the procurement and expenditure of funds.

Section 8. Encourages the churches to call and/or commission and to support missionaries appointed by the board.

Article II

The Board for Christian Reformed World Missions

The synodically established Board for Christian Reformed World Missions shall:

Section 1. Administer the joint foreign mission work of the churches as the agent of synod in such a manner that scriptural standards for all aspects of the work are maintained and the Mission Order is observed. The board may adopt and/or amend such by-laws and regulations which are needed for the fulfillment of its assignment and are in accordance with synodical decisions.

Section 2. Be legally incorporated and be known as the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions.

Section 3. Consist of a nominee from each classis and members-at-large whose appointment and term of service are regulated by synodical rules. The members-at-large shall ordinarily be lay persons and eight (8) in number, as follows:

United States: Eastern District (1)
 Central District (3)
 Mid-west District (1)
 Far West District (1)

Canada: Eastern District (1)
 Western District (1)

Section 4. Have the following officers who are elected at the annual board meeting: president, vice-president, recording secretary, and treasurer.

Section 5. Be authorized by synod to acquire, possess, hold and convey property and administer all funds relating to tasks assigned to it by synod.

Section 6. Recruit, appoint, and supervise all personnel, and make adequate provision for their needs and for the performance of their work.

Section 7. Designate calling and/or commissioning churches, present to them nominations, supply information and guidance to the churches and jointly sign the letter of call or commission.

Section 8. Meet at least annually to administer the work entrusted to it by synod.

Section 9. Present an annual report to synod regarding the status and progress of the work on the various fields, together with a proposed budget and recommendations concerning the fields, personnel and work.

Section 10. Provide for periodic visits to the fields by board representatives in order to encourage the missionaries and the national churches, keep abreast of current developments, and cultivate mutual understanding. These representatives shall submit a report of their visit to the board.

Section 11. Provide counsel and encouragement to all missionary personnel, which shall be supplemental to the primary care of the church where the missionary's membership resides.

Section 12. Elect annually from its membership an *executive committee* to exercise between the meetings of the board such of the board's responsibilities as the continuing and effective performance of the foreign mission task requires.

a. The executive committee shall be accountable to the board for all its actions.

b. The executive committee shall consist of eighteen (18) members, three of whom shall be members-at-large. The term of all executive committee members shall begin at the close of the annual board meeting.

c. The officers of the board shall be the officers of the executive committee.

d. Ordinarily a member of the executive committee shall serve the full year of his appointment even though he moves to a new location. If the executive committee, however, deems that distance or circumstances makes his continued membership on the executive committee inadvisable, his alternate shall serve in his place.

Section 13. Record the decisions and actions of all meetings of the board and its executive committee, and send copies of its minutes to all board members.

Article III

Field Councils

Section 1. The board shall ordinarily administer its work in foreign countries through agencies called field councils.

a. The field council shall make recommendations to the board regarding the field budget, assignment of CRC personnel, questions of mission policy, and field expansion or retrenchment.

b. The field council shall ordinarily make decisions regarding matters which are implementations of approved budgets and stated policies, and the assignment of personnel in its employ. It shall report its decisions to the board.

Section 2. The field council shall also serve as the agency through which the board normally conducts its activities in relation to national churches and foreign governments.

Section 3. Membership of field councils.

a. All Board personnel shall be eligible for membership in the field council if they are on regular assignment and have completed language and/or orientation requirements for their position.

b. Membership on the field council is by election or delegation of eligible personnel and ceases at the expiration of the term in office.

c. Membership on the field council shall be granted to nationals who have been properly delegated by a department and/or station to serve as its representatives.

d. The field council may invite to its sessions other individuals as advisors and resource personnel.

e. The Executive Secretary shall have the right at any time to participate in the meetings of all field councils and their committees as an *ex officio* (non-voting) member.

f. The Area Secretaries shall have the right to participate in the meetings of their respective field councils and their committees as *ex officio* (non-voting) members.

Section 4. Organization of field councils.

- a. A field council shall be organized as soon as feasible.
- b. The initial structure of the field council and any subsequent changes shall be subject to the approval of the board.
- c. Where the total representation on the field council becomes impractical for the efficient conducting of business, provision shall be made for representation from each department and/or mission station.
- d. The records of a field council shall include all its legal, financial and administrative documents, and all correspondence and minutes relating to its work. These shall be available to the Executive Secretary and to the Area Secretary for that field.
- e. Each field council shall elect a field secretary who is responsible to the Area Secretary and the field council.

Article IV

Relationship to National Churches

Section 1. The board shall encourage the establishment and development of national churches, truly indigenous and Reformed in character, on all the fields on which it serves.

Section 2. With respect to national churches to which the Christian Reformed Church is related in its foreign mission work, the board and its missionaries are pledged to respect their autonomy, encourage their independence, serve them in the development of their ecclesiastical relationships, and promote reciprocal interchurch contact.

Section 3. When a national church has been established and shares in the ministry of mission programs, a liaison committee may be formed to facilitate the transfer of authority and responsibility. Both the national church and the missionaries shall be represented on such a liaison committee.

Section 4. The board and its missionaries are pledged to recognize the contributions which the national churches make to enrich understanding of the Gospel and its implications for life and work.

Article V

The Executive Secretary and Area Secretaries

Section 1. Duties of the Secretaries.

- a. The Executive and Area Secretaries shall advance the cause of missions, stimulate prayer for missions, encourage men and women to consecrate themselves to the cause of missions, and promote a proper understanding and support of the mission program among the churches of the denomination.
- b. They shall visit the fields periodically, consult with the missionaries, national churches and field councils, advise on matters of mission strategy, be counselors to the missionaries and their children, and promote the unity and progress of the work.
- c. They shall give orientation to missionary personnel concerning the areas and tasks to which they are appointed.

Section 2. The Executive Secretary

- a. The Executive Secretary shall work under the supervision of the board and shall be a member *ex officio* of the board and its committees.
- b. He shall be responsible for the execution of board policy and decisions, the supervision of the board office, the submission of reports to the board and its executive committee and of the annual report to synod, the preparation of agenda for board and executive committee meetings, and the keeping of board records.
- c. He shall officially represent the board at synod and its advisory committees.

Section 3. Area Secretaries

- a. They shall work under the supervision of the board and the Executive Secretary, and shall serve as advisors to the board and its committees on matters relating to their assignments.
- b. They shall be responsible under the supervision of the Executive Secretary for the execution of board policy and decisions which relate to their areas. Furthermore, they shall keep the Executive Secretary, their area committees, and the board informed of all matters pertinent to their areas, and they shall prepare agenda for the area committee meetings.
- c. They shall represent the field councils to the board.

Article VI**The Sending Churches**

Section 1. While all churches of the denomination participate in the support of the denominational foreign missions, the individual churches may become specifically involved as sending churches by either calling, commissioning, or supporting one or more missionaries.

Section 2. There shall be a sending church for each missionary which shall call and/or commission in behalf of synod and the board.

Section 3. The calling or commissioning church shall have supervision of the missionary's doctrine and life, consonant with Article 12 of the Church Order.

Section 4. The sending churches shall be encouraged to sustain their missionaries through prayers, offerings, and personal contacts.

Article VII**Missionaries**

Section 1. Definition. Missionaries are men and women called of God and sent out by the church to spread the Gospel in word and deed. If married both husband and wife are recognized as missionaries. The wife may serve where mutually acceptable to herself and the mission by active participation in the program of the mission.

Section 2. Qualifications. The missionary shall give evidence of personal godliness, be committed to the Reformed faith, ordinarily be a member of the Christian Reformed Church, be dedicated to spreading the Gospel by word and deed, have the confidence of the churches, be in sympathy with board policy, be capable of cross cultural adaptation in life and ministry, have professional competence in the area of his or her missionary assignment, and have a level of physical and mental health commensurate with the tasks he or she is called to undertake.

Section 3. Duties. They shall learn the language and live into the culture of the people among whom they labor, shall dedicate themselves to the promotion of Christ's cause through the pursuance of their assigned tasks, shall work according to the guidelines of the field mandate, and specifically carry out the assignments given by the field council and the board.

The missionaries also bear a responsibility toward the sending churches. They shall attempt to develop and sustain a close relationship and lively interest in their work with their sending churches. During their periods of home service they shall encourage involvement in the foreign missionary program through personal contacts and deputation assignments.

Section 4. Reports. All missionaries shall regularly report their work to the board and shall also report to their calling, commissioning and supporting churches.

Section 5. Church membership status. They shall become members of the national church with which they labor if this is feasible and also retain membership in the Christian Reformed Church.

Section 6. Ministerial status. The credentials of ordained missionaries shall be held by their calling churches. They shall retain their status as ministers in the Christian Reformed Church. They may accept ministerial status in the national churches with which they labor.

Article VIII
Right of Appeal

Every missionary shall have the right to appeal a decision of a field council (or other field organization) and of the board.

A field council (or other field organization) also has the right to appeal a board decision.

Article IX
Conclusion

This Mission Order, having been adopted by synod, shall be faithfully observed and any revision thereof shall be made only by synod.

B. Communications

A good deal of concern has recently been voiced regarding the opportunities to increase the communication of the challenges of the missionary enterprise and the work of the Christian Reformed Church around the world. Your board undertook a study of ways and means to improve the communication of our missionary endeavors in order to strengthen the bond between the sending churches and the missionary staff. In these days there are many conflicting and competing calls for support, and in this context we must communicate our needs in a candid and attractive manner. The board has, therefore, adopted a large number of communication objectives so that the churches may more fully experience the missionary dimension of her life.

Naturally, the matter of communication also refers to the public relations or promotional side of your board mandate. We are pleased to report that several churches throughout the denomination have joined many others in the special support of foreign missionaries. At the present time, some 350 congregations participate in the above quota support of one or more of our missionaries. This faithful undergirding in prayer and gifts is indeed gratifying, and our missionaries are encouraged in their work when individual congregations remember them in these ways. At the same time, the board was apprised of the fact that over 300 congregations or forty percent of the total number are not at present participating in above quota support of one or more foreign missionaries. This individual contact is a vital link.

The number of churches involved in holding an annual mission emphasis week is increasing from year to year. In many instances these days of special focus on missions have culminated in the taking of a faith promise offering. The results have been not only in a broadened vision of what is happening on the cutting edge of the church, but also in a new appreciation for the opportunity to share with developing churches around the world.

There are thirty-five Womens Missionary Unions which contribute regularly to the mission effort of Christian Reformed missionaries. During 1975, some of the unions celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of their beginning during the 1920's. The tours that are conducted each year as mission personnel travel from place to place to tell of what God is doing on fields around the world is a living testimony of the interest of many in the outreach of the Gospel. The support of the Womens Missionary Unions is a significant part of our communications program.

In reply to many requests, a program involving children in praying and giving for missions was begun in 1975. Several children's banks and descriptive brochures for each project were made available and distributed to many Sunday schools, catechism classes and Daily Vacation Bible Schools. We are thankful for the enthusiastic response and hope for more participation in the season ahead.

There is a firm base of support from the churches in Canada and the United States so that the needs of the mission may be met and the missionaries adequately supported. The following congregations are engaged in this above-quota relationship.

CALLING AND/OR SUPPORTING CHURCHES BY CLASSES

- Alberta North**
 Edmonton II, AB
 Bethel, Lacombe, AB
 Lacombe I, AB
 Neerlandia, AB
- Alberta South**
 Burdett, AB
 Calgary, I, AB
 Maranatha, Calgary, AB
 Granum, AB
 Iron Springs, AB
 Medicine Hat, AB
 Vauxhall, AB
- British Columbia**
 New Westminster, BC
 Terrace, BC
 Victoria, BC
- Cadillac**
 Cadillac, MI
 Prosper, Falmouth, MI
 Lucas, MI
 McBain I, MI
 Rudyard MI, SS
 Vogel Center, MI
- California South**
 Latin American, Anaheim, CA
 Arcadia, CA
 Bellflower I, CA
 Bellflower III, CA
 Calvary, Chino, CA
 Chino, I, CA
 Honolulu, HI
 Ontario, CA
 Redlands I, CA
 Highland Avenue, Redlands, CA
 Bethel, Sun Valley, CA
- Central California**
 Alameda, CA
 Escalon, CA
 Modesto, CA
 Ripon, I CA
 Immanuel, Ripon, CA
 Moorpark, San Jose, CA
 Visalia, CA
 Walnut Creek, CA
- Chatham**
 Aylmer, ON
- Chatham I, ON
 Essex, ON
 Forest, ON
 London I, ON
 Sarnia I, ON
 Sarnia II, ON
- Chicago North**
 Cicero I, IL
 West Suburban, Cicero, IL
 Elmhurst, IL
 First, Fulton, IL
 Ridott, German Valley, IL
 Western Springs, IL
 Wheaton, IL
- Chicago South**
 Evergreen Park I, IL
 Park Lane, Evergreen Park, IL
 Oak Lawn I, IL
 Kedvale Avenue, Oak Lawn, IL
 Orland Park, IL
 Palos Heights, IL
- Columbia**
 Bethel, Manhattan, MT
 Calvin, Portland, OR
 Sunnyside, WA
- Eastern Canada**
 Athens, ON
 Kemptville I, ON
 Charlottetown, PEI
 Calvin, Ottawa, ON
 Williamsburg, ON
 Zion, Pembroke, ON
- Florida**
 Bradenton, FL
 Lake Worth, FL
 Calvin, Pinellas Park, FL
- Grand Rapids East**
 Ada, MI
 Caledonia, MI
 Boston Square, Grand Rapids, MI
 Brookside, Grand Rapids, MI
 Calvin, Grand Rapids, MI
 Cascade, Grand Rapids, MI
 Church of the Servant,
 Grand Rapids, MI
 East Paris, Grand Rapids, MI
 Faith, Grand Rapids, MI

- First, Grand Rapids, MI
 Fuller Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mayfair, Grand Rapids, MI
 Mayfair, Grand Rapids, MI SS
 Millbrook, Grand Rapids, MI
 Neland Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI
 Oakdale Park, Grand Rapids, MI
 Plymouth Heights, Grand Rapids, MI
 Princeton, Grand Rapids, MI
 Seymour, Grand Rapids, MI
 Shawnee Park, Grand Rapids, MI
 Sherman Street, Grand Rapids, MI
 Woodlawn, Grand Rapids, MI
 Middleville, MI
- Grand Rapids North**
- Coopersville, MI
 Eastmanville, MI
 Alpine Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI
 Arcadia, Grand Rapids, MI
 Beckwith Hills, Grand Rapids, MI
 East Leonard, Grand Rapids, MI
 Highland Hills, Grand Rapids, MI
 Riverside, Grand Rapids, MI
 Walker, Grand Rapids, MI
 West Leonard, Grand Rapids, MI
 Westview, Grand Rapids, MI
 Grant, MI
 Lamont, MI
 Rockford, MI
- Grand Rapids, South**
- Covenant, Cutlerville, MI
 East Cutlerville, Cutlerville MI,
 Cutlerville I, Cutlerville, MI
 Cutlerville Hills, Cutlerville, MI
 Alger Park, Grand Rapids, MI
 Bethel, Grand Rapids, MI
 Burton Heights, Grand Rapids, MI
 Burton Heights,
 Grand Rapids, MI SS
 Godwin Heights, Grand Rapids, MI
 Grandville Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI
 Ideal Park, Grand Rapids, MI
 Immanuel, Grand Rapids, MI
 Kelloggsville, Grand Rapids, MI
 LaGrave Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI
 Moline, MI
 Wayland, MI
- Grandville**
- Bauer, MI
 Byron Center I, MI
 Byron Center II, MI
 Heritage, Byron Center, MI
 Dorr, MI
 Hope, Grandville, MI
 Ivanrest, Grandville, MI SS
 South Grandville, Grandville, MI
 Baldwin Street, Jenison, MI
 Cottonwood Heights, Jenison, MI
 Jenison I, MI
 Ridgewood, Jenison, MI
 Trinity, Jenison, MI
- 12th Avenue, Jenison, MI
 Beverly, Wyoming, MI
 Calvary, Wyoming, MI
 Lee Street, Wyoming, MI
 Rogers Heights, Wyoming, MI
 36th Street, Wyoming, MI
 Wyoming Park, Wyoming, MI
- Hackensack**
- Northside, Clifton, NJ
 Newton, NJ
 Bethel, Paterson, NJ
 Bethel, Paterson, NJ SS
 Pompton Plains, NJ SS
 Terra Ceia, NC
 West Sayville, NY
- Hamilton**
- Brantford I, ON
 Aldershot, Burlington, ON
 Calvin, Dundas, ON
 Fruitland, ON
 Mountainview, Grimsby, ON
 Hamilton I, ON
 Immanuel, Hamilton, ON
 Mount Hamilton, ON
 Maranatha, St. Catharines, ON
 Trinity, St. Catharines, ON
 Immanuel, Simcoe, ON
 Riverside, Wellandport, ON
 Maranatha, York, ON
- Holland**
- East Saugatuck, MI
 Graafschap, MI
 Hamilton, MI
 Bethany, Holland, MI
 Calvary, Holland, MI
 Central Avenue, Holland, MI
 14th Street, Holland, MI
 Harderwyk, Holland, MI
 Holland Heights, Holland, MI
 Maple Avenue, Holland, MI
 Maranatha, Holland, MI
 Montello Park, Holland, MI
 Niekerk, Holland, MI
 Ninth Street, Holland, MI
 Park, Holland, MI
 Prospect Park, Holland, MI
 Providence, Holland, MI
 Noordeloos, MI
 Pine Creek, Holland, MI
 South Olive, MI
 West Olive, MI
- Hudson**
- Midland Park, NJ
 Irving Park, Midland Park, NJ
 Paterson IV, NJ
 Prospect Park, Paterson, NJ
 Rochester, NY
 Pleasant Street, Whitinsville, MA
 Calvin, Wyckoff, NJ
- Huron**
- Kitchener I, ON

- Owen Sound I, ON
- Illiana**
- Crown Point I, IN
- De Motte I, IN
- Highland I, IN
- Highland II, IN
- Bethel, Lansing, IL
- Oak Glen, Lansing, IL
- Lynwood, IL
- Munster, IN
- Bethany, South Holland, IL
- Cottage Grove, South Holland, IL
- South Holland, I, IL
- Peace, South Holland, IL
- Kalamazoo**
- Battle Creek, MI
- Alamo Avenue, Kalamazoo, MI
- Comstock, Kalamazoo, MI
- Kalamazoo I, MI
- Grace, Kalamazoo, MI
- Milwood, Kalamazoo, MI
- Northern Heights, Kalamazoo, MI
- Parchment, Kalamazoo, MI SS
- Prairie Edge, Kalamazoo, MI
- Kalamazoo III, MI
- Westwood, Kalamazoo, MI
- Lake Erie**
- Akron, OH
- Parkview Heights, Cincinnati, OH
- Dearborn, MI
- Cherry Hill, Inkster, MI
- Community, Saginaw, MI
- Minnesota North**
- Brandon, MN
- Bunde, MN
- Emo, ON
- Ogilvie, MN
- Pease, MN
- Prinsburg, MN
- Raymond, MN
- Emden, Renville, MN
- Bethlehem, Thunder Bay, ON
- Willmar, MN
- Kildonan, Winnipeg, MB
- Minnesota South**
- Chandler, MN
- Colton, SD
- Bethel, Edgerton, MN
- Edgerton I, MN
- Hills, MN
- Holland, MN
- Holland Center, SD
- Ebenezer, Leota, MN
- Luverne, MN
- Pinestone, MN
- Volga, SD
- Worthington, MN
- Muskegon**
- Ferrysburg, MI
- Fremont I, MI
- Fremont I, MI SS
- Fremont II, MI
- Trinity, Fremont, MI
- Grand Haven I, MI
- Grand Haven II, MI
- Allen Avenue, Muskegon, MI
- Bethany, Muskegon, MI
- Calvin, Muskegon, MI
- East, Muskegon, MI
- Muskegon Heights, Muskegon, MI
- New Era, MI
- Reeman, MI
- Spring Lake, MI
- Spring Lake, MI SS
- Northcentral Iowa**
- Cedar Falls, IA SS
- Holland, IA
- Kanawha, IA
- Wright, Kanawha, IA
- Wellsburg, I, IA
- Wellsburg, II IA SS
- Woden, IA
- Orange City**
- Hull, I, IA
- Ireton, IA
- Calvin, LeMars, IA
- Ocheyedan, IA
- Orange City I, IA
- Calvary, Orange City, IA
- Sanborn, IA
- Sheldon, IA
- Sibley, IA
- Sioux City, I, IA
- Pacific Northwest**
- Trinity, Anchorage, AK
- First, Everett, WA
- Everson, WA
- Bethel, Lynden, WA
- Lynden I, WA
- Lynden III, WA
- Marysville, Cascade, WA
- Monroe, WA
- Mount Vernon, WA
- Sumas, WA
- Community, Tacoma, WA
- Pella**
- Cedar, IA
- Leighton, IA
- Bethel, Oskaloosa, IA
- First, Oskaloosa, IA
- Calvary, Pella, IA
- Faith, Pella, IA
- Pella I, IA
- Pella II, IA
- Peoria, IA
- Prairie City, IA
- Sully, IA
- Quinte**
- Maranatha, Belleville, ON
- Bethany, Bloomfield, ON
- Rehoboth, Bowmanville, ON
- Ebenezer, Trenton, ON

- Hebron, Whitby, ON
- Rocky Mountain**
 Denver I, CO
 Denver II, CO
 Rehoboth, NM
 Immanuel, Salt Lake City, UT
 Bethel, Tucson, AZ
- Sioux Center**
 Doon, IA
 Inwood, IA
 Lebanon, IA
 New Holland, SD
 Platte, SD
 Calvin, Rock Valley, IA
 Rock Valley I, IA
 Trinity, Rock Valley, IA
 Bethel, Sioux Center, IA
 Sioux Center I, IA
- Toronto**
 Barrie, ON
 Brampton II, ON
 Orillia, ON
 Grace, Scarborough, ON
- Wisconsin**
 Beaver Dam, WI SS
 Milwaukee, Brookfield, WI
- Delavan, WI
 Kenosha, WI
 Madison, WI
 Oostburg I, WI
 Racine, WI
 Randolph II, WI
 First, Sheboygan, WI
- Zeeland**
 Allendale I, MI
 Allendale II, MI
 Borculo, MI
 Drenthe, MI
 Forest Grove, MI
 Hillcrest, Hudsonville, MI
 Immanuel, Hudsonville, MI
 Messiah, Hudsonville, MI
 Jamestown, MI
 Oakland, MI
 Overisel, MI
 Rusk, MI
 Bethel, Zeeland, MI
 Zeeland I, MI
 Zeeland I, MI SS
 Haven, Zeeland, MI
 North Street, Zeeland, MI
 Zeeland III, MI
 Zutphen, MI

C. *Statistical Report*

Synod of 1974 instructed the board to make available to it in alternate years a statistical survey regarding the various mission fields. This information is currently being assembled and will be presented to synod in a separate report.

Section Three

Africa

Africa continues to rush on its way to political independence. Between the years of 1950 and 1975, forty-one countries, encompassing nearly 95 percent of Africa's land surface and population, became independent. In the past year the attention of the world has been drawn to Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, and especially Angola, as these former Portuguese colonies join the quest for independent political stability.

Tribalism, nemesis of Africa, haunts young nationhood. Old tribal kingdoms and people, seeking to conserve their cultural past, clash with the young military rulers of the new Africa. Secularism and social unrest, fostered by the new economics of oil, agricultural and industrial wealth, tantalize the young and frustrate the old. In much of black Africa there is a growing revolt against the cultural and economic invasion of the West. Cultural revival, Negritude, the black arts and tribal folk lore are featured daily in the sub-continent's newspapers.

Christianity and other religions are caught up in an explosive matrix of new and old, traditional and foreign ideas. Black Africa is a turbulent womb in which transformed cultures and life styles are crying to be born. Christianity and Islam continue to experience rapid growth, and that of Christianity appears to be more rapid. However, David

Barrett's estimate of 350 million Christians in Africa by 2000 A.D. is now called into question by a developing alliance between secularism and the mystique of old animism. The remaining 100 million animists and another 50 million uncertain Christians must be incorporated rapidly into strong, indigenous churches to stem the tide of secularism and resurgent animism. For the Christian Church in Africa this is an uncertain hour. Some voices call for a moratorium on missions. Others, seeing inadequate resources for the great task ahead, cry out for increased assistance from missions abroad. For such missions the time is also uncertain. Some Western churches, faced with deep spiritual and financial problems of their own, welcome the call for a moratorium. However, many evangelical churches, stirred by events such as the Lausanne Congress on Evangelization, have recommitted themselves to the unfinished task.

We are constantly reassessing both the need for and strategy of our missions in Africa. A brief review of events in 1975 will give us a perspective for the future.

Nigeria

The rapid and confusing change of events in Nigeria made 1975 an uncertain year for the Mission. Early in the year, the Udoji Commission recommended huge salary increases for those in government employ. When the government adopted these recommendations it also encouraged the private sector to grant salary increases of at least thirty percent. Our mission employs over five hundred Nigerians in its various institutions. Some employees threatened to strike if they were not given salary increases similar to those in government service. After a period of discussion and study, during which a member of the board's Finance Committee visited Nigeria, an agreement was reached which granted salary increases averaging about thirty-five percent. This strained and already tight budget made a reduction in missionary staff imperative. A reduction from eighty-seven salaried missionaries in 1974 to seventy-nine by January, 1976, had already been approved by the board, and the pace of this reduction was accelerated. Other ministries in Nigeria were also curtailed or turned over to the Nigerian church. Inflation, already high, increased rapidly and compounded the difficulties.

In March, General Gowon, then Head of State, launched Nigeria's third development plan covering the years 1975-1980. He announced plans to spend fifty billion dollars during the period. Four new universities, eight hundred new secondary schools, twenty thousand new primary schools, five thousand new health institutions, eight thousand new postal agencies, eighteen thousand kilometers of new roads, and seventeen modern airports were included in the plan. It soon became evident that existing port facilities and building supplies were inadequate. Hundreds of towns and villages, excluded by the planners, were disappointed in the face of rising expectations.

Further steps toward socialized health care were taken. Our mission hospitals were instructed to reduce their fee charges and were promised additional government grants to make up the difference. The fee

reduction went into immediate effect, but increased government aid came slowly. There was a period of extreme financial crisis during which the hospitals had difficulty meeting their payrolls. During this period contingency plans were made to close all or part of our medical services if it became necessary. A second board delegation visited the field in July and gave administrative and financial advice.

On July 29, a few days after the board delegation left Nigeria, the Government of General Yakubu Gowon was overthrown in a bloodless coup d'etat. His vacillation and indecision, in the face of mounting corruption, inflation, and unrest, brought on his downfall.

The new leaders began an immediate crackdown on corruption. Thousands of government leaders and civil servants were swept aside in the purge. On October 1, the new regime announced a new political program with plans to turn over to a democratically-elected government in 1979. A constitutional committee was appointed. Other panels were pointed to study two burning issues — the division of states and the location of the federal capital.

During the regime of General Gowon, the country had been divided into twelve states. Prior to that there had been four regional divisions. Nigeria's eighty million people come from 250 different tribes. Many ethnic groups were dissatisfied with the state boundaries. In the first week of February 1976, the country was redivided into twenty states. On February 12, another group of military officers attempted a coup and assassinated General Murtala Mohammed, the country's Head of State. The coup was unsuccessful, but the political future remains uncertain.

Other events also brought turmoil and discouragement for our mission staff. On April 19, 1975, William P. De Jong, missionary teacher at Wukari Division Combined Secondary School near Takum, was drowned in a boating accident on the Katsina Ala River. Bill arrived in Nigeria on March 3, 1969. He returned to America in 1971, and in June, 1973, was married to Lois Gritter. Bill and Lois left for Nigeria in November, 1973, to share in teaching and living the Good News in Christ. Both the Nigerian Christian community and missionary staff were deeply shocked by this loss. On May 29, 1975, the mission was saddened again by the loss of Duane Henry Evenhouse, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Aldrich Evenhouse.

Last year a report was given on the agonizing church schism in the Ekas-Benue area. During 1975 the constitution of the mission and its administrative relationship to the church were revised and continued encouragement was given to reconciliation attempts. In November, after a series of reconciliation efforts had met with failure, the two groups agreed to attend yet another meeting called by the mission. We gratefully report the blessing of God on meetings held on November 4 and 15. Leaders from both groups frankly and openly admitted that the root problem was one of tribal differences between the Jukun and Kuteb. Faults on both sides were confessed and forgiven. On Sunday, November 16, the leaders attended worship services at the congregations of both EKAS-Benue and "EKAN-Takum" in the town of Takum and publicly acknowledged these faults and asked forgiveness. Following

these meetings, additional steps were taken to re-unite the church, and it is hoped that during the course of 1976 a complete reunion will be effectuated.

EKAS-Benue, recognizing its Nigerian context and growth beyond Benue Province, has changed its name. It is now known as the Church of Christ in Nigeria, Benue and Sardauna Region (EKAN-Benue and Sardauna). This church continued its evangelistic outreach amid the frustrations of schism. A denominational mission board has been established, and four Nigerian missionaries were sent out to unevangelized areas in 1975. N.K.S.T., the Tiv Church, has also established a denominational mission board in order to coordinate its efforts to reach more than one million unevangelized Tiv people. Thought is also being given to evangelization beyond their ethnic borders. It should be mentioned that in addition to these denominational mission efforts, significant congregational and classical mission work is also occurring.

Pastors and evangelists are increasingly available. There are presently nine students from the two churches studying at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria and another twenty-six at the Reformed Theological College of Nigeria located at Mkar. One hundred sixty students are enrolled in the five evangelist's training schools of EKAN-Benue and Sardauna, and another eighty students at the Benue Bible Institute, the N.K.S.T. School.

The literature work of the mission is in a difficult period. Amid expanding demand and increasing church interest, paper and printing costs have more than doubled in the last two years. This has forced us to reduce our total inventory and a reassessment of the literature is in process. One particular matter of concern is the fact that Tiv Bibles are out of print. These were supplied to us by the Nigerian Bible Society in conjunction with the British Bible Society. Both societies face financial difficulties and are increasingly unable to provide us with Bibles in the vernacular languages.

In education a major event was the transfer of Mkar Teachers College and W.M. Bristow Secondary School to the N.K.S.T. Church on November 13. This marked the end of direct educational involvement by our mission in Nigeria. We are happy to report that we no longer own or administrate any post-primary schools in Nigeria. In the future our role in education will be limited to staffing assistance of Nigerian owned schools. Although these schools continue to expand rapidly, great strides have been made in Nigerianizing the staff. For example, at Mkar Teachers College there were eight missionary and seven Nigerian teachers in 1965. In 1975 there are four missionary and twenty-six Nigerian teachers.

Mention has already been made of the uncertain situation faced by our hospitals. When the fee decreases went into effect, the patient load rose nearly forty percent, giving our staff almost unbearable work loads. Except for doctors, the staff is now predominantly Nigerian. For example, at Mkar Christian Hospital there were eight missionary and seventeen Nigerian nurses in 1965. In 1975 there are four missionary and forty-two Nigerian nurses. After initial uncertainty and the considered possibility of closing the hospitals due to lack of operating funds,

government grants have increased significantly and both hospitals anticipated that they would reach the end of 1975 with little or no operating deficit. Government attitudes toward all aspects of our medical work remain positive. The Ministry of Health of Benue-Plateau State has indicated that they have no immediate plans to take over this work. Significant church growth is stimulated by our medical outreach, and the Nigerian churches plead with us to continue until an effective method of indigenous administration of the hospitals can be worked out.

Meanwhile, important work by the Islam-In-Africa Project, now headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya, with Dr. Peter Ipema as General Secretary continues. This project provides African church leaders with meaningful assistance in the evangelization of Muslims. An all-Nigeria course will be held this year with many leaders from Nigerian churches attending.

Thus, in the context of political uncertainty and vast social change the mission and churches we serve rush on with a sense of urgency. Church growth, in proportion to members already incorporated, is leveling off. There are now over two million people in the Benue Valley. Of this number about 250 thousand attend our churches, but less than 50 thousand are baptized members. Another 200 thousand are adherents of the Roman Catholic Mission. This leaves 1.6 million unevangelized people. Most of them animists on their way to a secular state if we do not act now. Last year, in the midst of abounding responsiveness about three thousand baptized Christians were added to our roles. One of the greatest frustrations for both church and mission is that this number could be higher if the resources, both in terms of personnel and money, were available. One step in the incorporation of converts into the fellowship of the church is to give instruction in responsible Christian stewardship, morality, and mission outreach.

With this situation in mind, the Nigerian Mission sets its mind to the following strategy in 1976:

- Continued emphasis on church-planting in conjunction with the mission boards of the Nigerian churches;
- Increased emphasis on the improvement of catechetical and church educational programs, so that the cycle from responsible foreign missions to indigenous church to responsible indigenous missions can be completed;
- Continued efforts to provide vital Christian leadership training at the seminaries and Bible schools;
- Gradual transfer of medical institutions will continue with the awareness that this ministry of care must be a part of the context of faithful proclamation. Missionary staff, especially doctors, will be provided for some years.
- Transfer of post-primary schools has been completed. Since the educational system of Nigeria is undergoing rapid expansion, missionary teachers will be provided where there is need. They will be charged with the task of providing Christian leadership for the Nigerian church and community and will also be expected to participate in the evangelizing programs of the church. A large part of the salaries of most of these teachers will be paid by the schools in which

they teach since these schools are grant-aided by the Nigerian government. In addition, the mission will assist in the recruitment of some teachers for vital positions in government post-primary schools.

- Evangelism by means of literature and radio will be expanded as Nigerian society becomes increasingly literate and oriented to methods of modern communication.

Liberia

Synod authorized the opening of a Christian Reformed Mission in Liberia last year. Mr. and Mrs. Larry Vanderaa have returned to Liberia and are now engaged in the study of the Bassa language. We are presently seeking a second missionary to join the Vanderaas.

Official registration with the Liberian government is in process, and a site for our beginning mission in the heart of Bassa Land has been tentatively selected. The mission will concentrate on church-planting, a Bible school ministry, and literacy.

Many small pseudo-Christian or proto-Christian groups exist in Liberia. These groups have arisen as imitations of America-Liberian and mission churches, but have also incorporated many of the traditional religious practices which are carried on in the devil-bush societies which exist throughout the interior. Many of the attenders must be classed as Christo-pagan, even though the pastor may be a believer. The need for Bible training is desperate. We shall not align ourselves with any splinter group or proto-Christian group at this point but attempt to provide a basic statement of the Reformed faith which may serve as a bridge for these groups.

Our approach leads to the development of churches. Through trekking, use of the vernacular, a Bible training ministry, and adult literacy classes we hope to plan a strong and faithful church in the Liberian interior.

Section Four Asia Missions

Christian Reformed missions in Asia lived through the vortex of tradition-shattering events in 1975. Chief among these were the American withdrawal from Indo-China military involvements, the resultant emigration of 130,000 Vietnamese from their homeland, the continued economic pressures raised by the increase in energy costs, and a slight cooling of the attitude of China toward the West while changes of leadership occurred.

The effects which have been seen immediately in the Asian missions of the church include an increased emphasis on radio and literature ministries, since these are less dependent on an actual missionary presence in a given locality. Church organization has been accelerated coincidentally with Asias growing realization that Western missionary presence may at sometime become as untenable, or as impractical as American military presence once was. Local leadership training facilities have been encouraged by recent events. Notable is the beginning of the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong by a group of evangelical Chinese scholars. Western peoples came under a cloud

of suspicion or unreliability, due to CIA disclosures, reflections on American business morality, irregularities in relief programs, and a growing American attitude of isolationism.

The Japan Mission

Nineteen seventy-six marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of our missionary activity in Japan, dating from the 1951 arrival of the Rev. and Mrs. Henry Bruinooge on March 25 (Easter Sunday) and the Rev. and Mrs. Ed Van Baak on June 9. When the Christian Reformed Church responded to the invitation of the Reformed Church in Japan (formed in 1946) to engage in cooperative mission work in the greater Tokyo area, there were two congregations in the area. These two congregations and one in the Sendai area formed the Eastern Presbytery.

The evangelistic efforts of the Christian Reformed missionaries, the Orthodox Presbyterian missionaries in the Sendai area, and the Presbytery's own mission work now include a Presbytery with thirty-seven congregations and preaching posts. The membership of these churches in 1973, according to the latest report made by the Presbytery, including seventy-two baptisms and eight professions of faith in that year.

The Christian Reformed Mission has begun twenty-six mission posts during the past twenty-five years. Many other preaching posts have been begun and later transferred, incorporated into other posts, or deactivated. Sixteen of these posts have organized, built churches, installed elders, called pastors, and joined the fellowship of the Reformed Church in Japan. There are therefore no Christian Reformed churches in Japan; the Christian Reformed missions become congregations of a sister Japanese denomination.

The twelve organized mission posts have a membership of 240, and another 145 persons are committed to further inquiry into the Christian faith. The combined Sunday school attendance is 845. The groups have witnessed thirty-three baptisms in the past year. Three of these groups have begun very recently, and two of the twelve will begin meetings in 1976 when the Rev. and Mrs. Richard D. Sytsma relocate in Numazu and the Rev. and Mrs. William J. Stob move to Narita.

The mission has also begun evangelism projects which assist the existing churches in their evangelism, while at the same time seeking to contribute to the beginning of new church-planting projects. The Student Center in Kunitachi enrolls over two hundred students in participation in center activities, most of them instruction classes. Each of these students pays a fee for use of center facilities. The Rev. and Mrs. Gerrit Koedoot have served the center for six years. The Rev. and Mrs. Ray Hommes are also on the center staff, and Mr. and Mrs. John Tenyen-huis, Calvin Seminary interns.

Radio is in its eighth year, and has become in 1976 a joint project with the Back to God Hour. By this arrangement station time and program production are BTGH responsibilities, with the mission in charge of the follow-up, literature, and church contacts. The Rev. Henry Bruinooge is in charge of all aspects of the radio work. During 1975 the radio listeners' magazine distribution was 21,600 copies. Some counselling is done by telephone, dealing with 250 responses from listeners.

Bible correspondence courses written by the Rev. Mr. Maeda of the Reformed Church in Japan enrolled 449 persons.

Some of the same literature is used in the itinerant evangelistic work of the Rev. and Mrs. Maas Vander Bilt, whose efforts assist at the existing churches in their own evangelistic outreach and explore areas which are often neglected: rural communities, traditional festival occasions at temples and shrines, urban youth groups.

Church-planting ministries are the continued focus of all these activities, and the primary concern of the missionary families: Michiel De Berdt, Ronald Hempel, Dick Kwantes, Harvey A. Smit, and Richard E. Sytsma. Dr. Smit continues part-time teaching at Kobe Seminary, whose board has now honored him with a position of full professor at the seminary. Two missionary families, Jack Jones and Sidney Norman, teach at the Christian Academy in Japan.

These twenty-five years in Japan have been marked by great blessings:

- congenial relations with Japanese church leaders;
- stability and order within the church's life;
- continuity in the missionary staff;
- a high degree of language proficiency among missionaries;
- good communication and rapport with home churches and Mission Board;
- peace and order in Japanese society;
- innovations in mission strategy to meet Japan's national growth;
- clear delineation of responsibilities between mission and church;
- Japanese control and leadership in the Kobe Reformed Seminary;
- missionary participation in pastors' training;
- continued focus on church-planting as the mission's primary task;
- assistance to church-planting in radio, student, and itinerant evangelism;
- faithful support by CRC congregations in every year.

Guam

The Faith Presbyterian Reformed Church on Guam, missionary-pastor the Rev. Henry Dykema, bookstore manager Con Douma and Hospitality House director Bruce Bode made an immediate response to the challenge of thousands of Vietnamese refugees descending on Guam in 1975. It was a time of great physical exertion compensated by rich spiritual blessings.

Faith Church's vitality is better numbered by attendance (usually crowded) than membership (very transient). Those served by the church number 215. Attendance of 180 in the morning strains the facility. Evening worship runs between thirty and eighty. There are ninety-five Micronesian students (University of Guam) who regularly attend. Seventy children attend church school; the pastor leads the catechism classes, mid-week Bible study, and a regular broadcast over KUAM, "Call to Faith."

Faith Bookstore, managed by Con Douma who is assisted by his wife Betty and an efficient staff, had another very good year in 1975, selling about 27,000 religious books during the year and over 60,000 books on

secular topics. The store is open fifty-seven hours a week, more importantly provides the opportunity for these customers to be greeted by the friendly staff of the Faith Bookstore. The bookstore is a recognized Christian enterprise, not only adjacent to the church but identified with it, in name, location, and purpose.

The Hospitality House has during 1975 been led by Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Bode, and has emphasized the ministry to Micronesian students who attend the University of Guam, while adjusting to the lesser emphasis placed upon the servicemen's ministry. The Micronesian student is typically a product of a nominally Christian society on his home island, usually hundreds of miles away. He has an elementary knowledge of the Scriptures, but little understanding of the Old Testament. The goal of Mr. Bode has been that of training some of the students in biblical knowledge, so that they can return to the islands of Micronesia not only as university trained leaders in education and social areas, but as leaders in their churches as well. The involvement of the Faith Church in this ministry is being studied with the consistory of the church.

Taiwan

During 1975 Taiwan witnessed the death of President Chiang Kai-shek and an orderly transfer of authority. Later in the year the Billy Graham team conducted an evangelism crusade which gained much respect and acceptance.

The Taiwan Mission has been associated with nine congregations, either brought into being by the mission or supervised by sister missions (New Zealand, Korea, Orthodox Presbyterian). These congregations have a combined membership of about 685 persons, of whom forty-three were converted to the Christian faith in the past year. The organized congregations were formed into a Presbytery and denomination called the (Christian) Reformed Presbyterian Church of Taiwan.

During 1975 a group of pastors, elders, and churches from this Presbytery and elsewhere regrouped into what they called the "Second Presbytery," following the same creeds but differing on matters of church government and order. Objections to procedures in the original Presbytery is the stated reason for formation of a separate group. The Taiwan Mission is following the general policy that we maintain relationships with both groups, cooperating with them in every way possible, and seeking for communication at least, and reconciliation at best.

In addition to maintaining contact and cooperation with the congregations, the missionaries are involved in radio evangelism. The Mandarin broadcasts (the Rev. Peter Tong) are used locally in Taipei and other stations in Taiwan, and are beamed also from stations in Manila and Hong Kong to parts of the mainland. A unique and innovative English language program conducted by the Rev. Mike Vander Pol uses the same program facilities as Tong's work, but is on a different station reaching the student population, for whom English is a required subject. The two radio ministries have generated requests for 11,460 pieces of literature in 1975, including booklets, Bibles, and personal letters.

Another ministry centered in Luke Hall, a student center of the Tai-

wan Presbyterian Church where Dennis Mulder engaged with others in the Center work: fourteen classes per week, average attendance of ten, involving 650 students, of whom six were baptized in neighboring churches during the year. In addition, the Rev. Mr. Mulder directed a literature and correspondence program which graduated an average of 1,500 persons per month in churches throughout Taiwan.

Philippines

There are two major centers of activity in the Philippines: the island of Negros and Luzon Island. Negros is the site of the first work begun by Vicente and Lucy Apostol, and the Barry Blankers and Dick Bouma families. In 1976 three Negros churches, Bacolod, Bago, and Pulupandan anticipate organization as congregations and the formation of the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines. For more than a year missionaries have been working with the steering committees of these groups in the development of an acceptable church order.

The churches have grown considerably in membership in the last year. Pulupandan has 195 members (adult and children), Bago 262, and Bacolod 80. Another mission group begun in Murcia in late 1973 has 71 members. During the last two years, while the discussions regarding organization took place, Pulupandan had 32 baptisms, Bago had 78, Bacolod 18, and Murcia 64. There were 27 professions of faith in the four groups. Of the 192 baptisms, 78 were adult baptisms and 114 were children's baptisms, indicating that whole family groups have been coming for baptism and profession of faith.

In the Manila area of Luzon Island, the preaching centers of the Rev. Mr. Blankers in Tala, a leprosarium, has 27 members, 9 in San Francisco Del Monte, 12 in Calauan, and several recently baptized in remote Bayawas. Three groups in South Manilla are Silva Street, 35 members, Malibay, 30 members, and Tondo, 43 members. Thirty-eight of these 108 were baptized in the last two years. The Rev. Bob De Vries is in charge in South Manilla.

During 1975 the Genevan Reformed Seminary of the Philippines was begun in rented halls in Bacolod City with eleven students, three missionary teachers and a seminary intern, Miss Nola Opperwall. The Revs. Ed Vander Berg, Henry De Vries, and Keith Bulthuis have been teaching the first class of seminarians, while at the same time helping to organize the churches, supervise the work of students in the evangelistic field work, train two Bible Institute graduates for pastoral work and possible immediate ordination, recruit and screen the second class of seminarians (beginning 1976), and plan the new seminary location and buildings which may possibly begin construction in 1976 if the site is purchased this year:

In order to continue the work of church-planting unabated, additional personnel will be sought for the Philippine Mission. Mr. and Mrs. Vicente Apostol will move to Iloilo, expanding the church-planting work to Panay Island. The Rev. Henry De Vries expects to devote full-time to church-planting. An additional missionary may be posted to Luzon Island in the future.

South Asia

Correspondence with persons and groups requesting help in evangelism have been continued with persons in Sri Lanka, South India, North India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. Problems of distance, visas, and other restrictions have limited these contacts to investigations and inquiries. The Board of Foreign Missions and Calvin Seminary will cooperate in sending Dr. Richard De Ridder to teach in Sri Lanka; during that time he may be available to develop contacts with a group in India which writes faithfully, and calls itself "the Christian Reformed Church." Opportunities in Bangladesh are periodically reviewed with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee which has personnel working there.

The Christian Reformed pastors, elders and members are encouraged to keep the Board of Foreign Missions informed of businessmen, educators, and other short-term residents of their plans for travel and their observations and contacts in Asian lands.

Section Five Latin America

It has been a good year for mission work in Latin America, and all our fields report steady growth and development. In general we can say that there are more opportunities for expanded outreach than the missionaries can reasonably handle. This situation causes us to rejoice that God has prepared a rich harvest for us to work in and also makes us search for ever more effective methods of communicating the Gospel and bringing men and women into vital, living relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Latin America offers missionaries a variety of challenges. In theology there is the demand that the Gospel be presented more clearly within the context of Latin America culture and experience. In terms of basic evangelism, millions of people are on the move, resettling in cities and new frontier areas where vast new highways are being laid through previously uninhabited regions. Natural disasters, earthquakes and hurricanes, with all the suffering and loss which these entail, repeatedly challenge Christian compassion and service. Beyond these, the perennial specter of millions of people caught in dreadful poverty demands solutions which go beyond mercy and relief to matters of social change and the restructuring of the whole political order.

Argentina

The news media have kept us informed of the social and political troubles through which Argentina has been passing, but we are grateful to God that our missionaries' lives have not been placed in jeopardy. The missionaries sense very deeply the turmoil and suffering which the Argentines are experiencing, as prices keep soaring and the poor can scarcely make ends meet. Bombings, kidnappings, and assassinations keep everyone in emotional tension, yet somehow life goes on. The missionary's task is to present the whole Christ to the whole man, showing the relevance of the Christian message to every life situation, and in this

area Argentina offers one of modern missions' greatest challenges. What is happening in Argentina now may occur in a few years in many other countries, and the way in which Christians react to the Argentine situation may guide us when similar events face us elsewhere.

As in most of Latin America, our mission program in Argentina consists of basic church-planting evangelism, leadership training, and literature work. Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Rooy are located in Buenos Aires, where Dr. Rooy is engaged in theological education through teaching and writing at several levels. He serves on the Faculty of Theology in Buenos Aires and also conducts a program of extension education for evangelists and lay leaders in other parts of Argentina. Dr. Rooy is assisted in his publication work by Miss Sylvia Kallemeyn, who is another one of our missionaries resident in Buenos Aires.

Church-planting evangelism is being conducted in the cities of La Plata, Mar del Plata, Chascomus, Olavarria, and in the barrios of Buenos Aires. The Rev. and Mrs. Ramon Borrego and the Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Stob have succeeded in starting a new congregation each year for three years in the barrios around La Plata. Miss Cecelia Drenth left the work in La Plata this year in order to continue her graduate studies at Fuller Theological Seminary and the board hopes to recruit an ordained missionary to replace her.

The Rev. and Mrs. Jack Huttinga have finished language study and have been assigned to work with the Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Brinks in church-planting in the city of Olavarria. The Rev. and Mrs. John Hutt continue their program of evangelism at the chapel in Mar del Plata, and the Rev. and Mrs. Thomas De Vries are doing similar work in Chascomus. The Rev. and Mrs. Louis Wagenveld have recently begun a new urban program in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires.

Our mission has two Christian bookstores in Argentina, one in Buenos Aires, one in La Plata and the other in the southern city of Comodoro Rivadavia. A large amount of Christian literature reaches the Argentine public through these two outlets. The missionaries and the Reformed Church of Argentina are involved in various diaconal ministries, which include a social service center in one of the poorer barrios of La Plata.

Brazil

Brazil, with its 105 million people, is the largest country in Latin America both in regard to land area and population. Economically, Brazil is rising fast, and it is predicted to be among the strongest nations in the world by the end of this century.

The Christian Reformed missionary staff in Brazil consists of the Rev. and Mrs. Charles Uken and the Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Oldenkamp who are engaged in direct evangelism and church-planting in the city of Aracatuba, the Rev. and Mrs. Willem Dirksen who during this past year initiated an interesting new program of leadership training for young congregations in the southern state of Santa Catarina. The Rev. and Mrs. Carl Bosma are now in language study in the city of Campinas. The Rev. and Mrs. Bosma will eventually be assigned to teaching in the Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas after he has completed language study and orientation in evangelism and pastoral work.

The board recently received a request from the Presbyterian Church of Brazil and our missionaries to recruit an additional missionary for theological teaching at Mackenzie University in the city of Sao Paulo. The board felt led to approve this request in view of the strategic position which this missionary will occupy and is currently looking for the right person to be called for this work.

The Rev. and Mrs. Simon Wolfert are also serving in Brazil, though not directly under the board. In line with the terms of cooperation with the Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil which were adopted by the Synod of 1975, the Rev. Mr. Wolfert serves as a pastor of this indigenous church of Dutch origin and receives his entire financial support from the members.

Cuba

As a communist country, Cuba is closed to foreign missionaries. But the twelve congregations and eight Cuban pastors of the Christian Reformed Church in Cuba continue their services and witness on the island. In some cases the churches are showing remarkable growth.

Churches and pastors related to our mission are located in the following areas: Jaguey Grande, Rev. Erelío Martínez; Amarillas, vacant; Calamete, Rev. Pedro Suarez; Agramonte, Rev. P. Ramirez; Navajas and Torriente, Rev. Argelio Martínez; Balondron and Guira, Rev. David Lee; Alacranes and Estante, Rev. Benitez Tilan; Matanzas, Rev. A. Toirac; and Havana, Rev. Marcelo Sanchez.

Telephone contact is maintained with our pastors in Cuba and some correspondence does get through. The Mission Board has authorized a visit to Cuba as soon as this is possible.

Mexico

Mexico is the Christian Reformed Church's largest field in Latin America as far as the number of missionaries appointed by the board is concerned. Fourteen families, located from Baja California in the Northwest to the Yucatan Peninsula in the Southeast, are seeking to establish Christ's kingdom in the Mexican Republic.

The program which receives the greatest amount of attention in Mexico is the Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City, which serves also as the center of the program of theological education by extension known as Cooperative International Theological Education (popularly referred to as CITE). Using programmed textbooks and itinerating teachers, the CITE program is bringing theological education down to the grassroots level, training elders, deacons, Sunday school teachers, evangelists, and also future ministers of the Gospel. The Rev. Paul Bergsma heads this program in Mexico City, and working along with him at the seminary are the Rev. Gerald Nyenhuis, the Rev. David Doyle, and Dr. Derk Oostendorp. At a distance from the Mexico City center but also teaching in the CITE program are the Rev. and Mrs. Larry Roberts in the city of Campeche, and the Rev. and Mrs. Orlin Hogan in the Tijuana area.

Direct evangelism and church-planting are conducted by the Rev. Robert Ruis in Baja California, the Rev. Donald Lagerwey and Mr.

Abe Marcus in Central Mexico. This includes both urban and village work. Far to the south, Dr. and Mrs. Hans Weerstra labor among the Indians of the State of Oaxaca, and again their ministry is largely through theological education by extension.

The literature ministry has been building up steadily in Mexico for the past ten years, and the mission now operates eight attractive and well-stocked Christian bookstores in key cities throughout the country. Mr. Jack Roeda has overall charge of the bookstore work, and Mr. John De Young heads up the bookstore and bookmobile ministry in Baja California.

The Mexico Mission of the Christian Reformed Church also assists in the support of a Christian School for missionary children in Mexico City. Mrs. Cathy Silva and Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kroeze teach in this school.

The work in Mexico is done in cooperation with the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, a young denomination which is taking on more and more responsibility for its own maintenance and development. The mission works in active cooperation with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and the Back to God Hour whose radio broadcasts reach every part of Mexico.

At the time of the recent earthquake in Mexico, appeals for help reached the missionaries in Mexico who immediately gave money and sent Mr. and Mrs. Marcus to assist in relief work and evangelism among the earthquake victims. Many Protestant church buildings were destroyed or severely damaged by the earthquake, and many of our Christian brethren suffered great losses in Guatemala.

Nicaragua

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Teja have headed the Nicaragua mission program of the Christian Reformed Church this past year. This was their first year as overseas missionaries, and despite the normal problems of adjustment and transition the work in Nicaragua was blessed and multiplied under their direction. The Rev. and Mrs. John Vander Borgh are presently in Costa Rica studying Spanish, and they will join the Tejas in Nicaragua around the beginning of January, 1977.

The Tejas work primarily in the low-income housing development called Las Americas No. 2, on the outskirts of earthquake-devastated Managua. The mission was begun by our missionaries from Honduras and short-term workers from Mexico and the United States soon after the earthquake destroyed most of the capital city in December, 1973. Five more adults and several children were baptized in the Las Americas mission during the past year and several new members were received by transfer from other churches. Fifteen persons are presently being catechized in preparation for baptism.

Besides continuing the mission work around Managua, Mr. and Mrs. Teja began new work in the city of Masaya and in the smaller towns of San Benito and Muy Muy. At the present time it seems that the work in these new locations may grow faster than in the original area in Managua. The services in Muy Muy, for example, have an average attendance of around 150, and weekly services are also held in four

"satellite" communities outside the town of Muy Muy itself. Mr. Teja is working hard to train evangelists who can handle these additional preaching points, and he himself must divide his time between evangelism and evangelist-training.

Church-planting work is planned for the town of Solingalpa as soon as houses are occupied in the area where the mission has purchased land for a chapel. Hopefully, construction can begin later this year. A request has come in to begin services in Cinco Pinos, a town not far from the Honduran border.

A vital element in the growth and development of the work in both Nicaragua and Honduras is the CITE program. The establishment of new preaching points such as those described in these two sections would not be possible if a number of qualified men were not being trained for pastoral and evangelistic ministries in their own countries. Churches like those in Honduras and Nicaragua are too small to set up their own seminaries, yet they do need to provide adequate training for their leaders. To send men abroad for several years is not feasible, for it removes them from the churches and missions which need their services, it makes them dependent on foreign funds over an extended period, and it tends to separate them psychologically from their national context. The board has found a solution to this problem in the CITE program, which is described more fully in the section of this report on Mexico. With twelve men in training in Honduras, and five in Nicaragua, the board is confident that it is building a good foundation for the future.

Honduras

The Rev. and Mrs. Bernard Dokter and the Rev. and Mrs. Cornelius Persenaire have been in charge of our growing witness in the Central American country of Honduras. Our work in Honduras began through Back to God Hour contacts in the capital city of Tegucigalpa, and it has spread to other parts of the country. The Honduran church which has sprung up as a result of our witness calls itself the Christian Reformed Church of Honduras and is proud to identify with Christian Reformed Churches in other parts of the world.

The Central Church in the downtown area of Tegucigalpa, the capital, is pastored by the Rev. Mr. Dokter. The church ministers to a wide social spectrum which includes professors in the university, lawyers, and medical personnel, as well as the very humblest people in society. An attractive church building was completed this past year which has proven to be a tremendous asset to the church's program. Six adults were baptized this year in the Central Church. Sunday morning attendance averages close to one hundred, and an average of seventy-five attend in the evening.

The planting and development of new missions has been the major responsibility of the Rev. Cornelius Persenaire. The Rev. Mr. Persenaire's church-planting efforts in the urban barrios of La Travesia and Nueva Suyapa are outstanding examples of the harvest which waits to be brought in among new urbanites in Latin America. As in the case of the Central Church, when simple but attractive new church buildings were erected in these two barrios, attendance at the services increased.

The La Travesia congregation now has forty-three baptized members. New converts could be baptized at a faster rate, but the missionaries prefer to take new members through a careful program of indoctrination before baptism. Ten adults were baptized in La Travesia this year and the average attendance on Sunday is around eighty in the morning and ninety at night. A children's day care center under the supervision of CRWRC worker Miss Carol Boersma is located in the annex of the chapel and adds an important dimension to the total program.

In the vast new housing development known as Nueva Suyapa, there are only two evangelical chapels among more than 1,000 families and ours is one of these two chapels. Each of our Sunday services averages between thirty and forty persons, with 100 attending the mid-week service and more than 300 in attendance at evangelistic services when films are shown. Nueva Suyapa is a new and growing area composed of desperately poor people who have been relocated by the government. The new chapel which our mission dedicated on January 25, 1976, seats approximately 250 persons, and the annex has ample space for the sewing classes and literacy program which the mission hopes to begin in cooperation with CRWRC.

In the Tegucigalpa area, mission work is also conducted in the barrios called Las Vegas and El Bosque. The Rev. Mr. Persenaire is also in charge of the new mission program in the town of San Lorenzo and other places in the southern part of Honduras. The missionaries feel that the southern part of Honduras offers great possibilities for evangelism and if and when a third missionary is appointed to Honduras he should be assigned to this area.

It is with deep regret that the board and the Honduras Mission accepted the news that the Rev. and Mrs. Cornelius Persenaire will leave the field to return to ministry in the United States when their present term ends in August. The Lord has used them significantly to extend his kingdom in Central America. Replacements for the Persenaires are now being sought by the board.

Puerto Rico

The Puerto Rico field experienced considerable growth and a number of changes this past year. One of our missionaries, the Rev. Marvin Vugteveen, died unexpectedly in April, 1975, just ten days before the Bayamon congregation which he had begun was organized as a church. A beautiful testimony to the faithful and fruitful ministry of the Rev. Mr. Vugteveen and his colleagues was given by one of the newly-appointed elders at the organization service in Bayamon. In tribute to the Rev. Mr. Vugteveen, the elder said: "When he came seven years ago, we were nothing; but when he died we were a church."

Along with the Bayamon congregation, the Fairview group was organized as a church in May, 1975. The Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker were instrumental in bringing the Fairview congregation to the final stage of organization. Both the Bayamon and Fairview churches are now in the hands of national pastors.

Our missionary staff in Puerto Rico consists of the Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker, the Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott, the Rev. and Mrs.

Arnold Rumph, and the Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Sprik. The Spriks are engaged in church-planting evangelism in the city of Farjardo on the eastern end of the island. The Rev. Mr. Sprik also conducts a weekly radio program over a local station. The Rev. and Mrs. Pott took the place of the Vugteveens and they have just begun their church-planting work. Besides his own program of direct evangelism, Mr. Pott will be in charge of the evangelistic efforts of the seminary students. In the course of this year, the Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker had the joy of seeing the Fairview congregation organized and placed under a national pastor, and from that time on the Rev. Mr. Den Bleyker began devoting the major portion of his time to the seminary where he teaches Greek and New Testament. The Rev. Arnold Rumph serves as director of the seminary and teaches the courses in Systematic Theology and Church History.

The board has approved an additional missionary-teacher for Puerto Rico in 1977. The chief responsibility of the new missionary will be to teach in the seminary, especially Old Testament courses.

The Evangelical Reformed Seminary of Puerto Rico now has fourteen students, most of whom are university students or graduates. The students pay for their own textbooks and in addition they pay the seminary a tuition fee of \$25 for each quarterly course. Besides serving as the training center for the future pastors of the Christian Reformed Church of Puerto Rico, the seminary has attracted a number of students from denominations which do not have seminaries of their own and which are weak in theological instruction.

The importance of the Puerto Rico Reformed Seminary can hardly be overstated. The Latin American world needs high-quality theological training of the kind which the seminary can offer. The advantages of the seminary's location in Puerto Rico as over against Mexico, for example, are that visas can be obtained for students from other Latin American countries who may be sent by their churches for advanced Reformed training, the students generally are of a higher academic level, and there is easy access to Puerto Rico from the United States with greater security as far as permanent residence for missionaries is concerned.

The Christian Reformed Church of Puerto Rico is developing steadily. With the organization of the two new churches in 1975, a synod was called and denominational committees were appointed for theological education and evangelism. A committee is working on a revised church order. The Puerto Rican churches are growing under national leadership, and a number of new groups, meeting as house churches, have been formed. Prospects are good that in the next few years the island will be dotted with churches belonging to the denomination called the Christian Reformed Church of Puerto Rico.

The outreach of our Puerto Rico mission goes beyond the island itself and touches other parts of the Caribbean. Our missionaries are involved in follow-up from the Back to God Hour broadcasts in Spanish which are bringing an increasing number of contacts both in Puerto Rico itself and in other islands. The most significant of these so far has been the

responses in the Dominican Republic, just 60 miles west of Puerto Rico. A congregation has been formed in the town of Batey Tarana, and the congregation calls itself "The First Christian Reformed Church of the Dominican Republic." The board has authorized Puerto Rico missionaries to visit this congregation every six months and to enroll the Dominican pastor who is in charge of the group in extension courses through CITE. An additional request has come to the missionaries from Santo Domingo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, and that request is being studied. The possibility exists that our mission in Puerto Rico may become the base for wider evangelistic outreach throughout the Caribbean.

Spanish Literature Committee

The Spanish Literature Committee of the Christian Reformed Church serves all agencies and congregations of the denomination which have need for Spanish literature which cannot be obtained elsewhere. Serving on the committee are representatives from the Board of Home Missions (Rev. Peter Borgdorff), the Board of Publications-Education Committee (Prof. William Hendricks), the Back to God Hour (Rev. Juan Boonstra), and the Board of Foreign Missions (Dr. Roger Greenway). The Board of Foreign Missions serves as the administrative channel for the committee and Dr. Greenway is the coordinator of the program. Mr. Herman Baker and Prof. Elsa Cortina serve on the committee as members-at-large.

The function of the Spanish Literature Committee is to select books and pamphlets to be written or translated, process their publication, and make them available to Spanish-speaking churches and leaders. In the distribution of its materials the committee mainly uses the Evangelical Literature League (TELL), and cooperates also with field agencies overseas with which our missionaries are associated, namely, *Escaton* in Argentina and *La Antorcha* in Mexico.

Each year the number of Reformed books offered by the committee increases. Four new titles were produced this past year and twice that number are currently being prepared. Recently, the Rev. Jerry Pott, veteran missionary to Latin America and a recognized expert in the Spanish language and of Reformed literature in that language, was employed by the committee on a part-time basis to serve as editorial coordinator. Besides preparing two books of his own authorship, the Rev. Mr. Pott expedites the vast amount of work involved in corresponding with writers and translators, correcting manuscripts and galley proofs, and advising printers as to the final form of the books. Now that the Rev. Mr. Pott is serving with the committee, the number of titles published each year will definitely increase.

The work of the Spanish Literature Committee depends upon the financial support provided through the fifty-cents per family quota granted by synod. The committee up to now has never tried to raise money through private solicitation or appeals for special offerings in the churches. Because the amount which Latin American church leaders can pay does not meet the actual cost of producing and marketing the books, the committee maintains a policy of subsidizing all its publica-

tions so that TELL and other distribution agencies can sell the books at prices which people in Latin America and elsewhere can afford. The committee feels that this is a missionary service which must be rendered in order to meet the demand for the kind of literature which the committee produces.

This year the Spanish Literature Committee held a one-day planning session to which missionaries serving the Home and Foreign Boards and pastors serving Spanish-speaking congregations were invited. Problems relating to the contextualization of the Christian message, distribution, and the encouragement of Latin writers, were discussed in depth. The continuing need for the committee and for its program were reaffirmed and new avenues of service to the Spanish-speaking world explored. With appreciation for our denomination's faithful support of this work, and confidence that it must continue and be expanded, the Spanish Literature Committee requests synod to continue the fifty-cents per family quota which was granted last year.

Section Six Financial Matters

A. Treasurer's Report

The following are summary statements of balance sheets and receipts and disbursements of the various funds at the close of September 30, 1975, as prepared by our auditor. A detailed account of all transactions, as of December 31, 1975, will be presented to the budget committee of synod.

**CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES OF OPERATING FUND (WITHOUT AUDIT)
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1975 (CONDENSED)**

	Actual	Budget
Classical quotas (Page 9)	\$1,812,449	\$1,800,000
Missionary support	\$1,039,324	
Gifts and offerings		
Designated gifts	132,343	
Non-designated gifts	121,895	
General missions	166,744	
Legacies	92,371	
Above quota offerings	193,255	
Second Protestant Reformed Church receipts	<u>231</u>	
	1,746,163	1,650,000
Field receipts (For nine months ended September 30, 1975)	1,672,417	1,310,119
Interest and dividends	\$ 29,639	
Proceeds - sale of assets	<u>37,972</u>	50,000
Other operating revenue	<u>9,138</u>	
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$5,307,778</u>	<u>\$4,810,119</u>

EXPENDITURES		
Operating Expenditures	\$5,193,900	
Capital Expenditures	<u>148,700</u>	<u>\$5,342,600</u>
EXCESS OF EXPENDITURES OVER REVENUE		<u><u>(\$34,822)</u></u>

B. Budget for 1977

A complete list of budget requests for 1977 will be submitted to the officers of synod and to members of its advisory committee when synod meets. A summary of these requests follows:

BUDGET 1977

Expenditures

Administration.....		\$ 189,700
General Expenses.....		339,000
Promotion Expenses.....		175,000
Field Operations:		
Salaries.....	\$ 2,055,200	
Field Expenses.....	1,308,731	
Medical Expenses.....	67,800	
Travel and Freight.....	<u>230,869</u>	
Total field operations.....		3,662,600
Capital expenditures.....		416,700
Field Expansion.....		<u>142,000</u>
Total Expenditures.....		<u><u>4,925,000</u></u>

Estimated Income

Quota Receipts	\$ 2,275,000
Missionary Support/Gifts & Offerings	2,500,000
Field Receipts (Other than Nigeria)	64,000
Interest, Dividends, Sales of Assets	<u>86,000</u>
Total estimated income for 1977	<u><u>\$4,925,000</u></u>

C. Request for special offerings

We are requesting approval of a \$4,925,000 budget for 1977 and a quota amounting to \$2,275,000. The balance of \$2,650,000 must be raised through gifts and offerings, missionary support and income derived on the fields. To meet this financial need, above quota receipts, it is urgently necessary that the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions be recommended for one or more special offerings. Therefore, we respectfully request that synod continue the CRBFM on the list of denominational causes recommended for one or more offerings during 1977.

D. The board is asking for approval of a quota of \$39.75 per family for 1977.

Section Seven**Summary of Items Requiring Synodical Action**

1. Approval of board members and alternates, Section One, A.
2. Election of member-at-large, Section One, A.
3. Reappointment of Latin America Area Secretary, Section One, E.
4. Appointment of Africa Area Secretary, Section One, E.
5. Representation at Synod, Section One, F.
6. Presentation of Missionaries, Section One, G.
7. New Mission Order, Section Two, A.
8. Quota, Spanish Literature Committee, Section Five.
9. Financial Matters, Budget for 1977, Section Six, B.
10. Financial Matters, Request for Special Offerings for 1977, Section Six, C.
11. Financial Matters, Request for Quota, Section Six, D.

Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions
Eugene Rubingh, Executive Secretary

REPORT 4

CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

The exhortation, "*Proclaim liberty throughout all the land*" is found in Leviticus 25, verse 10, and is the theme of the United States' liberty bell. During this bi-centennial year of the United States, these words have a special appropriateness for the Board of Home Missions. God has given freedom through his Son, Jesus Christ. Those who are in Christ are free indeed. We, who are delivered, have a message of liberty for others. The Board of Home Missions, through its personnel and programs, is proclaiming liberty throughout both Canada and the United States. By God's Spirit, people are responding in faith and being delivered from the bondage of sin to new life as citizens of the kingdom of God.

During the past year, the staff and Regional Home Missionaries have been involved in a comprehensive mission planning process which has become known as "SEED." The first element of the process involved analysis and review of the present program. The Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions structure is such so as to allow an easy division into four areas of responsibility, viz., fields, personnel, evangelism, and finance. The second part of SEED was an identification of concerns in each of these areas. These concerns were then addressed and five-year-goals were set to meet the concerns. This third part of the SEED process also included the stating of objectives for the next year.

The SEED Report was presented to the board for its consideration in February, 1976. In this way, the board members were able to get a comprehensive look at the home missions responsibility, which is to give leadership to the Christian Reformed Church as it seeks to meet its mission opportunity in Canada and the United States. It meets this responsibility by—

1. Assisting all the congregations and members of the denomination to meet the local mission challenge.
2. Planting churches in strategic places where there is opportunity to do evangelism and there is potential for organizing believers into new congregations.
3. Carry on, or supporting ministries, where there is opportunity for significant mission service and extension of the church of Christ though new organized church is the goal.

Accepting its synodically assigned responsibility, the Board of Home Missions has adopted the following long-range goals:

1. The commitment of every congregation to significant ministries of outreach in its own area.
2. The encouraging and equipping of all members to use their gifts for the growth of the church and the coming of the kingdom.
3. The growth of home mission churches in Reformed doctrine and

life, financial independence and an active participation in denominational life.

4. The planting of new churches where there is need and potential for such.

5. The carrying on of strategic mission activity where there are significant needs which can be met by our God-given resources.

Analysis of the present program, with its financial implications, revealed some interesting trends. In ten years (1966-1976) the church planting portion of the budget has decreased from 74.5% to 53.8%. Campus ministries increased from .8% to 8.1%. Indian ministries increased from 26.5% to 32.8%. The major part of the increased cost in the Indian work was in education, not in church planting.

The board addressed itself to these trends by deciding—

1. Campus ministries shall not be expanded during 1976. (Three requests for new campus works were before the board.) Staff was instructed to review the campus ministries and advise the board in 1977 regarding what priority this ministry should have in the total home missions program.

2. During the next five years a minimum of 55% of the total budget shall be available for church planting.

The board also expressed itself regarding five-year goals and one-year objectives for the various parts of the home missions activity. Thus the board was able to give encouragement and direction to its personnel on the field and in the home office as they continue their work on fields and offer their assistance to all the churches.

The challenge of proclaiming the gospel to the citizens of our two lands belongs to the whole denomination. The good news must be heard in every community in which we are located, and brought to new communities as we have opportunity. The kingdom of Christ must come to expression wherever we are. Then liberty will be proclaimed throughout all our lands. The Board of Home Missions is thankful for its synodical mandate to mobilize the denomination in its outreach to our fellow countrymen.

II. THE BOARD

A. Delegates

Classis	Delegate	Alternate	Term Expires
Alberta North.....	Rev. J. Boonstra.....	Vacant	1978
Alberta South.....	Rev. H. Wildeboer**	Rev. N. VanderKwaak	1977
British Columbia.....	Rev. P. DeBruyne.....	Rev. C. Spoor	1977
Cadillac*.....	Rev. W. VandenBosch.....	Mr. G. Koster	1978
Chicago South.....	Rev. L. Tanis.....	Rev. D. Negen	1978
Central California.....	Rev. E. Marlink**	Dr. R. Gritter	1976
Chatham*.....	Rev. H. Lunshof.....	Rev. P. Kranenburg	1978
Chicago North*.....	Rev. J. T. Ebbers**	Rev. R. Grevengoed	1979
Chicago South.....	Rev. R. M. Hartwell.....	Rev. G. Hutt	1978
Columbia.....	Rev. J. E. Jeffers.....	Mr. E. Boeve	1978
Eastern Canada.....	Rev. H. Uittenbosch.....	Rev. D. J. Tigchelaar	1977
Florida.....	Rev. E. J. Tamminga**	Mr. J. Hofman	1979
Grand Rapids East*.....	Rev. R. G. Timmerman.....	Mr. P. G. Wobbema	1977
Grand Rapids North*.....	Rev. E. J. Knott.....	Rev. M. Groenendyk	1976

Classis	Delegate	Alternate	Term Expires
Grand Rapids South*	Rev. G. P. Holwerda	Rev. G. F. VanOyen	1976
Grandville*	Rev. H. Hoekstra**	Rev. A. Jongsma	1977
Hackensack	Rev. A. Rienstra	Rev. S. Vander Klay	1978
Hamilton	Rev. G. Ringnalda	Rev. J. Zantingh	1978
Holland*	Rev. C. Steenstra	Mr. G. Vander Bie	1976
Hudson	Rev. A. Arkema	Rev. R. Klingenberg	1979
Huron	Rev. J.M. V. Koole	Rev. P. Boodt	1978
Illiana*	Rev. E.G. Cooke	Rev. H. VanderWell	1978
Kalamazoo*	Rev. J. Witvliet	Rev. G. Rozenboom	1979
Lake Erie*	Rev. R. L. Peterson**	Rev. W. Dykstra	1977
Minnesota North	Rev. M. Reitsma	Rev. N. Gebben	1977
Minnesota South	Rev. T. Heyboer	Vacant	1979
Muskegon*	Rev. T. Verseput**	Mr. H. Poel	1977
Northcentral Iowa	Rev. D. VanGent	Rev. C. Roelofs	1977
Orange City	Rev. H. DeGroot**	Rev. J. Boot	1977
Pacific Northwest	Rev. W. VandenBos	Rev. R. Vander Ley	1978
Pella	Mr. J. Hugen	Mr. M. Klyn	1978
Quinte	Rev. D. Habermehl	Rev. H. Katerberg	1979
Rocky Mountain	Rev. J. Hofman, Jr.	Dr. J.R. Kamp	1978
Sioux Center	Rev. W. Verhoef	Rev. M. Vande Steeg	1979
Toronto	Rev. H. Eshuis**	Rev. S. Van Houten	1978
Wisconsin	Rev. J. H. Olthoff	Rev. G. Van Enk	1976
Zeeland*	Rev. B. W. Mulder	Rev. H. VanWyk	1977

Members-At-Large

Central*	Dr. F. Westendorp	Mr. J. H. Fles	1976
Central*	Mr. M. Van Dellen	Mr. R. DeBoer	1978
Central*	Mr. J. VanEerden**	Mr. H. Soper	1977
Central*	Mr. E. Berends**	Mr. W. Peterson	1978
Central*	Mr. R. DeVos**	Mr. P. Van Putten	1978
Southwest Ontario*	Mr. R. VanVeldhuisen	Dr. J. Oosterhuis	1977
Western Canada	Mr. B. Bolt**	Dr. M. Jurrius	1978
Western (U.S.)	Dr. J. VanderBeek**	Mr. M. Tanis	1978
Eastern Canada	Dr. D. H. Poel**	Dr. B. Kiesekamp	1978
Eastern (U.S.)	Mr. R. Fiemster	Mr. H. VanDenend	1978
Rocky Mountain	Mr. E. T. Begay**	Mr. H. R. Thomas	1977

* indicates members of the Executive Committee

** indicates second term

B. Officers of the Board

Rev. Edward J. Knott, president
 Rev. Herman Hoekstra, vice-president
 Rev. John G. Van Ryn, executive secretary
 Rev. Roger G. Timmerman, assistant secretary
 Mr. Gerard J. Borst, treasurer
 Mr. Jack Van Eerden, assistant treasurer

C. Sub-Committees of the Executive Committee

Administration Committee: Rev. E. Knott, Rev. H. Hoekstra, Rev. R. Timmerman, Mr. J. Van Eerden.

Evangelism Committee: Rev. R. Hartwell, Mr. R. VanVeldhuisen, Rev. E. Cooke, Rev. H. Lunshof.

Finance Committee: Mr. J. VanEerden, Mr. R. DeVos, Rev. C. Steenstra, Mr. E. Berends, Mr. M. VanDellen.

Fields Committee No 1 (Indian): Rev. T. Verseput, Dr. F. Westendorp, Rev. B. Mulder, Rev. E. Knott.

Fields Committee No. 2 (Minorities and Youth): Rev. J. Ebbbers, Rev. W. VandenBosch, Rev. Roger G. Timmerman, Rev. R. L. Peterson.

Fields Committee No. 3 (Regular): Rev. G. Holwerda, Rev. H. Hoekstra, Rev. J. Witvliet.

Personnel Committee: The Administrative Staff.

III. STAFF

A. *Personnel*

Executive Secretary, Rev. John G. Van Ryn

Minister of Evangelism, Rev. Wesley Smedes

Treasurer, Mr. Gerard J. Borst

Fields Secretary, Rev. Peter Borgdorff

Personnel Secretary, Rev. Duane E. VanderBrug

Church Relations, Mr. Stanley Koning

Associate Minister of Evangelism, Rev. Henry De Rooy

Accountant, Mr. Howard Meyers

Special Assignment - Evangelism, Rev. Milton Doornbos

B. *Changes in Staff*

During the past several years there have been several changes and some vacancies in the home missions staff. With the phasing out of the position of Fields Secretary for Indian Missions, David Bosscher who had worked for Home Missions since 1961 left the staff for other employment. Mr. Bosscher served well and made a real contribution to the mission effort of the church during his tenure. Ellis Deters who had formerly worked full-time and more recently worked part-time for the Board of Home Missions, began working for the Board of Foreign Missions. His services especially in the area of SWIM and long-term volunteers were significant. In August, 1975 the Rev. Peter Borgdorff took the Fields Secretary position and the Rev. Duane VanderBrug became Personnel Secretary. For the first time in several years the Board of Home Missions now has a complete staff.

The Rev. Henry De Rooy has served an initial two-year appointment as Associate Minister of Evangelism. He has been working closely with the Minister of Evangelism in promoting evangelism in all of the churches of the denomination. His special area of concern is evangelism literature and materials. In February the board appointed him to a second term (four years).

The office team includes Howard Meyers, office manager and accountant, along with the following secretaries: Julie Koster, Marcia Lankhorst, Annette Gootjes, Lynell Vredevoogd, Carla Douma, and Wilma Vanden Bosch.

C. *Reappointment of the Executive Secretary — Rev. John G. Van Ryn*

Rev. John G. Van Ryn was appointed by Synod in 1974 to an initial two-year term as Executive Secretary. He is now eligible for a second term (four years). The board recommends that synod reappoint John

		Opened	Families 1-1-71	Families 1-1-76
Church Rock, NM.....	Rev. A. Begay.....	1971	—	13
Crownpoint, NM.....	Rev. G. Stuit.....			
	Mr. A. Becenti.....			
	Mr. H. Begay.....	1913	25	31
Farmington, NM.....	Rev. S. Yazzie.....			
	Mr. G. Verhulst.....	1921	26	21
Ft. Wingate, NM.....	Mr. S. Siebersma.....			
	Miss E. Nyhof.....	1965	10	13
Gallup, NM.....	Rev. A. Mulder.....			
	Miss E. Vos.....	1932	33	47
Naschitti, NM.....	Mr. M. Harberts.....	1924	19	23
Phoenix, AZ.....	Rev. H. Van Dam.....			
			Cook Chr. Training School	
Red Rock, AZ.....	Mr. B. Garnanez.....	1953	30	25
Rehoboth, NM.....	Rev. R. Veenstra.....	1903	31	35
Rehoboth Rel. Ed. Ofc.....	Mr. T. Weeda.....			
	Miss H. Nyhof.....			
Salt Lake City, UT.....	Mr. N. Jonkman.....	1964	—	—
San Antone, NM.....	(cf. Crownpoint)			
San Francisco, CA.....	Vacant			
	Mr. W. Greenfield.....			
	Mr. P. Goudzwaard.....	1963	21	20
Sanostee, NM.....	Mr. F. Curley.....	1913	7	15
Shiprock, NM.....	Rev. A. Koolhaas.....			
	Mr. C. Brummel.....			
	Mr. B. Benally.....	1936	36	20
Teec Nos Pos, AZ.....	Rev. P. Redhouse.....	1936	26	33
Toadlena, NM.....	Mr. G. Klumpenhower.....			
	Mr. F. Frank.....	1925	24	22
Tohatchi, NM.....	Rev. E. Henry.....			
	Mr. H. Redhouse.....	1898	17	18
Tohlakai, NM.....	Mr. C. Grey.....			
	Miss E. Vos.....	1974	—	15
White Horse Lake, NM.....	(cf. Crownpoint)			
Window Rock, AZ.....	Vacant	1966	11	46
Zuni, NM.....	Mr. R. Chimoni.....			
	Rev. R. Posthuma.....	1897	11	16

3. Navajo, New Mexico - new field

The board decided to open a new field in the growing city located thirteen miles northeast of Window Rock. Over 4,000 people now live within the city limits with many more in the surrounding area. Presently a \$10 million particle board plant is under construction. Navajo is expected to be a center for industry. Many Navajo people will be locating here and it is essential that there be a Christian Reformed Church available for our people moving in as well as a center for mission activity.

4. Indian Ministry Membership Additions in 1975

Adult baptisms	27	Professions of faith	20
Infant baptisms	45	Reaffirmation of faith	7

5. Educational Ministry

a. Rehoboth

1975 marked a very significant year for Rehoboth Christian School in that an agreement was reached with the Board of Home Missions by which the Rehoboth Christian School Association will assume financial responsibility for the program of the school. While finan-

cial assistance from the BHM is still possible and the BHM will continue to fund personnel salaries, it is anticipated that most of the program funds will be raised through local tuition and grants. The 1975-76 school year was made possible through the excellent services of the following people:

Teachers and Staff

Mr. Keith Kuipers, superintendent	Miss Luella Helland
Mr. Ron Polinder, elementary principal	Mr. Joel Jasperse
Mrs. Ann Boyd, secretary	Mr. Carl Kloosterman
Miss Evelyn Begay	Mr. Bob Onderlinde
Mr. Ted Charles	Mr. Stanley Pikaart
Mr. James De Korne	Mr. William VanderHoven
Mr. Ken Faber	Mr. Merle VanderSluis
Miss Mary Feyen	Miss Rena VanderWoude

Houseparents

Mr. and Mrs. Marvin Apol	Mr. and Mrs. Bert Krygsheld
Miss Julia Ensink	Mr. and Mrs. John Lee
Mr. and Mrs. Roland Kamps	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Siebersma

Kitchen and Dining Staff

Mr. William Hockstra	Mr. Robert Kerr
Miss Nora DeKleine	

Industrial Staff (for entire Indian Field, based in Rehoboth)

Mr. Ed Oppenhuizen, business manager	Mr. Julian Baas
Mr. Ted Tibboel	Mr. Justin Harkema
Mr. Julius Den Blyeker	Mr. Willie Benally
Mr. Arthur Bosscher	Mrs. Violet Henry, secretary

b. Zuni Christian School

As part of our total mission effort at Zuni, Christian education is an integral part. We list the teaching staff below:

Educational Staff

Mr. Gil Bruxvoort, principal	Miss Lynne Veenstra
Miss Lois Landheer	Miss Ann Wiers
Mr. Don Petersen	Mr. George DeVries
Miss Eunice Post	

D. Specialized Ministries (Fields Committee No. 2)

Specialized ministries are designated such where either there are special circumstances surrounding a ministry or specialized skills are required of those who live/work there. The following ministries fall under this category:

1. Ministries with an Ethnic Orientation

a. Oriental

	Opened	Families 1-1-71	Families 1-1-76
Chicago, IL.....Rev. P. Han.....	1962	12	25
Los Angeles, CA.....Mr. S. Jung.....			
.....Dr. D. Yu.....	1963	26	16
San Francisco, CA.....Rev. P. Yang.....	1965	10	18

b. Spanish

Hoboken, NJ.....Rev. E. Lewis.....	1964	8	8
Miami, FL.....Rev. F. Diemer.....	1960	27	23
LA, Anaheim, CA.....Rev. C. Nyenhuis.....	1969	10	19

2. Core City Ministries

Detroit, MI, Community. Rev. J. Steigenga.....1964 17 24

3. Campus

Boulder, CO	Rev. S. Verheul
Champaign, IL	Rev. A. Menninga
Columbus, OH	Rev. R. Van Harn (until June, 1976)
Detroit, MI	Rev. J. Natelborg
Iowa City, IA	Rev. J. Chen
Kingston, ON	Rev. W. Dykstra
Lafayette, IN	Rev. T. Van't Land
London, ON	Vacant
Los Angeles, CA	Rev. H. DeYoung
Madison, WI	Rev. R. Palsrok
Minneapolis, MN	Rev. B. Becksvooort
Paterson, NJ	Rev. K. VanderWall
Scottsdale, AZ	Rev. M. Nieboer
Toronto, ON	Rev. J. Veenstra
Waterloo-Guelph, ON	Dr. R. Kooistra

4. Hospitality Homes for Service Personnel

Honolulu	Rev. G. Boerfyn (Stated Supply, 5-1-76)
San Diego	Mr. D. Rottenberg
Norfolk	Mr. R. Klunder

5. Membership Additions in Special Ministries (1975)

Adult baptisms	9
Infant	15
Professions of faith	3
Reaffirmations	2

E. Regular Ministries (Fields Committee No. 3)

1. Observations

The greatest part of the Board of Home Missions work and budget is expended on the beautiful work of beginning new congregations. The board considers this ministry a priority under its mandate from synod.

Church planting is a goal which is pursued on the Indian field, in some of the specialized ministries and in many other places in Canada and the United States. Our work and prayer is to see vibrantly active congregations develop and grow through announcing the coming kingdom of our Lord. In his name and to his glory our work goes on.

2. Statistical Listing of Fields

		Opened	Families 1-1-71	Families 1-1-76
Anchorage, AK.....	Rev. D. Recker.....	1953	33	37
Annandale, VA.....	Rev. W. Ribbens.....	1975	—	19
Atlanta, GA.....	Rev. F. MacLeod.....	1975	—	—
Bakersfield, CA.....	Rev. N. Vanderzee.....	1967	17	26
Bellevue, WA.....	Rev. F. Rietema.....		(Stage IV, 1-1-76)	
Boca Raton, FL.....	Rev. R. Tjapkes.....	1963	20	17
			(Stage IV, 1-1-76)	
Boulder, CO.....	Rev. R. Westenbroek.....	1961	30	29
Cedar Rapids, IA.....	Rev. E. Dykema.....	1969	14	21
Cochrane, ON.....	Rev. J. Binnema.....	1950	16	10
Corvallis, OR.....	Vacant.....	1969	10	12
Davenport, IA.....	Rev. S. VanderJagt.....	1965	20	32
Dayton, OH.....	Rev. J. Hollebeek.....	1961	10	10
East Grand Forks, MN.....	Rev. L. Slings.....	1963	20	25

		Opened	Families 1-1-71	Families 1-1-76
East Islip, NY	Rev. A. Likkel	1957	13	16
El Paso, TX	Rev. J. Berends	1960	6	21
	Rev. D. Geels			
Flagstaff, AZ	Rev. S. DeVries	1968	9	14
Flanders Valley, NJ	Rev. J. VanderArk	1965	30	31
Ft. Collins, CO	Rev. L. VanEssen	1963	28	37
Ft. McMurray, AB	Vacant	—	—	—
Ft. Wayne, IN	Rev. E. Holkeboer	1969	6	24
Fredericton, NB	Rev. A. VandenEnde	1961	14	20
Fresno, CA	Rev. J. Vigh	1963	28	25
Greeley, CO	Rev. D. Van Oyen	1969	21	22
Hayward, CA	Rev. V. VanderZee	1960	32	36
Honolulu, HI	Vacant	1967	20	17
Indian Harbour Beach, FL	Vacant	1959	15	31
Iowa City, IA	Rev. A. Helder	1960	37	41
Jacksonville, FL	Rev. H. Karsten	1971	6	10
LaCrosse, WI	Rev. J. Osterhouse	1975	—	6
Mason City, IA	Rev. M. DeYoung	1960	23	30
Meadowvale, ON	Vacant	—	—	—
New Glasgow, NS	Rev. A. Dreise	1969	22	21
Norfolk, VA	Rev. J. Rickers	1962	19	23
Ogden, UT	Rev. W. Heersink	1958	24	29
	Second Staff vacant			
Olympia, WA	Rev. S. Workman	1970	10	18
Portland, OR			(Stage IV 7-1-75)	
Riverside, CA	Rev. J. Rozeboom	1960	25	32
St. Louis, MO	Rev. W. Stroo	1965	22	29
Salt Lake City, UT	Rev. A. VanHeyst	1960	21	29
	Mr. A. Sprik			
South St. Paul	Rev. N. Gebben	1959	31	35
			(Stage IV 1-1-76)	
South Windsor, CT	Rev. P. Mans	1962	27	27
Syracuse, NY	Rev. F. Bultman			
	until June, 1976	1966	13	18
Terre Haute, IN	Rev. P. Brink	1960	12	19
Tri-Cities, WA	Rev. H. Bouma	1969	5	15
Tucson, AZ	Rev. O. Buus	1965	22	33
Wappingers Falls, NY	Vacant	1963	21	36
Washington, PA	Rev. A. VanWyhe	1963	18	28
Webster, NY	Vacant	1965	20	35
Windsor, ON	Rev. P. Hogeterp	1957	29	20
Yakima, WA	Rev. A. DeVries	1967	18	32

3. Kamloops, British Columbia—new field

The city of Kamloops, British Columbia has been on our agenda for four years. This center of economic development has been attracting many people. The growth rate has been twelve percent per year during the past decade. It presents a challenge for mission outreach. At the request of Classis British Columbia, which has committed itself to \$10,000 per year, this field has been approved for opening in 1976.

4. Church Planting: Membership Additions for 1975

Adult baptisms	12
Infant baptisms	108
Professions of faith	63
Reaffirmations	58

5. Accumulative Additions for all BHM Ministries

(1975 Summary based on an eighty percent return of annual reports)

Adult baptisms	48
Infant baptisms	168
Professions of faith	86
Reaffirmations	67

F. Fields that Graduated to "Stage IV" in 1975

The Board of Home Missions has fields in various stages of development. These categories are:

Stage I	Unorganized congregations
Stage II	Organized congregations with a calling church
Stage III	Organized and calling status
Stage IV	Independent of the Board of Home Missions - usually going under Fund for Needy Churches

During 1975 four fields became Stage IV. These are:

Portland, OR	Bellevue, WA
Boca Raton, FL	South St. Paul, MN

We are thankful to the Lord for guiding these congregations to this point.

G. Grants-In-Aid - Requests for 1976-77; July 1, 1976 - June 30, 1977

1. Indian

Fields	Missionary	Amount Recommended	Notes
Denver, CO.....	Mr. J. Yazzie	\$ 8,700	
Winnipeg, MB.....	Rev. H. DeBruyn	\$ 2,750	Subject to receipt of regular reports.

2. Specialized Ministries

Fields	Missionary	Amount Received	Notes
Ames, IA.....	Rev. F. Walhof	\$ 3,500	
Bellingham, WA.....	Rev. D. Bosscher	\$ 5,000	
Chicago (Roseland).....		\$10,000	With the understanding that: (a) this ministry be reviewed in 3 yrs., (b) this grant is linked to the missionary-pastor to be called as head of staff.
Chicago (Lawndale).....	Mrs. B. Clayton	\$ 9,000	
Chicago (Pullman).....	Rev. H. Botts	\$ 8,500	
Denver (Sun Valley).....	Rev. L. Roossien	\$ 8,000	
Edmonton (campus).....	Rev. T. Oosterhuis	\$ 8,000	
Grand Rapids (Madison).....	Mr. T. Raysor	\$10,000	With the provision that this be locally funded in subsequent years.
Hamilton (campus).....	Rev. E. Gritter	\$ 5,500	
Los Angeles (First).....	Rev. B. Niemeyer	\$ 4,000	Subject to favorable MAP report
Montreal, (Board of Seaway Min.).....	Rev. H. Uittenbosch	\$ 4,500	
Mt. Pleasant (campus).....	Rev. K. Tanis	\$ 6,000	
Muskegon (East).....	Mr. B. Foster	\$ 6,000	
Paterson (Madison Ave.).....	Miss J. Gill	\$ 9,700	
Paterson (Northside).....	Mr. R. Barker	\$10,000	
Sacramento, CA.....	Rev. B. Mensink	\$11,000	
Toronto (Lighthouse).....	Rev. K. Verhulst	\$ 8,500	
Vancouver (Seamen).....	Rev. J. Dresselhuys	\$ 4,000	

Fields	Missionary	Amount Received	Notes
Vermillion (campus).....	Rev. J. Van Ens	\$ 6,000	
YES (Toronto).....	Mr. D. DeRidder	\$ 3,500	
<i>3. Regular Ministries</i>			
Adrian, MI.....		\$ 7,000	(NEW)
Montreal (A Ma Baie).....			Conditional. For additional information, cf. supplementary report (NEW)
Anacortes, WA.....	Vacant	\$ 2,000	
Appleton, WI.....		\$ 5,000	(NEW)
Beaver Dam, WI.....	Rev. J. VanSchepen	\$ 1,250	(Final grant)
Bradenton, FL (Cape Coral).....	Mr. Wm. Ridley		(Pending additional information, cf. BHM supplementary report to synod)
Colorado Springs.....	Mr. M. Swets	\$ 6,885	
Dallas, TX.....		\$ 8,500	
Kalamazoo (Lex.Grn.).....	Rev. M. Buwalda	\$ 3,000	Subject to favorable MAP report.
Owego, NY.....		\$ 7,000	
Rapid City, SD.....	Rev. A. Gelder	\$ 2,500	
Richfield Springs.....	Rev. D. Belanus	\$ 7,000	
Riverdrive Park, ON.....	Mr. H. Boehm	\$ 3,000	
St. Cloud, MN.....	Rev. R. Uken	\$ 7,000	
Shubenacadie, NS.....	Mr. I. VerHage	\$ 8,000	
Vanastra, ON.....	Rev. K. Boersma	\$ 4,800	
Winter Haven, FL.....	Mr. F. Bakker	\$ 6,000	

V. PERSONNEL

The ministry of people to people is at the heart of our program. Therefore, direct labor services comprises approximately three-fourths of our entire budget. Through approximately 175 persons, the mission of Christ through the Board of Home Missions is carried on. The gifts and abilities that God has entrusted to these people are a chief resource for mission. That the right person is in the right place at the right time, given the needed help, support, and resources to perform the mission is crucial to fulfilling our mission goals under God.

Five concerns are very important factors in our entire international program.

A. Recruitment

How can we secure the best personnel, trained not only in seminary and other graduate schools, but learned in the school of life and possessing the potential of growing from experiences? Missionaries who understand the Reformed faith and who are gifted in presenting it in word and deed to the non-Christian world,

One urgent need has to do with minority people in mission leadership positions. Several trainee positions for Indian and Black youth have been established. Since 1972 the board has been committed to continuing efforts to recruit qualified minority persons indigenous to the ministry involved rather than hiring non-minority persons for these jobs.

It is understood by the board missionaries in minority ministries that if a qualified minority person indigenous to that ministry is available, he will vacate his position for the minority person.

B. *Training*

Training is a life-long, on-going process for maintaining a competency for ministry in a world that is constantly changing. Some training is basic to be a missionary, other training is part of a continuing education program or In-Service Training.

This year the board made its annual Home Missions Conferences a part of a systemized and planned missionary training program. Seven major components of missionary training have been identified and each year one of these components will be the training focus of our missionary conference-program. In 1976 the emphasis is on teaching ministries. Calvin Seminary's continuing education program was challenged and utilized for developing the teaching ministry program.

C. *Missionary Assessment*

Essential to missionaries being able to function productively is an awareness of how others, including their employer, see their work performance. Three years ago the board adopted and synod endorsed an appointment policy which provided for regular, systematic assessment of each missionary.

Almost all BHM missionaries have gone through the evaluation program. It has been a very positive, supporting, growing experience—not only for the missionary but also for all the agencies involved and the congregation and field served by the missionary. Growth points have been identified and a program of In-Service Training designed to meet the needs of the field and growing skills of the missionary.

The policy did come under some criticism. Two overtures were addressed to the Synod of 1975 which called for the elimination of the policy. Synod did not accede to the overtures but it did instruct the Board of Home Missions to clear up misunderstanding through clarification of the terminology of the policy.

We herewith present a revision which is designated "*A Policy for Personnel Assessment*" and request synod to approve this revision.

A POLICY FOR PERSONNEL ASSESSMENT CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

PREFACE

This policy for personnel assessment as herein revised is designed to provide a regular and systematic assessment of Home Missions personnel so that the work of Home Missions is as effective as possible.

As such, it is the answer of the Board of Home Missions to the request of the Synod of 1975 for clarification of the board's Appointment Policy.

I. *THE GOAL* of the personnel assessment experience is to provide everyone involved in the mission a time to understand and evaluate the missionary's work patterns, relationships, and effectiveness so that . . .

- A. . . . the missionary is assisted in developing and using his/her gifts and abilities to the maximum effectiveness in the mission program of the field.
- B. . . . the missionary is enabled to discover his/her training needs for that particular field assignment and a program for meeting these needs is designed.
- C. . . . the field learns how well it is utilizing the gifts and abilities of its missionary in the mission program.
- D. . . . all parties involved (the missionary, the field, the Classical Home Missions Committee, the calling church, and the BHM) are encouraged to and helped in developing and maintaining good, working relationships with each other - with a special emphasis on a working loyalty to each other.
- E. . . . the missionary can be intelligently advised and counseled regarding the place of his/her future ministry.

II. THE IMPLEMENTATION

To implement this assessment process,

- A. Field service for all missionaries in each new assignment will be divided into *terms* with:
 - 1. An initial term of two years, beginning on March 1 following a missionary's actual date of employment or assignment to/installation in a new field.
 - 2. Successive terms of three years (or less as appropriate).
- B. An assessment procedure will be initiated six months prior to the end of each missionary's term (September 1). This will involve:
 - 1. Written evaluations of the home missionary by -
 - a. Council/Steering Committee of the ministry he/she serves (or the equivalent in a special ministry).
 - b. The Classical Home Missions Committee (where applicable).
 - c. The council of the calling church (different from the church he/she serves).
 - d. Fellow staff members if the missionary is in a staff/team ministry.
 - e. The missionary himself/herself.
 - f. The missionary's spouse (if applicable and willing).
 - 2. Personal visits and conversations to seek open understandings of the evaluation and the nurture that each can provide. The RHM is to give leadership in this with -
 - a. The missionary (and spouse - if applicable).
 - b. The Council/Steering Committee/field committee (if applicable)
 - c. The calling church and Classical Home Missions Committee (if applicable)
 - 3. Written summary observations, conclusions, and recommendations by the Regional Home Missionary - shared and discussed with the missionary - processed through the Personnel Committee during January for board consideration in February.

C. Each year at its annual meeting the Board of Home Missions will:

1. *Review* the results of the assessment of each of its missionaries whose term ended that year and . . .

2. *Take action*, (on recommendation from its Personnel Committee)

a. If the personnel is ordained

1) endorsing,

2) endorsing conditionally (with conditions stated), or

3) not endorsing (with grounds, options, or alternative recommendations stated)

that missionary for beginning another term with its benefits at his/her present assignment under the supervision of the BHM and the CHMC.

b. If the personnel is unordained

1) reappointing,

2) reappointing conditionally (with conditions stated), or

3) not reappointing (with grounds, options, or alternative recommendations stated)

that missionary for beginning another term with its benefits at his/her present assignment under the supervision of the BHM and the CHMC.

NOTES:

1. The missionary is required to pursue whatever in-service training program is recommended as a result of the assessment process.

2. When endorsement of an ordained missionary is withheld, the provisions of the Church Order will be followed (e.g. Article 17).

3. This policy of personnel assessment is effective for missionaries under the Grant-In-Aid Policy with the decisions of the Board of Home Missions re endorsement of the missionary being communicated to the Grant-In-Aid employer.

D. *Field Vacancies*

Early in 1976 there was an unprecedented number of vacancies in the ordained posts: eighteen! The need to design a vacancy consultation process with each vacant field was realized. This would involve them in describing themselves accurately to a potential candidate and verbalizing their expectations of their new missionary. In the decentralized plan of synod, the board no longer transfers a missionary. Rather, the board approves or endorses a person for a field, and that field through the regular processes of congregational meetings, etc. chooses which one of the names endorsed/approved they wish to call. Initial screening work is done by the board. The final screening, information getting, and judgment is made by the field.

E. *Volunteer Work*

To perform the work the board has been called upon by synod to perform, the services of people who are skilled have to be purchased or secured from those who can volunteer them. An effective long-term volunteer program has been in operation for a number of years. However, people with various skills appear in our office frequently seeking ways

to be of Christian service. In response, the board is seeking to form a committee from various agencies to recruit lay people who are available for volunteer service to the church. In this way a central network can be provided where those who need volunteer services can come and those who wish to volunteer their services can go. The board is convinced that people in the denomination who have skills needed in our mission program are available for volunteer work.

VI. EVANGELISM

The evangelism staff, in fulfilling the mandate of the Board of Home Missions to assist all of the congregations and members of the denomination to meet the local mission challenge as the board gives leadership to the Christian Reformed Church, has the broad responsibility to educate, train, produce materials, provide consultation and do research in the area of evangelism for the denomination.

Some of the activities of the past year are:

A. *In Education*

1. Pastor's Seminars on the Growing Church were conducted in thirty classes. The seminars, attended by a large majority of Christian Reformed ministers, included discussions of the theology of the growing church, the patterns of Christian Reformed Church growth, and the necessity of planning for growth.
2. *REACH* — a bi-monthly newsletter with practical ideas, sent to all pastors and evangelism committees. Response has been very positive, with many requests for additional copies.
3. *The Home Missions News/Evangelism in North America*, produced with Stan Koning, has been distributed twice to all the families of the denomination. Reporting focuses on significant outreach activities of our fields and churches in such a way as to encourage greater involvement in this important work of the church.
4. The evangelism staff has had three class sessions with the senior seminarians in their evangelism course. Seven seminarians have completed Congregational Evangelism Training.

B. *In Training*

1. Congregational Evangelism Training (CET)
CET uses, as its basic teaching, classroom work with on-the-job training which has been pioneered by Evangelism Explosion. Our own training manual has been developed, as well as a leaders's manual and an advanced trainer's manual. A great deal of emphasis, in comparison with other programs using the basic method, is placed on the biblical-theological material which undergirds the presentation. A continuing emphasis upon the necessity and skills of a follow-up ministry seeks to do more than simply confront someone with the Gospel. We seek to build friendships and respond to both spiritual and physical needs. The program seeks to minister to the total person. Another skill that is given much attention is the ability to lead one-to-one or small group Bible studies.

The goal for the two year's pilot program was to work with thirty-six congregations and seek to establish a continuing calling-training ministry in each of the churches. That goal has been met and exceeded by almost double the number of congregations involved. The result of the training-calling has been very encouraging. As of January 1976, some sixty-seven people have been received into the fellowship of the Christian Reformed Church through the calling ministry. Many others are now in the process of being grounded in the Word and instructed in the faith. Some of the 132 people who have made commitments in response to the presentation of the Gospel have not grown in the faith as we would like. However, most of the churches are continuing to minister to them and trust that God will bless the continuing work with the individual. Bible studies have been stressed in situations where there was little biblical knowledge. There have been 239 Bible studies most of them of four weeks duration using Home Missions Faith Builders Series on *New Life In Jesus* or *Assurance*. Churches have also been used to train neighboring congregations in this ministry.

The CET program was reviewed by the board at its annual meeting. It was decided to approve the continuation of the program with the Rev. Milton Doornbos as the coordinator for another two years. This will allow further development of the program, make it available to a broader segment of the denomination and allow opportunity for the program to become an integral part of the responsibility of the evangelism staff.

2. Leadership Training

We are now nearing the completion of leadership training materials for elders and deacons. With representatives of CRWRC and the Education Committee we now anticipate:

- a. A book by the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven which will display the biblical and theological base for the offices and for training in the necessary skills (due by March 31).
- b. A training package with various components, each designed to develop a needed skill. Dr. Marion Snapper will be released by the seminary April 15 to July 15 to develop this package.
- c. Pilot testing of all the materials during the fall of this year.
- d. Availability of the complete program throughout our denomination, hopefully beginning in September, 1977.

3. SWIM

- a. Eighty fields have requested teams for 1976. Most have been assigned to Young Calvinist Leagues. Some fields will be receiving special minority group or college student teams. Approximately 25% of the fields are directly under the Board of Home Missions.
- b. A new pre-SWIM orientation program has been produced.
- c. Eleven home mission fields are requesting seminarians to assist in the SWIM program. Many of the other HM fields are being served by interns. Seven other fields are requesting teacher volunteers.

4. Evangelism Committee Workshops

In cooperation with the home missions committees of nine Western Michigan classes, workshops were held for the evangelism committees

of the area churches. They were conducted Saturday, January 31, each workshop being repeated four times to allow greater choice. The following workshops were held:

- Congregational Evangelism Training
- Rural Evangelism
- Reaching Young Adults
- Witnessing Where You Are
- Growing The Church
- Reaching Kids Through Cadets and Calvinettes
- Bible Studies and Evangelism
- Preschoolers and Mothers
- Reaching High Schoolers
- Urban Evangelism
- Busing for Church School
- Bible Correspondence Evangelism

The attendance goal was 400. The actual attendance reached a little over 500.

C. *In Materials*

1. **THE WAY** — Twelve issues have been published. Beginning with the next issue (April) issues will be prepared only for Easter and Christmas distribution.
2. **NEIGHBORS** — the subscription list for this mailer is building slowly: less than 5,000 at the present time.
3. **HIS** — subscriptions to this magazine, produced by Inter-Varsity to help students on secular campuses, were mailed to 1151 Christian Reformed students at secular colleges and universities.
4. **Cassettes** — 150 titles will be listed in our new catalog. Circulation during the past year totaled between 1500 and 2000 tapes.
5. **Small Group Study Material** — All the following enjoyed good distribution this year: Together We Grow; The Growing Church; Discipleship Series (I-VI)
6. **The Faith Builder Series** — As in the past, these are in demand for study by new Christians. The "Assurance" booklet has been used extensively in CET follow-up.
7. **Jewish Evangelism materials** — Some new materials prepared by Mr. Albert Huisjen, "A Mailing Ministry to Jewish Residents," are now being field-tested in the Chicago area.

D. *In Consultation*

1. Through conversations and correspondence, advice was given to several churches regarding more effective outreach in their communities.
2. Evangelism personnel were involved in MAPs in two non-Home Missions churches: Lake City, MI and Providence, Holland, MI.

E. *In Research*

Evangelism personnel participated in the spring conference at Westminster Seminary to discuss the concept of the growing church as it relates to Reformed thought and tradition. They also investigated some

fast-growing churches to isolate factors which contributed to their growth. The results of these studies are being made available to the churches.

VII. FINANCE

In 1975 we again experienced the fine support and faithfulness of our people. We are deeply grateful that we have been able to meet the needs of our missionaries and their programs.

A. General Information

In reviewing the level of receipts for the year 1975, it appears that what began in 1971 as an upward trend continued again during 1975. It is gratifying to note that the general level of receipts in 1975 was higher than in 1974 in all categories, except above quota sources.

1. Income from quotas increased from 88.4% in 1974 to 90.9% in 1975. During 1975 the percentage of quotas received from United States churches increased 1%, whereas the percent of quotas received from Canadian churches increased 8%. The percentage of quota received over the last ten years is as follows:

	Total	U.S.	Canada
1966	86.2%	97.8%	43.3%
1967	86.6%	97.8%	45.3%
1968	85.1%	97.4%	41.5%
1969	85.0%	97.1%	42.8%
1970	83.0%	95.8%	38.8%
1971	83.7%	95.8%	42.3%
1972	84.7%	95.7%	47.3%
1973	86.1%	96.2%	52.4%
1974	88.4%	96.3%	62.6%
1975	90.9%	97.3%	70.3%

2. Income from salary support continued to increase in 1975 as follows:

	Amount	% Increase
1966	\$228,719	8.8
1967	\$261,299	14.2
1968	\$256,633	(1.8)
1969	\$278,631	8.6
1970	\$295,353	6.0
1971	\$311,023	5.3
1972	\$354,446	11.1
1973	\$388,750	9.7
1974	\$416,821	7.2
1975	\$497,107	19.3

Two hundred sixteen churches participated in the salary support program during 1975. Of this number, 198 were United States churches and eleven were Canadian churches. In addition, seven classes gave salary support to a home missionary. At the end of 1975, there were twenty-one home missionaries without any supporting church, a decrease of fifteen. Only three missionaries have their salary fully subscribed.

3. Income from above-quota sources reflected a general decrease during 1975 as follows:

	Total	General	Armed Forces
1965	\$145,628	\$131,073	\$14,555
1966	\$158,944	\$124,800	\$34,144
1967	\$249,592	\$157,575	\$92,017
1968	\$252,578	\$157,290	\$95,288
1969	\$251,349	\$173,187	\$78,162
1970	\$217,277	\$161,765	\$55,512
1971	\$218,811	\$173,568	\$45,243
1972	\$270,642	\$237,585	\$33,057
1973	\$253,818	\$218,616	\$35,202
1974	\$281,385	\$252,959	\$28,426
1975	\$266,569	\$237,339	\$29,230

An analysis of the number of churches taking offerings for above-quota needs and the Armed Forces discloses the following:

	Total		Above Quota		Armed Forces	
	1975	1974	1975	1974	1975	1974
U.S. Churches						
Number	556	562	314	329	135	139
Percent	100	100	56	59	24	25
Canadian Churches						
Number	158	155	34	29	0	4
Percent	100	100	22	19	0	3
Total						
Number	714	717	348	358	135	143
Percent	100	100	49	50	19	20

You will note from the above comparison that there was a *decrease* in the number of churches involved in supporting Board of Home Missions' above quota needs. This downward trend is alarming since the support needed from quota funds most now be increased to make up the difference.

4. Building Programs

Activity on-field in building programs has again decreased substantially during 1975 due to the fact that few new fields have been opened in recent years. The following list reflects the 1975 building program activity:

- Fields with Site Selection Completed
- Jacksonville, FL
- Fields with Site Selection in Progress
- Northern Virginia
- LaCrosse, WI
- Atlanta, GA

B. Church Relations

1. General Activity

The increase of congregations adding to the number of home missionaries they support is encouraging. This number rose from twenty-six in 1974 to forty-four in 1975. Already by mid-February, 1976, nineteen churches have taken on responsibility for new persons, ten of which are churches who had previously not been involved at all.

The increase in the number of home missionaries being supported is likewise encouraging. Sixty-five new support relationships were established in 1975 compared with forty in the previous year. Twenty-

seven new ones have been reported by mid-February, 1976. This resulted in thirteen home missionaries being removed from the no-support list in 1974, fifteen in 1975, and ten by mid-February, 1976.

Although we did not reach the goal we had hoped in 1974 of having no home missionary left without a supporting church, the number has been reduced from over forty to twenty-one — the lowest ever — and we are quite confident this can at least be halved in 1976.

A third encouragement is the increase in number of churches setting aside a period of time for Mission Emphasis, focusing most of the congregational activity during the week on missions. Frequently we are able to assist them by providing literature on people or ministries in Home Missions, making presentations of the Faith-Promise concept and suggestions for implementation, arranging for speakers for public meetings, Sunday school, etc., booking films and audio visual programs, forwarding display and exhibit materials, and supplying suggestions, information, and contacts with home missionaries in need of support.

A small tabloid newsletter with the simple title, "Home Missions News," was published and mailed to the denomination in cooperation with the evangelism staff, in November and February. Other issues are projected for April, October, and December. This medium serves the denomination with much more information on home mission fields and evangelism practices than we have been able to transmit in any other way until this time.

"The Indian Churches," a 16mm film report of the Navajo and Zuni churches, in which various representatives of those churches tell what their program and prospects are, will complete its initial circulation through the denomination in July, 1976. The showing of the film has given many an occasion for joy to see the fruit of eighty years of Indian mission work. Some complaints were registered that the voices were not always easy to understand.

In spite of unusually severe scheduling problems, a number of home missionaries joined in various parts of six tours of Women's Missionary Unions, conducted jointly with the Board of Foreign Missions in spring and fall, resulting in better attendance and substantially greater offerings for the two agencies than in any previous year.

Denomination-wide direct mail solicitations were made in April and December, with another one for the Armed Forces Fund in May.

2. Calling and/or Supporting Churches

a. Home Missionaries (listed by Classis)

Alberta South	Bellflower III
Calgary-Maranatha	Calvary, Chino
Cadillac	Escondido
Aetna	Riverside
Vogel Center	Central California
California South	Bakersfield
Classis California South	Fresno
Anaheim	Hanford
Anaheim (Latin American)	Golden Gate, San Francisco
Artesia I	San Jose

- Walnut Creek
 Chatham
 Classis Chatham
 Essex, ON
 London, I, ON
 Windsor, ON
 Chicago North
 Cicero I
 West Suburban, Cicero
 Bethel, Fulton
 Fulton I
 German Valley
 Wheaton
 Winfield
 Chicago South
 Evergreen Park I
 Kedvale Ave., Oak Lawn
 Orland Park
 Palos Heights
 Columbia
 Manhattan I
 Sunnyside, WA
 Yakima, WA
 Eastern Canada
 Fredericton, NB
 New Glasgow, NS
 Truro, NS
 Florida
 Boca Raton
 Fort Lauderdale
 Indian Harbour Beach
 Lake Worth
 Miami
 Pinellas Park (S.S.), FL
 Orlando
 Grand Rapids East
 Ada
 Brookside, G.R.
 Calvin, G.R.
 Cascade, G.R.
 East Paris, G.R.
 Faith, G.R.
 Fuller, G.R.
 Millbrook, G.R.
 Neland Ave., G.R.
 Oakdale Park, G.R.
 Plymouth Heights, G.R.
 Shawnee Park, G.R.
 Sherman St., G.R.
 Woodlawn, G.R.
 Middleville
 Grand Rapids North
 Coopersville
 Alpine, G.R.
 Beckwith Hills, G.R.
 East Leonard, G.R.
 Highland Hills, G.R.
 Twelfth, G.R.
 Walker, G.R.
 West Leonard, G.R.
 Westview, G.R.
 Grant
 Grand Rapids South
 Covenant, Cutlerville
 East, Cutlerville
 Cutlerville I
 Alger Park, G.R.
 Burton Heights, G.R.
 Bethel, G.R.
 Grandville Ave., G.R.
 Immanuel, G.R.
 Kelloggsville, G.R.
 LaGrave, G.R.
 Moline
 Grandville
 Byron Center I
 Heritage, Byron Center
 Byron Center II
 South Grandville
 Baldwin, Jenison
 Ridgewood, Jenison
 Trinity, Jenison
 Twelfth Ave., Jenison
 Beverly, Wyoming
 Lee St., Wyoming
 Rogers Heights, Wyoming
 Thirty-Sixth St., Wyoming
 Wyoming Park, Wyoming
 Hackensack
 Flanders Valley
 West Sayville
 Paterson
 Hamilton
 Burlington I
 Jarvis
 Holland
 Graafschap
 Hamilton
 Bethany, Holland
 Calvin, Holland
 Central Ave., Holland
 Fourteenth St., Holland
 Harderwyk, Holland
 Holland Heights, Holland
 Maple Ave., Holland
 Maranatha, Holland
 Montello Park, Holland
 Niekerk, Holland
 Ninth St., Holland
 Park, Holland
 Prospect Park, Holland
 Providence, Holland
 Noordeloos, Holland
 South Olive
 West Olive
 Hudson
 Binghamton, NY
 East Palmyra, NY
 Goshen, NY
 Irving Park, Midland Park, NJ
 Norfolk, VA
 Paterson I, NJ
 Paterson IV, NJ
 Paterson II, NJ

- Rochester, NY
 Sussex, NJ
 Washington, DC
 Silver Spring, WA
 Webster, NY
 Fairlawn, Whitinsville, MA
Huron
 Drayton, ON
 Kitchener, ON
 Listowel, ON
Illiana
 DeMotte I, IN
 Highland II
 Lafayette, IN
 Lansing I, IL
 Bethel, Lansing, IL
 Oak Glen, Lansing, IL
 Munster, IN
 Bethany, South Holland, IL
 Cottage Grove, South Holland, IL
 South Holland I (S.S.), IL
Kalamazoo
 East Martin
 Goshen, IN
 Comstock, Kalamazoo
 Grace, Kalamazoo
 Milwood, Kalamazoo
 Northern Heights, Kalamazoo
 Kalamazoo II
 Kalamazoo III
 Westwood, Kalamazoo
Lake Erie
 Cincinnati, OH
 Olentangy, Columbus, OH
 Dayton, OH
 Dearborn, MI
 Detroit I, MI
 Jackson, MI
 Washington, PA
 Willard, OH
Minnesota North
 Classis Minnesota North
 Bunde
 Ogilvie
 New Brighton, St. Paul
 South Grove, South St. Paul
 Baldwin
 Pease
Minnesota South
 Chandler
 Bethel, Edgerton
 Hull, ND
 Ebenezer, Leota
 Bemis
Muskegon
 Fremont II
 Trinity, Fremont
 Grand Haven I
 Grand Haven II
 Allen Ave., Muskegon
 Bethany, Muskegon
 Calvin, Muskegon
 Muskegon I
 Muskegon Heights
 New Era
 Spring Lake
 Northcentral Iowa
 Austinville
 Kanawha
 Lincoln Center
 Rolling Acres, Mason City
 Orange City
 Hull I
 Le Mars
 Calvary, Orange City
 Orange City I
 Ocheyedan
Pacific Northwest
 Anchorage, AK
 Bellevue, WA
 Bethel, Lynden, WA
 Lynden III, WA
 Calvary, Seattle, WA
 Seattle I, WA
Pella
 Classis Pella
 Cedar
 Trinity, Iowa City
 Newton
 Oskaloosa I
 Calvary, Pella
 Faith, Pella
 Pella I
 Pella II
 Peoria
 Prairie City
 St. Louis, MO
 Sully
Quinte
 Kingston I, ON
Rocky Mountain
 Classis Rocky Mountain
 Alamosa, CO
 Chelwood, Albuquerque, NM
 Valley, Albuquerque, NM
 Boulder, CO
 Brigham City, UT
 Colorado Springs, CO
 Fairview, Denver, CO
 Denver I, CO
 Hillcrest, Denver, CO
 Denver II, CO
 Denver III, CO
 Trinity, Denver, CO
 Dispatch, KS
 Flagstaff, AZ
 Fort Collins, CO
 Gallup, NM
 Greeley, CO
 Luctor, KS
 Ogden, UT
 Phoenix I, AZ
 Rehoboth, NM
 Immanuel, Salt Lake City, UT

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Scottsdale, AZ | Borculo |
| Elim, Tucson, AZ | Drenthe |
| Sioux Center | Hillcrest, Hudsonville |
| Lakeview-Valentine, NB | Immanuel, Hudsonville |
| Rock Rapids, IA | Messiah, Hudsonville |
| Sioux Center I, IA | Jamestown |
| Toronto | North Blendon |
| Toronto I, ON | Oakland |
| Wisconsin | Overisel |
| Madison | Rusk |
| Calvin (SS), Sheboygan | Bethel, Zeeland |
| Zeeland | Zeeland I |
| Allendale I | Haven, Zeeland |
| Allendale II | Zeeland III |
| Beaverdam | Zutphen |
| b. Long-term Volunteers | |
| West-Leonard, Grand Rapids | Pease, MN |
| Grandville Ave., Grand Rapids | Ocheyedan, IA |
| Fourteenth Street, Holland | Seattle I, WA |
| South Olive | Pella II, IA |
| Bethel, Lansing, IL | Jamestown, MI |

C. Report of the Auditors

February 11, 1976

To the Board Members,
 Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions,
 Grand Rapids, Michigan

We have examined the statements of fund balances of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, Grand Rapids, Michigan, as of December 31, 1975 and the related statement of changes in fund equity for the year then ended. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances.

In our opinion, the accompanying statements of fund balances and statement of changes in fund equity present fairly the financial position of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions at December 31, 1975, and the results of its operation for the year then ended, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

DEN BRABER & LYZENGA
 Certified Public Accountants

CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

STATEMENT OF GENERAL FUND BALANCES

December 31, 1975

ASSETS

CURRENT			
Operating funds cash (Note A)		\$ 285,150	
Designated funds cash (Note B)		287,000	
Prepaid expenses		58,947	
Marketable Securities - at cost		16,060	
		<u> </u>	\$ 647,157
REAL ESTATE AND NOTES RECEIVABLE			
United States		\$4,166,778	
Canada		343,931	
Urban fields		1,496,260	
		<u> </u>	6,006,969

REAL ESTATE AND EQUIPMENT - INDIAN FIELD

Land and buildings	\$2,314,018	
Furniture and equipment	124,889	
Trucks and automobiles	<u>115,228</u>	
	\$2,554,135	
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>1,038,875</u>	1,515,260
OTHER ASSETS		
Notes receivable	\$ 200,000	
Mortgage and contracts receivable	66,922	
Furniture and fixtures - Grand Rapids - net	<u>4,753</u>	
		<u>271,675</u>
		<u>\$8,441,061</u>

LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY

LIABILITIES		
Mortgage payable	22,849	
Withholding taxes and other payables	<u>15,537</u>	
		\$ 38,386
FUND EQUITY		
Balance at end of year		<u>8,402,675</u>
		<u>\$8,441,061</u>

Note A - By action of the Board of Home Missions, \$350,000 of the operating funds on hand at December 31, 1975 are to be used to provide the necessary funds for the 1976 Synodically approved budget.

Note B - At December 31, 1975, \$287,000 was committed and budgeted for additional capital expenditures but not spent at the end of the year.

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN GENERAL FUND EQUITY

Year ended December 31, 1975

BALANCE - January 1, 1975		\$ 8,604,069
ADDITIONS		
Budgeted additions:		
Quota receipts	\$ 2,289,217	
Salary support	497,107	
Above quota gifts	275,370	
Indian field revenue	65,453	
Other income	<u>97,305</u>	
	\$ 3,224,452	
Other additions:		
Gain on disposal of fixed assets	1,400	
Prior year's adjustment		
- gain on disposal of fixed assets	6,936	
Transfer from restricted funds	<u>15,283</u>	
TOTAL ADDITIONS		<u>3,248,071</u>
TOTAL AVAILABLE		\$11,852,140

DEDUCTIONS

Budgeted expenses:			
Administration		\$	315,105
General home missions			103,784
Evangelism			201,628
Regular outreach			929,322
Urban fields			574,118
Indian fields			<u>1,231,307</u>
		\$	<u>3,355,259</u>
Other deductions:			
Depreciation			<u>94,206</u>
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS			<u><u>3,449,465</u></u>
BALANCE - December 31, 1975			<u><u>\$ 8,402,675</u></u>

STATEMENT OF RESTRICTED FUND BALANCES

	BALANCE December 31, 1974	Additions	Deductions	BALANCE December 31, 1975
ASSETS				
Cash (Note C)	<u>\$562,409</u>	<u>\$ 62,051</u>	<u>\$ 39,616</u>	<u>\$584,844</u>
FUND BALANCES [Note C]				
Missionary training fund (Note D)	\$221,083 24,618	\$ 29,039 4,716	\$ 6,157 3,435	\$243,965 25,899
Indian tuition assistance	277,847	20,366	17,928	280,285
Indian field expansion fund	4,532	-0-	-0-	4,532
Medical insurance fund	7,926	-0-	-0-	7,926
Jewish evangelism	1,236	7,309	2,736	5,809
Various missions projects	14,800	-0-	8,800	6,000
Annuity fund	<u>10,367</u>	<u>621</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>10,428</u>
Trust agreements				
	<u>\$562,409</u>	<u>\$ 62,051</u>	<u>\$ 39,616</u>	<u>\$584,844</u>

Note C - These funds represent amounts received for specified projects the use of which is restricted either by Synod or by the donor.

Note D - The Balance in the Missionary training fund at December 31, 1975 includes \$47,565 which has been credited to the individual missionaries' training accounts and is available to them under the rules of the fund.

1977 Proposed Budget**Estimated Receipts**

Quota Payments	\$2,700,000
Salary Support	580,000
Above Quota	290,000
Indian Field Revenue	11,000
Real Estate Repayments	105,000
Other Income	90,000
From Cash Balance	<u>370,000</u>

TOTAL ESTIMATED RECEIPTS..... \$4,146,000

Budgeted Disbursements**Operating:**

Administration and Promotion	\$ 390,300
General Home Missions	123,250
Evangelism	297,500
Regular Fields	1,131,500
Minority & Youth Fields	722,950
Indian Fields	<u>1,368,500</u>

TOTAL OPERATING..... \$4,034,000

Real Estate and Capital

Regular and Minority & Youth Fields	\$87,000
Indian Fields	20,000
Equipment	5,000

TOTAL REAL ESTATE & CAPITAL..... \$ 112,000

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS..... \$4,146,000

D. Proposed Budget for 1977

The proposed budget for 1977 is summarized below. A more detailed list of budget requests for 1977 will be submitted to the Finance Committee of the synod. On the basis of this proposed budget the Board of Home Missions requests the synod for a per family quota of \$47.00 for 1977.

VIII. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

A. The board respectfully requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to the board's President, Executive Secretary and Treasurer when matters pertaining to Home Missions are discussed.

B. The board requests synod to approve the Armed Forces Fund for one or more offerings from the churches.

C. The board urgently requests synod to place the Board of Home Missions on the list of denominational causes recommended for one or more offerings.

D. The board recommends that synod reappoint the Rev. John G. Van Ryn as Executive Secretary of the Board of Home Missions for a four-year term, (Section III, C of this report).

E. The board requests that synod approve the revision of the appointment policy which is designated "A Policy for Personnel Assessment," (Section V, C of this report).

F. The board requests that synod approve the Grant-In-Aid recommendations as presented in Section IV, G of this report.

G. The board requests synod to receive and act upon the following nominations for members-at-large:

1. Member-At-Large, Central
Gertrude Vander Ark — Helen Westra
2. Alternate Member-At-Large
Carl Mulder — Mark Vander Ark

H. The board requests synod to approve a quota of \$47 per family for the year 1977.

Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions
John G. Van Ryn, Executive Secretary

REPORT 5

THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS

The Board of Publications operates under the mandate of synod which authorizes it to produce, implement, and supervise the church's program of church education and denominational publications. It has now completed its seventh year of operation since synod consolidated the work of its former education, Sunday school and publication committees under one denominational board. During the past year the board has again sought to carry out the responsibilities assigned by synod through its subcommittees, the education committee, the periodicals committee, and the executive committee and through the annual meeting of the board on February 10 and 11. We herewith report the board's activities in the past year and present various matters for synod's information and action.

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD AND ITS COMMITTEES

A. *Membership of the Board*

The membership of the board is composed of one delegate elected by each classis in the denomination and meets once each year, ordinarily in the month of February. At the latest annual meeting all the classes were represented. The current roster of delegates and alternates is as follows:

Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Alberta North.....	Rev. J. Westerhof.....	Rev. G. Pols	1977
Alberta South.....	Mr. D. Bousema.....	Rev. C. H. Salomons	1977
British Columbia.....	Mr. G.W. Ensing.....	Rev. J. Tuininga*	1977
Cadillac.....	Rev. F. Van Dyk.....	Rev. G. Heyboer	1976
California South.....	Rev. C. Nyenhuis.....	Rev. C. Vander Plate	1976
Central California.....	Rev. L. C. Mensink.....		1977
Chatham.....	Rev. A. Vanden Berg.....	Rev. J. Nutma	1978
Chicago North.....	Miss B. Bean.....	Mr. A. Hoving	1978
Chicago South.....	Rev. N. Punt.....	Rev. D. Zylstra	1978
Columbia.....	Rev. T. Dykman.....	Rev. J. Moes	1977
Eastern Canada.....	Mrs. S. Cook.....	Mr. H. Van Schepen	1977
Florida.....	Mr. R. Sikkenga.....	Mr. P. Witte	1978
Grand Rapids East.....	Rev. C. Boomsma.....	Rev. C. Terpstra	1977
Grand Rapids North.....	Mr. A. Van Maastricht.....	Mr. J. Day	1977
Grand Rapids South.....	Rev. W. De Vries.....		1977
Grandville.....	Rev. W. Van Antwerpen.....	Rev. L. Bossenbroek	1978
Hackensack.....	Miss D. Kelder.....	Miss W. Knoll	1978
Hamilton.....	Rev. J. Kuntz.....	Mr. S. De Jong	1978
Holland.....	Mr. R. Holwerda.....	Mr. D. Zwier*	1978
Hudson.....	Dr. T. Dykstra.....	Mr. N. Bruinsma	1978
Huron.....	Rev. J. Van Dyk.....	Mrs. J. Boersma	1977
Illiana.....	Rev. J. Piersma.....	Rev. P. Brink*	1977
Kalamazoo.....	Rev. J. A. Mulder.....	Dr. S. Dvkstra	1976
Lake Erie.....	Rev. A. Hoksbergen.....	Mrs. R. Chong	1978
Minnesota North.....	Rev. T. Wevers.....	Rev. B. Becksvooort	1979
Minnesota South.....	Rev. B. Den Herder.....	Rev. L. Zoerhof	1978
Muskegon.....	Rev. M. Beelen.....	Mr. D. Schelhaas	1978

Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Northcentral Iowa**	Mr. A. Cooper	Rev. K. Van De Griend	1978
Orange City	Mr. H. Pluim	Mr. N. Vander Art	1978
Pacific Northwest	Rev. C. Pastine	Rev. K. Slager	1977
Pella	Rev. C. Vander Plaats	Mr. R. De Jager	1977
Quinte	Rev. R. Praamsma	Mr. V. Vos	1978
Rocky Mountain	Rev. C. De Velder	Mr. T. Weeda	1977
Sioux Center	Dr. C. Rozeblom	Mr. H. Haak	1977
Toronto	Rev. M. Greidanus	Rev. L. Tamminga	1978
Wisconsin	Mr. W. Leys	Mr. F. Stremmler	1977
Zeeland	Rev. S. Newhouse	Rev. C. Vander Meyden	1977

(Note: * indicates alternate Rev. P. Brink was seated instead of member Rev. J. Piersma; Rev. J. Tuinenga instead of member Mr. G. W. Ensing; Mr. D. Zwier took the place of Mr. Holwerda on Tuesday, but Mr. Holwerda returned on Wednesday.)

** Neither the member nor alternate of Classis Northcentral Iowa was able to be present; therefore the Classical Committee authorized Rev. R. Lammers to attend.)

It will be noted that four board members retire this year: Rev. C. Nyenhuis, Rev. F. Van Dyk, Rev. J. Piersma, Rev. J. A. Mulder. The president of the board expresses thanks in behalf of the board for the time and labors given by these members to the Board of Publications.

B. Officers of the Board

The officers of the board are chosen annually at the beginning of the sessions and begin serving immediately in their several capacities. The elections this year indicated the following were chosen to serve:

- President: Rev. Clarence Boomsma
- Vice President: Mr. Raymond Holwerda
- Secretary: (until Sept. 1, 1976) Rev. John A. Mulder
- Secretary: (after Sept. 1, 1976) Rev. Willard De Vries
- Treasurer: Rev. Willard Van Antwerpen

C. The Executive Committee

The executive committee is composed of the officers and eight additional members five of whom are elected by the board, and three who are appointed by synod. These members are:

- Rev. Marvin Beelen
- Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen
- Rev. Morris Greidanus
- Mr. William Leys
- Dr. Sidney Dykstra (after Sept. 1, 1976, replacing Rev. J. A. Mulder)
- Mr. Jack R. Brouwer (Businessman from Periodicals Committee)
- Mr. Kenneth Horjus (Businessman from Education Committee)
- Mr. Gordon Quist (Businessman from Education Committee)

The executive committee and the two committees serving under it, the education committee and the periodicals committee, meet regularly the first Thursday of each month except March, which follows closely after the annual meeting of the board, and August, which is largely a vacation month. The education and periodicals committees meet separ-

ately during the day, and the executive committee meets in the evening of the same day. This keeps travel costs at a minimum and has worked satisfactorily.

D. *The Education Committee*

The education committee as organized this year is composed of the following members: *Dr. Sidney Dykstra (1979), chairman; *Rev. John A. Mulder (1976), secretary; Dr. Derke Bergsma (1976) Rev. Henry De Rooy (representative of the Board of Home Missions); *Rev. Willard De Vries (1977); Mr. Barry Foster (1976); *Rev. Morris Greidanus (1978); Prof. William C. Hendricks (1977); *Mr. Ken Horjus (1978); *Mr. William Leys (1977); *Mr. Gordon Quist (1977); Mr. Arnold Snoeyink (1977), who has resigned effective Aug. 31, 1976; Miss Cora Vogel (1978). Rev. C. Boomsma serves ex officio, as president of the board.

* indicates executive committee members. Dr. Dykstra is to replace the Rev. John Mulder on Sept. 1, 1976, as executive committee member serving on the education committee. The terms of three members of the education committee end this year. Two are eligible for reelection, Dr. Derke Bergsma and Mr. Barry Foster. Mr. Snoeyink resigned because of conflicts in his teaching schedules.

The board presents the following nominations for the vacant positions:

1. For theological member:

*Dr. Derke Bergsma
Dr. Edwin Roels

2. For evangelism member:

*Mr. Barry Foster
Rev. Virgil Patterson

(*indicates incumbent eligible for reelection)

3. To fill the remaining year of Mr. Snoeyink's term as educator: (one year appointment)

Dr. Marion Snapper
Mr. Gordon Oosterman

4. To fill a vacancy in the slot of educator:

Mrs. Alma Holkeboer
Mrs. Rose Van Reken

For synod's information we supply the following resumes:

DR. DERKE BERGSMA is presently serving on the education committee as a theological type member according to the rules of synod for the composition of this committee. He is a member of the faculty of Trinity College, Chicago. He is eligible for a second term of three years.

DR. EDWIN ROELS is a theologian, presently serving as the pastor of the Cottage Grove Christian Reformed Church of South Holland, Illinois.

MR. BARRY FOSTER has served on the education committee for one term and is eligible for a second term of three years. He serves as evangelistic type member according to the rules of synod for the com-

position of this committee. He is the United Evangelism Program Director for the Muskegon area.

REV. VIRGIL PATTERSON is an ordained pastor serving the Madison Square Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.

DR. MARION SNAPPER is an educator, serving on the faculty of Calvin Seminary as Professor of Church Education. Dr. Snapper has previously served on the committee to draw up the Unified Church School Curriculum and also as a member of the education committee.

MR. GORDON OOSTERMAN is an educator serving on the staff of the National Union of Christian Schools.

MRS. ALMA HOLKEBOER is a member of the Third Christian Reformed Church of Kalamazoo, is serving on the Board of South Christian School, and functions as a substitute teacher. She is the wife of Dr. Paul Holkeboer, Professor of Chemistry at Western Michigan University.

MRS. ROSE VAN REKEN has previously served as a member of the Board of Publications, its executive and education committees, and was formerly an educator. She is the wife of Everett Van Reken, M.D. and lives in Cicero, Illinois.

E. *The Periodicals Committee*

The periodicals committee as organized this year is composed of the following members: *Mr. Raymond Holwerda (1978), chairman; *Rev. Marvin Beelen (1978), secretary; *Mr. Jack Brouwer (1978); *Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen (1978); Dr. Henry Stob (1978); Dr. John Timmerman (1977); *Rev. Willard Van Antwerpen (1978); Mr. Casey Wondergem (1976). Rev. C. Boomsma serves ex officio as president of the board.

(* indicates executive committee members)

The term of Mr. Casey Wondergem expires this year, and he is not eligible for reelection according to the rules of synod governing tenure of board and committee members. The board submits the following nomination to synod:

Mr. James K. Haveman Jr.

Mr. Kenneth Housekamp

For synod's information we supply the following resumes:

MR. JAMES K. HAVEMAN JR. Mr. Haveman is 32 years old, executive director of Project Rehab, member of the Madison Square Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, where he is serving as deacon. He is active on many local committees for social and economic betterment, such as Baxter Community Board, etc.

MR. KENNETH HOUSEKAMP. Mr. Housekamp is 38 years old, manager of Market Research at Rapistan Inc. He is a member of the Beckwith Hills Christian Reformed Church, where he has served as deacon. He is also a member of the Creston-Mayfield School Board and part-time teacher at Calvin. He graduated from Calvin in 1960 and from Michigan State with an MBA in 1962.

F. *The Education Staff*

1. The education staff, operating under the direction of the education committee, is composed of the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, director and theological editor, Mr. Robert Rozema, pedagogical editor, Mr. A. James Heynen, managing editor, Mrs. Ruth Vander Hart, assistant editor serving as journalist, Mr. Paul Stoub, artist, Mrs. Alida Arnoys, secretary and receptionist, Mr. Peter Meeuwse, business manager, and Mr. Allen Van Zee, accountant.

2. The board sincerely regrets that the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven has decided to retire as director of education and theological editor because of his desire to return to the parish ministry. He has done excellent work for the board during the years he served in the dual capacity of director and theological editor, and his departure from the staff will be keenly felt.

3. The board desires to recognize the efficient work being done by all the staff members, their dedication and loyalty which is constantly shown. Particular mention is made of the contributions of Mr. A. James Heynen as managing editor. Since his term expires this year, and he is an appointee of the board rather than synod, the board reappointed him for a term of two years, and so informs synod.

4. An addition to the staff was made when the executive committee appointed Mrs. Eldon (Cecelia) Mereness as Coordinator of Teacher Training. A rather lengthy report was approved by Synod in 1970 on the subject of teacher training. With the board's approval, arrangements have been made for Mrs. Mereness to begin work on March 1, 1976, and be employed on the basis of working nine months of the year.

Experience may prove that the work of teacher training will require a full-time position. For the present, however, the three-quarter time arrangement under which Mrs. Mereness was appointed, is to the advantage of both Mrs. Mereness and the education department. Mrs. Mereness would like additional time with her family, and the education department thus has an opportunity to evaluate the needs of this position in the light of the experience gained under the present arrangement, can begin work toward establishing a full teacher training program, and the expenditures will be kept within the limitations of the projected budgets and the five-year plan submitted to synod last year. The board approved the following guidelines under which Mrs. Mereness will be working:

- a. Teacher training should be grounded in and advance the principles and guidelines adopted by the Synod of 1970 for the work of the education department (cf. *Acts of Synod*, 1970, p. 206ff.).
- b. Teacher training should include both specific training events and a process for continuing teacher training in the local church.
- c. Teacher training should have a focus on both what is taught (content) and how it is taught (process or pedagogy).
- d. Materials produced by the education department as part of the Unified Church School Curriculum should be used in the program

of teacher training. One objective is the improved use of these materials in local churches.

e. Teacher training is aimed first at pastors, teachers and church school staff members. As consistories and parents can be involved, the entire work of church education will be enhanced.

f. The education department's teacher training program should function cooperatively with other leadership training programs available in the Christian Reformed Church. Particular attention should be given to those institutions whose purpose(s) include the training of church members for service.

g. The education department's teacher training program should be made available within and outside the CRC upon request. Where it is reasonably possible, teacher training should be financially self-sustaining.

h. While teacher training is a specific function within the education department, it must be fully integrated (personnel, the setting of priorities, staff participation, etc.) with all work done within this department.

5. The education committee and the executive committee considered a number of candidates for the position of Theological Editor. After interviewing several people the education and executive committees were prepared to recommend a nomination for the approval of the board and synod. However, shortly before the board met, the nominee for the position of Theological Editor informed the committees involved that he had accepted a call to serve a congregation, and therefore withdrew his name from further consideration. The board recognized therefore that it was impossible to submit a nominee or nominees to synod at this time. Arrangements are being made for the interim until the Synod of 1977 can make an appointment.

6. The executive committee submitted to the board a nominee for the position of Editor of Adult Education in response to synod's approval of the position last year. Dr. Edwin Walhout, who had been interviewed for the position of Theological Editor, indicated his interest in the appointment as Editor for Adult Education. After interviews by the personnel, education and executive committees, it was decided to recommend to the board that Dr. Walhout be presented to synod as the candidate for this position. The board also interviewed Dr. Walhout, and now comes to synod with the request that he be appointed as Editor for Adult Education.

If synod appoints Dr. Walhout as Editor for Adult Education, the board plans the following interim arrangements whereby the work of the Director and Theological Editor may be carried on until synod appoints a candidate to fill this vacancy:

a. That Dr. Walhout be asked to function on a temporary basis as Theological Editor as well as Editor for Adult Education, thus serving in a dual capacity for the interim period.

b. That Mr. A. James Heynen, managing editor, be given additional responsibilities of directorship temporarily.

- c. Should synod not appoint Dr. Walhout, and/or should additional help be required to assist the staff in carrying out its work, the education and executive committees will make the necessary arrangements.
7. The board instructed the executive committee, through its personnel and education committees, to continue the search for possible candidates for the position of Theological Editor, so that the board may present nominee(s) to synod in 1977. The board further instructed that definitive job descriptions for the positions of Director of Education, Theological Editor, Editor for Adult Education and Managing Editor be drawn up for the approval of the board at its 1977 annual meeting so that these may be reported to synod.

The board is not able to present to synod at this time the final plan of operation for the board, its committees, subcommittees and staffs as had been anticipated. The board hopes to make this report next year.

8. Although the final draft of the job description for the Editor for Adult Education will be under study this year as well as those for other staff positions, the board did adopt a set of guidelines under which the Editor for Adult Education is to operate this year. They are as follows:

Position: Editor for Adult Education

Responsibility: The Editor for Adult Education is responsible for the development of educational resources for use with adults in the church. In meeting this responsibility, the Editor for Adult Education shall:

- a. Coordinate the planning of all adult church education materials.
- b. Edit and, when necessary, write materials for adult church education in cooperation with the other churches.
- c. Actively monitor current — and project future — adult church education needs at the congregational level, so that appropriate resources can be developed.
- d. Review and critique materials produced by the Education Department or by other agencies with a view to the continuing usefulness of these materials in the churches.
- e. Recommend authors and other resource people to work on the adult church education program.
- f. Recommend and participate in joint-efforts for adult church education with other denominational agencies.
- g. Present the work and the goals of the Education Department in the area of adult education to the churches in order to stimulate deeper interest in this phase of church education.

Accountability: The Editor for Adult Education is accountable to the Theological Editor of the Education Department in all areas pertaining to the content of the curriculum, and to the Managing Editor of the Education Department in all other areas until such time as the board finalizes the staff structure.

G. The Periodicals Staff

1. The periodicals staff, operating under the direction of the periodicals committee, is composed of Dr. Lester De Koster, editor of The Banner, Miss Gertrude Haan, assitant editor of The Banner, Rev. William Haverkamp, editor of De Wachter, Mr. Wayne De Jonge, artist, Miss Judy Bronsink, secretary, Mr. Peter Meeuwsen, business manager, Mr. Allen Van Zee, accountant.

2. The board desires to recognize the efficient work being done by all the staff members, their dedication and loyalty which is constantly shown. Since the terms of both Dr. De Koster, editor of The Banner, and the Rev. Mr. Haverkamp, editor of De Wachter end this year, the Periodicals Committee had prepared evaluations for each as bases for its recommendations that they be reappointed. The board instructed the secretary to include these in the official minutes of the board sessions.

The board comes to synod with the following recommendations:

- a. That Dr. Lester De Koster be reappointed as editor of The Banner for a term of four years.
- b. That the Rev. William Haverkamp be reappointed as editor of De Wachter for a term of two years.

II. FINANCIAL MATTERS

A. The Financial Report

The board operates on a fiscal year beginning September 1 and ending August 31. This is more adaptable to the entire program of the board and facilitates budgeting for the following year. The board submits the following condensed financial report as information to synod, noting that a more detailed accounting of all transactions is available to the advisory budget committee of synod. The business manager, Mr. Peter Meeuwsen, and other representatives of the board are prepared to supply synod and its budget committee with any further information requested.

**BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN**

August 31, 1975

ASSETS

CURRENT

Cash on hand and on deposit	\$107,319
Accounts receivable	199,933
Land contract receivable	13,104
Accrued interest receivable	746
Inventories	171,848
Prepaid Expenses	<u>5,663</u>
Total Current Assets	\$498,613

OTHER

Land contract receivable	\$ 6,679	
Inventory - supplies and metal	<u>13,618</u>	\$ 20,297

EQUIPMENT

Machinery & equipment, office furniture &
 fixtures, and truck
 Less allowance for depreciation

\$676,431
297,063 \$379,368

TOTAL ASSETS

\$898,278

LIABILITIES

CURRENT

Accounts payable
 Accrued expenses
 Current portion of long-term debt

\$ 72,482
 26,518
14,000

TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES

\$113,000

DEFERRED INCOME

146,196

LONG-TERM DEBT

Mortgage payable

112,000

RESERVE FOR FUTURE REPAIRS

3,752

EQUITY

FROM OPERATIONS

Balance - September 1, 1974
 Net income for the year ended
 August 31, 1975
 Less: Transfer of land and building,
 contributed capital accounts and
 mortgage payable to Christian
 Reformed Church in North America

\$526,663

50,474 \$577,137

 166,767

CONTRIBUTED

Balance - August 31, 1975

112,960 \$523,390

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

\$898,278

STATEMENT OF INCOME

Year ended August 31, 1975

INCOME

Subscriptions and sales

\$1,163,433

COSTS

Material
 Direct Labor
 Artwork
 Manufacturing Expenses
 Writers
 Mailing Costs

\$500,732
 127,997
 37,826
 159,006
 23,694
96,662 \$ 945,917

GROSS MARGIN

\$ 217,516

GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE

Direct (clerical-editorial-managerial)
 Indirect (depreciation-insurance-office supplies-
 postage, etc.)

\$271,130

82,979 354,109

OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	(\$ 136,593)
OTHER INCOME - NET *	<u>187,067</u>
NET INCOME	<u>\$ 50,474</u>

* Includes \$172,370 quotas for:

Banner	\$ 21,377
De Wachter	20,118
Unified Church School Curriculum	<u>130,875</u>
	<u>\$172,370</u>

B. Comparative Costs of the Board's Printing Operations

The board is constantly on the alert to check out the efficiency of our office and plant to insure that it is exercising proper stewardship of time, talents and funds. In 1971 the results of the Morris report were shared with synod, indicating that the business aspects of the board's operation were in good order. Last summer the president of the board requested the executive business committee to make a thorough investigation of our printing operations, seeing five years had elapsed since the previous report had been made, and the economic conditions had changed drastically. The executive business committee began working on this mandate at once so that it would have its report ready for the annual meeting of the board.

The executive business committee is composed of the three members appointed directly by synod to the executive committee. The chairman is Mr. Gordon Quist, a practicing attorney in Grand Rapids. The other members are Mr. Ken Horjus, a C.P.A. with the Touche Ross and Company accounting firm, and Mr. Jack Brouwer, who is associated with one of the advertising agencies in the city.

The executive business committee solicited bona fide bids on the cost of producing a comprehensive number of products printed by our plant. After an intensive study of the entire problem, the committee rendered its report in writing to the board. In order to share this information with synod, we have included the entire report and its conclusions. We are happy that the results are favorable. Through our present operations the board has been able to save the denomination a sizeable amount of money each year. The report as given to the board reads as follows:

January 21, 1976

Board of Publications of the
Christian Reformed Church
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Gentlemen:

As you know, the Executive Business Committee has had, over a period of months, various discussions regarding the possibility of using outside printers for all the materials presently published by the board. These discussions resulted in a decision to solicit bids from various reputable printers for the purpose of determining whether any economic advantage would result from using one or more

outside printers for all the board's materials and, correspondingly, discontinue the composing, pressroom and bindery operations presently carried on by the board. Accordingly the business manager assembled specimen packages of the various items published by the board and requested bids from certain printers (Exhibit D) for comparable production of these items. Various bids were received as a result of these requests which are summarized in Exhibit A entitled Comparative Schedule of Current Costs. It is very important to note that bids were requested only on the items indicated and not on certain materials published for Calvin College, synod, various denominational agencies and others. This schedule, and the footnotes thereto, indicate that in total, and for almost all individual items, the costs of production currently being experienced by the board are substantially less than the costs which would be incurred if this production was performed by any one of the various commercial printers indicated.

Inasmuch as the validity of this conclusion is entirely dependent on the reliability of what we have indicated as our current costs, a comparison was made between these costs and the costs of materials and production as they appear in our audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 1975.

Reference should be made to the Exhibit B entitled Comparative Schedule of Costs (page 13 of the accountants' report for the year ended August 31, 1975). The following line items, taken from that page, represent the actual costs of all items for which bids were solicited *plus* all items, as previously discussed, for which bids were not solicited:

Material	\$532,133
Direct labor	140,446
Manufacturing expenses	173,912
	\$846,491
Increase in work in process and merchandise for resale inventories	(58,757)
Total	\$787,734

This amount is \$211,193 in excess of actual costs for 1975 as indicated on Exhibit A. This excess represents the actual costs of producing the various items appearing on Exhibit C, all of which were not included in the requests for bids. We have observed that all of the historical cost figures are supported by job cost records prepared by the accounting department of the board. We have concluded that the current costs of production as indicated on Exhibit A are reasonable in comparison to actual costs experienced during the year ended August 31, 1975 and represent a valid basis for comparison with bids received from commercial printers.

We believe that the differential in costs, which in many cases is quite dramatic, is due primarily to the following:

1. Commercial printers must seek a profit, and accordingly, must include a profit factor in their bids.
2. The building and land, which had been paid for by the board out of operating revenue, is now utilized by the board pursuant to a perpetual rent free lease from the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Accordingly, the board now incurs no rental expense or depreciation charges relating to this property. Obviously, commercial printers do not enjoy such arrangements.
3. Commercial printers are required to pay sales commissions or other expenses related to the marketing of their products. It is not necessary for the board to incur many of these kinds of expenses.

The Executive Business Committee has concluded that the board's printing operation satisfies its original purpose of substantially reducing the printing costs for the denomination. Therefore, we recommend that the printing operation be continued. We are, however, as a committee and with the assistance of the business manager, attempting to identify opportunities for cost reductions and greater efficiencies in our production operations. We are hopeful that these efforts will bear fruit.

Sincerely,
The Executive Business Committee

[EXHIBIT A]

COMPARATIVE SCHEDULE OF COSTS

BID RESPONSES FROM COMMERCIAL PRINTING COMPANIES

	Board of Publications 1975 1st Quarter		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
	Actual	1976 (C)									
THE BANNER	\$ 215,992	203,200	339,350	387,100	388,000	277,100	-0-	282,500	-0-	-0-	
DE WACHTER	15,902	16,535	41,574	36,062	54,375	23,140	-0-	21,820	-0-	-0-	
WEEKLY SERMON	10,378	10,003	22,672	24,336	23,140	21,996	-0-	37,960	-0-	-0-	
RADIO PULPIT	19,869	19,329	31,824	48,924	28,320	25,656	-0-	39,780	-0-	-0-	
TODAY	82,760	78,925	156,695	175,236	121,020	105,264	-0-	134,088	-0-	139,080	
SPANISH SERMONS	13,554	13,028	22,748	39,700	21,300	16,960	21,200	23,792	-0-	18,672	
CALVINIALIA	8,786	7,468	9,780	12,780	12,440	10,000	10,500	10,500	11,904	11,828	
SPARK	<u>12,064</u>	<u>13,031</u>	<u>27,636</u>	<u>22,252</u>	<u>33,000</u>	<u>15,660</u>	<u>17,400</u>	<u>16,212</u>	<u>17,852</u>	<u>16,240</u>	\$ <u>15,168</u>
	379,295	361,519	652,279	746,390	681,595	495,776	(A)	566,752	(A)	(A)	(A)
STEPS PAPER	24,718	24,800	35,744	61,400	42,060	27,620	60,020	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
WORKBOOK	9,260	9,300	8,900(B)	18,260	19,420	12,168	16,400	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEACHER MANUAL	9,212	9,200	18,372	16,528	16,560	14,000	8,480	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEACHER KITS	8,419	8,400	10,636	-0-	12,580	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TRAILS STUDENT PAPER	24,975	25,000	33,388	55,500	39,160	25,700	53,620	-0-	-0-	-0-	55,250
WORKBOOK	10,440	10,500	18,996	20,312	22,020	13,460	16,000	-0-	-0-	-0-	16,000
TEACHER MANUAL	8,732	8,800	18,272	16,766	16,200	11,172	8,160	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEACHER KIT	9,164	9,200	14,744	11,736	18,180	-0-	20,820	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
GUIDE STUDENT PAPER	28,832	28,900	43,052	56,048	63,660	46,236	41,860	-0-	45,800	-0-	40,248
TEACHER MANUAL	7,610	7,600	17,220	16,324	15,680	10,808	7,780	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CROSSROADS PAPER	25,556	25,600	38,168	30,772	38,540	29,160	28,120	-0-	23,200	-0-	30,160
TEACHER MANUAL	6,960	7,000	14,820	13,176	13,120	10,440	7,220	-0-	-0-	-0-	15,208
FOOTPRINT TEACHER MANUAL	11,340	11,400	23,432	22,264	22,080	9,144(B)	8,300	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TEACHER KIT	<u>12,038</u>	<u>12,000</u>	<u>21,588</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>15,400</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>-0-</u>
	<u>197,246</u>	<u>197,700</u>	<u>317,332</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>354,660</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>
\$	<u>576,541</u>	\$ <u>559,219</u>	\$ <u>969,611</u>	<u>(A)</u>	\$ <u>81,036,255</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>	<u>(A)</u>

(A) Bid response not complete

(B) Miscalculated the number of pages.

(C) Based on first quarter current costs which, due to a decrease in paper prices and an offsetting increase in labor and manufacturing expenses, are in many cases, estimated to be the same as last year's actual costs.

[EXHIBIT B]

COMPARATIVE SCHEDULE OF COSTS

BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

	Year ended August 31		Increase
	1975	1974	(Decrease)
Material:			
Inventory - September 1	\$ 54,113	\$ 12,286	\$ 41,827
Purchases, including sublet*	<u>507,917</u>	<u>421,748</u>	<u>86,169</u>
	\$ 562,030	\$434,034	\$127,996
Less inventory - August 31	<u>29,897</u>	<u>54,113</u>	<u>(24,216)</u>
	\$ 532,133	\$379,921	\$152,212
Direct labor*	\$ 140,446	122,004	18,442
Art work	37,826	33,830	3,996
Manufacturing expenses	173,912	164,492	9,420
Writers	23,694	24,724	(1,030)
Royalty expense	-0-	2,150	(2,150)
Mailing expenses	<u>96,662</u>	<u>97,662</u>	<u>(1,000)</u>
	\$1,004,673	\$824,783	\$179,890
Decrease (increase) in work-in-process and merchandise for resale inventories	(58,757)	46,980	(105,737)
Totals	<u>\$ 945,916</u>	<u>\$871,763</u>	<u>\$ 74,153</u>

*Net after allocation of costs to office supplies and promotional material.

(EXHIBIT C)

ITEMS NOT INCLUDED IN REQUEST FOR BIDS

Footprints Papers	\$ 27,000
Footprints SAS	7,100
Adult Studies	14,620
Adult Booklets	2,500
Home Missions	8,000
Catechism	16,300
Synod	2,100
SCORR	600
Acts	16,629
Agenda	14,004
Yearbooks	14,656
Psalter Hymnals	25,358
Bibles	8,645
Tracts	11,601
Misc. church supplies	10,025
Promotional jobs	5,300
Office jobs	2,692
Misc. for Back to God Hour	7,057
Misc. for Calvin College	11,306
Coordinated Services Agency	<u>5,700</u>
	<u>\$211,193</u>

EXHIBIT D
SOLICITATIONS OF BIDS

Bids were requested from all commercial printers indicated below, five of which did not respond.

The following list is in alphabetical order which does not correspond in any way to the order of presentation on Exhibit A.

Birch Printers, Benton Harbor, MI.
 Dickinson Brothers, Grand Rapids, MI.
 EPI, Battle Creek, MI.
 Etheridge Company, Grand Rapids, MI.
 Gilson Press, Grand Rapids, MI.
 Hoekstra Printing, Grand Rapids, MI.
 A. P. Johnson Company, Grand Rapids, MI
 Knickerbocker Press, Grand Rapids, MI.
 Michigan Lithographing Co., Grand Rapids, MI.
 Pipple Pattersen, Grand Haven, MI.
 Printing Arts Company, Grand Rapids, MI.
 The Printers, Grand Rapids, MI.
 Wobbema Press Inc., Grand Rapids, MI.
 Wynalda Lith, Grand Rapids, MI.

C. Quotas for the Board of Publication

Synod requested that a projected five-year plan be presented in 1975 concerning the costs and projected market penetration of the Unified Church School Program. This will be found in the board's report submitted last year. On the basis of this report synod determined the quota for the education department.

The periodicals department still struggles with the fantastic increase in postal rates in both Canada and the United States, which have again risen this past year. In the previous report it was pointed out how many of the religious periodicals have had either to cease publication or seek some kind of subsidy because of the mailing costs.

For the reasons indicated above, the board is again requesting synod to grant the same quotas for 1977 as synod approved last year for 1976.

1. For the education department for the purpose of continuing to develop the materials of the Unified Church School Curriculum: \$4.00 per family.
- b. For the periodicals department to subsidize the church periodicals:
 - a) For The Banner, \$2.00 per family
 - b) For De Wachter, \$.50 per family
 for a total of \$2.50 for this department.

D. The Establishment of a Canadian Distribution Center

Suggestions have come from Canadian sources asking that studies be made concerning the establishment of a Canadian Distribution Center either for the entire denomination or for the Board of Publications. The purpose was to discover whether it might be economically more feasible to distribute materials this way, and whether the establishment of such a center would speed the deliveries. After an in-depth study was made by a committee for this purpose, the board took the following action:

1. That at this time the Board of Publications adopt none of the options that were presented as possibilities, since none seemed suf-

ficiently advantageous to warrant the work and expenditures involved.

2. That further study be given to determine possible means for greater economy and better service in shipments to Canada. This study should investigate the feasibility (costs, benefits, problems and funding) of:

- a. Contracted services for mailing periodicals;
- b. A Canadian Corporation for the Board of Publications;
- c. Postal rates that would apply in different methods of shipping to Canadians: e.g. truck materials to Canada and place in Canadian mail; truck materials to Canada and deliver to a Canadian Corporation for mailing.

3. That because distance from Grand Rapids makes much of the necessary information difficult or impossible for the staff or a committee to obtain, the board is requesting Classis Chatham (presumably by appointing a committee in that area) to make this study in behalf of the Board of Publications and report to the executive committee of the board by November, 1976.

This request, together with the report the board received, has been submitted to the Stated Clerk of Classis Chatham.

III. MATTERS RELATING TO PERIODICALS AND PUBLICATIONS

A. The board in 1975 adopted the following resolution:

"That the Board of Publications instruct the periodicals committee to conduct an in-depth long range study regarding the future of The Banner and report to the board at its annual meeting of 1976. This study shall include consideration of and recommendations on:

1. The purpose and/or functions of The Banner, recognizing the position of The Banner as an official publication of the Christian Reformed Church.
2. The editorial direction and overall content of The Banner.
3. The projected costs of The Banner and alternative sources of revenue, this to include market research and analysis."

The periodicals committee reported to the board as follows:

"Results of the in-depth long range study regarding the future of The Banner. The periodicals committee recommends the following for adoption by the board.

"1. *The Official Character of The Banner*

The Banner is the official organ of the Christian Reformed Church. This means that it is a paper which is owned, controlled, and administered by the denomination. The synod regulates The Banner through the board which is an incorporated body and is responsible to synod and subject to synodical decisions. The members of this board are selected by each classis and are approved by synod. In the regulation of The Banner the board is governed by the purposes which are set down in the articles of incorporation (See Article 2, Articles of Incorporation), and by the rules and regulations of synod.

"2. *The Purpose of The Banner*

In the light of the official character of The Banner and in accordance with the articles of incorporation and regulations of synod, we consider the purpose of The Banner to be:

- a. To inform our membership of what is happening in the denomination. The Banner is to provide succinct information for our membership of the activities of our congregations, classes, synod, and denominational boards. In providing this information it helps to foster denominational consciousness.
- b. To strengthen the Christian life of all the members of the church. The Banner is to provide meaningful and interesting articles, devotional materials, Bible studies, stories, and poetry which are written to build and encourage our Christian families. It reinforces the ministry of every local church.
- c. To stimulate our membership to serious reflection upon the content of the Christian faith as it relates to our surrounding culture. The Banner is to provide editorials, in-depth studies, and special articles which are written to guide and challenge our members in understanding the culture which surrounds us today, in particular, moral and theological issues, all in the light of our Reformed faith.

"3. *Editorial Direction and Overall Content of The Banner*

The Editorial Direction of The Banner.

Editorial direction may be defined in two ways:

- a. editorial direction as *movement* toward a goal and
- b. editorial direction as *supervision* of the production of The Banner.

a. Editorial direction as *movement*.
The goal of the church in the publication of its weekly periodical is that the will and work of God, as defined by the Scriptures and by our confessions shall be promoted in church and world by the ministry of the printed page.

- 1) The editor shall exercise care in communicating our Reformed heritage and shall encourage wide-spread appropriation of it. He shall at the same time acquaint the membership with new insights into the meaning of Scripture and with the on-going development of thought and life in the Christian world.
- 2) The editor shall recognize and respect diversity within the CRC, while striving for such unity as will build up the church and equip it for its mission in the world.
- 3) The editor shall make the CRC membership conscious and appreciative of contributions made by or within other churches.

- b. Editorial direction as *supervision*

- 1) The editor shall be accorded a wide range of editorial freedom while being obliged to fulfill the purposes for which The Banner is published.
- 2) The editor shall recommend to the periodicals committee on a regular basis the appointment and reappointment of departmental editors, and assume full responsibility for their work.

3) The editor is required to seek approval of the periodicals committee for all series of four or more articles by the same writer.

4) The editor shall assume full responsibility for content and format of each issue of The Banner.

5) The editor shall maintain along with the periodicals committee and executive committee open lines of communication for the receipt of advice, direction, and guidance, and for the discussion of all problems and opportunities that arise in the daily exercise of his responsibilities.

c. The overall content of The Banner

The content of The Banner shall reflect the purposes of The Banner. Writers shall be sought who will write interesting, informative, challenging articles that will fulfill these purposes. This calls for a wide variety of writers, with different styles, representing various attitudes and convictions within the Reformed community of North America. Matters considered in all editorials, articles and news reports shall be dealt with courageously and sensitively.

On the matter of the projected costs of The Banner and alternative sources of revenue, the periodicals committee made several statements as a progress report, but indicated that further study and surveys were needed before a full report could be made on this matter. The board adopted the report and brings it to synod as information.

B. The Banner received first place awards in two categories at the Evangelical Press Association Convention this year. In the "editorial category" Dr. De Koster's editorial entitled "Gulag Archipelago" received a first award. Dr. Kroese's article entitled "Going to the Movies at Home" received a first award in the "critical review" category. At this same convention Dr. De Koster gave an address which was much appreciated by the delegates.

C. Plans have been made for The Banner to recognize both the Bicentennial of the United States and the Centennial of Calvin College. By the time synod meets much of the fruit of this planning will have become apparent.

D. The relationship between the Church Herald staff of the Reformed Church of America and The Banner staff is very cordial. The joint issue of The Church Herald and The Banner for October 17, 1975 was a venture that proved a happy one for both staffs.

E. Because of the continuing increased mailing costs for The Banner in both Canada and the United States, it was decided to add a surcharge to help cover these rising costs. Therefore in October the executive committee decided that a surcharge of \$1.00 for all subscriptions in both Canada and the United States should be added. Since the postal strike in Canada, rates there have risen again, so that the board was forced to add an additional dollar for Canadian subscribers. Even these increases do not meet the total mailing costs.

F. Past synods have encouraged the churches to adopt the Every Family Plan of subscribing to The Banner. Thus far 156 churches have entered

this plan, accounting for 11,480 subscriptions. Of these 2,120 are from Canada and 9,360 from the United States. The board would like to see a larger number of congregations follow this pattern.

G. The total number of subscriptions to *The Banner* at time of this reporting is 44,216 of which 4,622 come from Canadian readers, and 38,814 from subscribers in the United States. A number of free subscriptions are also sent out, mostly to college dormitories and seminary libraries, as well as exchanges with other religious periodicals. At present 355 copies are sent to Calvin College and Seminary, 250 to Dordt, 50 to Trinity and 30 to the Reformed Bible College. In all, 780 free copies are sent out each week. The board feels that this is a worthwhile ministry.

H. The number of subscriptions to *De Wachter* is at present 2,410, of which 1,547 are from Canada, and 863 from the United States. The rate of decline in subscriptions is not as great as it has been in the past. Since synod has repeatedly expressed itself in favor of continuing publication of *De Wachter* the board has recommended the reappointment of the Rev. William Haverkamp.

I. The Periodicals Committee brought to the attention of the board an oversight that occurred in 1972. Synod, dealing with Report 44 on the Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority, gave the Board of Publication the following mandate:

- a. That synod instruct the Board of Publications to make available to the denomination, in popular form, the contents of Report 44, for the purpose of reaching also the general membership of the churches;
- b. Specifically, that the board accomplish this in a series of articles in *The Banner*, expanding each of the points of pastoral advice;
- c. Further, that following publication in *The Banner*, the board, using its discretion in incorporating suggested improvements in these articles, make them available to the churches in booklet form.

(Acts of Synod, 1972, Art. 52, 8; p. 69).

Five articles appeared in *The Banner* (Jan. 5-Feb. 2 1973), popularizing the report, but we failed in carrying out the instruction in point c, quoted above. The board expresses regret for this oversight. It requests synod to relieve the board of this mandate, since there has been no demand for this material in this format.

J. In 1968 the board "instructed the executive committee to initiate a study of restructuring the editorship of *The Banner* in accordance with the instruction of the Synod of 1966 with a view to possible implementation of such a plan in 1970, this study to be presented to the board at its February meeting. (Note: The instruction to initiate a study for the restructuring of the editorial work of *The Banner* with a view to the possible implementation of the same in 1970." (Cf. Acts of Synod 1966, Art. 99, IV, C 2, p. 72) and (Art. 68-42 of Board Minutes.)

In 1969 the board decided "that a study of the possible restructuring of the editorial work of *The Banner* be made by the executive and periodicals committees in conjunction with the new editor of *The Ban-*

ner, and report its findings to the next annual meeting of the board" (Art. 69-A 39).

The following year it was reported to the board that the mandate had proved impossible to carry out because the editor-elect had not had actual experience in the preparation of *The Banner*, and neither he nor the committee were ready to give a judgment in this matter. Here matters stood until the board this year mandated the periodicals committee to study this entire question once more and make a report to the board at its annual meeting in 1977. Since the initial mandate came from synod, we submit the above as information.

IV. MATTERS RELATING TO THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

A. *The Director's Report*

The Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven presents his final report as follows:

1. *History of the Program*

The Board of Publications was Synod 1968's attempt to combine Sunday school, catechism, the *Banner*, *De Wachter* and the printing plant, and to place them under the supervision of a denominational board. It will remain debatable whether or not this system of government is in the best interest of the cause. But whatever drawbacks the board structure may have, the board was instrumental in opening a new perspective on church education. We would not have received the vision if the committees on Sunday school and catechism had continued their separate existence. Only a young and idealistic board could have framed the document, "Towards a Unified Church School Curriculum" (Acts of Synod 1970, pp. 260ff. reprinted as Appendix I in *Church Education in the Christian Reformed Church*). The new Board of Publications simply proposed a new church school for the whole church. The board had strong convictions and enough courage to outline a program that would cause conflicts with traditional ideas and institutions which the church had picked up without much thought.

Of course, to write a manifesto is one thing, to translate it into action is a second. When the editors were appointed, the authors contracted and the first materials printed (1972), the local churches began to take note and ask questions. The answers had to be given by the staff—although staff members were appointed to implement a decision, not to defend the orders. I, for one, have become very tired of the questions and even more so by the lack of attention to the answers.

Ultimately it is not the education department of the Board of Publications that decides if the church is going to have a new approach to church education in the seventies. It's true that the availability of a program has much to do with it; and our program is not yet complete. But the decision will be made by the local congregations, consistories and pastors.

We have come a long way, since 1970, also in disseminating information. Before the summer of 1976, we hope to have a sight-sound program available, so that board members and other good people can explain what the *Bible Way* is all about, why we started it and how it works. And during the summer of 1976, we hope to do more about teacher's

training than we have ever done. But there are nitty-gritty questions that cannot be settled here; such as, On what days does the church school meet? And for how long? Must we have church school even after Easter? How do we initiate and maintain effective supervision, so that we know that the students are really learning? How many classes should the pastor teach? Must one be an elder to qualify as a catechist? How can church education be taken seriously as education, when we have inherited attitudes that do not favor learning in church school? The last one is probably the most important question and the hardest to answer.

2. *State of the Program*

Our educational materials consist of two-year cycles. In the first year of their publication they are regarded as pilot projects. They are revised when they are issued for the second time. Then they are merely reprinted for a four year period (two cycles) whereupon they are subject to revision once again.

In 1972 we began the publication of three courses, *Bible Steps* (for grades 1 and 2), *Bible Trails* (grades 3 and 4), and *Bible Guide* (grades 5 and 6). These have now gone through two cycles, once as pilot project, once revised. When they are re-issued in September 1976, they should last in this format until 1980.

In 1974 we published two more courses, *Bible Footprints* (for ages 4 and 5) and *Bible Crossroads* (for grades 7 and 8, ages 12-13). In September 1976 we should begin the publication of the revised *Footprints* and *Crossroads*. All the *Footprints* lessons were written by Gary and Pat Nederveld of Denver, Colorado. They have done extremely well over a long period of time. *Crossroads* were written by a variety of authors, notably Mr. John Brondsema and the Rev. Earl Schipper.

The revisions are made by the editors. Their decisions are based on the evaluations by hundreds of teachers. Apart from unsolicited comments which we get nearly every day, 625 teachers of *Footprints* and 305 teachers of *Crossroads* returned our questionnaires. I do not think that any other publishing house has so much involvement on the part of the church school teachers. Think of it: six hundred and twenty-five teachers of preschoolers answer thirty-five questions each, because they are so interested in better teaching. These 625 teachers have an average of thirty minutes to teach an average of ten and one-half children. One of every eight children does not belong to the church. The students of *Crossroads* (12-13 years old) are in many churches. The Christian Reformed teachers have only thirty-five minutes to teach; they should have forty-five. On the average they teach a class of ten students. Of their students 93% are Christian Reformed and 44% do not attend a Christian day school.

The teachers' comments are carefully tabulated and their evaluations are weighed in staff meetings. As much as possible, staff members themselves teach at their local churches, so that they have first hand experience with the materials.

This summer we will have five courses completed, from preschool through grade eight. (See the grid following.)



BIBLE WAY CURRICULUM PLAN

1976-1977				1977-1978				
	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter	Spring	Summer
Footprints Preschool	God's World	Who is Jesus	Learning With Peter	The Greatest Friend	God's Children	All About Jesus	Words and Stories of Jesus	People Around Me
Bible Steps Grades 1 & 2	My God And I	Jesus Our Savior	God's Family	God's Great World	God Speaks	People Jesus Loved	When We Worship	The Lord's Prayer
Bible Trails Grades 3 & 4	Jesus Came to do God's Will	People Called Him Master	Following a Faithful Savior	Carrying on Jesus' Work	Period of Beginnings	Joseph and Moses	The Promised Land	Fall of the Nation
	GOSPELS			ACTS	OLD TESTAMENT			
Bible Guide Grades 5 & 6	The Gospel of John	The Great Conflict	Sharing in Christ's Victory	The Church of Christ	God's Revelation—the Bible	God's Revelation—Jesus Christ	God's Revelation—The Holy Spirit	Relationships
Crossroads Grades 7 & 8	God's Government	Prophecy	Church History	The Kingdom	Children of God	The Covenant	Discipleship	Church and Worship

High School and Adult Level Materials To Be Announced, 1976

It will be a long time before every church teaches all of the curriculum. Nevertheless, this is the trend. During 1975 the percentage of Christian Reformed churches that used the whole curriculum increased from 31% to 41%. These percentages are based on the total number of churches that take parts of the curriculum. There are 699 churches which take one or more of our courses and of these 699 churches, 289 use the whole curriculum. Last year we had only 229 that used the whole package.

We consider this amount of full participation one of the two most significant figures we have to show. The second most significant figure is the amount of non-Christian Reformed churches using Bible Way materials. Considering that we have put forth very little effort to obtain these accounts, the interest in our materials outside of the Christian Reformed Church is a continuing source of gratitude and encouragement.

Denomination.	Congregations using Bible Way materials
Christian Reformed Church	707
Reformed Church in America	210
Orthodox Presbyterian Church	25
Presbyterian Churches	94
Congregational Churches	10
United Church of Christ	13
"Other"	31
TOTAL	1,090

In other words, 35% of the churches ordering Bible Way materials are non-Christian Reformed.

3. *One New Course in 1976*

Requests for a course for three year olds prompted staff discussions, meetings with experts and deliberations by the education committee during the past year. Independent publishers consider such a course lucrative together with the cradle roll, which constitutes a still lower level.

We do not feel justified to invest much of the church's funds into a course for three year olds, considering that parents rather than church school teachers have formative influence at this age level. It is a fact, however, that an increasing number of classes are being conducted for tiny tots. Hence it was decided to publish a Teacher's Resource Manual for three year olds. The manual will contain complete outlines for fifty-two lessons, four pages to a lesson, plus additional patterns and resources at the end of the manual. The format will be a three-ring binder containing approximately 250 pages. No student papers, teachers' kits or activity sheets, other than those which the teacher might make according to the directions provided in the manual. Sheri Haan will author the manual.

The Teacher's Course for three year olds should be available this summer. The education committee was the more ready to approve this project, since it is one of the things staff could handle in the absence of a theological editor.

In this connection I should mention that we have also received requests from churches for materials on "Children's Worship Services." It has become the custom in an increasing number of churches to con-

duct not only classes but also worship services with the children while the public worship is in progress. Your staff has replied that the production of such materials is not within the scope of its mandate.

4. *Course on the Heidelberg Catechism*

Our course for three year olds will complete the lower end of our curriculum. We still have a long way to go up on the ladder. The next rung is "grades nine and ten" (ages 14 to 16), for which our curriculum plan demands an intensive study of the Heidelberg Catechism.

A planning committee for this course was meeting already at the time of your previous board meeting. At that time they referred one question to you: the committee was trying to unravel the relationship between the Heidelberg Catechism and the Compendium of the Christian Religion. It noted that there were materials in the Compendium that were not in the Heidelberg and proposed that these materials be separated. The board decided in its meeting of February 12, 1975:

a. That the Heidelberg Catechism and its condensation (abbreviation) in the Compendium of the Christian Religion serve as the basis for instruction at grade levels nine and ten.

b. That doctrinal material, not contained in the Heidelberg Catechism but embodied in the compendium be incorporated in a later part of the curriculum. Such distinctive material as contained in the compendium can be discussed more profitably with more mature students.

These decisions of the board were also included in the board's report to the Synod of 1975 and implicitly adopted when synod approved the work of the board.

The *ad hoc* committee presented a full report to the education committee on August 7, 1975. The education committee amended the recommendations and adopted the report. On the same date the executive committee approved the report by motion and referred its final ratification the board meeting of February 1976.

Meanwhile the Synod of 1975 has given us a mandate in somewhat oracular language. Having made detailed stipulation for the printing of the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, synod said:

"11. That synod refer the matter of the use of the new translation and its format in a compendium to the Committee of Education of the Board of Publications" (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 93).

Your education committee asked a committee of three to interpret this mandate. It has become clear to us that synod did not mean that we should now write an abbreviated Heidelberg Catechism, using the words of the new translation. It's merely that someone in the Advisory Committee on Confessional Matters must have said: "This new translation is going to affect the compendium" (and by "compendium" he meant the shirt pocket edition of the *Compendium of the Christian Religion* as adopted by the Synod of 1957). There must be well-known words and phrases, it was thought, which found their way from the old translation of the Heidelberg Catechism into the Compendium of 1957, and now that some of these old words and phrases had disappeared from the

Heidelberg, they should also be corrected in the compendium. That must have been the thinking behind the unhappily phrased mandate.

Thus understood, and having done some thinking on the relationship between Catechism and Compendium, and being on the verge of launching a new course on the Heidelberg Catechism, the education committee thought it wise to defer action on synod's mandate until we know how it is all going to fit together.

A year ago we had hoped to begin our offering of a new Catechism course in September of 1976. But such work is better undertaken when there is a theological editor on staff who can help to see the project through.

Thinking about the Heidelberg Catechism and the Compendium — and how these are the backbone of classical Reformed instruction — made us wonder about the propriety of the Church Order Article 64c, "The Heidelberg Catechism and its compendium shall be the basis of instruction"

A committee of three (William Haverkamp, John C. Medendorp, Andrew Kuyvenhoven) served the education committee with advice. The report of this committee has also been forwarded to the members of the Board of Publications. The study shows that Compendium (*Kort Begrip*) initially stood for an abbreviation of the Heidelberg Catechism and a minimum requirement for accepting members (the "General Orders" of 1881). Later the compendium became "a combination of the Catechism, the confessions, and some materials that go beyond the confessions" (Report, page 4). The committee of three points out that the Church Order statement about "the Heidelberg Catechism and its Compendium" is incorrect and confusing. They suggest that Article 64c could be improved if it were made to say: "The Scripture and the Confessions shall be the basis of instruction . . ." However, they add that more revision is necessary if the Church Order is to speak meaningfully about church education. Most likely a proposed revision of the Church Order will be presented to the board in 1977.

5. Older Youth

If there is agreement with the education committee that the tie-in between church school and dayschool be broken after grade ten, we have to give a name to that part of the curriculum which follows the Heidelberg Catechism for grades nine and ten, and which precedes the adult education. Around our house we call it "post ten," but we admit that it sounds like a breakfast cereal. We tried "young adults" but the Rev. Jim Lont says, by doing so, we would confuse the confused: the voluntary organizations distinguish between "young people" who are of high school age and "young adults" who are past high school age. If we were to call our new program, generally geared to the upper grades of high school, a program for young adults, the young people would be young adults when attending church school and the present young adults would lose their identity.

At present we have a committee of five persons advising staff on the planning of materials for this part of the curriculum. On some points a consensus is developing.

6. *Adult Education*

Every week we issue *Bible Studies*, an eight page paper for adults. It was one of the publications which we inherited from our predecessors. (First issue was in September 1964, the Rev. John Schaal, editor.) Since every issue has four articles, it is a kind of mini *Banner* and does give us much additional work. The rewards are not insignificant. More than seven thousand people use the paper in small groups for Bible study. And whenever we publish an article that tends to be a little controversial, we are reminded that the paper is still being read. The solicitation of articles constitutes a part-time job. But an honorable citation is due to the Rev. Ralph Heynen who week after week and month after month and year after year writes his column, "Today's Family."

A curriculum for adult education has not yet been developed. In the past four years we have published a few study guides (on the Kingdom, the Covenant, and on Neo-Pentecostalism), and we are about ready to make available a study guide on Ephesians (by F. Breisch) and on Romans (by A. Kuyvenhoven). We hope that we can issue these two studies in a format that will serve as a model for study guides on all the books of the Bible.

At last year's board meeting, significant progress was made for opening up the field of adult education. The board accepted a definition of adult education, it set goals which it expects adult education to accomplish within the context of the Unified Church School Curriculum; and the board asked that it be presented with a nominee for the position of Adult Education Editor.

The staff was not able to prepare further plans, and we have not made further study of the question how we are to be involved with the other agencies in the broad field of adult education. We expect a measure of leadership from the editor synod may appoint to this position, so that his first job might be to formulate the plans. The foundational work was done for the board meeting of 1975. But the detailed planning of a curriculum has to find place according to the guidelines set forth earlier.

Next month the Back to God Hour Committee expects to open its new facilities in Chicago. They will be equipped to make video cassettes with their new TV cameras. At the invitation of Dr. Nederhood, the staff has already expressed its eagerness to discuss how we can cooperate in the production of video cassettes which can be used in a general adult educational program.

Besides the Back to God Hour, there are many other agencies with which we ought to have an understanding when we venture out into the field of adult education.

7. *Teachers' Training*

Since the very beginning of the formation of the education department of the Board of Publications, the matter of teacher training has been a topic of discussion. Time and again it has been emphasized that materials are of little value, unless the teacher knows how to handle them. Especially during the last year, many ideas have been formulated and

numerous avenues explored. As long as we don't have our own teaching program, we have been lending support to the National Teacher Education Project, or NTEP (with which Locke Bowman and Gary De Velder are associated), and those who attended these intensive workshops have left us enthusiastic testimonies. We intend to continue our support of this institute, but we recognize that it is not enough.

In December 1975, the executive committee, acting upon the recommendation of the education committee, approved the appointment of Mrs. Cecilia Mereness as Coordinator of Teacher Training. It was agreed that Mrs. Mereness would begin work on March 1, 1976, that she should work as a member of the staff of the education department, and that she would work for nine months per year. The executive committee gave its reasons for not waiting for the full board meeting in making this important decision (Minutes, December 4, 1975, p. 57). Some guidelines for a system of teacher training were accepted.

8. *Relationship to Other Churches*

a. Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Our efforts to do a joint production with the OPC fizzled out during 1974, and Great Commission Publications became an agency of the OPC and PCA during 1975. As the Rev. Mr. Johnston put it in his report to the Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church on May 29, 1975: "cooperation with the Christian Reformed Church waned and effectively ceased during 1974." He further declared that "blame for the failure of these efforts (at joint production) cannot be assigned to either church exclusively." Many OP churches are using our course for preschoolers, *Bible Footprints*. The staff of Great Commissions has promised a critique of this course before we undertake the revision.

b. Reformed Church in America. The Board of Publications has 214 active accounts with RCA congregations. All but four of these use Bible Way materials and 95 congregations use the entire Bible Way curriculum.

The leadership of the RCA is interested in (1) discussing distribution possibilities through their own outlets, (2) planning for contents and methodology of future Bible Way courses, (3) some kind of involvement in curriculum revision, and (4) some involvement in the teacher training program. The education committee has authorized your staff to discuss these matters with the RCA, but not to make any binding decisions.

As you know, the educational agency of the RCA has no commitment to any *one* particular educational program. As a matter of fact, this church has a rather strong commitment to support the JED ("Joint Education Development") program, which will, by 1978, have four different curricula available—from right to left. We keep in touch with this development through Mr. James Heynen.

Another interesting development within the RCA is evidenced by the resolution of its General Program Council to provide a packet of materials which would focus on the distinctiveness of the Reformed heritage (called: Heritage and Hope Educational Resources). We

may be involved in this project. Our relationship to the RCA is most cordial.

c. The Reformed Churches of Australia are going to use the Bible Way curriculum if its synod approves in May 1976. The Australian churches will do their own distributing and we will ship to their depot. In calculating the cost of alternative routes of shipment, we have had much help from Mr. Ron Moll, the director of Central Services in the denominational building.

9. *Relationship to Other Agencies*

a. Calvin Seminary. The fact that Dr. M. Snapper is now teaching church education in the seminary has had a definite influence on the students' acquaintance with our work and it has strengthened our ties with the seminary. During the summer of 1975, Seminarian Harold Hartger fulfilled the requirements for summer fieldwork in our office. Thus far this student contact with real church life was only possible in the regular parish or on a mission field. Mr. Hartger has been very helpful. Apart from participation in the regular work flow, he has concentrated on devising options for teaching the Heidelberg Catechism in units. His work has greatly facilitated the work of the *ad hoc* committee on the Heidelberg Catechism curriculum.

b. Foreign Mission Board. Our managing editor gave a speech last summer to a gathering of missionaries in an institute sponsored by the Board of Foreign Missions. The result has been that the missionaries have become very interested in the use of our curriculum as a take-off for the development of their own materials. This was being done already in the Philippines (by the Bob De Vries family) and now also at John Calvin Seminary in Mexico City (Bergsma) and even in the TIV churches in Nigeria, where pastor Ajoko has been charged with the development of an educational program. To all of these fields we have made available a specially prepared set of materials, designed to enable them to develop their own courses. We merely gave them the spine of our curriculum: goals, sequence, Bible background, etc.

c. Youth Evangelism Services (YES). This organization, located in Toronto, serves Christian Reformed churches in setting up and maintaining clubs for girls and for boys of non-Christian homes. The director is Mr. David De Ridder. As of last fall, YES has been using the *Bible Trails* teacher manual for the basic outline of the lessons to be taught in the clubs.

d. SCORR is the synodical committee to combat racism and to facilitate communication between groups of different racial background. This committee has given financial aid to teachers within racial minority churches who wished to strengthen their teaching ability by attending the NTEP institute which we sponsored last June. The executive secretary of the committee, Mr. Karl Westerhof, also serves as a consultant on a booklet which we are preparing on "how to lead inquirers to church membership," especially geared to inner city churches.

We are frequently reminded of the sensitivities that are connected with ethnic roots and racial diversity. In our church history course in

Bible Crossroads, we tell the students that their ancestors came from the Huns, Angles, Franks and Germanic barbarians. Then we received a letter from Paterson, New Jersey signed by eighteen students whose last names seem to support their claim that their ancestors weren't as barbaric as ours. The letter was utterly sympathetic.

e. Home Missions and CRWRC. The plan to develop a training course for office bearers is already old. The implementation of the plan is very slow, not in the last place because the theological editor cannot find time to make good his promise to write a basic booklet outlining the nature of office and the task of office bearers. Even though this booklet is not yet finished, Dr. Snapper is going to coordinate efforts this spring, to put together a program that will assist office bearers in obtaining skills necessary to do the job to which they have been called. Home Missions, CRWRC and the Education Department will sponsor this program. But the Education Department doesn't intend to be involved in the mechanics of the program itself.

It may be expected that our relationship to Home Missions will become closer as soon as we get more involved in adult education. Ultimately these two agencies aim for the same goal. This year we assisted the staff of Home Missions in preparing the booklet on the life and teaching of the Christian Reformed Church. Our committee gave Home Missions the right to handle the booklet *Called to Serve*. The Rev. Henry DeRooy serves on our education committee.

f. Hope College. The English Department of Hope College gives credits to their students in English and Journalism if they take training in our and other publishing concerns. We will have one of their students, Miss Carol Rummeler, working in our department for a seven-week period, beginning February 23, 1976.

Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Director of Education

B. *The Course on the Heidelberg Catechism*

The board called the attention of synod last year to decisions made to begin work on courses on the Heidelberg Catechism as these have been designated in the Unified Church School Curriculum. These were:

1. That the Heidelberg Catechism and its condensation (abbreviation) in the Compendium of the Christian Religion serve as the basis for instruction at grade levels nine and ten.
2. That doctrinal material not contained in the Heidelberg Catechism but embodied in the compendium be incorporated in a later part of the curriculum. Such distinctive material as contained in the compendium can be discussed more profitably with more mature students.

Since synod had no objection to these decisions, the education committee proceeded to establish some guidelines for developing the course on the Heidelberg Catechism and presented them to the board for approval. The board amended the statements at one point, then approved the guidelines and now presents them for synod's information. These are as follows:

a. *Statement on Goal*

The goal of the curriculum oriented to students beyond the *Bible Crossroads* level is, within the life of each student, to effect:

- 1) a meaningful profession of faith, and full participation in the life and work of the church.
- 2) a broader expression of Christian discipleship in the service of God and man in every area of life.

In the course based on the Heidelberg Catechism, grades nine and ten, students will recognize the central teaching of Scripture as normative for Christian faith and life. This is to be accomplished through the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism as a meaningful reformulation of that central teaching.

b. *Statement on Curriculum Division*

With regard to the Unified Church School Curriculum, the close parallel to the academic structure of grade levels should end after grade-level ten (or, the study of the Heidelberg Catechism) is completed.

Grounds:

- 1) The variety of local circumstances makes rigid program structure undesirable beyond grade ten.
- 2) The great diversity among young people (in levels of maturity, interest, concern, etc.) renders grade-level distinction beyond grade ten meaningless.

(The effect of this recommendation is not to avoid development of a "core program" beyond grade ten, but simply to end the tight relationship to academic divisions at that point.)

c. *Statement on Current Materials for Grades Nine and Ten*

While *Never on Your Own* should be kept available without revision, new materials should be developed for the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism at grade levels nine and ten.

Grounds:

- 1) Because *Never On Your Own* has proven to be a popular text for the teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism, it should be made available in its present form to those who desire to purchase it. (This is consistent with policy previously established concerning materials pre-dating development of the new curriculum.)
- 2) The Unified Church School Curriculum has sought pedagogical flexibility at all levels. To maintain consistency in that curriculum, and to achieve wider pedagogical flexibility, new resources should now be developed for teaching the Heidelberg Catechism at grade levels nine and ten.

Never On Your Own contains certain references and illustrations which are now outdated; therefore, it is an appropriate time to develop additional resources.

d. *Statement on Recommended Guidelines of Curriculum, Grades Nine and Ten.*

In the development of the curriculum for grades nine and ten, the following guidelines shall be observed:

- 1) That the course have pedagogical flexibility, employing a variety of resources and techniques.
- 2) That the course, including review and testing, consist in not more than sixty (60) sessions specifically on the Heidelberg Catechism, and that supplementary course materials be developed for a total of one hundred four (104) lessons.
- 3) That an introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism, including such matters as context, structure, history and purpose of the document, comprise not more than two (2) initial lessons.
- 4) That the course provide for responsible student home study, but not necessarily such as will make success in a following class session wholly dependent on home study.
- 5) That memorization of portions of the Heidelberg Catechism be encouraged. The materials will enable the individual teacher to make final judgment regarding such memorization.
- 6) That the structure as well as the content of the Heidelberg Catechism be clearly presented in this course of study.
- 7) That, although the course may be produced in relatively brief units of study, the integrity of the Heidelberg Catechism as a documentary whole be respected.
- 8) That the course be structured so that individual units will follow the basic sequence of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- 9) That the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism (approved as amended by the Synod of 1975) be published separate from other resources and be in the possession of all the students in this course.
- 10) That, at all times, the developers of this course of study maintain a sensitivity to the Heidelberg Catechism's
 - a. scriptural content,
 - b. historical context, and
 - c. contemporary relevance.

V. HIRING AND PURCHASING POLICIES

Synod has requested each board to include in its annual report a statement on its hiring and purchasing policies as these relate to the problem of race relations. The Board of Publication endorses the decision of synod "to promote social justice in hiring and purchasing policies and practices." We are continuing our attempts to implement synod's decision. The board's policy is to hire on the basis of ability regardless of race or nationality. Purchases are made on a regular basis from salesmen including those from minority groups.

VI. BOARD REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

The board requests that the following be permitted to represent the Board of Publications at the sessions of synod in all matters pertaining to the board when these are being considered by synod:

The Rev. Clarence Boomsma, the president of the board; the Rev. John A. Mulder, the secretary of the board; Mr. A. James Heynen, acting director of education (in all matters pertaining to the education

department); Mr. Peter Meeuwse, business manager (in all matters pertaining to the business aspects of the board's operation); and the editors: Dr. Lester De Koster and the Rev. William Haverkamp (in all matters pertaining to their respective periodicals).

VII. SUMMARY OF MATTERS FOR SYNOD

A. *Requiring Action*

1. Approval of the membership of the board (I, A)
2. Appointment of education committee members (I, D)
3. Appointment of periodicals committee members (I, E)
4. Appointment of Dr. Edwin Walhout as editor for Adult Education (I, F, 6)
5. Reappointment of Dr. L. De Koster as editor of *The Banner* for a term of four years (I, G, 2, a)
6. Reappointment of the Rev. W. Haverkamp as editor of *De Wachter* for a term of two years (I, C, 2, b)
7. Approval of the request for the quota for the Education Department (II, C, 1)
8. Approval of the request for the quotas for the Periodicals Department (II, C, 2)
9. The request that synod relieve the board of the mandate given by the Synod of 1972 (III, J)
10. Approval of board representation at synod (VI)

B. *For Synodical Information*

1. The decision of the Rev. A. Kuyvenhoven, Director of Education and Theological Editor, to be released from these appointments and return to the parish ministry (I, F, 2)
2. The board's reappointment of Mr. A. James Heynen as managing editor (I, F, 3)
3. The board's appointment of Mrs. Eldon Mereness as coordinator of teacher training (I, F, 4)
4. The Guidelines governing the work of teacher training (I, F, 4)
5. The job description for editor for adult education (I, F, 8)
6. The financial report of the board (II, A)
7. The board's report on comparative costs of its printing operations (II, B)
8. The establishment of a Canadian Distribution Center (II, D)
9. The official character, purpose and editorial direction of *The Banner* (III, A)
10. The restructuring of the editorial work of *The Banner* (III, K)
11. The Director of Education's report (IV, A)
12. The guidelines for developing the course on the Heidelberg Catechism (IV, B)
13. The hiring and purchasing policies of the board (V)

Board of Publications of the
Christian Reformed Church, Inc.
John A. Mulder, secretary

REPORT 6

CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

I. INTRODUCTION

Each year brings to us at CRWRC more challenges, more opportunities to serve, and ever increasing occasions to thank the Lord for his wisdom and enabling grace. 1975 was not an easy year for CRWRC, we faced many problems, but we thank the Lord for safe passage through some tortuous situations.

CRWRC grew again this year; the number of staff members rose to an all-time high of 44. The generous gifts of individuals and churches brought our income to nearly two million dollars. Fields which were barely known to us in January were familiar names by December. Our first staff members arrived in Niger, and in Haiti, and Mississippi Christian Family Services opened its door to the trainable mentally retarded children of two counties.

Poverty and misery seemed as widespread in the world as ever at the close of 1975. We, who rarely, if ever, experience the misery that is a way of life for millions of the world's people, see ahead of us only more challenges to greater service in the name of Jesus Christ.

II. THE BOARD

Deacons and those who recently served as deacons make up a significant part of our board. Representatives from each classis assure both an input at our annual February meeting and a feedback to the areas throughout the denomination. Our membership during the past year follows:

Classis	Delegate	Alternate
Alberta North.....	J. Ellen.....	H. Vriend
Alberta South.....	D. Vander Wekken.....	J. Vanden Dool
British Columbia.....	A. Tukker.....	B. Vantriet
Cadillac.....	J. Gernaat.....	W. Hoekwater
California South.....	P. Scholten.....	
Central California.....	L. Fondse.....	C. De Jong
Chatham.....	P. Berghuis.....	A. Bisschop Jr.
Chicago North.....	A. Hoving.....	H. Buurma
Chicago South.....	F. Iwema.....	R. Wolterink
Columbia.....	H. Buys.....	M. Feddes
Eastern Canada.....	C. Hogeveen.....	E. De Kleer
Florida.....	D. Bouwer.....	J. Meiste
Grand Rapids East.....	K. H. Terpstra.....	J. W. Stoepker
Grand Rapids North.....	R. Meeuwssen.....	D. Molewyk
Grand Rapids South.....	H. Kreulen, M.D.....	H. Blacquiere
Grandville.....	H. De Jong.....	F. Visser
Hackensack.....	G. Kuipers.....	A. Statema
Hamilton.....	J. W. Potma.....	J. Kerkhof
Holland.....	H. Lubbers.....	P. Kuiper
Hudson.....	A. Malefyt.....	C. Hekman
Huron.....	W. Klumpenhauer.....	H. Exel
Illiana.....	G. Kroll.....	N. Zuidema

Classis	Delegate	Alternate
Kalamazoo.....	J. Vander Ploeg.....	E. Joling
Lake Erie.....	C. J. Vrieland.....	P. Bouman
Minnesota North.....	G. Blok.....	R. Vanden Einde
Minnesota South.....	R. Van Essen.....	W. Vander Werf
Muskegon.....	L. Van Rees.....	C. Van Coevering
Northcentral Iowa.....	H. Eiten.....	C. Vander Ploeg
Orange City.....	F. Ten Napel.....	M. Visser
Pacific Northwest.....	J. Tjoelker.....	J. Van Ry
Pella.....	L. Nugteren.....	R. Dieleman
Quinte.....	P. Feddema.....	W. Piersma
Rocky Mountain.....	R. Paauw.....	D. Murry
Sioux Center.....	R. De Stigter.....	Dr. W. Alberda
Toronto.....	A. Vander Meulen.....	W. Rekker
Wisconsin.....	J. Thonus.....	F. Sterk
Zeeland.....	B. Hulst.....	J. Meyer
Members-at-large		
Medical.....	D. A. De Vries, M.D.....	P. Van Vliet, M.D.
Businessman.....		K. Holtvluwer
Sociologist.....	J. Tuinstra.....	H. Start
Attorney.....	C. Van Valkenburg.....	D. Swierenga
Accountant.....	D. Pruis.....	E. Westenbroek
Minister.....	Rev. J. Bergsma.....	Rev. J. Medendorp

III. DISASTER AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

At this writing, the disaster most prominent in our minds is the Guatemala earthquake of February, 1976. It was a tragedy of colossal proportions. The estimated death toll continues to mount each day. One out of every five or six people in Guatemala was left homeless. CRWRC's staff from Nicaragua and Honduras took prompt action, and material aid started flowing from Grand Rapids to Guatemala City only three days after the quake. Plans are not yet clear, but it may be that Guatemala is the next field of opportunity to which the Lord will call us.

Other emergencies had our attention throughout the year. In March we received word through such sources as our missionaries in Japan and RES churches in Australia that Christians were suffering increasingly in South Vietnam. Monetary gifts in modest amounts were provided until it became clear that the fall of the country was imminent. Evacuation began for more than 150,000 people. From Vietnam to Guam to United States Army bases to eventual homes, the refugees made their pilgrimage. More than 630 of them were welcomed into the hearts of ninety Christian Reformed congregations throughout the United States.

Many aspects of this venture are remarkable. It was a commendable display of cooperation and coordination by vast numbers of people. Diaconates throughout the denomination responded with faith in action to CRWRC's request for sponsors. Countless hours of tender loving care by countless numbers of Christian Reformed people made resettlement by our church a much sought after goal by some refugees. CRWRC spent more than \$90,000 on resettlement. It started with aid to Saigon Christian pastors, expanded to include a massive shipment of grain, an air shipment of clothing and blankets to Guam, crews of English teachers in two army camps, educational assistance to some twenty students at Calvin, Trinity and Dordt colleges, aid to a large resettlement project in

a Christian Reformed Chinese community, and help in meeting critical personal needs. The saga of the resettled Vietnamese is an exciting demonstration of our denomination showing love to the stranger and sojourner in our land.

Emergency food needs in 1975 were less spectacular than in 1974, but CRWRC responded to requests for emergency food in several countries. We participated in grain and soybean shipments to Bangladesh, and financed some food distribution in the inner city of Detroit (hard-hit by auto industry cut-backs), but the bulk of our emergency food assistance went to Latin America. Little publicized but widespread drought obliterated much of the major grain harvest in Nicaragua, Honduras, and Haiti. CRWRC spent \$70,000 for drought relief in these countries, including food purchase, seed supply, feeding programs for children, and credit for hard-hit farmers.

In India CRWRC provided funds for feeding centers operated by the Rev. M. J. Wycliffe in the Adoni area and by J. Alexander near Sriakulum, in cooperation with the tiny Christian Reformed Church of South India. Twice we responded to emergency appeals for funds—once for the digging of wells in half a dozen isolated villages, and once to repair or rebuild between 200 and 300 homes heavily damaged by floods in the Adoni area.

At home, forty-nine trained disaster volunteers contributed 10,125 hours of work in disaster relief and recovery efforts in Kentucky, Georgia, Arkansas, Michigan, and Nebraska. Our Brandenburg, Kentucky volunteer effort, begun in 1974, ended in April, 1975, with a weekend of joy and celebration hosted by the city of Brandenburg in honor of our volunteers' efforts there. They rebuilt seven homes and helped rebuild or repair seven other facilities essential to the livelihood of disaster victims in this community. Our disaster preparedness volunteers in Iowa put their training to use in responding to needs in tornado-struck Omaha, Nebraska, in May.

IV. FOREIGN PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

Just as in 1974, CRWRC foreign programming in 1975 was marked by growth—frustrating at times, agonizingly slow at others, beset by setbacks on occasion . . . but growth nevertheless and accompanied always by the blessing of God.

A. Asia

The long-awaited independent CRWRC outreach in *Bangladesh* is underway. John and Kathy Brouwer have completed language study since their arrival last autumn. They'll be joined in early 1976 by Rick and Edith De Graaf. John Brouwer has filed necessary documents with the Bangladesh government for program approval and registration of the CRWRC as a voluntary agency licensed to work in the country. Andy Ryskamp (on loan from CRWRC to the Mennonite Central Committee) reports continued success in the agricultural program (crop diversification, agricultural extension, dry-season farming) to which he is assigned. Mennonite administrative staff, in both Bangladesh and the United States have often expressed their delight with

and gratitude for the staff we've "loaned" them during the past few years. Peter Vander Zaag, who preceded Andy by approximately one year, returned home during 1975 to continue his formal education. He was replaced by Ron Prins. Ron and his wife, Tena, have just completed language study—the first part of a three-year assignment.

We gratefully note that the political strife in Bangladesh during the fall of 1975 did not adversely effect our opportunities for service, nor pose a threat to the personal safety of our staff.

CRWRC's *Philippines* staff indicate a healthy concern for the long-range effectiveness and durability of our work within the growing Christian Reformed Church of the Philippines, as well as in needy communities outside the church. At mid-year, CRWRC was assigned responsibility for assisting the indigenous CR church to set up its own diaconal outreach. A modest amount of external aid is being given, but generally the local churches are expected to meet benevolent needs with their own resources.

In Manila, the DeKams (Ivan and Joy) tell of successful agricultural and medical projects in the Tala Leprosarium community; and nutrition, self-help and community development programs in several slum-area and refugee centers on the fringes of the metropolitan area. On the island of Negros-Occidental, Pete Vellenga and Bill Fernhout are planning a pilot program in "Adult Family Education" — to be conducted within the CR mission and church. The curriculum will include classes in sanitation, nutrition, home management, and family planning . . . all aimed at helping the family develop its resources beyond the bare subsistence level. Meanwhile, previously-instituted agricultural and feeding programs are proceeding.

Our *Korean* staff — totally indigenous, loyal and dedicated — carries on with a minimum of western supervision from the home office. Dr. H. C. Lee's prenatal slum clinics continue to serve indigent women and children in eighteen separate communities on the fringes of Seoul. The Sadang-dong community development project, under the direction of K. H. Kang, offers a wide range of educational, medical and social work services to the surrounding community. Both Mr. Kang and Dr. Lee indicate that the local churches contribute substantially to their efforts through the provision of facilities, volunteer workers and pastoral counseling. Efforts to gain broader (and financial) support from the national church(es) at large have been generally unsuccessful.

CAPOK—child-care and adoption (in-country)—one of CRWRC's pioneer and most-successful programs — operates today as a division of Holt Children's Services in Korea, under an agreement between CRWRC and Holt in early-1975. Statistical reports indicate that in-country work proceeded during 1975 at about the same rate as in 1974. A significant increase in adoptive placements during the last two months of the year indicates the possibility of a breakthrough.

Tensions and hostility between and among religious groups — Jews, Moslems, and Christians — and nations in the Middle East offer our staff in *Jordan* a unique opportunity to demonstrate that Christ's love

really knows no bounds and does not discriminate on the basis of national, cultural, and religious differences. Paul Kok and Lee Vander Baan report an increasing acceptance of and appreciation for the distinctively-Christian services offered by CRWRC to the handicapped and poor in this Moslem-dominated country. Lee Vander Baan cites the establishment of Sheltered Work Activity for the handicapped, the placement of thirty handicapped trainees in competitive employment, and the assumption by various Jordanian institutions (public and private) of responsibility for services to the handicapped as highlights of his experiences in 1975. Paul Kok's year-end report tells of ninety-three new self-help projects and the continuing need for CRWRC individual assistance to physically and mentally handicapped in Jordan's rural sectors especially.

B. Africa

Lou Haveman, veteran CRWRC staffer in *Nigeria*, still works without a CRWRC colleague. We are grateful for his competence, Christian commitment, and hope in the face of refusal to issue visas to new CRWRC appointees. In late 1957 Steve Nikkel, who will graduate from Iowa State University agricultural school in May, 1976, was tendered an appointment by CRWRC to serve in Nigeria. His application for a visa has been submitted and we wait for approval from Lagos.

Lou Haveman, meanwhile, is blessed with sincere and dedicated cooperation from his missionary (CRBFM) and national church colleagues. 1975 saw increased participation by national Christians in the administration and supervision of our Christian Rural Development (CRD) program. The CRD committee is seeking a qualified Nigerian Christian to become Assistant Director of CRD (Haveman's counterpart, in a sense). The tragic split within the Nigerian church in early 1975 also involved disruption of the CRD committee. Later in the year there were signs of a reconciliation, and Lou is cautiously optimistic while pleading for prayers to effect a healing of the wounds left by the church's division.

Elsewhere in Africa, CRWRC last year succeeded in placing workers in the country in *Niger*. Markus and Mary Ann Frei, appointed in late 1974, arrived in Maradi in February, 1975; Judy Dotinga, a registered nurse, has worked as a staff nurse at the Christian Hospital in Galmi since mid-August. Both the Freis and Judy are considered "on loan" to the Sudan Interior Mission. Judy has recently left her hospital assignment for four months of intensive Hausa language study in Kano, Nigeria. She looks forward to returning to Galmi in April and being then "more efficient in the hospital and able to share the news of Jesus Christ" more effectively with her new language skills. Markus Frei, supervising the SIM's agricultural program in Maradi, tells of successes, failures, and frustrations; but more of the opportunity for offering hope and Christian love to the Fulani and other nomadic tribes who were victimized by the great famine of 1974. Included in his efforts are the distribution of sheep and cattle to tribesmen whose herds were wiped out by the famine and a growing well-

digging project which serves a dual purpose — a clean water supply and irrigation for vegetable gardening.

C. *Latin America*

CRWRC's profile in Latin America has changed greatly during the past year. Highlighting the change was rapid growth and expansion of our efforts in *Honduras*. Expatriate staff increased from one to four; national staff from two to twelve. This in response to needs greatly accentuated by the devastating Hurricane Fifi in late 1974.

During the year, CRWRC sponsored three programs — a nutrition program, a Day Care Center, and a fishing cooperative — and provided advisors to two national organizations, CEDEN and ALFALIT. New CRWRC appointees, Elisabeth Roldan and Tom Post, arrived early in the year. Elisabeth serves as coordinator for nutrition and other community programs in eighteen rural towns in the country's north coastal area (most severely hurt by the hurricane); Tom gallantly battles indifference, alcoholism and a lack of effective leadership among the destitute fishing community on the off-coast island of Amapala. His recent bride — Melva — is planning to institute a literacy program in the community. Carol Van Ess, who joined our Honduran staff at mid-year, is assigned the task of improving and broadening the present literacy program of ALFALIT in Honduras. Among work begun in 1975 was the laying of plans for literacy material development for the Miskito tribe. Our Honduras program is under the capable supervision of Carol Boersma, who was our initial worker in Honduras (1973). Among Carol's tasks is the regular collaboration and cooperation with CEDEN — the national evangelical church organization assigned to coordinate the relief and development efforts of local Christians and foreign Christian agencies, including CRWRC. We are grateful for CEDEN's existence and effectiveness. The presence of a sizable evangelical Christian witness (including the fledgling CRC of Honduras) greatly aids the CRWRC.

A similar situation prevails in *Nicaragua*, where the umbrella Christian agency is known as CEPAD. CRWRC agriculturist Joel Zwier will work under their auspices when he completes another term in language school. Dave Veltkamp reports successful completion of another community of low-cost housing during 1975. Dave, and program coordinator Pete Limburg, put together equipment and trained a team to drill wells. This will be a major new emphasis in CEPAD's (and CRWRC's) 1976 rural program. During the past year, Nurse Peg MacLeod completed her two-year assignment in Nicaragua and returned home. She completed the writing of a Spanish-language, 180-page training manual for para-professional health workers in Nicaragua and other Latin American countries. Pete Limburg continues to play a key role as an advisor to CEPAD, supervising expatriate and national staff, and searching for new opportunities for CRWRC in Central America.

Pat Duthler, who joined our Nicaraguan staff following the Managua earthquake in late 1972, accepted an assignment with ALFALIT, International during 1975. Working out of Costa Rica, Pat now co-

ordinates a Program Development (pilot) Project for ALFALIT in the countries of Guatemala, Salvador, Columbia, and the Dominican Republic. The project's goal is to move former illiterates from the barely literate state to true functional literacy through the promotion and use of Adult Basic Education materials. Gertie Gietema, another CRWRC 1975 recruit, is currently studying Spanish preparatory to taking Pat's place when the latter's term ends in late 1976.

In *Mexico*, CRWRC's agricultural outreach will continue undiminished during 1976. Cal Lubbers and Clarence De Boer will continue their work with farmers and landless rural villagers in the Yucatan. However, they expect that their work will be completed or phased over to the national church by the end of 1977. Cal reported numerous frustrations during the year, but finds the villagers hopeful, thankful to God for their harvests, and optimistic about the future. Clare De Boer notes excellent cooperation from the local church and good repayment to the revolving loan fund.

A thousand miles to the southwest CRWRC's Oaxaca program centers around the Oaxaca Training Center (operated jointly by the CRBFM and CRWRC). The training center and the newly acquired experimental farm and animal center provide agricultural training for Indian farmers from the valley and the nearby mountains. Duane Bajema tutors hundreds of farmers each year in subjects ranging from animal husbandry to agronomy and horticulture. Bruce Buurma supervises follow-up work as the farmers return to their own villages with their knowledge. Duane Postma, and his wife Shelley, are currently in language school, preparatory to replacing the Bajemas during 1976.

In CRWRC's newest foreign program — *Haiti* — Dave and Deb Genzink left in November, 1975, to begin language study and the first stages of opening a new field. Dave writes optimistically of the challenges they face — a complex agency/government relationship, a new culture, depths of poverty not seen elsewhere in the western hemisphere. Two in-country Christian agencies — CEEH, the Council of Evangelical Churches in Haiti, and CPAL, the Haitian affiliate of ALFALIT — shows promise as Christian groups with whom we can work.

V. DOMESTIC PROGRAMMED ACTIVITIES

On the domestic scene, too, 1975 brought growth and new opportunities to CRWRC. We've expanded our knowledge and expertise in domestic programming, as well as our program outreaches. We continue to work with deacons and diaconal conferences. Several retreats were conducted in 1975, challenging the deacons to the substantial diaconal ministries that the Lord is calling us to.

A special thank-you to the ninety-five CRWRC volunteers who worked a total of 26,720 hours to assist in meeting the needs to which CRWRC responded.

A. *Disaster Preparedness Program*

Two training sessions were held in 1975, one in Pella, Iowa, and

another in Muskegon, Michigan. This brings to 293 the total number of volunteers CRWRC has trained for emergency work in disasters. The work these trained volunteers did this year (see Section III) was once again hailed by Red Cross and government disaster workers as excellent and essential.

B. *Appalachia*

Early in 1975 it became clear that a satisfactory working relationship with a local organization known as COMPASS was not possible. After negotiations, it was decided that CRWRC should establish a distinctive program, and in July we established the CRWRC Resource Center in Middlesboro, Kentucky. Under this new arrangement, CRWRC continued to provide information, referral, and advocacy services to individuals and needy families in Bell County, and provided other services which had formerly been provided under COMPASS.

Additional opportunities came to our attention during 1976. An October study in response to a request from citizens of Pennington Gap, Virginia, resulted in CRWRC's decision to establish a program in their community, similar to that in Middlesboro, Kentucky. Also, CRWRC responded to a request from citizens in West Lee County, Virginia, to help them establish a medical clinic. We appointed Janna Doesburg and Jim Boldenow to give Jim Laack assistance with this expanding ministry. Plans are underway to employ additional social workers during the early part of 1976 in order to carry out the many assignments. One exciting development in this program is the request from CRWRC to the BHM to explore the possibility of BHM providing a staff person to make the Christian Reformed Church's ministry in Appalachia more complete.

C. *Mississippi Christian Family Services*

Through a cooperative effort on the part of CRWRC and the Luke Society, this new program became a reality in 1975 with the employment of Elvinah Spoelstra as Program Director and Susie Evans as our first black teacher. Our program in Mississippi has a two-fold ministry — one to provide quality training for retarded children and the other, the delivery of services to the families of the children.

From June to August, CRWRC volunteers contributed time and talents to completely remodel an old bottling plant in Rolling Fork, Mississippi. They transformed it into an attractive landmark within the Rolling Fork community. The program began in September; the community responded enthusiastically in an open house held in October to dedicate this facility to the Lord. Our year ended with eight trainable retarded children participating in a program for their growth and development. Eighty-five more children in Sharkey and Issaquena Counties need this kind of attention and care. A tremendous challenge awaits CRWRC in this ministry of mercy.

One of the goals of CRWRC is indigenization. We are happy to report that we have been able to employ qualified local people to fill various positions in this program.

D. *Diaconal Conferences*

One of CRWRC's goals is to assist and support the projects of local diaconal conferences. The following are some examples:

1. *Northside Addicts Rehabilitation Center*

CRWRC continued to assist the Eastern Diaconal Conference with its narcotics rehabilitation program, by providing both financial assistance and volunteers. During 1975, the NARC facility was completely remodeled by CRWRC volunteers and New Jersey contractors and volunteers. The remodeled facility was dedicated to our Lord in October. NARC is now able to meet all state and federal regulations, and to receive substantial federal monies to operate this Christ-centered, drug-free rehabilitation program.

We are happy to report that the North Central Iowa Diaconal Conference assisted in this remodeling effort by building footlockers for the NARC residents. We are deeply appreciative to the deacons in this conference for this assistance.

2. *Native American Urban Transition Program*

Through a developmental grant, CRWRC has encouraged the Denver Diaconal Conference to support this program. The program focuses on native American girls who migrate to the Denver metropolitan community from various Indian reservations. By providing a residence, counseling, and employment assistance, this program offers an alternative to the debilitating life style that many native American girls experience in the city.

This program is directed by Mary Pioche, a Navaho Indian and member of our Gallup CRC. Deacons of the Denver Diaconal Conference assisted in its remodeling.

3. *Edmonton Family Counseling Program*

CRWRC has the privilege of working with the North Alberta Diaconal Conference in this program to establish a Christian counseling program in the metropolitan Edmonton community. As such services were not previously available, the deacons of North Alberta considered it a major responsibility to provide such services, not only to members of the CR churches, but also as an outreach to persons within the broader community. Through a grant from CRWRC, supplemented with funds from the diaconal conference, this program hired its director, Dr. John Carr in September.

4. *Los Angeles Refugee Center*

During 1975, CRWRC was approached about a refugee center in Los Angeles by the Crenshaw CRC. Crenshaw wanted to provide a residential-support program for Vietnamese refugees of Chinese descent. The Los Angeles Diaconal Conference responded to CRWRC's request to provide daily and weekly supervision of this program. It is anticipated that this project will terminate during the early part of 1976 as the refugees are assimilated into the Los Angeles community. CRWRC is deeply appreciative of the efforts put forth by the Los Angeles Deacons Conference in generating both financial and material support from the Los Angeles churches in response to this need.

5. *One to One (Prisoner-Volunteer) Programs*

Within the Pacific Northwest, there are two diaconal conferences — Cascade and Mount Baker — who have selected this prisoner-volunteer program as their primary diaconal ministry. The Cascade Diaconal Conference supports the program in Tacoma, Washington, and the Mount Baker Diaconal Conference supports the program in Lynden, Washington. CRWRC has been providing both of these conferences with financial assistance and with advice and consultation. Through these programs, over four hundred volunteers (primarily from the CR church community) are visiting and caring for a person confined in one of the state or federal correctional facilities.

This model, established by these two diaconal conferences, is now being shared with the other communities in Washington State. Truly this is a response to our Lord's expectations that "when I was in prison you visited me."

E. *Other Programs*

1. *Gallup Friendship House*

1975 was CRWRC's third year of support to the Gallup Friendship House, an alcohol recovery program primarily for Navaho Indians. During 1975, a substantial federal grant was obtained by the Gallup Friendship House Board of Directors. They asked that CRWRC continue to work closely with them in establishing program policy and future goals. During this past year eighty-one men graduated from this program; 749 persons who were experiencing alcohol related problems were helped in some way.

2. *Sun Valley, Denver, Colorado*

CRWRC is cooperating with the Board of Home Missions and the Third CRC of Denver in a ministry to Spanish speaking people living within the Sun Valley community. Through a CRWRC grant to the Sun Valley Board of Directors, who serve under the direction of the Third CRC, of Denver, Lupe Rodriquez is employed to provide Christian counseling and other family services to individuals and families in this community. The family counseling program is an integral part of the multi-ministry being carried out by the Sun Valley Community Church. Dave Medema, one of CRWRC's Disaster Preparedness volunteers, is currently working as a volunteer community worker with Lupe Rodriquez.

3. *Detroit Community Church*

The primary focus of this project — also carried on in cooperation with the BHM — is to provide services to needy individuals and families in the neighborhood of the Detroit Community Church. During 1975, its primary activity was a food distribution program which employed a member of the Detroit Community Church as supervisor. It is anticipated that this program will expand substantially as soon as the new location of the Detroit Community Church has been determined. The outlying churches in the Detroit area have supported this program with food products and materials, as well as financial resources.

VI. FINANCES — ADMINISTRATION — AND PROMOTION

To plan and maintain operations of the size of CRWRC requires back-up services and supporting staff, plus the assured good-will and financial support of our constituents. Here also we may thank the Lord for his oversight and blessings.

A. *Material Resource Center*

Already last year we were aware that it would be necessary to vacate the Clothing Center in Chicago because of the decision of the Back-to-God Hour to vacate their share of the building in favor of constructing a new facility. At the end of November we moved to rented space in a newly constructed warehouse building at 4317 Air-west S.E. in Grand Rapids. Art Schaap, center manager for thirteen years, elected to stay with CRWRC and moved to Grand Rapids.

The Center, now called the CRWRC Material Resource Center, is functioning. Prospects look good for volunteer assistance by diaconal groups, ladies groups, and individuals. The center responded promptly and thoroughly to the Guatemala earthquake disaster needs. Total value of shipments to Guatemala was \$123,145.

B. *Office Administration*

By mid-year it became evident that an addition to our staff was urgently needed. Based on an office survey by a professional management firm, it was decided to augment the staff by dividing the position of Coordinator of Business and Promotional Affairs into two positions — Coordinator of Business Affairs (Controller) and Coordinator of Promotions. Merle Grevengoed was appointed as Controller and began his assignment in November. Late in the year it became clear that CRWRC funds had been misappropriated for personal use by the former Coordinator of Business and Promotional Affairs. He was dismissed, and Karen De Vos, who had been working part-time, was given an interim appointment as Coordinator of Promotions until a permanent appointment could be made.

Charles Vander Sloot, veteran of five years in CRWRC's Korea program and two years in the Grand Rapids office resigned his post as Coordinator of Foreign Programs for personal reasons. Wayne Medendorp was appointed to fill this position beginning in early 1976.

Peter Vander Meulen, a two-year volunteer, left CRWRC to return to school. We continued to receive the services of part-time people. With gratitude we acknowledge the service of Clarence De Vries and of Fran Vryhof, who very capably coordinated the Vietnamese refugee resettlement effort under the direction of the Coordinator of Domestic Programs, C. "Neil" Molenaar. Our secretarial and bookkeeping services are ably provided by Jane Ritsema, executive secretary; Tillie Geers; Kathy Roosien; and Connie Schaver.

Peter Zwart serves part-time as Administrative Aide in our Canadian office, where Canadian contributions are received and from which visual aids and speaking assignments are handled.

A significant policy-making venture took place in June when a conference of boardmembers, administrative and field staff, put together a statement of policy, mainly a careful statement of policy that had been operative but unwritten. Under the capable chairmanship of boardmember John Vander Ploeg, the conference document was adopted at the 1976 annual board meeting, and the staff was instructed to evaluate their programs according to these guidelines. By 1977 we will know more fully the value and effects of these policies.

C. Report of Receipts and Disbursements

Both income and expenditures reached new levels during 1975. A generous and sustained flow of diaconal offerings and personal contributions made possible a greater outreach of mercy in Christ's name than at any time in our history.

Giving was substantial for both our disaster needs and our programmed outreach. It is important that we do not assure this generous support as automatic. Instead, it is necessary and proper to always pray for the continued response of our people and to thank God for stimulating them in continuing their outpouring of love to those in need.

STATEMENTS OF FUND BALANCE

December 31, 1975

GENERAL FUND

ASSETS

Cash:			
Demand deposits		\$ 37,895.45	
Savings accounts and certificates		304,445.35	
Field bank and cash accounts		<u>72,439.88</u>	\$414,780.68
Account receivable (See note)			<u>30,000.00</u>
			<u>\$444,780.68</u>

FUND EQUITY

Balance at December 31, 1975:			
General Fund			\$394,780.68
Disaster Fund			<u>50,000.00</u>
			<u>\$444,780.68</u>

FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT FUND

ASSETS

Furniture and equipment - at cost		\$ 84,739.01	
Less allowance for depreciation			<u>19,930.41</u>
			<u>\$64,808.60</u>

FUND EQUITY

Balance at December 31, 1975			\$ <u>64,808.60</u>
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STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND EQUITY
GENERAL FUND

Year ended December 31, 1975

BALANCE - January 1, 1975			\$ 475,697.05
ADDITIONS			
Cash receipts:			
Contributions:			
General	\$1,159,999.90		
Foreign program	360,026.46		
Domestic programs	14,950.55		
Clothing center	<u>1,683.87</u>	\$1,536,660.78	
Insurance refunds and miscellaneous		139.98	
Interest and dividends		<u>25,494.69</u>	
Material aid - at fair market value:		\$1,562,295.45	
Clothing (132,469 pounds)	\$ 198,704.00		
Drugs and medicines	21,000.00		
Transportation and miscellaneous	<u>7,108.00</u>	<u>226,812.00</u>	1,789,107.45
Adjustment for recoverable 1974 defalcation (see note)			<u>12,466.82</u>
			\$2,277,271.32
DEDUCTIONS			
Disbursements (detail schedules):			
Program services:			
Foreign programs	\$1,028,720.96		
Domestic programs	297,090.17		
Clothing processing	<u>71,645.79</u>	\$1,397,456.92	
Supporting services:			
Program	\$ 59,725.18		
Administrative	96,026.28		
Fund raising	<u>44,191.26</u>	199,942.72	
Material Aid		226,812.00	
Transfer to disaster fund		<u>40,869.12</u>	
Unrecovered defalcation loss (see note)		\$1,865,080.76	
		<u>17,409.88</u>	<u>1,882,490.64</u>
BALANCE - December 31, 1975			\$ <u>394,780.68</u>

STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FUND EQUITY
DISASTER FUND

Year ended December 31, 1975

BALANCE - January 1, 1975			\$ 50,000.00
ADDITIONS			
Cash contributions:			
General	\$13,194.50		
VietNam refugees	6,181.69		
VietNam scholarship	9,164.38		
Famine	123,994.78		
Tornado	1,484.98		
Honduras	<u>54,072.09</u>	\$208,092.42	
Transfer from general fund		<u>40,869.12</u>	\$248,961.54
			\$298,961.54

DEDUCTIONS

General disbursements	\$ 56,805.06	
Famine	58,226.88	
Tornado	8,893.13	
Honduras	13,452.08	
Omaha	4,814.58	
VietNam refugees	79,359.83	
Fort Valley	11,059.98	
Vietnamese Scholarship Fund	<u>16,350.00</u>	<u>248,961.54</u>
BALANCE - December 31, 1975		\$ <u>50,000.00</u>

NOTE TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

December 31, 1975

A defalcation by a former employee in the amount of \$34,943.06 in 1975 and \$12,466.82 in 1974 was discovered during the year. An agreement for restitution was signed for approximately \$50,000.00 covering the total amount of the defalcation (\$47,409.88) plus associated professional fees. The Officers' Committee has voted to invoke a \$25,000.00 bond. \$30,000.00 (the \$25,000.00 bond plus \$5,000.00) is estimated to be immediately recoverable, and amounts received in excess of that will be accounted for as current income when collected.

D. *New Financial Controls*

Since November 1, many new financial controls have been instituted. Plans are underway to institute new, more uniform reporting procedures from the many fields where CRWRC personnel are active. As CRWRC continues to grow, we recognize the need for more sophisticated procedures to control and record our financial activity.

VII. **PLANNED PROGRAMMING FOR 1976**

It is anticipated that CRWRC's outreach in 1976 will acquire both additional personnel and funds over the past year. In Bangladesh and in Appalachia we are increasing both our personnel and funding resources. In other areas we are finding an increased capacity of local groups to assume the responsibility for personnel needs. This invariably follows a period of intense instruction by CRWRC expatriate personnel. In Nicaragua the medical and dental outreaches are now being handled by local Christian groups. CRWRC does continue to provide a good measure of financial support.

Meanwhile plans for adding an agriculturist to our Nicaragua staff have been implemented. During the course of the year we anticipate that the local groups will also be able to assume a greater responsibility for the housing programs. National leadership roles and financing through a revolving loan fund are being developed.

We are becoming increasingly aware that for our teaching to become effective, there must be evidence on our part to allow local Christians to take over when they display the ability and the interest to do so.

A. Projected Expenditures1) *Foreign Programs*

Bangladesh	\$154,750
Jordan	143,600
Korea	133,700
Philippines	126,800
Honduras	162,750
Haiti	70,250
India	6,000
Mexico	149,350
Nicaragua	139,850
ALFALIT	87,000
Nigeria	76,100
Niger	29,500
Food Needs	75,000
Contingency	34,400

Total\$1,389,050

2) *Domestic Programs*

Appalachia	
— Middlesboro	\$101,575
— Pennington Gap	38,800
— West Lee County	9,000
Mississippi Christian Family Services	\$149,375
Refugee Home (V.N.)	77,625
Sun Valley	3,500
Detroit Community Center	21,250
Denver - NAUTP	13,500
Edmonton - Family Counseling	16,675
Chicago Christian Ministries	15,300
Tacoma - One to One Project	7,000
Mount Baker - One to One Project	12,100
Northside Addicts Rehabilitation Center	3,650
Gallup Friendship House	20,000
Deacons' Training	20,500
Disaster Preparedness	6,300
Anticipated Projects	3,925
Los Angeles Diaconal Conf. - V.N.	10,500
	23,000

Total 404,200

3) CRWRC Material Resource Center	36,250
4) Promotion	115,900
5) Administration	227,600

Grand Total\$2,173,000

B. Projected Receipts

General Receipts	\$2,050,000
From December 31, 1975 cash reserves	123,000

Total\$2,173,000

Note: Above projections do not take into account needs for disasters or emergencies other than the \$50,000 reserved for such needs.

C. Request for approval for denominational offerings

CRWRC requests that:

- 1) Synod approve projected plans for 1976.
- 2) Synod commend the work of mercy to our churches and urge them to take offerings on a regular and sustaining basis to provide the necessary funds for this ministry.

3) Synod continue CRWRC as the denominational benevolent cause for one or more offerings.

VIII. NEW FIELDS

CRWRC entered Bangladesh in response to the food emergency there in 1973. Our first staff members served with the Mennonite Central Committee in Noakhali District. A field trip undertaken by the Coordinator of Foreign Programs and a boardmember in 1975 convinced us that the Mennonite program was successful, was a major contribution to food supply in that populous country, and was replicable in another district—that of Bogra. Consequently CRWRC has been making plans to set up an independent CRWRC program in Bogra district. The program will involve up to five staff people who will spread the value of their work by training Bengali extension workers to serve the villages.

John Brouwer and Rick De Graaf have already been assigned to this program and John has laid the groundwork for registration of CRWRC in this country.

We request that synod approve this work as a new programmed field.

Grounds:

A. Increase in food production in underdeveloped countries is a top priority item for the next few years.

B. Bangladesh is one of the world's most populous countries and has a government dedicated to increasing food production.

C. The program design has been proven successful and useful.

D. The constituency of the Christian Reformed Church has indicated intense interest in helping Bangladesh.

CRWRC sent two staff members to work with the Sudan Interior Mission in Niger in response to disaster needs brought about by the drought in the Sahel in 1973-74. We request synod to approve the setting up of an independent program in Niger if staff there finds this feasible and useful.

IX. APPOINTMENTS

Synod is requested to appoint a replacement for the following board-member-at-large position:

Businessman: Tunis Prins has served two terms.

CRWRC will provide nominees for selection by synod.

X. SUMMARY OF ACTION REQUESTED OF SYNOD

A. Representation at synod

CRWRC requests that its president, Dr. Dan De Vries; minister board-member, the Rev. John Bergsma; and its Executive Director, Mr. Louis Van Ess, be granted the floor when matters pertaining to our work are discussed.

B. Program approval of current fields (VII)

C. Approval of new fields (VIII)

D. Approval for offerings (VII-C)

E. Appointment to board position (IX)

Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
Louis Van Ess, Executive Director

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

REPORT 7

BACK TO GOD TRACT COMMITTEE

The Back to God Tract Committee has been made up of the following members: Rev. C. Bremer, Mr. P. Brink, Mr. M. De Boer, Mr. G. De Young, Mr. K. Navis, Mr. K. Swets, Mr. J. Tibbe, Rev. W. Vander Hoven and Rev. J. Wiegers.

Mr. P. Brink and Mr. M. De Boer are completing six years of service with the committee.

Mr. Navis is leaving the committee because he is going into the Marketplace Ministry.

Mr. J. Tibbe is completing a three year term and is eligible for reelection to a second term.

I. INTRODUCTION

Monthly meetings are held at the Denominational Building. The printing, mailing and storage of the tracts is taken care of at this office.

The staff of the denominational building, especially Mrs. Angie Westerhuis, assists in carrying out the plans and programs of the tract committee.

The committee sees its task as that of providing attractive, printed materials which proclaim the message of Christ and his church to those around us. With this in mind, we produce so-called doctrinal tracts for people who want to know the church's position on these matters, evangelical tracts for those who need to be faced with the call of salvation and tracts which are designed to catch the attention of specific groups such as the youth or senior citizens. As the committee searches for new material, for topics, for writers, these goals are in their minds. We pray to God that he will use this means to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE

A. Tract distribution

During 1975 the following number of tracts were distributed:

Tracts distributed free of charge.....	85,795
Tracts given to SWIM teams.....	26,785
Tracts given for Wayside Chapels.....	26,950
	<u>139,530</u>
Sample packs	18,790
Total tracts sold.....	<u>484,218</u>
Total tracts distributed.....	642,538

The two groups who receive the majority of free materials are SWIM teams and lay evangelists. Our committee has found that over the last few years these are the people who make the most use of our tracts and are very appreciative of the materials. The cost of this program is covered by the gifts which our committee receives from individuals and churches.

B. Special projects during 1975

The committee investigated ways of distributing tracts and other written materials in foreign countries. Two projects were undertaken, both in the form of financial support so that materials could be produced in the foreign country itself. A total of \$2,000 was spent in Taiwan through the work of the Rev. M. Vander Pol. This money enabled him to have tracts printed in Taiwan and distributed there. The second foreign country involved was India. Our Back to God Tract Committee sent \$2,500 to that land for the printing of a tract called "Keys to Good News" (10,000 copies) and "The Two Ways of Salvation" (200,000 copies). This project was carried on through contact with the World Home Bible League.

A second major project was the reprinting of the doctrinal tracts which explain the position of our denomination on such topics as The Trinity, Baptism, The Bible, Predestination, Christ's Second Coming, etc. Many of our lay missionaries have found these to be useful in their contacts.

The committee also is working toward the publication of special tracts designed to minister to special groups, one of these would be materials for senior citizens. Tracts designed to minister to specific groups such as senior citizens or teen agers are most frequently asked for by individuals and churches.

III. MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION

Our committee is very dependent on the financial support of our churches. Many of our Christian Reformed constituency benefit from the tracts published. Therefore, the committee requests that synod recommend the Back to God Tract Committee and its program to the churches for one or more offerings.

Secondly, several new committee members must be chosen to serve. A list of nominees will be submitted from which four individuals must be picked to work on the Back to God Tract Committee.

IV. FINANCES

A financial statement and auditor's report follow.

Back to God Tract Committee
Marvin De Boer, secretary

BACK TO GOD TRACT COMMITTEE
Financial Report 1975

Balance of accounts January 1, 1975:	Checking	\$ 375.17
	Savings	<u>9,131.60</u>
	Total	9,506.77

RECEIPTS:

Contributions — churches	18,160.66	
Contributions — others	562.75	
Sales — tracts	4,566.91	
Interest	468.17	
		<u>23,758.49</u>
		33,265.26

DISBURSEMENTS:

Clerical and Distribution	6,268.16	
Writing	30.00	
Printing and engraving	8,756.03	
Freight and postage	939.79	
Advertising	236.70	
Meals and mileage	347.20	
Art Work	710.00	
Supplies	10.00	
Coordinated Services	1,070.05	
Honorarium	250.00	
Misc.:		
W.H.B.L.	2,500.00	
Taiwan	2,000.00	<u>4,695.04</u>
		<u>23,312.97</u>
Balance of accounts December 31, 1975		<u><u>9,952.29</u></u>

Balance of December 31, 1975 consisted of the Michigan National Bank accounts as follows:

Demand Deposits	\$ 1,352.52
Savings Account	8,599.77

REPORT 8
BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

Due to unexpected difficulties our review of *The New International Version* (New Testament) was not completed last fall as we had planned. Presently it is close to completion and should be published in the various church papers sometime this summer.

Because of the delay mentioned above, the committee has begun no new project. The remainder of this report simply restates the committee's plans submitted to synod last year.

The committee has not yet decided on a project for the next year or two. It will be important for this committee to review the Old Testament part of *The New International Version* when it appears in 1978. We think it is possible to do some useful work until that version appears, and we are considering the following possibilities: either a review of the *New American Standard Bible* with a view to recommending it as a study Bible, or a review of one of the contemporary Catholic versions (*The Jerusalem Bible*, or *The New American Bible*) with a view to shedding some light on the ecumenical situation that now exists in the area of Bible translation. These Catholic versions are ecumenical in nature and are being read by at least some of our people. Our decision has not yet been made, and we are still open to suggestions.

Bible Translation Committee
Andrew Bandstra, chairman
David Holwerda, secretary
Stanley Bultman
David Engelhard
Bastiaan Van Elderen
Clarence Vos
Louis Vos
Marten Woudstra

REPORT 9

CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE

Since the Synod of 1975, the Chaplain Committee has met regularly, carrying on the work committed to it by previous synods of the Christian Reformed Church. It has been a very good and busy year. The following report will reflect aspects of the work accomplished; some issues which the committee faces, some information on what is happening in the chaplaincy and recommendations on how we can continue to do the work of the denomination through the chaplain ministry.

I. PURPOSE

The committee basically represents the denomination in the broad spectrum of chaplain ministries. It is the agency which processes the ecclesiastical endorsement of chaplains who serve federal, provincial, state, public, private, secular and religious institutions. The committee investigates and evaluates new fields for chaplain services, recruits and sometimes assists in the training and placement of ministers going into chaplain service, is concerned with the trends of behavioral science and pastoral care as it affects the quality of chaplain service, and makes pastoral visits to chaplains and their families to learn of their welfare and foster a positive linkage to the denomination.

In the past, chaplains have served in non-ecclesiastical settings such as in the courts of kings or with the military. The chaplain today ministers to persons who have been dislocated from their regular home, family, or church to such institutions as the military, hospitals, etc. Another aspect of chaplain service is that they minister to persons who are experiencing brokenness in their lives, whether physical, emotional, mental or social. One need reflect only momentarily to realize that there is a growing need for chaplains in our highly complex, mobile society where there are all kinds of broken relationships.

II. ORGANIZATION

Synod has appointed the following members to serve on the Chaplain Committee (dates indicate end of term) with the Rev. Harold Bode, serving as Executive Secretary:

Rev. Galen Meyer, chairman.....	1976
Rev. Duane Visser, vice-chairman.....	1978
Mr. Donald Swierenga, treasurer.....	1978
Mr. Nick Van Andel, vice-treasurer.....	1976
Rev. Carl Tuyl (Canadian representative).....	1976
Dr. Melvin Hugen (chairman, industrial).....	1977
Dr. Dick Van Halsema (chairman, military).....	1977
Mr. Neal Berghoef (industrial).....	1977

The committee is well served through the attendance and advice of the Revs. Harold Dekker, James Lont and Duane Vander Brug; the first

two represent the denomination on the General Commission on Chaplains, and Armed Forces Personnel and the latter as liaison with the Board of Home Missions. The committee appreciates the work of Messrs. Harold Rodenhouse and Robert Van Koevering who serve on the Industrial Chaplains subcommittee and the Rev. James R. Kok of Pine Rest Christian Hospital who serves on the Institutional Chaplains subcommittee.

III. MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

Christian Reformed ministers now serving on extended active duty are as follows:

Air Force

Chaplain, Major, Ralph W. Bronkema, Homestead AFB FL (1966)
 Chaplain, Lt. Col., Henry Guikema, Elmendorf AFB AL (1962)
 Chaplain, Lt. Col., Louis E. Kok, Luke AFB AZ (1962)

Army

Chaplain, Major, William Brander, Ft. Wadsworth NY (1968)
 Chaplain, Major, Jan Friend, Ft. Bragg NC (1962)
 Chaplain, LTC, John Hoogland, Stuttgart Germany (1959)
 Chaplain, LTC, Bruce C. Hemple, Ft. Sam Houston TX (1959)
 Chaplain, Capt. Herman Keizer, Bremmerhaven Germany (1968)
 Chaplain, Major, Marvin Konynenbelt, Ft. Wadsworth NY (1965)
 Chaplain, Major, Paul Vruwink, Camp Zama Japan (1958)
 Chaplain, Capt. Karl Willoughby, Ft. Leonard Wood MO (1976)

Navy

Chaplain, LCDR, Herbert Bergsma, Princeton Theological Seminary (1966)
 Chaplain, LCDR, Robert Brummel, Third Marine Division Okinawa (1966)
 Chaplain, LCDR, Donald den Dulk, Camp Pendleton CA (1975)
 Chaplain, LCDR, Albert Roon, USN Supply School GA (1966)
 Chaplain, LCDR, Raymond Swierenga, Camp LeJeune NC (1960)

We have sixteen chaplains on extended active duty. This is an increase of two over 1974. The Rev. Donald A. den Dulk, after serving in a reserve component for a number of years, began active duty as a Navy Chaplain in June 1975. The Rev. Karl K. Willoughby was accepted for active duty as an Army Chaplain at the close of 1975. We are grateful that these men could be placed on active duty at a time when the military services are cutting their manpower.

Our chaplains serve with distinction in various places around the world. Some of them occupy unique positions of leadership and are respected for the contributions they have made. For example, Chaplain Major Jan Friend has served in a significant leadership role with the Army Chaplains Task Force for the resettlement of Vietnamese refugees. Chaplain Friend as well as our other chaplains reflect credit upon the chaplain corps and the denomination they represent.

In addition to active duty chaplains, twenty Christian Reformed ministers serve in reserve assignments in various ways to fulfill their reserve commitments. These are:

Air Force

Rev. Harold Bode, (Lt. Col.) Wright-Patterson AFB OH
 Rev. Arlin Menninga (Capt.) Chanute AFB IL
 Rev. Andrew Rienstra (Major) Dover AFB DE
 Rev. Jay Vander Ark (Lt. Col.) McGuire AFB NJ
 Rev. Donald Wisse (Lt. Col.) McGuire AFB NJ

Army

Rev. J. Harold Ellens (Col.) 323 General Hospital, Inkster MI
 Rev. Galen Meyer (Major) Headquarters, 791 Trans. BN, Grand Rapids MI
 Rev. Dick Oostenink, Jr. (Col.) 322 General Hospital, Newark NJ
 Rev. Harvey Ouwinga (Major) Headquarters, 394 Station Hospital, Grand Rapids MI
 Rev. Jay Pruiim (Capt.) 46 Bde, 38 Inf Division, MIARNG, Wyoming MI
 Rev. Harvey Smit (Major) 5854 USAR Civil Affairs, Camp Zama Japan
 Rev. Dick Van Halsema (Col.) USARCPAC/Control Gp., St. Louis MO
 Rev. Theodore Verseput (LTC) 46 Bde 38 Inf. Division, MIARNG, Wyoming MI

Navy

Rev. Donald G. Belanus (LTJG) Navy Reserve Center, Utica NY
 Rev. Derke Bergsma (CAPT) CP Command, Staff Chaplain, Naval Reserve Center, Chicago IL
 Rev. Peter Mans, Jr. (LCDR) Navy Reserve TR & Sup., Hartford CO
 Rev. Esler Shuart (LCDR) USNRTC, Chicago IL
 Rev. Jerry Zandstra (LCDR) San Diego Naval Station, San Diego CA

Civil Air Patrol

Rev. Kenneth Slager (Major) Northside Composite Sq. WA
 Rev. Samuel Vander Jagt (Major) Davenport Composite Sq. IA

We are grateful to churches, consistories and other related agencies which allow these men to minister as chaplains to various reserve components. In addition to these, we have two seminarians who have been approved by the committee to serve in training programs with the Army and Air Force. Note should be made of the fact that two of our reserve chaplains have retired from reserve commitments with the Navy, they are Ch. (LCDR) Paul A. Boertje and Ch. (LCDR) Adrian Van Andel.

IV. INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY

A. Personnel

The following ministers are endorsed by the Chaplain Committee and serve as full-time chaplains in various institutions.

Rev. John de Vries, Jr., Federal Training Center, Montreal Quebec

- Rev. A. Dirk Evans, Peoples Community Hospital Authority, Detroit MI
 Rev. Gordon Kieft, Bethesda Hospital, Denver CO
 Rev. Donald Klompeen, Salvation Army Social Center, Oakland CA
 Rev. James R. Kok, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids MI
 Rev. William Lenters, Calvary Rehabilitation Center, Phoenix AZ
 Rev. Peter Mantel, Milbrook Correctional Center, Milbrook Ontario
 Rev. Gerald Oosterveen, Dixon Development Center, Dixon IL
 Rev. Adrian Van Andel, VA, Palo Alto/Menlo Park, Palo Alto CA
 Rev. Larry Vande Creek, Family Practice Department, Ohio State University, Columbus OH
 Rev. Thomas Vanden Bosch, VA Hospital, Sioux Falls SD
 Rev. Duane Visser, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids MI
 Rev. Benjamin Ypma, Koinonia Medical Center, Muskegon, MI
- The following ministers are in different stages in the process of ecclesiastical endorsement, classical approval and/or placement:
 Rev. Warren Boer, Boer Marriage and Family Counseling Services, Grand Rapids, MI
 Rev. Jerry Dykstra, Victoria General Hospital, Halifax, NS
 Rev. Terry Hager, Community Counseling and Personal Growth Ministry, Grand Rapids MI
 Rev. Elton Piersma, Christian Life Enrichment Ministries, Muskegon MI
 Rev. Nick Vander Kwaak, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids MI

We have a number of ministers in training for specialized ministries. We are pleased with the growing interest in the area of institutional chaplaincy both by ministers who aspire to serve as chaplains and by institutions which desire the services of chaplains.

Some of our chaplains have gained unique positions of influence in the area of pastoral care. For example, the Rev. Larry Vande Creek serves as a chaplain counselor in the Family Practice Department of Ohio State University. Such a program has been tried in some military medical centers with great success and is part of a trend in patient care. There is a growing awareness for total care for the total person, both body and soul.

The Chaplain Committee continues to engage the chaplain services of the Rev. Paul Zoschke of the Reformed Church in Rochester, Minnesota, the Rev. Mr. Zoschke is one of six certified chaplains with Mayo Clinic and the surrounding hospitals. He provides spiritual care for Christian Reformed people while they are patients there. We have appreciated the genuine concern shown our people both by the Rev. Mr. Zoschke and the Church of the Savior.

B. General Status

The institutional chaplaincy is a ministry which presents the church with a tremendous challenge, ministering to persons who have been uprooted from their familiar surroundings of home to an institution or to those who have suffered from broken relationships of life.

During this past year, your committee, along with its executive secretary, has worked many hours on the complicated issues of institutional

chaplaincy. The field of institutional chaplaincy is not only expanding but is also becoming more specialized, such as in the areas of family and marriage counseling and in alcoholic rehabilitation. The committee seeks to facilitate placing the minister who has specialized training in a position best suited for that training. Gradually more of our ministers are seeking the guidance of the committee as they begin their training and a good relationship with the committee is maintained, which is helpful in the placement of chaplains.

It is our judgment that synod needs to be aware, not only of the opportunities for chaplaincy, but also of some of the problems inherent in those opportunities. We would like to present those opportunities with their problems at this point in the report.

C. Opportunities With Some of Their Inherent Problems

1. All of us are becoming increasingly more aware of rising costs in hospitalization. This has not only increased insurance rates, but it has also affected the policies of insurance companies regarding lengths and types of coverage. In some hospitals at least part of the chaplain's salary is paid through insurance benefits. Hospitals by regulation are required to have certain trained personnel; chaplains may not be required at these hospitals by regulation. Therefore, if a hospital has a chaplain in its employ and is working with an austere budget, the chaplain's administration desires their services.

2. Some ministers, after specialized training in pastoral care and counseling, gain employment with an institution while others join an existing counseling center. Some form an association with a board of directors, working as a counsel or in that type of organizational context while others advertise their counseling services in the form of a "private practice." The committee, realizing that each one of these types of employment procedures may be quite legitimate by itself, faces the following questions. Should we promote affiliation with an institution and/or a counsel center or should we favor the formation of an association, foundation, or private practice? Who should pay and determine the salary and who should cover pension costs for those who enter varying types of counseling practices? How would a chaplain in a type of private practice be supervised by the church or an appointed agency?

3. The Chaplain Committee is committed to the policy of getting the best qualified ministers to serve as chaplains in specialized ministries. We are quite aware that chaplains going into prison chaplaincy will need specialized training somewhat different than chaplains going into alcoholic rehabilitation or some other type of specialized ministries. Synod 1973, basically requires two things of the Chaplain Committee relative to the ecclesiastical endorsement of chaplains to specialized ministries: (1) That the chaplain be judged to possess the ministerial skills and training commensurate with the specialized position to which he is aspiring; and (2) that the field be approved as a "worthy field" with a potential great enough to justify the full-time employment of an ordained minister. The committee realizes that classes shall retain the task of judging the spiritual nature of the position and granting permission

for a man to be called to that position. Synod 1973, decided, “. . . that synod strongly urge that classis require that any ordained person working full-time in pastoral care or counseling, not serving a local church or a denominational agency, be endorsed by the Chaplain Committee in order to receive approval by his classis for work in a special ministry.” Some classes have worked very closely with the Chaplain Committee in this matter, while others have not, maybe due to the fact that classis is not aware of the decision. The result is that we have ordained ministers working in special ministries, not serving a local church or denominational agency and not having the ecclesiastical endorsement of the Chaplain Committee.

Problems related to this general issue are as follows. Some ministers go on an extended leave of absence to engage in special training and during this training they decide to enter a specialized ministry. They may then apply for a position that is open or create an agency through which they may utilize their expertise. This takes time for planning, organizing, processing, etc. When does the committee enter the process and is it by invitation? Who supplies the salary during the interim? Sometimes the position is so new and necessarily ill-defined that it is extremely difficult to make wise decisions. When does classis enter the process? The problems are quite different from the simple procedure of calling a pastor to an established congregation but the specialized ministry may be just as needed and important.

The Chaplain Committee is also working toward the goal that all ministers working as chaplains in specialized ministries be endorsed by the committee. This is in line with good ecclesiastical procedure and policy as set forth in the Church Order as well as in the Acts of Synod.

4. In this section of our report, we not only desired to make synod aware of some of the problems we are facing, but also inform synod that we are studying these opportunities with their inherent problem and will make recommendations regarding same at a later date.

V. INDUSTRIAL CHAPLAINCY

The Chaplain Committee had hoped to report to this synod that it had placed its first industrial chaplain. Though the committee has not succeeded in placing a chaplain in industry, our efforts toward that goal continue.

The industrial subcommittee has met from time to time and opportunities are being investigated. Studies are being made on models of industrial chaplaincy and the committee hopes to place several chaplains in industrial settings in order to provide some working models from a Reformed perspective.

The committee has earmarked monies to be used in making further studies on working models and will be recruiting ministers who have indicated interest in this type of specialized ministry. The Seaway, Airport and Industrial Mission Chaplaincy are only a few examples of industrial chaplaincy.

VI. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The Rev. Harold Bode, after six months of Clinical Pastoral Education at Pine Rest Christian Hospital, began working full-time as executive secretary for the Chaplain Committee. Since the first of March 1975, he has occupied an office in the denominational building.

While promoting the chaplaincy at classical meetings and in churches investigating new fields, recruiting ministers for chaplain positions, monitoring the training of chaplains, monitoring Chaplain Deposit Fund coverage, and visiting chaplains in the field, he also studies the past actions of synods relating to the Chaplain Committee and familiarizes himself with the previous minutes of the committee going back several decades. The committee deeply appreciates synod's appointment of an executive secretary and is encouraged by this denominational commitment toward the advancement of chaplain ministries. As a committee, we feel that we are gradually catching up on our workload through the work of our executive secretary.

Now that we have an executive secretary, the chaplains have an advocate with whom they can identify and discuss questions which arise. Correspondence from the chaplains indicate appreciation for the professional and pastoral visits by our executive secretary. The chaplains also feel that through the executive secretary they have a closer association with the denomination. Furthermore, agencies desiring chaplain services are making more frequent contact with the committee through him.

VII. IN MEMORY

The committee was deeply saddened by the sudden death of one of its members, Mr. Jack Holwerda, just as he was concluding six years of service with the committee. Mr. Holwerda had accomplished so much outstanding work, especially in the area of pension coverage for chaplains. The minutes of the last meeting he attended, indicate that he was still going to do some work for the committee in several areas, but obviously, this will need to be done by others. He is missed but not forgotten.

While this report was being written, the committee learned of the sudden death of one of our chaplains, the Rev. William Swierenga, who served the Michigan Veterans Facility as chaplain for fifteen (15) years. His work there was characterized by energetic dedication. He was deeply evangelical and warmly pastoral. We are thankful to God for his life and work.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Representation at synod: We request that our Executive Secretary, the Rev. Harold Bode, and Dr. Melvin Hugen be permitted to speak at synod in matters pertaining to the Chaplain Committee.

2. Presentation of chaplains: We request that active duty chaplains, both institutional and military, who may be present while synod is in session be presented to the synod and that one of each be allowed the privilege of speaking briefly to synod.

3. We request that synod allow the Chaplain Committee an extension of time to fulfill the mandate of Synod 1974, Article 69, C, 7; namely, "That synod authorize the Chaplain Committee to appoint a limited number of chaplains to strategic positions and to arrange for calling and subsidized support to a maximum expenditure of \$20,000.00 during 1975."

Ground:

The monies to accomplish this authorization were not available during 1975 because 1975 was the first year the committee came under the quota system and most of the monies came in after the beginning of the third quarter of the year.

4. We request that synod increase the quota for the Chaplain Committee to \$1.65 per family for 1977 in order that the committee may be facilitated in accomplishing its mandates and to take greater advantage of placing chaplains in strategic positions.

Grounds:

- a. The opportunities for placing chaplains in institutions is increasing.
- b. Rising hospital costs will preclude some hospitals from providing chaplain services.

5. Chaplain Deposit Fund: The Chaplain Committee wishes to inform synod, relative to the matter presented in the Acts of Synod 1975, Article 84 II. B, that it concurs with the Ministers' Pension Fund and that for the time being, these funds remain separate. The committee requests synod to approve a \$0.50 per family quota for the Chaplain Deposit Fund for 1977.

6. The committee requests synod to reappoint the Rev. Harold Bode as Executive Secretary for the Chaplain Committee for a two-year term.

7. Committee Membership:

a. The Revs. Carl Tuyl, Galen Meyer and Mr. Nick Van Andel have each served two terms of three years with the committee and are, therefore, retiring from the committee. To fill these vacancies, the committee submits the following nominees to synod:

(1) To replace the Rev. Carl Tuyl, our Canadian representative on the committee, we, after due consideration and consultation with the staff of the Board of Home Missions, submit the name of the Rev. John Van Til, the Regional Home Missionary for Canada. His interest in chaplaincy in general, his knowledge of the Canadian scene, his more than average contact with the Canadian Christian Reformed Churches and his frequent trips to Grand Rapids for meetings, weighed heavily in favor of presenting his name as a single nominee as Canadian representative for membership on our committee.

(2) To replace the Rev. Galen Meyer on the committee, we present:
—Rev. Marvin Baarman, former Executive Secretary of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions and now an emeritus minister.

—Rev. Harvey A. Ouwinga, former Army Chaplain, now serving as Pastor of East Leonard Christian Reformed Church.

(3) To replace Mr. Nick Van Anandel on the committee, we present:—Mr. Gerald Vander Tuig, social worker; Director, Grand Rapids Child Guidance Clinic and Elder of the Calvin Christian Reformed Church.

—Mr. Evert Vermeer, social worker; Director, Kent County Social Services; President of the Michigan County Social Services Association; Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, Western Michigan University; Member of the Calvin Christian Reformed Church.

b. The Chaplain Committee requests synod to increase the committee's membership by two members. The work load of the committee is increasing. The committee believes that because of the specialized training of chaplains for specialized ministries, the committee would be well served by a broader spectrum of expertise among its membership. There would be no extra cost involved. We present the following sets of two names for nomination:

(1) Mr. Harold Mast, hospital administrator, Pine Rest Christian Hospital. He has served in the Navy as a hospital administrator and currently holds the rank Lt. Commander in the Naval Reserve in that specialty.

(2) Mr. Jay Morren, teacher of business at South Christian High School; financial consultant. He has served nine (9) years with Army National Guard.

(3) Ms. Margery Vander Ploeg, social worker for Family Services in Kent County. Member of the Michigan State Board for Certification of Social Workers.

(4) Mrs. Jean Ettesvold, social worker; former policewoman with the Grand Rapids Police Department; now Director, Special Services with the Kenowa Hills School District.

IX. FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 1975, ATTACHMENT No. 1

X. PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 1977, ATTACHMENT No. 2

The Chaplain Committee
Harold Bode, Executive Secretary

REPORT 10

CHURCH HELP FUND

The following is a report of the work of the Church Help Fund Committee for the year 1975. Regular meetings were held throughout the year to consider the twenty-six applications received. Following a careful review of the information submitted by the churches and the evaluation of the endorsing classes, loans were granted to twenty-four congregations totaling \$367,000.00. This represents an increase of almost 50% over the previous year.

We were once again forced to operate with a deficit throughout most of the year, but with the cooperation of the churches in not calling for their approved loans until they were actually needed we were able to supply funds to the various churches upon request. Most of the loans were approved on a ten to fifteen year repayment schedule. This means that the payments would be equal to the interest payments on commercial loans. Keeping the loans on a somewhat shorter payment schedule enables us to be of assistance to more congregations. We appreciate the cooperation received from the churches, and we are especially grateful to those who have made advance payments on their loans. Whenever churches fail to meet their obligations in full it jeopardizes the revolving nature of our fund. Once again we would urge the churches that have experienced substantial growth to make more rapid repayment of their loans. We also request that the classes continue to give careful review to all applications they endorse.

In projecting our needs for the coming year the committee feels that it will not be necessary to ask for quotas since the yearly repayments, plus the cooperation of the churches, should enable us to meet the requests anticipated.

The financial regulations regarding the safety of the bank accounts are being followed by the Church Help Fund Committee. Matters requiring action by synod:

1. We recommend that the Rev. E. Blankespoor and Mr. T. Van Bruggen be reappointed to another term on the Church Help Fund Committee.

Ground: They have served one term and are eligible for reappointment.

2. The Rev. J. Engbers and Mr. M. Wiersma have completed six or more years of service as secretary and treasurer of our fund thereby necessitating the appointment of a ministerial and a lay person to our committee.

3. We recommend the appointment of a ministerial alternate to our committee to replace the Rev. D. Houseman.

Ground: Mr. Houseman's term expires and since he has requested emeritation and will be leaving the area he is not available for reappointment.

4. We recommend that Mr. H. De Groot be reappointed as lay alternate to our committee.

Ground: He is eligible for reappointment.

5. In matters pertaining to the Church Help Fund you are asked to contact the treasurer, Mr. M. Wiersma, or the secretary, the Rev. J. Engbers.

Church Help Fund Committee

J. H. Rubingh, president
 J. H. Engbers, secretary
 M. Wiersma, treasurer
 E. Blankespoor
 T. Van Bruggen
 E. Huizenga

THE CHURCH HELP FUND

CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS

Schedule A

Cash on hand December 31, 1974

Northwestern State Bank		
General checking	\$ 34,004.38	
Savings account	<u>81,000.00</u>	
Total		\$115,004.38

Receipts:

Repayment of Loans Schedule "B"	\$298,687.06	
Interest on savings	6,994.05	
U.S. — Canadian Exchange	131.69	
Classis — gifts and miscellaneous	90.38	
Repayment — refund	<u>333.31</u>	
Total		<u>\$306,236.49</u> \$421,240.87

Disbursements:

New loans — disbursed — Schedule "B"	\$262,000.00	
Administration expense — Schedule "C"	2,314.12	
U.S. — Canadian Exchange	513.29	
Refund — repayment	<u>333.31</u>	
Total		<u>\$265,160.72</u> \$156,080.15
Total Cash		

Cash on hand December 31, 1975

Northwestern State Bank, Orange City, Iowa		
General checking	\$ 65,152.33	
Savings account	17,740.53	
Security National Bank, Sioux City, Iowa		
Savings account	31,211.41	
First National Bank, Sioux Center, Iowa		
Savings account	<u>41,975.88</u>	
Total cash		\$156,080.15

Outstanding Loans to Churches

\$2,227,058.50

THE CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
1	Abbotsford, B.C.—1st	\$ 700.00	\$	\$ 700.00	\$ none
2	Abbotsford, B.C.—2nd	24,000.00		1,500.00	22,500.00
3	Ackley, Iowa	12,000.00		1,000.00	11,000.00
4	Acton, Ont.	3,275.00		718.75	2,556.25
5	Actna, Michigan	10,000.00			10,000.00
6	Agassiz, B.C.	17,300.02		2,783.33	14,516.69
7	Alamosa, Colorado	10,000.00		2,000.00	8,000.00
8	Albuquerque, New Mexico—1st Chelwood Community	10,666.69		1,333.33	9,333.36
9	Alliston, Ont.	6,333.36			6,333.36
10	Alto, Wisconsin	5,996.34		666.66	5,329.68
11	Anchorage, Alaska—Trinity	22,000.00		2,000.00	20,000.00
12	Ann Arbor, Michigan	4,100.00		700.00	3,400.00
13	Athens, Ont.	2,125.00		687.50	1,437.50
14	Atwood, Michigan	3,337.00		667.40	2,669.60
15	Bakersfield, California	10,000.00		666.66	9,333.34
16	Barrhead—Westlock, Alta.	1,555.72		1,555.72	none
17	Barrie, Ont.—1st	1,312.50		687.50	625.00
18	Belleville, Ont.—Maranatha	3,750.00		750.00	3,000.00
19	Bellevue, Alta.	7,000.00		2,500.00	4,500.00
20	Bigelow, Minnesota	650.00		325.00	325.00
21	Big Rapids, Mich.—Fellowship	15,000.00		1,500.00	13,500.00
22	Blenheim, Ont.	13,500.00		1,250.00	12,250.00
23	Bloomfield, Ont.	11,500.00		1,500.00	10,000.00
24	Blyth, Ont.	14,500.00		1,250.00	13,250.00
25	Boca Raton, Florida	10,000.00		1,000.00	9,000.00
26	Boulder, Colorado—Crestview	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00
27	Bowmanville, Ont.—Maranatha	12,000.00			12,000.00
28	Bowmanville, Ont.	1,950.00		1,250.00	700.00
29	Brandon, Man.—1st	4,525.00		831.25	3,693.75
30	Brantford, Ont.	10.00		10.00	none
31	Britt, Iowa	4,375.00		825.00	3,550.00
32	Brockville, Ont.—Bethel	375.00		375.00	none
33	Brookfield, Wisc.—Milwaukee	18,966.67		1,333.33	17,633.34
34	Brooks, Alta.	5,701.16		1,392.50	4,308.66
35	Brooten, Minnesota	800.00		800.00	none
36	Burbank, Ill.	9,000.00		1,000.00	8,000.00
37	Burdett, Alta.	3,750.00		3,750.00	none
38	Burlington, Ont.—Aldershot	4,000.00		2,000.00	2,000.00
39	Burnaby, B.C.	5,875.00		875.00	5,000.00
40	Byron Center, Michigan—2nd	2,000.00		500.00	1,500.00
41	Cadillac, Michigan	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
42	Caledonia, Michigan	15,147.67		2,666.66	12,481.01
43	Calgary, Alta.—Maranatha	4,750.00		750.00	4,000.00
44	Cambridge, Ont.—Maranatha	10,750.00		750.00	10,000.00
45	Cedar, Iowa		15,000.00		15,000.00
46	Cedar Falls, Iowa	12,000.00		1,500.00	10,500.00
47	Cedar Rapids, Iowa	18,665.00		2,670.00	15,995.00
48	Cedar Springs, Mich.—Pioneer	5,475.00		725.00	4,750.00
49	Champaign, Ill.—Hessel Park	10,000.00			10,000.00
50	Chatham, Ont.—Grace	7,500.00		2,500.00	5,000.00

THE CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA
1975

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
51	Chicago, Ill.—Garfield	8,146.68	8,000.00	626.66	15,520.02
52	Chicago, Ill.—Korean	27,662.00		2,004.00	25,658.00
53	Chilliwack, B.C.	18,729.30		2,500.00	16,229.30
54	Chula Vista, California	4,000.00	20,000.00	4,000.00	20,000.00
55	Clarkson, Ont.	1,518.75		1,518.75	none
56	Cleveland, Ohio—Maple Heights	2,000.00		500.00	1,500.00
57	Clinton, Ont.	1,006.25		750.00	256.25
58	Cobourg, Ont.—Grace	7,300.00		1,100.00	6,200.00
59	Cochrane, Ont.	1,444.15		550.00	894.15
60	Collingwood, Ont.	12,989.33		1,500.00	11,489.33
61	Colorado Springs, Colo.	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
62	Columbus, Ohio	960.00		960.00	none
63	Comstock Park, Michigan	6,500.00		500.00	6,000.00
64	Conrad, Montana	6,655.00		835.00	5,820.00
65	Coopersville, Mich.—Little Farms	10,000.00		666.66	9,333.34
66	Cornwall, Ont.—Immanuel	16,562.50		1,000.00	15,562.50
67	Crown Point, Indiana	3,500.00		500.00	3,000.00
68	Cutlerville, Mich. Cutlerville Hills	6,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00
69	Decatur, Michigan	7,000.00			7,000.00
70	Delta, B.C.—1st	2,675.00		625.00	2,050.00
71	De Motte, Indiana—Bethel	20,000.00			20,000.00
72	Denver, Colorado—Fairview	6,225.00			6,225.00
73	Denver, Colorado Ridgeview Hills	20,666.68			20,666.68
74	Denver, Colorado—Trinity	14,750.00		2,500.00	12,250.00
75	Des Moines, Iowa	6,000.00		1,500.00	4,500.00
76	Dorr, Michigan	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
77	Drayton, Ont.	1,200.00			1,200.00
78	Dresden, Ont.	875.00		412.50	462.50
79	Dundas, Ont.—Calvin	5,500.00		750.00	4,750.00
80	Dunnville, Ont.—Bethel	6,250.00		750.00	5,500.00
81	East Martin, Michigan	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00
82	Edmonton, Alta.—Maranatha	1,312.50		375.00	937.50
83	Edmonton, Alta.—Otte well	7,250.00		750.00	6,500.00
84	Edmonton, Alta.—Trinity	6,000.00		2,000.00	4,000.00
85	Edmonton, Alta.—West End	3,700.00		1,000.00	2,700.00
86	Edson, Alta.	13,433.68		1,416.00	12,017.68
87	Emo, Ont.	7,355.00		1,150.00	6,205.00
88	Escalon, California	1,625.00		1,625.00	none
89	Essex, Ont.	1,600.00		820.00	780.00
90	Exeter, Ont.	4,750.00		750.00	4,000.00
91	Ferrysburg, Michigan	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
92	Forest, Ont.	9,031.25		1,218.75	7,812.50
93	Forest Grove, Michigan	27,000.00		3,000.00	24,000.00
94	Fort Collins, Colo.—Immanuel	25,000.00		1,000.00	24,000.00
95	Fort Lauderdale, Florida	22,000.00		666.66	21,333.34
96	Framingham, Mass.	3,500.00		500.00	3,000.00
97	Freeman, S.D.—Bethlehem	4,300.00	20,000.00		24,300.00
98	Fremont, Mich.—Trinity	500.00			500.00
99	Fresno, California	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
100	Fruitland, Ont.	787.50		506.25	281.25

CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA
1975

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
101	Fruitport, Michigan	\$15,216.68	\$	\$1,883.33	\$13,333.35
102	Fulton, Ill.—Bethel	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
103	Gary, Indiana—Beacon Light	850.00	5,000.00		5,850.00
104	Georgetown, Ont.	6,000.00		750.00	5,250.00
105	Goshen, Indiana	2,666.74		666.66	2,000.08
106	Grand Prairie, Alta.—La Glace	1,977.07			1,977.07
107	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Arcadia	3,250.08		916.66	2,333.42
108	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Bristolwood	6,666.69		833.33	5,833.36
109	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Ideal Park	8,000.12		1,333.32	6,666.80
110	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Princeton	4,500.00			4,500.00
111	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Riverside	1,700.00		700.00	1,000.00
112	Grand Rapids, Mich.—Sunshine	10,000.00		1,000.00	9,000.00
113	Grandville, Mich.—Hanley	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
114	Grandville, Mich.—Ivanrest	3,500.00			3,500.00
115	Grandville, Mich.—South	1,000.00		500.00	500.00
116	Granum, Alta.	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
117	Greely, Colorado	12,000.00		5,200.00	6,800.00
118	Grimsby, Ont.—Mountainview	6,750.00			6,750.00
119	Guelph, Ont.	4,505.00		1,500.00	3,005.00
120	Halifax, Nova Scotia	4,637.01		592.00	4,045.01
121	Hamilton, Ont.—Immanuel	7,250.00		775.00	6,475.00
122	Hamilton, Ont.—Mount Hamilton	1,850.00		600.00	1,250.00
123	Hancock, Minnesota	3,625.00		500.00	3,125.00
124	Hartley, Iowa	4,200.00		2,000.00	2,200.00
125	Hawarden, Iowa	500.00		500.00	none
126	Hills, Minnesota	17,333.34		1,333.33	16,000.01
127	Holland, Iowa	10,666.69		1,333.33	9,333.36
128	Holland, Michigan—Calvary	6,700.00			6,700.00
129	Holland, Mich.—Park	3,000.00		2,000.00	1,000.00
130	Holland, Minnesota	3,190.00		500.00	2,690.00
131	Hollandale, Minnesota	3,000.00		500.00	2,500.00
132	Holland Marsh, Ont.	1,688.44		500.00	1,188.44
133	Houston, B.C.		9,000.00		9,000.00
134	Hudsonville, Mich.—Messiah	3,000.00		1,500.00	1,500.00
135	Hull, Iowa—Hope	9,500.00		750.00	8,750.00
136	Hull, North Dakota	5,100.00		1,950.00	3,150.00
137	Indianapolis, Ind.—Devington		10,000.00		10,000.00
138	Iowa City, Iowa—Trinity	9,000.00		600.00	8,400.00
139	Jackson, Michigan	2,000.00		250.00	1,750.00
140	Jamaica, New York—Queens	7,500.00			7,500.00
141	Jenison, Mich.—Cottonwood	12,000.00		1,500.00	10,500.00
142	Kalamazoo, Mich.—Eastern Hills	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
143	Kalamazoo, Mich.—Faith	9,000.00		1,500.00	7,500.00
144	Kalamazoo, Mich.—Knollwood	5,200.00		1,700.00	3,500.00
145	Kalamazoo, Mich.— Northern Heights	9,000.00		1,500.00	7,500.00
146	Kalamazoo, Mich.—Parchment	2,500.00		500.00	2,000.00
147	Kalamazoo, Mich.—Prairie Edge	4,000.00		1,500.00	2,500.00
148	Kalamazoo, Mich.— Southern Heights	5,000.00			5,000.00
149	Kansas City, Mo.—Lane Ave.	17,333.34		1,333.34	16,000.00
150	Kelowna, B.C.	17,666.68	10,000.00	1,000.00	26,666.68

THE CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA
1975

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
151	Kentville, Nova Scotia	\$ 7,500.00	\$	\$ 750.00	\$ 6,750.00
152	Kitchener, Ont.—1st	1,343.75			1,343.75
153	Lacombe, Alta.—Bethel	4,000.00		750.00	3,250.00
154	Lake City, Michigan	9,625.00		1,750.00	7,875.00
155	Langley, B. C.	1,822.50			1,822.50
156	Lindsay, Ont.	5,850.00			5,850.00
157	Listowel, Ont.	6,000.00		750.00	5,250.00
158	Los Angeles, Calif. Crenshaw	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
159	Lowell, Michigan—Calvary	5,000.00		1,000.00	4,000.00
160	Lucknow, Ont.	16,300.00		1,450.00	14,850.00
161	Lynden, Washington—Mountainview	26,000.00		2,000.00	24,000.00
162	Lynnwood, Washington	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
163	Madison, Wisconsin		20,000.00		20,000.00
164	Marysville, Wash.—Cascade	13,333.34		1,333.34	12,000.00
165	McBain, Michigan		10,000.00		10,000.00
166	McBain, Michigan—Calvin	7,000.00		2,000.00	5,000.00
167	Medicine Hat, Alta.	4,000.00		750.00	3,250.00
168	Miami, Florida	5,000.00		1,500.00	3,500.00
169	Middleville, Michigan	21,333.36		1,666.66	19,666.70
170	Midland Park, New Jersey — Irving Park	1,000.00		500.00	500.00
171	Minneapolis, Minn.—Calvary	2,250.00		250.00	2,000.00
172	Minneapolis, Minn.—1st	25,500.00		1,500.00	24,000.00
173	Momence, Ill.	5,000.00			5,000.00
174	Montreal, Quebec	18,000.00		1,500.00	16,500.00
175	Mountain Lake, Minnesota		20,000.00		20,000.00
176	Muskegon, Michigan—Grace	4,769.81		1,875.00	2,894.81
177	New Glasgow, N.S.—Emmanuel	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
178	Newmarket, Ont.—Bethel	7,500.00		750.00	6,750.00
179	New Westminster, B. C.	1,537.50			1,537.50
180	Niagara Falls, Ont.—Rehoboth	5,500.00		1,000.00	4,500.00
181	Noordeloos, Michigan	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
182	North Haledon, New Jersey	900.00			900.00
183	Oak Forest, Ill.—Hope	3,200.00		800.00	2,400.00
184	Oak Harbor, Washington	2,333.36		2,333.36	none
185	Ocheyedan, Iowa	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
186	Ogden, Utah	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
187	Olympia, Wash.—Evergreen	26,000.02			26,000.02
188	Omaha, Nebr.—Prairie Lane	10,500.00		1,500.00	9,000.00
189	Orangeville, Ont.	12,645.00		2,220.00	10,425.00
190	Orillia, Ont.—1st	6,500.00		750.00	5,750.00
191	Orlando, Florida	20,000.00		1,000.00	19,000.00
192	Oshawa, Ont.—Zion	2,800.00		1,500.00	1,300.00
193	Oskaloosa, Iowa—Bethel	1,000.00		250.00	750.00
194	Ottawa, Ont.	3,250.00		625.00	2,625.00
195	Ottawa, Ont.—East Calvary	10,662.67		1,333.33	9,329.34
196	Palo Alto, California	27,333.34		1,999.99	25,333.35
197	Palos Heights, Ill.	900.00		700.00	200.00
198	Paramus, New Jersey	16,000.01		1,000.00	15,000.01
199	Parkersbrg, Iowa		15,000.00		15,000.00
200	Peers, Alta.	719.26		719.26	none

THE CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA
1975

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
201	Pembroke, Ont.—Zion	\$ 1,751.80	\$	\$ 875.00	\$ 876.80
202	Penticton, B.C.	8,711.97		1,224.00	7,487.97
203	Peterborough, Ont.—Cephas	5,268.52		800.00	4,468.52
204	Phoenix, Arizona—Orangewood	6,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00
205	Plainwell, Mich.—Calvary	9,000.00			9,000.00
206	Port Alberni, B.C.—1st	9,004.66		666.66	8,338.00
207	Randolph, Wisconsin—1st	13,500.00		3,000.00	10,500.00
208	Red Deer, Alta.—1st	1,312.50		562.50	750.00
209	Redlands, Cal.—Highland Ave.	1,750.00		250.00	1,500.00
210	Regina, Sask.—1st	5,960.00		3,910.00	2,050.00
211	Renfrew, Ont.—Hebron	4,500.00		750.00	3,750.00
212	Richfield Springs, N.Y.—Trinity		30,000.00		30,000.00
213	Richmond, B.C.	3,950.00		500.00	3,450.00
214	Riverside, Calif.	8,666.68		666.66	8,000.02
215	Rockford, Michigan	14,350.02		2,008.33	12,341.69
216	Rock Rapids, Iowa		20,000.00		20,000.00
217	Rock Valley, Iowa—Trinity	22,500.00		3,500.00	19,000.00
218	Rocky Mountain House, Alta.	112.50			112.50
219	Roseville, Mich.—Immanuel	15,000.00		1,250.00	13,750.00
220	Rudyard, Michigan	7,333.36		666.66	6,666.70
221	Sacramento, Calif.	12,500.00		1,500.00	11,000.00
222	Saginaw, Mich.—Community	6,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00
223	St. Joseph, Michigan	20,000.00		2,666.66	17,333.34
224	St. Thomas, Ont.—1st	2,687.50		762.50	1,925.00
225	San Francisco, Cal.— Golden Gate	10,000.00		666.66	9,333.34
226	San Jose, Cal.—Moorpark	12,000.00		1,000.00	11,000.00
227	Sarnia, Ont.—Second	1,050.00			1,050.00
228	Saskatoon, Sask.—Bethel	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
229	Seattle, Wash.—Calvary	3,000.00		750.00	2,250.00
230	Sheboygan, Wisc.—Calvin	5,333.35		1,083.33	4,250.02
231	Sheldon, Iowa.—Immanuel	30,000.00		2,500.00	27,500.00
232	Simcoe, Ont.—Emmanuel	18,416.67			18,416.67
233	Sioux Center, Iowa—Covenant		10,000.00		10,000.00
234	Sioux City, Iowa	9,280.00		830.00	8,450.00
235	Smithers, B.C.	4,040.00		630.00	3,410.00
236	Smithville, Ont.		20,000.00	333.34	19,666.66
237	South Holland, Ill.—Peace	8,500.00		2,000.00	6,500.00
238	Stony Plain, Alta.—Hope	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
239	Stratford, Ont.	5,000.00		954.00	4,046.00
240	Strathroy, Ont.—East	1,125.00		600.00	525.00
241	Strathroy, Ont.—Westmount	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00
242	Sun Valley, Cal.—Bethel	500.00		500.00	none
243	Surrey, B.C.	7,750.00		750.00	7,000.00
244	Taber, Alta.	9,298.91		1,965.61	7,333.30
245	Telkwa, B.C.	3,134.30		725.00	2,409.30
246	Terrace, B.C.	3,000.00		625.00	2,375.00
247	Terra Ceia, North Carolina	14,795.09		1,631.00	13,164.09
248	Thunderbay, Ont.—Bethlehem	8,250.00		750.00	7,500.00
249	Toronto, Ont.—Fellowship	10,000.00		1,000.00	9,000.00
250	Toronto, Ont.—Grace, Scarborough	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00

THE CHURCH HELP FUND
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH
ORANGE CITY, IOWA
1975

ANALYSIS — LOANS OUTSTANDING

Schedule "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-74	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-75
251	Toronto, Ont.—2nd	\$ 7,500.00	\$	\$ 300.00	\$ 7,200.00
252	Trenton, Ont.—Ebenezer	975.00		647.81	327.19
253	Troy, Mich.—North Hills	16,666.71		2,999.99	13,666.72
254	Truro, Nova Scotia—John Calvin	2,800.00		600.00	2,200.00
255	Tucson, Ariz.— Elim in the Desert	7,800.00		1,800.00	6,000.00
256	Vancouver, Wash.—Trinity	22,000.00		2,000.00	20,000.00
257	Vauxhall, Alta.	1,200.00		200.00	1,000.00
258	Vernon, B.C.	17,536.44		2,033.33	15,503.11
259	Victoria, B.C.	3,750.00		625.00	3,125.00
260	Vogel Center, Michigan	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
261	Wallaceburg, Ont.	5,850.00			5,850.00
262	Walnut Creek, California		20,000.00		20,000.00
263	Washington, D.C.	26,000.00		2,000.00	24,000.00
264	Washington, D.C.— Silver Spring	33,666.70		1,666.66	32,000.04
265	Waupun, Wisc.—Bethel	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
266	Wayland, Michigan	18,000.00		4,000.00	14,000.00
267	Welland Junction, Ont.	15,583.34		1,416.66	14,166.68
268	Wellandport, Ont.— Riverside	625.00		625.00	none
269	Wellsburg, Iowa—2nd	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
270	Whitby, Ont.—Hebron	5,062.50		750.00	4,312.50
271	Williamsburg, Ont.	3,125.00		625.00	2,500.00
272	Willmar, Minnesota	3,500.00		3,500.00	none
273	Winfield, Ill.	7,500.00			7,500.00
274	Winnipeg, Man.—Kildonan	5,000.00		1,000.00	4,000.00
275	Winnipeg, Man.—Transcona	11,250.00		1,250.00	10,000.00
276	Wisconsin Rapids, Wisc.	20,666.67		1,833.33	18,833.34
277	Wyoming, Mich.—Rogers Heights	3,000.00			3,000.00
278	Wyoming, Ont.	762.50		400.00	362.50
279	Yakima, Wash.—Summitview	30,000.00		3,000.00	27,000.00
280	York, Ont.—Maranatha	14,683.36		2,016.66	12,666.70
281	Zeeland, Michigan—Haven	3,000.00		1,500.00	1,500.00
282	Zillah, Washington	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
		<u>\$2,263,745.56</u>	<u>\$262,000.00</u>	<u>\$298,687.06</u>	<u>\$2,227,058.50</u>

Schedule "C"

Administrative Expense	
Meetings and mileage	\$ 448.91
Rev. John H. Engbers, secretary	450.00
Marion Wiersma, treasurer	1,100.00
Henry De Groot, auditor	45.00
Postage and supplies	82.21
Fidelity Bond	188.00
Total	<u>\$2,314.12</u>

REPORT 11

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES ABROAD

The past year has been a significant year for your committee; it has been a year of continuation and building in regard to the student-support aspect of our mandate. This work absorbed most of your committee's time and financial resources. Our library-assistance program, however, has not functioned as well this year. This has been due to a lack of the donation of good used books, and a shortage of funds available to the committee. Hence, we could not engage as we had hoped in the purchase of new books needed by several evangelical educational institutions worldwide. We are hopeful that with an anticipated increase of funds that we can increase our activity in regard to this aspect of our work during the coming year.

We are happy to report that the Rev. Reginald Ben Ebenezer of Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) has almost completed his program in the area of communications at Wheaton College. He has also had frequent contacts with the personnel of the Back to God Hour. By the time synod meets he should be back in his homeland and providing the churches there with valuable assistance in the work of radio ministry. We rejoice in this avenue of aid to the church in Sri Lanka.

The Rev. Sularso Sopater has also made excellent progress in his Th.M. study program in systematic theology at Calvin Seminary. He will leave early in March to return to Indonesia to take up a teaching ministry at the Reformed seminary in Jakarta. This contact with a fine Christian from the Reformed Churches in Indonesia has been much appreciated. The chair of systematic theology for which he is now trained is a crucial position in his country.

The Rev. Keith Warren of the Queensland Bible Institute of Australia has also done very well in his Th.M. program in the area of systematic theology. He too will have completed his program by the time synod meets. Mr. Warren is a graduate of the Theological Seminary at Geelong and a minister in the Reformed Church of Australia. He is able to provide a strong Reformed witness for that church in the distant area of Queensland.

The committee assisted the Back to God Hour Committee and Calvin Seminary in the project of bringing Prof. Wilson Castro Ferreira of the Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas, Brazil, to Grand Rapids. Prof. Castro was able to be here for one quarter in order to teach a course at Calvin Seminary on the genesis and growth of the Presbyterian Church of Brazil. He was also in frequent consultation with the staff of the Back to God Hour regarding the future of the Portuguese broadcast in Brazil.

The committee welcomed the Rev. Han Hum Ok, a pastor in the Hapdong Church, Seoul, Korea; he has embarked on a Th.M. study program at Calvin Seminary in the area of practical theology. He has made a good beginning on his program which will enable him to join

the faculty of the Calvin Theological Seminary in Seoul when he returns in 1977.

A Taiwanese beneficiary currently at Drew Theological School is Paul Jin-Yuan Jaw. Mr. Jaw is pursuing a doctoral program in systematic theology and will return to a position of leadership training at Tainan Theological College upon completion of his program.

The Rev. Joseph Dzenda of the NKST church of Mkar, Nigeria, is currently studying at the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California, in order to do research along with the Rev. Timothy Monsma, regarding church growth in Nigeria. The committee is assisting Mr. Dzenda in order to make this stay possible. This program will be completed this summer and Mr. Dzenda plans to return to Nigeria at that time.

Two other Nigerian nationals from our sister churches in Nigeria are recipients of aid from your committee. Mr. Amos Addi is preparing for a teaching position at the Theological College of Northern Nigeria. This school has a profound impact on the life of many churches in Nigeria and the provision of a man of Reformed conviction is crucial. The Rev. Jacob Yaaya arrived for study at the Reformed Bible College on January 3. This study was made possible through contributions from the Tiv Church of Nigeria, the Board of Foreign Missions, Reformed Bible College, and your committee. The importance of training Nigerian nationals is of great moment as the churches there assume responsibilities formerly held by the mission.

As some of these men move toward the completion of their study programs, we again have a number of promising candidates requesting support for various programs which have been approved by their home churches. We are eager to be of assistance in accordance with our mandate, but we are moving slowly till we are sure that adequate funds will be forthcoming from the churches. We are grateful for the financial support which several individual donors have given to the work of this committee, and we are confident that worthwhile results have been achieved in this past year. The churches should note that we end the year with a very low cash balance. Our commitments last year were unusually large, but the opportunities outlined above spurred us to move ahead in the faith that our churches would see us through. The response has been heartening.

We continue to appreciate the work which Mr. Peter De Klerk so graciously does on behalf of the used book depot at Calvin College, and we appeal to our people to send good used theological books, Bible commentaries, concordances, and dictionaries to our committee in care of:

Mr. Peter De Klerk
% Calvin Seminary, CEACA
3233 Burton St. S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506

The terms of service of two members of this committee, Prof. Edward Vander Weele and Prof. Robert Recker, expire during 1976. As they are no longer eligible for reappointment, the committee presents the following nominations to synod for their replacement:

Dr. Richard De Ridder and Mr. Peter De Klerk as replacement for Prof. Robert Recker; Dr. Martin Essenburg and Dr. Edward Stehouwer as replacement for Prof. Edward Vander Weele. The committee thanks both retiring members, but particularly expresses gratitude to Prof. Recker who expended countless hours in secretarial duties on behalf of the committee.

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements

February 1, 1975 - January 31, 1976

Cash balance, February 1, 1975		\$ 6,869.73
Receipts:		
Christian Reformed Churches and groups	\$ 10,971.49	
Personal gifts	1,011.15	
Total receipts		11,982.64
Disbursements:		
Support of students	\$ 18,052.42	
Supplies, postage, and meeting expense	239.13	
Total disbursements		18,291.55
Cash Balance, January 31, 1976		\$ 560.82

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That synod approve the work done by this committee.
2. That synod approve the nomination of R. De Ridder and P. De Klerk as replacement for R. Recker, and elect one of the nominees.
3. That synod approve the nomination of M. Essenburg and E. Stehouwer as replacement for E. Vander Weele, and elect one of the nominees.
4. That the work of this committee be recommended to the churches for one or more offerings.

Committee for Educational Assistance
to Churches Abroad

E. Rubingh, chairman
R. Recker, secretary
P. Vande Guchte, treasurer
J. Heerema
J. Lont
J. Schuurmann
E. Vander Weele

REPORT 12

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES

I. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

A. *The committee is composed of three laymen and two ministers.*

This composition is in keeping with the decision of the Synod of 1958. The present membership of the committee is as follows:

President—Mr. John Swierenga of Elmhurst, Illinois (1978)
Vice-President—Mr. H. Ray Schaafsma of Elmhurst, Illinois (1978)
Secretary—Rev. Harry Arnold of Lansing, Illinois (1977)
Treasurer—Mr. Henry Wierenga of Oak Lawn, Illinois (1977)
Vicar—Rev. John Vander Lugt of Palos Heights, Illinois (1978)

B. *Committee for the coming year*

The terms of the present committee members have one or two years to run before expiring. Therefore no recommendations concerning personnel are necessary at this time.

II. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

FNC 1975 Statistics

Applications processed—142
Assistance granted—142
Children allowances—288
Total families in these churches—5230
New churches—5
Average number of families per church—37
Churches no longer requiring assistance—11

III. MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION

A. We request that our secretary and treasurer be consulted on matters pertaining to the FNC when considered by synod or its advisory committee and that they be given the privilege of the floor. In the absence of either the secretary or treasurer, we request that the same privilege be given to the other members of the committee.

B. *Recommendations:*

1. That the minimum salary for ministers serving churches which receive assistance from the FNC be set at \$11,000.00 for 1977. This involves an increase of \$1,500.00 or about 16%.
2. That a child allowance of \$500.00 be granted for every child up to twenty-two (22) years of age, excluding those who have reached the age of nineteen (19) years of age, and who are no longer enrolled at an educational institution. This involves an increase of \$100.00 per child or about 25%.
3. That a car allowance of \$800.00 be given each minister out of FNC funds and that each church receiving aid from the FNC be required to pay an equivalent amount of \$800.00 from its own funds. This involves an increase of \$100.00 or about 7%. The committee suggests

that synod remind the churches that paying their share of the car allowance is obligatory and not optional.

4. That the per family contribution towards the minister's salary in congregations receiving aid from FNC in 1977 be not less (and if possible more) than \$140.00 in both the United States and Canada.

5. That the quota for FNC for 1977 be set at \$14.00 per family.

Grounds:

a. In our effort to comply with synod's instruction "to make every attempt to comply with *Guidelines for Ministers' Salaries* published in 1970 and to take into consideration current information available from the Synodical Interim Finance Committee as published in the annual Handbook for Christian Reformed Churches" (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 88), additional funds will be needed.

b. Although we know additional funds will be needed, it is not clear at present exactly how much additional funding will be required and therefore, a slight increase is justifiable.

6. That the allowance for a Stated Supply remain at \$150.00 per week for 1977.

7. That synod approve the following policy re moving expense for ministers being called by FNC churches from mission service:

"That the FNC be responsible for its share of moving expenses for ministers being called from foreign mission service only from the port of entry of Canada or the United States.

Ground: It should not be the obligation of the FNC to help pay moving expense of personnel returning from foreign mission service."

Fund for Needy Churches Committee
Harry G. Arnold, secretary

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.

United States Accounts

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements

February 1, 1975 to January 31, 1976

[In U. S. Dollars]

UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE, February 1, 1975	\$270,559.70
RECEIPTS:	
Quota payments from Classical Treasurers	\$625,366.40
Interest on Savings Accounts	18,708.87
Refunds and Gifts	<u>1,058.73</u>
Total Receipts	<u>645,134.00</u>
Total funds to be accounted for	\$915,693.70

DISBURSEMENTS:

Salary Subsidy Payments	\$336,030.95
Child Allowance Payments	65,158.60
Automobile Allowance Payments	44,405.11
Moving Expense	11,776.39
Stationery and Supplies	563.31
Auditing expense	150.00
Honorariums	2,000.00
Committee Expense	843.14
Postage	138.50
Transfers to Canadian Account	<u>25,000.00</u>

Total Disbursements \$486,066.00

UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE, January 31, 1976 \$429,627.70

CASH ACCOUNTS:

First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Checking Account	\$ 8,681.73
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Savings Account	145,945.97
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Certificate of Deposit	<u>275,000.00</u>

\$429,627.70

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.

Canadian Account

Statement of Cash Receipts & Disbursements

February 1, 1975 to January 31, 1976

[In Canadian Dollars]

CANADIAN FUND BALANCE, February 1, 1975 \$15,462.04

RECEIPTS:

Quota payments from Classical treasurers	\$149,506.85
Transfer from United States Account	25,000.00
Exchange premium	365.00
Gifts and refunds	<u>7,066.00</u>

Total receipts 181,937.85

Total funds to be accounted for \$197,399.89

DISBURSEMENTS:

Salary Subsidy Payments	\$102,204.32
Child Allowance Payments	27,225.66
Automobile Allowance Payments	16,320.75
Moving Expense	<u>5,431.40</u>

Total Disbursements 151,182.13

CANADIAN FUND BALANCE, January 31, 1976 \$ 46,217.76

CASH ACCOUNT - Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce \$ 46,217.76

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.

Schedule B

Subsidy payments for year ending January 31, 1976

Classis	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Car Allowance	Moving
Alberta North					\$
Barrhead Westlock	\$4397.50	\$3547.50	\$ 475.00	\$375.00	
Edson	4953.00	4253.00	375.00	325.00	
Grande Prairie-La Glace	3857.50	3157.50	450.00	250.00	
Stony Plain					
Alberta South					
Bellevue	5000.00	4500.00		500.00	
Bethel-Saskatoon	2550.00	1000.00	1050.00	500.00	
Brooks-Vauxhall	3210.00	1210.00	1500.00	500.00	
High River	5575.00	4000.00	1200.00	375.00	
Regina	3105.00	2430.00	425.00	250.00	
British Columbia					
Agassiz	5752.10	3300.00	600.00	500.00	1352.10
Houston	5300.00	3600.00	1200.00	500.00	
Penticton (Kelowna)	2295.00	1745.00	50.00	500.00	
Port Alberni	3901.83	1883.33	750.00	420.00	848.50
Prince George	6300.00	4600.00	1200.00	500.00	
Telkwa	6480.00	5380.00	600.00	500.00	
Terrace	2540.00	1740.00	300.00	500.00	
Vernon	1678.33	908.33	350.00	420.00	
Cadillac					
Lake City	4792.50	3742.50	675.00	375.00	
California South					
Fountain Valley	6900.00	4600.00	1800.00	500.00	
California Central					
Sacramento	5400.00	4000.00	900.00	500.00	
Chatham					
Blenheim	4960.00	3560.00	900.00	500.00	
Dresden	4700.00	3300.00	900.00	500.00	
Forest	5570.00	4470.00	600.00	500.00	
Ingersoll					
Wallaceburg	1890.00	390.00	1125.00	375.00	
Woodstock	\$3800.00	3300.00		500.00	
Chicago North					
Garfield	9238.95	7688.00	288.25	480.00	782.70
Korean	6400.00	5000.00	900.00	500.00	
Winfield	2068.41	741.81	100.00	83.35	1143.25

Classis	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Car Allowance	Moving
Chicago South					
Immanuel	\$5650.00	\$3950.00	\$1200.00	\$500.00	
Richton Park	5390.00	3690.00	1200.00	500.00	
Columbia					
Conrad	4500.00	3400.00	600.00	500.00	
Gallatin	2600.00	1500.00	600.00	500.00	
Calvin, Portland	5570.00	4470.00	600.00	500.00	
Calvin, Spokane	5850.00	3850.00	1500.00	500.00	
Oak Hills, Portland	1245.43	924.58	175.00	145.85	
Trinity, Vancouver	7317.50	5145.00	600.00	500.00	\$1072.50
Quincy	5750.00	5250.00		500.00	
Eastern Canada					
Athens	2600.00	1800.00	300.00	500.00	
Charlottetown	4090.00	2690.00	900.00	500.00	
Cornwall	4374.00	3040.00	834.00	500.00	
Halifax	7470.00	5770.00	1200.00	500.00	
Kemptville	6740.00	5640.00	600.00	500.00	
Pembroke, Zion	4100.00	3000.00	600.00	500.00	
Renfrew	2266.00	2083.00	100.00	83.00	
Truro	3170.00	1455.00	450.00	250.00	1015.00
Florida					
Miami	950.85	481.75	289.10	180.00	
Orlando	4660.00	3560.00	600.00	500.00	
Pinellas Park	2250.00	1750.00		500.00	
Grand Rapids East					
Grace					
Lowell	2730.00	2280.00	450.00		
Madison Square	5050.00	3950.00	600.00	500.00	
Middleville	4440.00	3040.00	900.00	500.00	
Portland	6253.83	4408.33	575.00	500.00	770.50
Grand Rapids South					
Wayland	4300.00	2000.00	1800.00	500.00	
Grand Rapids North					
Bristolwood	5310.00	4210.00	600.00	500.00	
Cedar Springs	4360.00	3860.00		500.00	
Comstock Park	3200.00	2625.00	200.00	375.00	
Sparta (Trinity)	6233.25	4600.00	900.00	500.00	233.25
Hackensack					
Broomal (Trinity)	4090.00	2690.00	900.00	500.00	
Franklin Lakes	3119.18	1375.00	1100.00	460.00	184.18
Lodi	3290.00	2690.00	600.00		
Madison Ave. Patterson	5050.00	3950.00	600.00	500.00	
Monsey	3275.08	2833.33	212.50	229.25	
Patterson Community	12774.00	10274.00	1650.00	850.00	
Queens, Jamaica, N.Y.	6650.00	5250.00	900.00	500.00	
Terra Ceia	4560.00	3460.00	600.00	500.00	

Classis	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Car Allowance	Moving
Hamilton					
Simcoe					
Holland					
St. Joseph	\$2328.32	\$ 995.82	\$ 500.00	\$210.00	\$622.50
Hudson					
Binghamton	2650.00	1650.00	750.00	250.00	
Framingham	5740.00	4340.00	900.00	500.00	
Manhattan					
North Haledon	3050.00	1350.00	1200.00	500.00	
Paramus	6740.00	5640.00	600.00	500.00	
Silver Springs	4100.00	2140.00	1460.00	500.00	
Huron					
Blyth	1930.00	830.00	600.00	500.00	
Collingwood	6005.50	3620.50	1375.00	460.00	550.00
Orangeville	1395.00	545.00	600.00	250.00	
Stratford	4204.50	2129.50	1575.00	500.00	
Illiana					
Beacon Light, Gary	2879.35	2088.60	290.75	500.00	
Crown Point	4400.00	3300.00	600.00	500.00	
Indianapolis	4920.00	3820.00	600.00	500.00	
Kalamazoo					
Decatur	4600.00	3500.00	600.00	500.00	
Eastern Hills	6100.00	4700.00	900.00	500.00	
Northern Heights	3338.65	1500.00	900.00	500.00	438.65
Plainwell, Calvary	5360.00	4450.00	410.00	500.00	
South Bend	4500.00	3400.00	600.00	500.00	
Lake Erie					
Akron	5610.00	4210.00	900.00	500.00	
Cherry Hill, Inkster	4802.19	3208.34	825.00	460.00	308.85
Columbus (Olentangy)	5000.00	3300.00	1200.00	500.00	
Farmington (University Hills)	7160.00	4860.00	1800.00	500.00	
Flint	4672.36	2115.00	337.50	187.50	2032.36
Jackson	5090.00	3690.00	900.00	500.00	
Lambertville (Toledo)	7721.50	6209.00	662.50	850.00	
Maple Heights	6130.00	4730.00	900.00	500.00	
Roseville	5350.00	4250.00	600.00	500.00	
Saginaw	328.35	253.35	75.00		
Troy	2970.00	1870.00	600.00	500.00	
Minnesota North					
Bejou	500.00			500.00	
Bloomington (Calvary)	3400.00	2000.00	900.00	500.00	
Brandon	4682.80	2475.00	1125.00	375.00	707.80
Broton	3967.00	3000.00	300.00	500.00	167.00
Emo	4243.00	2200.00	750.00	335.00	958.00
Hancock	5228.00	3336.00	262.00	437.00	1193.00
Ogilvie	2987.50	1792.50	225.00	375.00	595.00
Port Arthur (Thunder Bay)	1911.07	966.66	666.66	277.75	

Classis	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Car Allowance	Moving
Minnesota South					
Bigelow	\$5700.00	\$4300.00	\$ 900.00	\$500.00	
Lodgepole-Holland Center	\$6780.00	5380.00	900.00	500.00	
Mt. Lake	6600.00	5500.00	600.00	500.00	
Holland	1550.00	1550.00			
Hull, N.D.	3800.00	3000.00	300.00	500.00	
Muskegon					
Fruitport	4336.00	3536.00	900.00	500.00	
Grace	5090.00	3690.00	900.00	500.00	
Green Ridge	7860.00	6160.00	1200.00	500.00	
North Central Iowa					
Ackley	5650.00	4250.00	900.00	500.00	
Britt	7280.00	6030.00	750.00	500.00	
Cedar Falls	5570.00	4470.00	600.00	500.00	
Holland	2000.00	1500.00		500.00	
Iowa Falls	5463.33	4455.00	550.00	458.33	
Orange City					
Hartley	6440.00	5640.00	300.00	500.00	
Haywarden					
Hope, Hull	4040.00	3040.00	500.00	500.00	
LeMars	3360.00	2560.00	300.00	500.00	
Omaha (Prairie Lane)	3539.00	2625.00	75.00	125.00	\$714.00
Sioux City	1489.50	1436.00		53.50	
Pacific Northwest					
Bellingham	1684.50	561.50	722.00	401.00	
Lynwood	6260.20	4860.20	900.00	500.00	
Mt. View	2728.00	1890.00	368.00	470.00	
Seattle, Calvary	5220.00	3820.00	900.00	500.00	
Pella					
Tracy	6241.65	4758.00	778.50	435.00	270.15
Quinte					
Lindsay	2700.00	1000.00	1200.00	500.00	
Rocky Mountain					
Ridgeview Hills	3350.00	1350.00	1500.00	500.00	
Albuquerque	5465.50	4398.00	362.50	705.00	
Denver, Trinity	1970.00	570.00	900.00	500.00	
Fairview	5200.00	2900.00	1800.00	500.00	
Salt Lake City; First	4270.00	3170.00	600.00	500.00	
Tucson, Bethel	3075.00	2500.00	75.00	500.00	

Classis	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Car Allowance	Moving
Sioux Center					
Freeman, S. D.	\$6232.50	\$ 4350.00	\$ 815.00	\$455.00	\$ 612.50
Harrison	1650.00	916.67	275.00	458.33	
Valentine	7300.00	6500.00	300.00	500.00	
Toronto					
Thistleton Fellowship	1485.00	685.00	300.00	500.00	
Wisconsin					
Wisconsin Rapids	4198.67	3166.67		396.00	636.00
Zeeland					
Forest Grove	3135.00	2260.00	375.00	500.00	
TOTALS	\$608553.18	\$438235.27	\$92384.26	\$60725.86	\$17207.79

Schedule C

1975 Quota Payments

Families	Classis	1975 Quota	Payment as of January 31, 1976	Percentage of Quota
1617	Alberta N.	\$21,829.50	\$19,886.98	91%
1026	Alberta S.	13,851.00	9,783.60	71%
2062	Brit. Columbia	27,837.00	23,765.68	85%
653	Cadillac	8,815.50	8,927.05	101%
2207	Calif. S.	29,794.50	19,039.29	64%
1185	Calif. Cent.	15,997.50	16,092.63	101%
2201	Chatham	29,713.50	28,770.92	97%
1353	Chicago N.	18,265.50	17,851.50	98%
1362	Chicago S.	18,387.00	16,608.28	90%
814	Columbia	10,989.00	9,084.56	83%
1007	E. Canada	13,594.50	12,636.03	93%
529	Florida	7,141.50	6,653.30	93%
3804	G.R. East	51,354.00	50,430.65	98%
2079	G.R. North	28,066.50	27,550.13	98%
2522	G.R. South	34,047.00	34,780.06	102%
3199	Grandville	43,186.50	43,678.43	101%
1065	Hackensack	14,377.50	14,091.08	98%
2530	Hamilton	34,155.00	19,235.54	56%
2920	Holland	39,420.00	39,860.03	101%
1916	Hudson	25,866.00	25,567.00	99%
1294	Huron	17,469.00		0%
2383	Illiana	32,170.50	32,245.35	100%
1782	Kalamazoo	24,057.00	24,014.67	100%
1166	Lake Erie	15,741.00	15,593.50	99%
1717	Minn. North	23,179.50	16,856.61	73%
1092	Minn. South	14,742.00	14,226.37	96%
1904	Muskegon	25,704.00	24,591.65	100%
763	N. C. Iowa	10,300.50	9,708.19	94%
1502	Orange City	20,277.00	19,527.81	96%
1785	Pacific N. W.	24,097.50	19,699.36	82%
1661	Pella	22,423.50	22,140.85	99%
1369	Quinte	18,481.50	7,434.26	40%
1579	Rocky Mt.	21,316.50	25,013.33	117%
1652	Sioux Center	22,302.00	21,273.99	95%
1898	Toronto	25,623.00	23,620.18	92%
1240	Wisconsin	16,740.00	16,739.99	100%
2807	Zeeland	<u>37,894.50</u>	<u>37,894.60</u>	<u>100%</u>
		\$859,207.50	\$774,873.25	90%

REPORT 13

HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

Your Historical Committee continues to work with pleasure and with benefit to the church we love. For some time we have missed in our committee the participation of Dr. Henry Ippel who is pursuing work in England. We find helpful advice from Dr. Herbert J. Brinks, archivist, and from E. R. Post, field agent.

Our committee was instituted by Synod of 1934 with the mandate "to gather and preserve books and documents of historical value pertaining to the history of our church and the church from which we originated and to religion in general." Since that mandate was given us, we have concerned ourselves rather consistently with advancing that task. In some respects, however, we have come to understand the mandate a little more broadly or extensively than was true at first. Allow us to review the various categories into which materials are placed at present.

MICROFILMING of minutes of consistories, classes, denominational boards and agencies, educational institutions, and the like, continues as a main area of activity. Our computations now indicate that 84% of our churches have complied with synod's hearty recommendation of this means of preserving records. Mr. Post, our field agent, continues to pursue the goal of complete co-operation, and will be traveling to more distant classes' meetings, since this is still the single most effective and fruitful source of materials. Our committee is sincerely appreciative of his yeoman service, and senses that, while his strength appears not to be abating, he will need a replacement in time. Your committee welcomes the suggestion of names of individuals who might have the ability and inclination to serve the church in this capacity.

Synod will be happy to learn of the great many hours of time voluntarily contributed by Mr. David Van Vliet, like Mr. Post, a retired school principal. He has been filing and cataloging materials obtained so as to make them available and useful for research purposes according to the carefully supervised guidelines that are in effect. With reference to the microfilming project, your committee seeks once more the endorsement of synod as we strive to complete this aspect of the work.

However, there are additional collections in various stages of progress, and we draw those to your attention.

VERTICAL FILES are set up to receive biographical materials, congregational histories, and information relative to our mission fields, our many organizations on the denominational and local level, and our varied institutions.

PHOTO FILE is a depository for photos reflecting our history in more graphic form. We have been giving much time and attention to ways by which this collection can be caused to grow, and have sought the co-operation of our constituency more directly, informing them of our

desires, goals, and needs through an article in *The Banner*. If this method proves to be productive, we will, likely, do more of it.

PERSONAL PAPERS in the way of scrapbooks and diaries are housed in another collection, to which items are added from time to time.

RECORDS like congregational membership books with names and dates, plus genealogies as these become available, find place in a collection.

CALVIN COLLEGE & SEMINARY materials, especially minutes, reports, publications, and presidential papers have definite historical value, and, while not in all instances so extensive as to demand a separate library for each, these do deserve a prominent place in our ever-growing library.

SYNODICAL RECORDS, especially such as reflect our earlier history, are also being lodged in a collection in the Colonial Origins department.

VARIA (What else?) is a final catch-all category and department, in which can be preserved memoirs, correspondence, and related memorabilia. And that completes our review or resumé reflecting the scope and breadth of activities in which the staff continues to labor through the year.

As must be expected, anticipated expenditures occasioned in connection with the acquisition and cataloging of materials for the benefit of researchers remains the area of greatest need. A growing number of individuals is making use of the materials acquired. To mention just two, we note the work of Dr. Henry Zwaanstra and his history of Calvin Theological Seminary, and Dr. Gordon Spykman, who is preparing for publication a book of sermons by Dr. Albertus C. Van Raalte. We are certain synod will want to encourage the amassing of historically significant materials for the use of future researches and scholars.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We respectfully request that:

1. synod approve of the work of the committee and encourage the churches at large to provide desirable materials, either as donations or on loan for a time.
2. synod recognize with appreciation the great amount of work being performed by Mr. E. R. Post, field agent, and Mr. David Van Vliet, who puts acquired materials into usable form according to prescribed methods.
3. synod again allocate \$10,000.00 to defray costs incurred in connection with the acquisition, administration, preservation, and cataloging of materials in the denominational archives, and to help subsidize the continued acquisition and preservation of historic materials so important to us as bits of our denominational heritage.

Historical Committee

L. Oostendorp, chairman

J. Leugs, secretary

H. Zwaanstra

H. Ippel

REPORT 14

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Your committee has met regularly each month since the meeting of synod, except in August. With the retirement of Dr. John H. Bratt from committee membership, Dr. John H. Kromminga was elected as president, with Tymen E. Hofman being reelected as secretary. The committee has had a very busy year again, with a large amount of involvement and concern in matters of interchurch relations. To facilitate the work, the various areas of responsibility have been set forth with the members of the committee being given special responsibilities in each area. The division of labor and assignment is as follows:

1. Dutch churches and their Canadian counterparts: Gerard Bouma and Jacob Kuntz.
2. RES and South African churches: Jacob D. Eppinga and John H. Stek.
3. NAPaRC and special attention to OPC & PCA: Wm. P. Brink and Albert Bel.
4. WARC, NAE, Reformed Church in America: John H. Kromminga and Nelson Vanderzee.

Concerns and relationships not included in the above will be assigned when they present themselves or will be dealt with directly.

A. *Fraternal Delegates*

1. John H. Bratt and Albert Bel served as our fraternal delegates to the concurrent meetings of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church (Evangelical Synod) which were held from May 29 to June 6 at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Their reports are on file.
2. John H. Bratt represented the CRC at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, meeting in Jackson, Mississippi in September. Report on file.
3. Nelson Vanderzee again represented the CRC at the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, held the week of June 9 in Chicago. Report on file.
4. Dr. P. Y. De Jong represented the CRC at the synodical meeting of the Reformed Church in the United States (Eureka Classis) meeting on May 19-22 in Lincoln Valley, ND. Report on file.
5. Gerard Bouma, Jacob D. Eppinga, Tymen E. Hofman and John H. Kromminga represented the CRC at the General Synod of Maastricht of the Gereformeerde Kerken at its September 23-26 session. Dr. Kromminga was the leader of the delegation; the address he delivered was drawn up by the delegation under the guidance of the IRC and with its concurrence. The address was published in *De Wachter* and a report on the delegation was printed in *The Banner*.

An extensive report of the work of the delegation is on file and has been inscribed into the minutes of the IRC. Aspects of the report will appear in this report in connection with the Dutch churches.

6. John H. Kromminga represented the CRC as a delegated observer at the Nairobi meeting of the WCC in November-December 1975. His report is on file and will be sent to the delegates to synod.

B. *Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

1. The decision to terminate the relationship of "Sister Church" in favor of a similar but broader and less intimate relationship of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" was communicated to all former sister churches and it is becoming evident that several will not be giving us formal responses. We conclude from this that the churches in question have accepted the change with little or no problem and that we can assume the essential relationship that formerly existed will continue to exist. This involves in the main, very distant churches with whom we have little contact at the interchurch level. Some of these churches are very actively related to the Board of Foreign Missions and the change in formal relationship has had no effect upon the cooperation and fellowship. Your committee is not minded to insist on a formal response to our letter.

The following are churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC:

- a. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland
 - b. Die Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid Afrika
 - c. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand
 - d. The Reformed Churches of Australia
 - e. The Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil (Igreja Evangelica Reformada no Brasil)
 - f. The Reformed Church of Argentina (Eglesias Reformadas de la Argentina)
 - g. The Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka (Ceylon)
 - h. The Benue Church of Christ in Sudan (EKAS)
 - i. The Church of Christ in the Sudan Among the Tiv (NKST)
 - j. The Reformed Church in Japan
 - k. The Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia)
 - l. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church
 - m. The Presbyterian Church in America
2. It will be recalled that the Reformed Churches of New Zealand informed the Synod of 1975 of their serious objections to the change in relationship. The answer of the synod was communicated to the RCNZ by the Stated Clerk (synod having endorsed the reply of the IRC) and we have not had further response from the RCNZ.
3. Since the meeting of the last synod, a similar protest addressed to synod has been received by the office of the Stated Clerk from the deputies of the Gereformeerde Kerke van Suid Afrika. Your committee has made an initial response to the deputies in view of the fact that their synod was meeting in January and would benefit from an early response along the same line as that sent to the RCNZ. The letter and response of the committee is being sent to the delegates

to synod. It should be noted that the synod of the GKSA will have had ample time to inform us of its actions in this matter by the time synod meets.

4. We are continuing to work with churches which were formerly listed as "correspondence churches" with a view to their entering the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. The Reformed Church in the United States (Eureka Classis) has, at its synod, rejected the recommendation of its interchurch relations committee to enter the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC. Since this was a negative vote on a positive recommendation there is no indication as to the reason for this action. Efforts with respect to other churches will be set forth when those churches are dealt with more specifically in this report.

5. The delegates to synod are reminded that the Synod of 1975 decided to invite two fraternal delegates from each church in ecclesiastical fellowship for the entire meeting of synod, with the privilege of the floor and access to the meetings of the advisory committees with the permission of the chairman of the committee. In addition synod approved membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council, which involves the presence of two fraternal delegates at the major assemblies of the churches from each member church in NAPA RC. These delegates will have the "privilege of the floor" but no right to visit advisory committees. A third category of fraternal delegate is that from a church that is not in the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship but has been invited to send a fraternal delegate for purposes of observation and bringing a fraternal greeting.

In order to establish policy, *your committee recommends* that the Stated Clerk of Synod be mandated to invite those churches which are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC and those which are in NAPA RC to send fraternal delegates to the annual meetings of synod, while the IRC be mandated to invite fraternal delegates from other churches with which it is working, such delegates to be presented to synod by its Reception Committee for the purpose of extending the greetings of their church.

C. *The Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands*

While the committee has no specific mandate with respect to the GKN (as it once did) it maintains a close relationship with a hearty interest in and a deep concern for the GKN. This is evidenced by the fact that the committee sent a delegation of four of its members to the Netherlands for two weeks of intensive and extensive involvement. While the delegation was commissioned to meet with representatives of four churches, the primary focus of its visit was on the GKN. The delegation was able to meet with the interchurch deputies of the GKN at the beginning of its visit as well as with several leading personages in informal settings. This, in addition to the extensive discussions with Prof. Herman Ridderbos in preparation for the visit, gave the delegation a good introduction to the problems faced by the synod of GKN. A final meeting

with the deputies after the synodical session concluded the work of the delegation overagainst the GKN.

The problems of the GKN are well known and are difficult to solve. In the face of obvious deviation from the confession and forthright attacks on the authority of the confession, the synod has taken positions which uphold both the authority and the teaching of the confession, rejecting the error involved. However, it has hesitated and even vacillated in the matter of applying discipline to those who are in error and have, to this time, refused to heed the admonition of the synod. Living close to and intimately with the schism in its ranks in 1944 (the Schilder controversy) the GKN has become inordinately fearful, on the one hand, of schism and the loss of the younger members of the church who are largely sympathetic to a freer and more open stance to doctrine and life such as advocated by some of its leaders. On the other hand it has evidenced little fear of the danger of further schism on the part of those who are disturbed by such trends. It is the conviction of your committee that the deep concern for preserving the unity of the church in the structural sense is taking undue priority over the urgent calling to preserve the church in the unity of truth.

The concern of the IRC and that of the CRC was expressed to the synod of the GKN in a kindly but firm manner. A key passage from the address of the delegation reads as follows:

“By means of the press and also in the light of personal contacts we have come to understand that you have found ‘another way of dealing with each other’ in the matter of doctrinal deviation from the Confessions than was the case in the recent past. In all frankness we must say that we believe such ‘another way of dealing with each other’ is fraught with grave danger for the welfare of the church. We recognize that it is possible that the circumstances of our times call for a different way of dealing with each other than was the case a few decades ago, but we are of the steadfast conviction that any such change is valid only if it moves forward resolutely toward either the correction of error or the application of discipline. Therefore we ask you: Has not the time come for healing action of discipline - applied to be sure, with due consideration and patience, but applied firmly for sake of integrity of the church? You will forgive us if we seem to grow impatient. We assure you that any impatience that may live in us does not spring from thoughtless insensitivity to the problems you face. It rises only from a sincere concern for the church of Jesus Christ, and especially for you our brothers and sisters in the Reformed faith.”

The address of the delegation was well received by the synod and its members. There were many expressions of appreciation for the spirit and the content of the message as well as for the presence of a sizeable delegation for an entire “sitting” of the synod. There was time and opportunity for developing a vital fellowship in the context of which the delegation was able to contribute very freely to the ongoing discussion, both on the personal level and in the meeting of the synod’s committee on confessional matters. The delegation was keenly aware

of a deep reservoir of common faith and commitment, like that which would be experienced at one of our own synods. It was also aware of the presence of the challenge and threat to that faith.

It is difficult to assess what might be the results and the ultimate impact of the efforts of the committee and its delegation. If the GKN is able to come to a faithful resolution of its problems it may be in part because of the concern of the CRC; if it does not it will not be because we have ignored or neglected our calling to those with whom we are one in the faith. In addition it must be said that thousands "of the rank and file" members of the GKN and others of Reformed conviction are deeply appreciative of the concern and efforts of the CRC. The visit and the address of the delegation was given excellent coverage in the national as well as the more local press. We firmly believe that this more intense effort in relating to the GKN is most important and ought to be continued if at all possible.

The committee wishes to acknowledge a debt of deep gratitude to Dr. Herman Ridderbos who was a "host" to our delegation for much of the two weeks it spent in the Netherlands. He gave unstintingly of his time and his presence as well as opening up his home and providing an intimate family fellowship. The hospitality of the synod of the GKN and its deputies was also most delightful and fully appreciated.

D. The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands

The CGKN is a denomination with which the CRC has been in correspondence for many years. It has been designated as a church with which the CRC ought to be in ecclesiastical fellowship and it was the desire of the committee to promote this relationship through the visit of the Netherlands delegation of the committee. We hereby reproduce the report of the delegation with respect to the CGKN.

"Meeting with the Deputies of the CGKN

The deputation met with the full membership of the deputies of the CGKN on Monday, September 29 in Apeldoorn. Only one member of its eleven member committee was absent. Prof. J. Van Genderen is the president and Ds. J. H. Velema is the general secretary and Prof. J. P. Versteeg the secretary for 'buitenlands.' We introduced our concern for establishing the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship and offered to discuss fully the concept and the relationship. This included a full explanation of the factors leading the CRC to make this change in interchurch relations.

"It should be noted that the history of very unsatisfactory communications between the committees was not a factor in the discussions and the preparatory work of John Stek can be credited for the fine atmosphere of the meeting.

"1. Reactions

"The deputies responded quite favorably to the general thrust of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, and the remark of the general secretary that he saw possibilities in the new relationship which had not existed previously seemed to fall in favor with the members. This was particularly so when it was explained that the relationship need

not commit both parties to exactly the same involvement with each other, and that the degree of relationship could be defined in relation to the six categories of involvement.

"Problem areas were identified. The matter of access to their pulpits on the part of CRC ministers might meet resistance in view of their general feeling that in the CRC the assumption of 'veronderstelde wedergeboorte' are still a factor in preaching and the sermons of the CRC are lacking in the 'bevindelijkheid' or intimately personally-experimental dimension. This seemed to be a large problem with some of the deputies.

"In addition, the presence of the Free Reformed Churches of North America, their close sister church, in the orbit of the CRC, constitutes the largest impediment to their relationship with the CRC. It is this factor which has made progress impossible in the past and it is here that the new relationship has some new possibilities. But it was made clear to us that any progress in our relationship would be contingent upon our taking up discussions with the Free Reformed Churches.

"2. *Conclusions*

While contending earnestly that 'presumptive regeneration' is not a significant factor in the preaching or the belief of the CRC and its minister, we believe that the fears of the CGKN will be dismissed only when experience with us leads them to this same conclusion. We clearly set forth the belief of the CRC that preaching must call those baptized to repentance and faith and conversion of life.

"Further we recognized and acknowledged the problem with respect to the Free Reformed Churches and made commitment to the deputies that we would take up a contact with those churches with a view to establishing the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, requesting the deputies to inform the Free Reformed Churches of this discussion and of our willingness to take up contact with them."

The committee awaits the recommendations of the deputies of the CGKN and the decisions of its synod.

E. The Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands (Vrijgemaakt)

Our Netherlands delegation also met with the representatives of the GKN-V which included members of the "moderamen" of its synod, then in session. Our delegation expressed the desire and hope of the CRC to be able to resolve the longstanding stalemate between our churches and to make progress in establishing the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship. The import of the relationship and the reasons for making the change from the "sister church relationship" were set forth.

Summarizing briefly, the GKN-V representatives informed us that they and their people were very thankful for the message of the CRC to the GKN spoken by our delegation, but having spoken so clearly the CRC ought to act in harmony with our message and sever its relationship with the GKN. They also expressed their hurt at having been neglected by the CRC for over twenty years while they struggled for the truth while the CRC has been concerned about a wayward church like the GKN

(always identified as "synodaal"). In addition, the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship is an unacceptable category for their church which has only one category, that of "correspondence church" in the sense of near identity in all confessional and church order matters.

We have not been informed of the official action of the synod.

F. *The Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerken*

Our delegation was also instructed to take up whatever contact it could with a group of about one hundred congregations formerly associated with the GKN-V but who are now "buitenverband," that is, free from any synod relationship. They are related in congregationalist fashion. They fear the power of synods; their ministers have, in some cases, been deposed a second time in the course of their ministry. The occasion for disciplinary action by the GKN-V was the effort on the part of such ministers to engage in reunion discussions with the GKN in about 1967.

Into this situation of brokenness and fear, your committee is concerned to work for oneness, hope and love. Our delegation could meet with no official representatives for none exist. It did meet with Professor C. Veenhof, now retired, who was very sympathetic to our concerns though he could only speak informally. He believes that there would be desire on the part of the churches to relate to the CRC on a yet-to-be-determined basis and that this should be explored through contact with the Kampen church. A letter has been sent to the Kampen churches. At this time we have nothing further to report.

G. *The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council*

1. The Synod of 1975 authorized involvement on the part of the CRC in the formal organization of NAPaRC. The proposed constitution was approved at that time. The five churches therein named each designated four delegates to the first meeting of the council in October 31-November 1 at Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania. Synod mandated the IRC to name the delegates of the CRC to this organizational meeting of NAPaRC; John H. Bratt, Albert Bel, John H. Kromminga and William P. Brink served as our delegates, with Nelson Vanderzee as an official observer. Delegates were also present from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES); Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA), with observers from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) and the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS).

The minutes of this meeting will be made available to all the delegates to synod. *Your committee recommends* that a copy be sent to each consistory.

While it will take some time to determine the full range of the concerns and activities of NAPaRC a few aspects thereof are becoming evident.

a. The council will engage in the study of matters of mutual concern. It will do this by

- (1) assembling a listing of all matters which have already been studied by the member churches and which can be shared;
- (2) listing those matters of mutual concern where studies are being carried on at present;
- (3) listing those matters which are of mutual concern and are in need of study, with the possibility of council study.

For initial listings, see the Minutes of the Council, page 5.

b. The council has begun to list areas of interchurch cooperation and is taking the initiative in promoting such cooperation. It has set forth specific areas of present cooperation between member churches and it has listed several areas that should be considered for cooperative effort. These can be found in the minutes of the council (page 5).

To give content to this concern, the council has arranged for the calling together of representatives of all denominational agencies (missions and education) for consultation and the exploration of areas of cooperation. While the minutes of NAPaRC indicate that the IRC of the CRC has been asked to call this meeting, we have been informed that this is in error and that the OPC has been given this assignment.

We recommend that synod strongly urge the boards and agencies which have been invited to meet under NAPaRC auspices to participate in such a meeting and to cooperate as fully as possible in any joint efforts that are judged feasible on the part of those assemblies.

Grounds:

- (1) We believe such cooperation to be one of the basic reasons for membership in NAPaRC.
 - (2) NAPaRC has requested that the delegates of its member churches seek the endorsement of this meeting by their major assemblies.
2. It should be noted that the council passed the following resolutions:
- a. "That NAPaRC call for a prolonged Concert of Prayer on the part of the council's member churches, and especially the elders of those churches, to beseech the Lord God for a great outpouring of the Word of God that many people in North America and throughout the world would be converted and savingly brought into the kingdom of God; that the church of the Lord Jesus Christ would be revived, strengthened and edified; that God would be glorified by a magnificent display of his sovereign grace, so that many people of all nations of the earth would sincerely acknowledge and worship the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and God, as the only Savior of sinners, as the Ruler of the kings of the earth and as King of kings and Lord of lords" (Minutes, pp. 8, 9).

We recommend that this resolution be received as information and referred to the churches for their consideration and action.

b. In connection with the National Presbyterian and Reformed Fellowship and its expressed intention to organize and hold a North American Congress as a witness to the Reformed faith and life, the

council decided as follows: "That the council express its appreciation for the initiative of the NPRF in conceiving of a congress as a witness of the Reformed faith to the world and suggest to the NPRF that it make specific plans for the congress and report them to the Interchurch Relations Committees of the NAPaRC churches for their support and inclusion in their reports to their synods/general assemblies."

We recommend that synod endorse in principle a congress for North America in which the witness of the Reformed faith and life would be set forth, and authorize the Interchurch Relations Committee to cooperate in the setting up of such a congress as it may have opportunity to be involved, with the clear understanding that the IRC will exercise its critical judgment and evaluation with respect to our involvement in the congress.

Grounds:

(1) A North American Congress to witness to the Reformed faith and life could be a very significant event and should be as broadly based and supported as is possible.

(2) Since it is not yet possible to fully evaluate the proposed congress, it would be well that synod provide for such evaluation on the part of the IRC.

c. Delegation to NAPaRC

The Synod of 1975 mandated the IRC to name the four persons who should represent the CRC as its delegates to the constituting assembly of NAPaRC. The committee named three of its members and its former president who had been deeply involved in the work of organizing the council. But the mandate was a limited one. The question arises as to who shall name the delegates for this annual meeting.

From its inception the nature of NAPaRC has been a meeting of the churches through their interchurch relations committees. The matters under discussion always have a basic interchurch orientation and concern. Therefore it is quite natural that the council should be essentially a meeting of interchurch relations committee representatives. However, this has not been formally decided either by NAPaRC or by synod.

We recommend that synod mandate the IRC to continue to name the delegates of the CRC to the meetings of NAPaRC.

Grounds:

(1) The nature of the work is basically interchurch in character.

(2) This is consistent with the practice of the other churches in the council.

(3) This will provide the kind of continuity which is necessary to promote the unity of the churches.

3. NAPaRC Churches and "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship"

It should be noted that of the churches holding membership in NAPaRC, the OPC and the PCA are related to the CRC as churches in ecclesiastical fellowship; the RPCES and RPCNA (and the "observer" ARPC) are not so related. While the committee has had close

relations with the interchurch committee of the OPC in the past few years, our relationship in the council has taken up such a large amount of our effort that no meetings have been held between our respective committees. The same is true of the PCA. It is altogether likely that this may be the general pattern for the future though such meetings are surely not ruled out if there should be occasion to hold them. This would be particularly true with respect to efforts toward church union, an item which is also a very living reality between other member churches of the council. If one were to ask, what then is the difference between our relationship to the OPC and the PCA in distinction with the other churches, the answer would lie in the area of the role of fraternal delegates at the synodical level, always bearing in mind the possibilities for close cooperation when matters of mutual concern might surface.

The delegates will understand therefore that we have no special report on our relations to the OPC and the PCA.

4. Concurrent Meetings of the Assemblies of NAPaRC Churches

In the light of the blessings experienced by three NAPaRC churches on the occasion of a concurrent meeting of their major assemblies, it was suggested that all the churches should meet concurrently at some future date. It was suggested that the logical place for such a meeting would be in Grand Rapids at Calvin College and Seminary. From informal discussions that have been held with representatives to NAPaRC, the committee has been urged to recommend to synod that the CRC be the church to invite the other churches to such a concurrent meeting of major assemblies. Your committee has investigated the matter of facilities and we have been assured that Calvin College and Seminary could furnish facilities for the five meetings at one time. Assuming that the date for the meeting will be the same as that which is established for the meeting of our synod, we believe that there are no obstacles to our endorsing this concept and many blessings that could come forth from it.

Therefore, we recommend that synod invite the NAPaRC churches to hold their major assemblies on the premises of Calvin College and Seminary in June 1978.

Grounds:

- a. Representatives of the churches involved have urged this action.
- b. The facilities have been judged to be adequate by officials of Calvin College.
- c. The churches of NAPaRC stand to gain greatly in mutual understanding and appreciation through the fellowship hereby made possible.
- d. It would make possible some joint, public activities in which our unity in Christ would be set forth and strengthened.

H. *The Reformed Church in America*

1. There is not much to report in the way of official action between the committee and the Committee on Christian Unity of the RCA. We are working with the committee on the offer of the CRC to enter

into the relationship of churches in ecclesiastical fellowship in a formal sense. It is the conviction of your committee that the essence of this relationship has been exercised for the past five or more years but the formalization of it has not taken place. In view of the fact that the RCA has not worked with such a clearly formalized relationship, it has become necessary to enter into somewhat fuller discussion with its committee to ensure mutual understanding of what is involved. We believe that the February meeting of their committee will have been able to make a recommendation to the next synod of the RCA. If this is so, and the recommendation is positive, the way will be clear for the synod of the CRC to consider formal ratification of the relationship.

Therefore, we recommend that, contingent upon an affirmative action on the part of the general synod of the RCA endorsing a fraternal relationship which in essence corresponds to that of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship," synod recognize the Reformed Church in America as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC.

Grounds:

a. The fraternal relationship between our churches is of long standing.

b. All of the essential elements which are involved in the relationship of "Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" have been operative for some time in the relationship between our churches, having been established by ad hoc decisions on the part of several synods. These include

- exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies
- occasional pulpit fellowship (by local option)
- intercommunion (regulated by each consistory)
- joint action in areas of common responsibility
- communication on major issues of joint concern
- the exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting the fundamentals of Christian unity.

2. There has been considerable local activity in various areas including a conference initiated by the classes of the two churches in the Grand Rapids area. It should also be noted that a "joint issue" of *The Banner* and *The Church Herald* was published at the time of the "denomination-wide pulpit exchange" which coincided with Reformation Day Sunday, 1975.

We recommend that the IRC be authorized to continue to encourage pulpit fellowship with the RCA on a Sunday near Reformation Day, for a period of three years.

I. *The Reformed Ecumenical Synod*

1. The RES will be held in South Africa from August 9-20, this year. Delegated by the Synod of 1975 are Dr. Fred Klooster, the Rev. Jacob Eppinga, and Dr. William Spoelhof (with John Stek, Tymen E. Hofman and Albert Bel as respective alternates) as voting delegates, along with the Rev. Juan Boonstra and Dr. Eugene Rubingh and the person designated by the Board of Home Missions to attend the RES Mission Conference as non-voting delegates. The Board of Home Missions has

decided to send the Rev. John Van Ryn to the mission conference; he is, therefore, the third non-voting delegate.

2. Overture with respect to RES Delegate Recommendations (Overture 8, 1975)

a. The Synod of 1975 referred an overture sent to it by Classis Chicago South to the IRC for study and advice to the Synod of 1976. It was Overture 8, entitled *Study Committee on RES Recommendations*. The mandate of synod is as follows:

"That synod refer the concerns of this overture to the Interchurch Relations Committee for advice to the Synod of 1976.

"*Ground*: The peculiar relationship of the CRC to other churches within the fellowship of the RES and other ecumenical organizations, in distinction from the relationship of the synod of the CRC to the classes and consistories within the CRC, may be such that restrictions appropriate within the internal structure of the CRC may be inappropriate for ecumenical relationships, or too confining for the most fruitful pursuit of ecumenical responsibilities" (Acts of Synod, 1975, page 116).

The overture reads as follows:

Overture 8 — Study Committees on RES Recommendations

At the Synod of 1970, a committee was appointed to study "Women in Ecclesiastical Office" at the recommendation of the delegates of the Christian Reformed Church to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1968. The mandate of this study committee reads as follows: "That synod appoint a committee 'to examine in the light of Scripture the general Reformed practice of excluding women from the various ordained offices in the church.'

Grounds:

1. The views and practices of members of the RES differ markedly on these matters.

2. The CRC should play a responsible role in the consideration of the issues within the RES.

3. An official stand by our church in the light of recent developments will serve as a directive for our delegates to future RES meetings."

By this action of the Synod of 1970 a question is raised concerning the procedures by which study committees are appointed by our synod at the request of the delegates to the RES. The question simply put is this: Do the rules which apply to overtures from classes, consistories, and individuals also apply to these recommendations? In this case it would appear this is not so, for the mandate given to the committee is so formulated as to cause the onus of proof to rest upon the defenders of the present position instead of upon those who propose a change.

Therefore, in order to clarify procedures, Classis Chicago South overtures synod to declare that, whenever the delegates of the RES recommend a study of matters concerning which our synod has already made a decision, such study shall be entered into only if the following conditions have been met:

1. it relates to matters which are of concern in the world-wide Reformed community, and

2. it cannot be solved at the denominational level, and

3. sufficient and new grounds are presented.

Ground: Such criteria are necessary to bring these requests into conformity with Articles 29 and 31 of the Church Order.

Classis Chicago South

Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

b. *Analysis:*

It should be pointed out that the overture refers specifically to situations where "the delegates of the RES recommend a study of matters concerning which our synod has already made a decision," which limits the scope of the concern of the overture. Specifically, it does not deal with those items in which the RES itself requests the synod for study, nor does it deal with items in which the church has not made a "decision." Therefore, the title given to the overture is somewhat misleading; it does not concern "RES Recommendations." This is also clear from a study of the illustration in the overture. The decision to study the question of women in ecclesiastical office was taken by the Synod of 1970 on the recommendation of the delegates to the RES of 1968; there was no request on the part of the RES for study at this point.

If it should be contended that the underlying intent of the overture is to deal also with a request coming from the RES, we would counter by saying that this should have been set forth in the overture and is at this point an assumption. In addition, if such an assumption is the right one, the nature of the problem is entirely different, for then it is a matter of the relationship between the RES and its member churches.

It should also be noted that the overture appeals in principle to Article 31 of the Church Order, which sets forth the procedure when there is "a request for the revision of a decision" taken by an assembly. This applies to procedure for "lower" assemblies and individuals to seek revision of decisions by the broader assemblies, not the reverse. Therefore, if one were to assume that the underlying intent of the overture is to deal also with a request coming directly from the RES, Article 31 cannot be used to govern such requests since the RES is not a "lower" assembly.

In addition, we would find it difficult to conceive of a situation where the RES would ever request the synod to revise a decision it had taken in matters of denominational concern. If such requests for revision of decision should come from persons reporting as delegates to the RES their request should undoubtedly conform to all the criteria which apply to classes and consistories and individuals. These criteria are the same for all and we see no need of establishing special criteria for delegates to the RES.

However, we are convinced that the general concern of Classis Chicago South for the proper processing of RES materials is a legitimate concern which has not been addressed by synod to this time. Even delegates to the RES are at times uncertain as to what is expected of them in the way of reporting and of recommendation. We believe the classis has rendered valuable service in bringing this to the attention of synod but its recommendations will not solve the problem.

c. *Therefore we recommend:*

- (1) That synod not accede to the overture of Classis Chicago

South requesting additional rules for determining the validity of recommendation of delegates to the RES.

Grounds:

- a) The rules governing requests for synodical action by individuals and assemblies also apply to RES delegates and are adequate.
- b) The recommendations of the classis do not really solve the problems involved in processing the reports and recommendations of RES delegates.

(2) That synod declare that the report of delegates to the RES, with their recommendations, be directed to the Interchurch Relations Committee which shall publish the report as an appendix to its report to synod and shall make recommendations to synod in the light of the report and recommendations of the delegates to the RES.

Grounds:

- a) It is proper to process the work of persons representing the Christian Reformed Church through an appropriate committee.
- b) Relations with the RES lie properly within the sphere of the IRC.
- c) This will ensure preliminary study of delegate recommendations.
- d) This will provide a procedure which will satisfy the legitimate concern of Classis Chicago South that good order be exercised in the processing of RES matters.

J. *World Alliance of Reformed Churches*

While your committee is still studying the question of membership in the WARC, the possibility of arriving at an early answer has fully eluded us. There are indications that the viability of the WARC is in some question. The 100th anniversary celebration of the organization of the Alliance, scheduled for St. Andrews, Scotland, in 1977 has been cancelled, largely due to lack of funds and the competing demand for support that comes from the World Council of Churches to many of the member churches of the WARC. In addition, the North American Area Council of the WARC had cancelled its regular January meeting with a view to saving funds for the St. Andrews meeting. So the committee has had no further direct opportunity to assess the state of affairs and has adopted a "wait and see" attitude. The NAAC will meet in September in view of the cancellation of the St. Andrews meeting. The 100th anniversary of the WARC will not go by without proper note; a special meeting of an extended executive committee will be held in St. Andrews to set forth a program for the WARC as it faces the future. We will have fraternal-observer-delegates at the NAAC meeting and hope to keep ourselves informed about developments leading up to the St. Andrews meeting.

Your committee continues to be represented on the Theological Committee of the NAAC of the WARC by Dr. Fred Klooster. In this way we continue to make a contribution to the ongoing discussion of Re-

formed theology in the "old line" churches of Reformation heritage.

K. The World Council of Churches

The WCC met in Nairobi in November of 1975 and our delegate observer, John H. Kromminga, was able to attend the whole meeting. The plan of the committee to send two observers could not be realized since we were able to obtain only one invitation. However, Dr. Peter Ipema, in the employ of the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions and residing in Nairobi, was able to attend many of the meetings and functions as a visitor and was able to contribute the kind of presence that encourages consultation and discussion with those of like spirit and allegiance. Your committee is not actively studying the question of membership in the WCC and feels no urgency to do so.

L. The National Association of Evangelicals

Your committee was represented at the February convention of the NAE held in Washington, DC by William P. Brink. His report will be placed on file when received. Again, your committee is not actively studying the question of membership in the NAE.

M. Delegation to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod

The Stated Clerk has informed us that Dr. William Spoelhof is not able to attend the August meeting of the RES and that Albert Bel, his alternate elder delegate, has been requested to attend. An alternate to Mr. Bel should be named by synod.

We recommend that synod appoint Dr. T. Greidanus of Edmonton, Alberta as alternate delegate to the RES.

N. Committee Membership

The terms of three committee members expire this year, those of Albert Bel, John H. Kromminga and Nelson Vanderzee. All are eligible for reelection but Nelson Vanderzee no longer lives within reasonable meeting distance of Grand Rapids.

We recommend:

1. That synod thank Nelson Vanderzee for his service to the committee.
2. That synod elect three members to the IRC from the following nominations:
 - a) Albert Bel and John Daling, with Albert Bel noted as the incumbent.
 - b) Leonard J. Hofman and John H. Kromminga, with John H. Kromminga also so noted.
 - c) John H. Bratt and Elco H. Oostendorp.

O. Representation at Synod

The president and secretary of the committee will be available for meeting with synod and we respectfully request that they be given the privilege of the floor and access to the advisory committee when matters pertaining to the report of this committee are being considered.

P. Summary of Items for Synodical Action

1. Committee representation at synod - Section O
2. Inviting Fraternal Delegates - Section B, 5
3. Sending out of Minutes of NAPaRC - Section G, 1
4. Boards and Agencies meeting called by NAPaRC - Section G, 1, b.
5. NAPaRC resolutions for a Concert of Prayer - Section G, 2, a.
6. NAPaRC resolution re North American Congress - Section G, 2, b.
7. Delegation to NAPaRC - Section G, 2, c.
8. Concurrent meetings of assemblies of NAPaRC churches - Section G, 4.
9. Relationship to the Reformed Church in America - Section H, 1 and H, 2.
10. Reformed Ecumenical Synod and Overture of Classis Chicago South - Section I, 2, c.
11. Alternate Delegate to the RES - Section M
12. Election of members to the IRS - Section N

Q. Items Sent to Delegates to Synod

1. Report of Observer to WCC
2. Letter of Deputies of the GKSA and Response of IRC
3. Minutes of the meeting of NAPaRC

Interchurch Relations Committee

John H. Kromminga ('76) president

Tymen E. Hofman ('77) secretary

Albert Bel ('76)

Gerard Bouma ('78)

Jacob D. Eppinga ('77)

Jacob Kuntz ('77)

John H. Stek ('78)

Nelson Vanderzee ('76)

William P. Brink, ex officio

REPORT 15

LITURGICAL COMMITTEE

The Liturgical Committee spent most of its time this past year preparing the forms which are scheduled to be considered for final adoption by this synod. The forms to be considered have been in use by several of our churches on a provisional basis for the past few years. The forms before synod this year for adoption are the following:

1. A new baptismal form for infant baptism
2. A new baptismal form for adult baptism
3. A new form for public profession of faith
4. A new translation of the "Form for the Baptism of Infants" found in the liturgical section of our Psalter Hymnal.

The preparation and presentation of these forms is partial fulfilment of the mandate given to our committee by the Synod of 1964. The mandate given is as follows:

"a. to review all our liturgical literature in the light of its history, its theological content, and the contemporary needs of the churches; and to recommend such revisions or substitutions as the results of this review might recommend.

"b. to study liturgical usages and practices in our churches in the light of Reformed liturgical principles and past synodical decisions, and to advise synod as to the guidance and supervision it ought to provide local congregations in all liturgical matters" (Acts of Synod, 1964, p. 60).

We call the attention of synod to the fact that there is a diversity of opinion among our churches in regard to our liturgical forms. Some of our congregations have expressed a strong desire to have totally new forms. Others expressed a preference for new translations of our present forms. There are also a number of congregations which are comfortable with the forms currently found in our Psalter Hymnal and see no need for change, not even for new translations of the forms. In view of this diversity of opinion and need, your committee is of the opinion that the forms we present to this synod should not replace those found in our Psalter Hymnal. As our denomination continues to grow and extend itself, it seems that the varied needs of our congregations can best be met by offering a variety of liturgical forms rather than requiring congregations of diverse backgrounds to fit into a single liturgical mold.

A brief sketch of the background and history of our work with these forms is presented before moving on to a presentation of each form.

The first report of our committee was a document presented to the Synod of 1968 in which we set forth a short history of Christian worship in general and of Reformed worship in particular. The fourth division of this report is, we believe, of special importance as we consider liturgical forms for final adoption. This section has to do with the "criteria for evaluating the liturgy." The opening paragraph reads as follows:

"In a report submitted to the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken (1965), a committee serving that church listed four motifs which ought to guide the church in any review and reform of its liturgy. We are confident that these four motifs can indeed serve as our criteria, both in judging old forms and creating new ones. They are: (1) the biblical motif; (2) the catholic motif; (3) the confessional motif; and (4) the pastoral motif. These are criteria that allow the Word of God, the history of the church, the faith of the church, and the contemporary needs of the people of God to be primary in all our judgments on the liturgy."

Your committee has worked hard to be sensitive to these four motifs in the preparation of these forms and is hopeful that the synod and the church at large will also evaluate our work along these lines. The full report from which the above quotation is taken is available to our churches in the *Psalter Hymnal Supplement*.

A new form for the baptism of children was first presented by the committee to the 1969 Synod. This synod asked the committee to solicit response from the churches to this form and report again to the Synod of 1971. A number of responses were received and the form presented to the Synod of 1971 reflected several suggestions made by the churches. Synod gave this form to the churches for provisional use for a period of three years. This synod also gave the churches provisional use of a form for the baptism of adults for a period of three years.

The Synod of 1972 considered a new form for public profession of faith presented by the Liturgical committee. Synod granted provisional use of this form for a period of three years.

In 1973, the committee presented to synod a new translation of the "Form for the Baptism of Infants." This is a translation of the form found in the liturgical section of our *Psalter Hymnal*. The Synod of 1973 granted the churches permission to use this translation on a provisional basis for a period of three years.

In 1974, the synod decided that all of these forms, the two new forms for baptism, the translation of our old form for the baptism of children, and a new form for public profession of faith, should be considered by the Synod of 1976 for final adoption. The churches were encouraged to make their responses to these forms known to the committee no later than September, 1975.

Your committee gratefully acknowledges receipt of more than 140 communications about these forms. Approximately twenty-five came from individuals with the remainder coming from consistories.

These communications were helpful to us as we prepared the forms for final adoption. A careful tabulation was made of the wide variety of comments, criticisms and suggested changes. Some communications not only criticized our work rather severely, but also stated that there was no need for new forms, not even new translations of our old ones. Most communications, however, were of a more positive nature, offering many helpful suggestions which reflected that a careful and critical analysis had been made of our work. From these we were again made aware of the diversity of opinion among our churches. Frequently

comments cancelled each other out. What some liked, others preferred not to see. But many of the changes we have made in these provisional forms reflect suggestions made to us by our churches.

In regard to the two new forms for baptism, one for children and the other for adults, we wish to call the attention of synod to a matter which was carefully considered by the committee. It has to do with a desire expressed by some that we have two distinct forms for baptism, one which sets forth the theology in support of the baptism of infants and the other which sets forth the theology underlying the baptism of adults.

It is the opinion of your committee that a move in this direction would not be in harmony with Scripture. The Bible, we believe, teaches that there is but one baptism whether it be administered to a child or to an adult. We therefore are presenting a single form for baptism which sets forth the covenantal nature of this sacrament and thereby includes infants of believing parents as well as adults who come to faith in Christ from a non-covenantal background. The difference between the forms to be used for infants and adults lies in the questions asked, in one instance of parents who present their child for baptism and in the other instance of the adults who wish to receive this sacrament.

We have tried in the rubric titled "The Instruction" to set forth in a brief manner the biblical significance of baptism, showing that baptism is significant for children of believers as well as those who enter the covenant at an adult age. In our study of this matter, it seemed most appropriate to us that this picture of baptism be presented each time baptism is to be administered regardless of who is to receive the sacrament.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN (New Form)

Having given the above as background information, we now proceed to each of the forms. The first of these which we present is the new form for the baptism of children.

In this form we have attempted to place special emphasis on letting Scripture speak for itself. For that reason there are several direct quotations from Scripture as well as a number of references to biblical passages in *The Instruction*. As you may observe, the biblical references in *The Instruction* are more than a text called upon to support a certain theological position. Instead, the sentences of this section often paraphrase or use certain specific words of the text referred to.

The form opens with a quotation of Matthew 28:18-20 which is usually looked upon by the church as the words of institution for this sacrament. The form then presents but a few of the several passages of Scripture which set forth the promises of God which are especially prominent in baptism. The passages selected for this section show the historical progression of the covenant promise first made to Abraham, later renewed with the people of Israel, established by the death of Christ, proclaimed to the world by the apostle Peter, and declared by the apostle Paul to be fully realized by the people of God when they join their Lord and Savior in glory. These words of promise not only place the covenant God makes with us in sharp relief, but they also emphasize the fact that

baptism is a sign and seal that God washes away our sin through the blood of Christ. We have attempted to carry throughout the form this emphasis on the covenant and the forgiveness of our sins through the sacrifice of Christ.

The two themes, covenant and forgiveness, are, then, further elaborated in *The Instruction*. Here we show that children are included in God's covenant along with adults, and that the covenant requires that we follow the Lord in obedience and faith. The explanation of the symbolism of baptism centers on the forgiveness we receive in Christ and the new life we may have in him. In this section we attempt to let Scripture speak for itself as we call upon a number of passages to do the explaining for us.

The *Prayer of Preparation* is a trinitarian prayer. We have included references to the flood and the Red Sea because Scripture tells us that baptism is foreshadowed by these events. Also, the church throughout its history has included these two historic redemptive events in its baptism liturgy.

The form has three questions asked of the parents in the section titled *The Vows*. Only the third question is, strictly speaking, a vow made by the parents. The first two questions are expressions of faith on the part of the parents indicating that they have a right to receive this sacrament for their child. The third question elicits a promise from the parents that they will bring up their child in the fear of the Lord and that they will welcome the assistance given them by the community of believers in this endeavor.

The vow taken by the congregation is also an integral part of the covenant concept. In our Reformed tradition, we have rejected private or family baptism. For us, baptism must take place within the congregation. The baptism of the child not only symbolizes that it is a child of God but is also a declaration that it is a part of the believing community. As such, the community has a responsibility to this child and is called upon to assist the parents in the religious instruction of the child. This vow, taken by the congregation, does refer to the child that is to be baptized at a particular service. However, the intent is not that the congregation must fulfil a direct responsibility for that particular child even if the parents move with the child to another location. Rather, the intent is that the parents are assured by the congregation that the believing community will be supportive of them and will assist them in teaching their little one about God. This is a vow which the congregation carries out primarily within the confines of a particular, localized body of believers. When parents move with their children to another location they may expect the same kind of support and assistance from the new community of believers with which they affiliate.

In the section titled *The Sacrament* is a biblical quote from the account of Jesus receiving the little children into his arms. We made a slight change in this section by stating that this passage "may" be read rather than saying it "shall" be read. Our reason for this change is that the context from which this quotation is taken is not directly concerned with baptism, although there are certain implications for baptism in this

episode. Because the relationship of this text to baptism is not equally and obviously clear to all, we have left its use to the choice of the person administering the sacrament.

It is the opinion of the committee that a hymn of praise and rejoicing is a most fitting response to the sacrament. We therefore insert the rubric, *A Triumphant Hymn*.

The *Baptismal Prayer* is one which invokes the blessing and guidance of God upon all who were involved in the sacrament. The special attention of this prayer, however, centers on the child who was baptized.

As may be observed, a number of changes have been made in the provisional text which has been before the churches since 1971. As was stated, most of these changes were motivated by the communications we received from the churches. We feel this form is an improvement over the provisional form and again express our thanks to the churches for the help given in making these improvements.

We are pleased to present the following form for the baptism of children to this synod to be considered for adoption:

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN (New Form)

The Institution

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Let us hear our Lord's command concerning the sacrament of holy baptism. After he had risen victorious from the grave, Jesus said to his disciples:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age" (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

In obedience to this command the church baptizes believers and their children, brought into fellowship with God by his Word and Spirit.

The Promises

Let us hear the promises of God which are confirmed in baptism.

The Lord made this great promise to Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you" (*Genesis 17:7*).

In later years, though Israel was unfaithful, God renewed his promise through the prophet: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people . . . , for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (*Jeremiah 31:33, 34*).

In the fullness of time God came in Jesus Christ to give pardon and peace through the blood of the cross, the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (*Matthew 26:28*).

After Jesus had risen from the dead, the apostles proclaimed: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (*Acts 2:38, 39*).

Anticipating the fulfillment of God's promises, Paul assures us, "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him" (*II Timothy 2:11, 12*).

These are the unfailing promises of our Lord to those who are baptized.

The Instruction

Let us also recall the teaching of Scripture concerning the sacrament of baptism.

The water of baptism signifies the washing away of our sin by the blood of Christ and the renewal of our lives by the Holy Spirit (*Titus 3:5*). It also signifies that we are buried with Christ (*Romans 6:4*). From this we learn that our sin has been condemned by God, that we are to hate it and consider ourselves as having died to it. Moreover, the water of baptism signifies that we are raised with Christ (*Colossians 2:12*). From this we learn that we are to walk with Christ in newness of life. All this tells us that God has adopted us as his children, "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (*Romans 8:17*).

Thus in baptism God seals the promises he gave when he made his covenant with us, calling us and our children to put our trust for life and death in Christ our Savior, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him in obedience and love.

God graciously includes our children in his covenant, and all his promises are for them as well as us (*Genesis 17:7, Acts 2:39*). Jesus himself embraced little children, and blessed them (*Mark 10:16*); and the apostle Paul said that children of believers are holy (*I Corinthians 7:14*). So, just as the children of the old covenant received the sign of circumcision, our children are given the sign of baptism. We are therefore always to teach our little ones that they have been set apart by baptism as God's own children.

The Prayer of Preparation

Father in heaven,

We pray that you will never destroy us in our sin as with the flood, but save us as believing Noah and his family, and spare us as the Israelites who walked safely through the Sea.

We pray that Christ,

who went down into the Jordan and came up to receive the Spirit, who sank deep into death and was raised up Lord of life, will always keep us and our little ones in the grip of his hand.

We pray, O holy Father,

that your Spirit will separate us from sin

and openly mark us with a faith that can stand the light of day and endure the dark of night.

Prepare us now, O Lord, to respond with glad hope to your promises so that we, and all entrusted to our care, may drink deeply from the well of living water.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

The Vows

The minister addresses the parents:

Since you have presented this child (these children) for holy baptism, you are asked to answer the following questions before God and his people:

First, do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, accept the promises of God, and affirm the truth of the Christian faith which is proclaimed in the Bible and confessed in this church of Christ?

Second, do you believe that your child, though sinful by nature, is received by God in Christ as a member of his family, and therefore ought to be baptized?

Third, do you promise, in reliance on the Holy Spirit and with the help of the Christian community, to do all in your power to instruct this child in the Christian faith and to lead him by your example into the life of Christian discipleship?

The parents respond: We do, God helping us.

The minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive this child in love, pray for him, help care for his instruction in the faith, and encourage and sustain him in the fellowship of believers?

The congregation responds: We do, God helping us.

The Sacrament

The minister may say:

Our Lord said: "Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God" (*Mark 10:14*).

In administering the sacrament the minister shall say:

_____, I baptize you into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

A Triumphant Hymn

The Baptismal Prayer

Lord our God, forever faithful to your promise,
We thank you for assuring us again that you
will forgive us and receive us as children in Christ.

Grant wisdom and love to the parents
and to us all as we carry out the vows just made.

We pray that you will guide our little ones
throughout their lives.

Enable them to respond in faith to the gospel.
 Fill them with your Spirit
 and make their lives fruitful.
 Uphold them in their hour of trial,
 and when Christ returns
 let them celebrate with all the people of God
 your greatness and goodness forever
 in the joy of your new creation. Amen.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS (New Form)

Its Composite Structure. Persons baptized as adults have the distinction of first making public profession of their faith and of then being baptized. Hence the form your committee is now presenting starts off, after a very brief introduction, with three questions. Since these vows are identical with the vows in the (new) form for public profession of faith, we need not comment on them here, except to say that the vow accepting "the gracious promises of God sealed to you in your baptism" was, of course, omitted.

Just as the vows are the same as in the form for public profession of faith so the *Institution, The Promises, The Instruction,* and the *Prayer of Preparation* are identical with the corresponding sections in the new Form for the Baptism of Children. Our concern, as mentioned earlier, was to present a single scriptural case for baptism, regardless of the recipients. The last paragraph of *The Instruction*, focused as it is on the inclusion of children, has been marked with an asterisk to indicate that in instances where no children are involved it may well be omitted.

Other Characteristics. Your committee is somewhat conscious of the length of this form and for that reason has added only a brief welcome into the church. We believe we can safely allow some play here for the pastoral instincts of the local minister.

The question just preceding the baptism does not elicit a promise so much as a statement of readiness and willingness to be baptized in accordance with a Reformed understanding of baptism. The congregation here, as in the Forms on the Baptism of Children and Public Profession of Faith, does vow to encourage and help the persons about to be baptized.

The form follows:

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS (New Form)

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

It is always a joy for the church to receive new believers into its fellowship. At our last consistory meeting
 declared their faith in Christ and expressed their desire to receive the sacrament of baptism. Today we are happy that they will confess their faith before us all and receive the sacrament.

The Vows

_____, will you stand now, and in the presence of God and his people respond to the following questions:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love and trust him as the One who saves you from your sin, and do you with repentance and joy embrace him as Lord of your life?

I do.

2. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the confessions of this church faithfully reflect this revelation?

I do.

3. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

I do.

(The questions may be changed into statements and said by the confessors. Opportunity may also be given here for additional self-expression on the part of the confessors. The response may be asked after the last question only.)

The Institution

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Let us hear our Lord's command concerning the sacrament of holy baptism. After he had risen victorious from the grave, Jesus said to his disciples:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always to the close of the age" (*Matthew 28:18-20*).

In obedience to this command the church baptizes believers and their children, brought into fellowship with God by his Word and Spirit.

The Promises

Let us hear the promises of God which are confirmed in baptism.

The Lord made this great promise to Abraham: "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you" (*Genesis 17:7*).

In later years, though Israel was unfaithful, God renewed his promise through the prophet: "This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people . . . , for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (*Jeremiah 31:33, 34*).

In the fullness of time God came in Jesus Christ to give pardon and peace through the blood of the cross, the "blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (*Matthew 26:28*).

After Jesus had risen from the dead, the apostles proclaimed: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (*Acts 2:38, 39*).

Anticipating the fulfillment of God's promises, Paul assures us, "If we have died with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall also reign with him" (*II Timothy 2:11, 12*).

These are the unfailing promises of our Lord to those who are baptized.

The Instruction

Let us also recall the teaching of Scripture concerning the sacrament of baptism.

The water of baptism signifies the washing away of our sin by the blood of Christ and the renewal of our lives by the Holy Spirit (*Titus 3:5*). It also signifies that we are buried with Christ (*Romans 6:4*). From this we learn that our sin has been condemned by God, that we are to hate it and consider ourselves as having died to it. Moreover, the water of baptism signifies that we are raised with Christ (*Colossians 2:12*). From this we learn that we are to walk with Christ in newness of life. All this tells us that God has adopted us as his children, "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (*Romans 8:17*).

Thus in baptism God seals the promises he gave when he made his covenant with us, calling us and our children to put our trust for life and death in Christ our Savior, deny ourselves, take up our cross, and follow him in obedience and love.

*God graciously includes our children in his covenant, and all his promises are for them as well as us (*Genesis 17:7, Acts 2:39*). Jesus himself embraced little children, and blessed them (*Mark 10:16*); and the apostle Paul said that children of believers are holy (*I Corinthians 7:14*). So, just as the children of the old covenant received the sign of circumcision, our children are given the sign of baptism. We are therefore always to teach our little ones that they have been set apart by baptism as God's own children.

The Prayer of Preparation

Father in heaven,

We pray that you will never destroy us in our sin as with the flood,
but save us as believing Noah and his family,
and spare us as the Israelites who walked safely through the Sea.

We pray that Christ,
who went down into the Jordan and came up to receive the Spirit,
who sank deep into death and was raised up Lord of life,

*This paragraph should be read in instances of family baptism.

will always keep us and our little ones
in the grip of his hand.

We pray, O holy Father,
that your Spirit will separate us from sin
and openly mark us with a faith that can stand the light of day
and endure the dark of night.

Prepare us now, O Lord, to respond with glad hope to your promises
so that we, and all entrusted to our care,
may drink deeply from the well of living water.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!

The Sacrament

The minister addresses the confessors (standing):

Do you now wish to be baptized in the name of the triune God, and
will you receive your baptism as a sign and seal that God accepts you in
Christ, forgives all your sins and incorporates you into his church?

Each confessor responds: I do, with all my heart.

The minister addresses the congregation:

Do you, the people of the Lord, promise to receive _____
into your fellowship as members of the body of Christ, and do you promise
to encourage them in the Christian faith and help them in doing the
work of the Lord?

Congregation: We do, God helping us.

In administering the sacrament the minister shall say:

_____, I baptize you into the name of the
Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Minister: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I now welcome you to
all the privileges of full communion. I welcome you to full participation
in the life of the church. I welcome you to its responsibilities, its priv-
ileges, its sufferings, and its joys.

A Triumphant Hymn

The Baptismal Prayer

Our Father in heaven, we thank you for Jesus Christ,
for the new life given in him,
and for the one faith, one hope, and one baptism
which your people have shared through the ages.

We rejoice that _____ are now one with
your church and that we may receive them as members of this
congregation.

Guide them in the Christian way

and sustain us all in the fellowship and service of our Lord. Amen.

THE FORM FOR PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH (New Form)

A Historical Note. Our present form (*Psalter Hymnal*, page 88) is of
recent origin. It was adopted by our Synod of 1932 (*Acts of Synod*,

1932, page 79), after a Committee on Liturgical Revision had labored over a form since 1924. In his *Onze Eeredienst*, Abraham Kuyper devoted no fewer than five chapters to "The Transition from Holy Baptism to Holy Communion." It is his contention that public profession of faith "is an ecclesiastical act of the highest significance and the churches are duty-bound to produce a form for this purpose" (*Onze Eeredienst*, page 442). Presumably it was this plea which prompted the *Gereformeerde Kerken* to adopt a form in 1923 and our churches to act in 1924. Until 1932 various sets of questions circulated in our churches.

The Vows. Again, your committee has profited from the reactions of the churches in its effort to strengthen the form now being presented. The latest revisions of importance occur in the first and fourth questions. In response to the first question, as it now stands, a statement of the confessor's love for the Lord as Savior from his or her personal sin is given. The fourth question has added the words "submitting to" with reference to the authority of the church.

In the opinion of your committee the vows are pithy and comprehensive without overburdening the generally young confessors with commitments that go far beyond their tender faith and experience.

Other Features. In this form as in the new form for baptism the congregation stands by the persons making confession of faith and joins them in this confession, at the same time promising that it will support and encourage them. This feature speaks for itself in a covenant community conscious of its responsibilities.

Your committee would encourage the churches to allow for additional self-expression on the part of young confessors. Every effort must be made to keep the act of public profession of faith from becoming highly formal and, in spite of the words used, impersonal. Generally, pastors should be allowed to adapt the form to varying situations and enrich it with appropriate words and song. The form follows:

FORM FOR PUBLIC PROFESSION OF FAITH (New Form)

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

Today we are privileged to welcome into the full life of the church's fellowship those who wish to confess their faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. When they were baptized God made clear his claim on them as his own and they were received into the church. Now they wish to share fully in the life of this congregation and of the whole church of God. And so today they will publicly accept and confirm what was sealed in their baptism, confess their faith in the Lord Jesus, and offer themselves to God as his willing servants. We thank God for having given them this desire and pray that as we now hear their confession, he will favor us with the presence and guidance of his Holy Spirit.

The Vows

_____, will you stand now, and in the presence of God and his people respond to the following questions:

1. Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God sent to redeem the world, do you love and trust him as the One who saves you from your sin, and do you with repentance and joy embrace him as Lord of your life?

I do.

2. Do you believe that the Bible is the Word of God revealing Christ and his redemption, and that the confessions of this church faithfully reflect this revelation?

I do.

3. Do you accept the gracious promises of God sealed to you in your baptism and do you affirm your union with Christ and his church which your baptism signifies?

I do.

4. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring and submitting to its authority; and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

I do.

(The questions may be changed into statements and said by the confessors. Opportunity may also be given here for additional self-expression on the part of the confessors. The response may be asked after the last question only.)

The Reception

The minister asks the congregation to rise.

Minister: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I now welcome you to all the privileges of full communion. I welcome you to full participation in the life of the church. I welcome you to its responsibilities, its joys and its sufferings. "May the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good, that you may do his will, working in you that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen" (*Hebrews 13: 20, 21*).

Congregation: Thanks be to God! We promise you our love, encouragement and prayers.

Minister: Let us together say what we believe:

I believe in God, the Father Almighty

The Prayer

Lord, our God, we thank you for your Word and Spirit through which we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. May those who confessed your name today never cease to wonder at what you have done for them. Help them to continued firmly in the faith, to bear witness to your love, and to let the Holy Spirit shape their lives. Take them, good Shepherd, into your care that they may loyally endure opposition in serving you.

May we, with all your children, live together in the joy and power of your Holy Spirit. We ask this, Lord Jesus, in the hope of your coming. Amen.

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN (New Translation)

The new translation of the form for the baptism of children which the committee is presenting to synod for final adoption is essentially a modified version of the provisional translation which has been before the churches for the last several years. The modifications need not be documented in detail, since they will be obvious to anyone acquainted with the provisional translation. Several observations are in order, however.

First, many of the changes are in direct response to the communications received from the churches. A few of these are grammatical in nature. Others, in the interest of the dignity and propriety of terms and phrases in the provisional translation, are aesthetic and stylistic. Some are attempts to sharpen the theological and doctrinal precision of the translation. Wherever the committee felt that comments and suggestions were consistent with the style of its translation and faithful to the Dutch text from which it worked, it took them seriously and profited from them in preparing this revision.

Second, the committee investigated the textual history of the form and consciously chose to work with the version which lies behind our current, official translation. Such a choice is necessitated by the fact that virtually from the time of its first edition in 1566, this form has existed in concurrently used and accepted versions. The national synod of Dort, 1618-1619, failed to adopt a version for universal usage by the Dutch churches, and provisional synods and Dutch printers long perpetuated slightly modified versions of the form. Even in the Christian Reformed Church the English version employed in the 1914 edition of the *Psalter* differs somewhat from that used in our current hymnal. While this variation in versions of the form does not touch substantive, doctrinal emphases, it does manifest a stylistic flexibility which extends to the modification, addition and/or deletion of non-essential theological content.

Third, in several instances the committee has made changes in the provisional translation which are textually more faithful than our current, official translation. For example, in the first point of the explanation our current translation reads, "that we may be admonished to loathe ourselves" The wording in all the Dutch versions consulted by the committee is "een mishagen aan onszelf te hebben." This literally means "to be displeased with ourselves." The committee has so translated it. "To hate ourselves," "to despise ourselves" and "to loathe ourselves" were all suggested as preferable in some of the correspondence to the committee. But these formulations are not a faithful translation.

A second example of a more accurate translation introduced by the committee occurs in the second question and answer. The Dutch clause "en in de Artikelen des christelijken geloofs begrepen is" can best be translated "summarized in the Apostles' Creed," as a reference to any Dutch translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, questions and answers twenty-two and twenty-three readily indicates.

Similarly, other modifications in the provisional translation were made by the committee with the intention of bringing it into still closer conformity with the Dutch text.

A fourth observation concerns two instances where the committee has for stylistic reasons departed from both the Dutch text which it ordinarily followed and from the current, official translation. The opening sentence of the form is a translation of the one used by the Synod of Leeuwarden of the Gereformeerde Kerken in 1955. It was adopted by the committee because it is stylistically less formal and more consistent with the cadence and spirit of our proposed translation than the traditional introduction. Theologically it also seems preferable to the old version. In one other instance the committee followed Leeuwarden. The opening words of point two of the instructions have been changed from the verb to the noun form: "*Second*: Baptism is a sign and seal"

The churches which have expressed themselves on this form and the liturgical committee itself have worked hard to ensure a new translation which will best serve the church of Christ. It is in that spirit that the committee presents this translation to synod for final adoption. The form follows:

FORM FOR THE BAPTISM OF CHILDREN (New Translation)

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ:

What the Lord has revealed to us in his word about holy baptism can be summarized in this way:

First: Baptism teaches that we and our children are sinful from the time of conception and birth. This means that we are all under the judgment of God and for that reason cannot be members of his kingdom unless we are born again. Baptism, whether by immersion or sprinkling, teaches that sin has made us so impure that we must undergo a cleansing which only God can accomplish. Therefore, we ought to be displeased with ourselves, humble ourselves and turn to God for our salvation.

Second: Baptism is a sign and seal that our sins are washed away through Jesus Christ. For this reason we are baptized into the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Our baptism into the name of God the Father is his assurance to us that he makes an everlasting covenant of grace with us and adopts us as his children and heirs. Therefore, he surrounds us with his goodness and protects us from evil or turns it to our profit.

When we are baptized into the name of the Son, we are assured by Christ himself that he washes us in his blood from all our sins. Christ joins us to himself so that we share in his death and resurrection. Through this union with Christ we are liberated from our sins and regarded as righteous before God.

Baptism into the name of the Holy Spirit is the assurance that the Spirit of God will make his home within us. While living within us, the Spirit will continually work to strengthen and deepen our union with Christ. He will make real in our lives Christ's work of washing away our sins. He will also help us each day to live the new life we have in Christ.

As a result of his work within us, we shall one day be presented without the stain of sin among the assembly of the elect in life eternal.

Third: Because all covenants have two sides, baptism also places us under obligation to live in obedience to God. We must cling to this one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We must trust him and love him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. We must abandon the sinful way of life, put to death our old nature, and show by our lives that we belong to God. If we through weakness should fall into sin, we must not despair of God's grace, nor use our weakness as an excuse to keep on sinning. Baptism is a seal and totally reliable witness that God is always faithful to his covenant.

Our children should not be denied the sacrament of baptism because of their inability to understand its meaning. Without their knowledge, our children not only share in Adam's condemnation, but are also received into God's favor in Christ. God's gracious attitude toward us and our children is revealed in what he said to Abraham, the father of all believers: "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you" (*Genesis 17:7*). The apostle Peter also testifies to this with these words, "For the promise is to you and to your children and to all that are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him" (*Acts 2:39*). Therefore God formerly commanded that children be circumcised as a seal of the covenant and as a declaration that righteousness comes by faith. Christ also recognized that children are members of the covenant people when he embraced them, laid his hands on them, and blessed them (*Mark 10:16*). Since baptism has replaced circumcision, our children should be baptized as heirs of God's kingdom and of his covenant. As the children mature, their parents are responsible for teaching them the meaning of baptism.

Let us turn to God, asking that in this baptism his name may be glorified, we may be comforted, and the church may be edified.

Almighty, eternal God, long ago you severely punished an unbelieving and unrepentant world by sending a flood. But you showed your great mercy when you saved and protected believing Noah and his family. Baptism was again signified when you drowned the obstinate Pharaoh and his whole army in the Red Sea and brought your people Israel through the sea with dry feet.

We pray that in your boundless mercy you will look upon these your children with favor by bringing them into union with your Son, Jesus Christ, through your Holy Spirit. May they be buried with Christ into death and be raised with him to new life. Give them true faith, firm hope, and ardent love so that they may joyfully bear the cross of Christ as they daily follow him.

Give these children the full assurance of your grace so that when they leave this life and its constant struggle against the power of sin they may appear before the judgment seat of Christ without fear. We ask this in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one only God, lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Address to the Parents

People of God, as you have now heard, baptism is given to us by God as proof that he does make a covenant with us and our children. We must, therefore, use the sacrament for the purpose that God intended and not out of custom or superstition. You are asked to give an honest answer to these questions as a testimony that you are doing what God commands.

First: Do you acknowledge that our children, who are sinful from the time of conception and birth and therefore subject to the misery which sin brings, even the condemnation of God, are made holy by God in Christ and so as members of his body ought to be baptized?

Second: Do you acknowledge that the teaching of the Old and New Testaments, summarized in the Apostles' Creed, and taught in this Christian Church, is the true and complete doctrine of salvation?

Third: Do you sincerely promise to do all you can to teach these children, and to have them taught, this doctrine of salvation?

Answer: We do.

_____, I baptize you into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Almighty God and merciful Father, we thank you and praise your name for having forgiven our sins through the blood of your dear Son, Jesus Christ. We thank you for uniting us with Christ through your Holy Spirit and adopting us as your children, and we thank you for sealing and confirming these blessings to us and our children in the sacrament of baptism.

We pray, O Lord, that you will always govern these children by your Holy Spirit. May they, through your guidance, be so nurtured in the Christian faith and godliness as to grow and develop in Jesus Christ. Help them see your fatherly goodness and mercy which surrounds us all. Make them champions of righteousness under the direction of Jesus Christ, our only Teacher, King, and High Priest. Give them the courage to fight against and overcome sin, the devil and his whole dominion. May their lives become an eternal song of praise to you, the one only true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Representation at synod.

We request that our chairman, the Rev. John Vriend, and our secretary, the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, be given the privilege of the floor when the work of the Liturgical Committee is being considered.

2. Liturgical Forms.

We recommend the following liturgical forms for adoption for use in our churches:

- a. "Form for the Baptism of Children" (a new form)
- b. "Form for the Baptism of Adults" (a new form)

- c. "Form for the Baptism of Infants" (a translation of our old form)
- d. "Form for Public Profession of Faith" (a new form).

3. Nominations.

The terms of office for Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, Rev. Nick Knoppers, and Dr. Nick Wolterstorff expire this year. We present to synod the following nominations for Liturgical Committee membership for a term of three years:

- a. Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen* and Rev. John Malestein
- b. Rev. Nick Knoppers* and Rev. Dick Pierik
- c. Dr. Steve VanderWeele and Dr. Nick Wolterstorff*

Ms. Henrietta Ten Harmsel, whose term expires in 1977 asked to be released from service on the Liturgical Committee for health reasons. We submit the following nomination from which one is to be elected for one year to fill this unexpired term:

- d. Mrs. Ann Noteboom and Ms. Nell VanderArk.

*Incumbents

PROGRESS REPORT

The committee is continuing its work on a new form for excommunication and a new form for marriage. We are hopeful that we can present forms for these activities which will be suitable for provisional use to the synod of next year. We are also working on the preparation of a number of prayers as directed by the Synod of 1975. Work is beginning on a new form for the installation of elders and deacons.

We also call the attention of synod to the provisional use granted by the Synod of 1968 to models for the communion service. No time limit for this provisional use was set. We plan to ask for the response of the churches to these models with a view to asking the Synod of 1978 to adopt suitable models to be presented at that time for use by our churches.

Liturgical Committee:

John Vriend, chairman
 Alvin L. Hoksbergen, secretary
 Clifford E. Bajema
 James A. De Jong
 Dirk J. Hart
 Nicholas B. Knoppers
 Nicholas P. Wolterstorff

REPORT 16

MINISTERIAL INFORMATION SERVICE

I. PERSONNEL

The committee members are the Rev. Wm. Van Peursem, Mr. George Groen, the Rev. Donald Negen, the Rev. Bernard Niemeyer, Mr. Harm Te Velde and Mr. Carl Vander Brug.

II. STATISTICS

	1974	1975
Ministers' profiles on file	523	579
Ministers' profiles mailed out	482	1,375
Ministers' profiles requested but not on file with the committee	98	138
Churches served during	81	96
Church profiles sent to ministers		3

III. SERVICES

There were two primary areas of service provided by the committee during 1975. One area of service consisted of mailing profiles of ministers to churches who requested the same of given men in whom they were interested.

The other service consisted of suggesting names of ministers and of mailing corresponding profiles upon the request of the vacant churches. In this category of service the committee is guided in the selection of ministers by the profile preference indicated by ministers and by the desires of the vacant churches making the request. Obviously the church profiles help the committee to function more efficiently in this preference matching process. The committee is also guided by the degree of interest in a call which the minister expresses on his profile. That is to say, if a minister states that he is not able to consider a call that minister obviously will not be suggested to a vacant church.

In order to provide the best possible service we are attempting to keep the profiles current. The committee will mail new blank forms to ministers whose profiles are more than eighteen months old. This will replace the mailing to all ministers at the beginning of each year as was done previously. Ministers whose profiles are not on file with us will be invited to do so. Those wishing a form immediately should contact the committee.

Carl Vander Brug, our recording secretary, is doing a lion's share of the work for duplicating and mailing. His work is much appreciated. Those who wish to make direct contact with him may do so by dialing (213)869-6017 or the Rev. Donald Negen (213)866-6015. Our mailing address is 17834 Ibbetson, Bellflower, CA 90706.

IV. A NEW AREA OF SERVICE PROPOSED: A PASTOR EXCHANGE

During the past year the question concerning the possibility of a pastoral exchange has been placed before your committee. In fact, when the original questionnaire was mailed for the formation of the Ministerial Information Committee there were already several requests both from churches and ministers to move in the direction of initiating exchanges. This original concern still exists. Therefore your committee is seeking the authorization from synod to become an enabling agency to assist churches and ministers in this capacity. This service will not interfere with existing church order procedures because the exchanges will ultimately be on the basis of calls rather than placements. The committee will function as a contact agency to bring two or more interested parties together. The basic procedure to accomplish the exchange of pastorates will be as follows:

1. Ministers and churches who are interested in an exchange of pastorates will make the initial contact with the committee indicating their desires and preferences. They will subsequently provide other pertinent information which will be of value to the committee in performing its task. The local church council and pastor must mutually agree on a request for a pastoral exchange before the committee will be able to take the next step. Prior confidential inquiries to the committee, however, may be made by either the council or the minister before reaching mutual agreement on the local level.
2. When two or more churches and ministers have made requests, the committee will approach the executive committee of the councils, with strict confidence, to reveal the names of the ministers involved and to determine the feasibility of proceeding further.
3. Simultaneous with step 2, the committee will approach the ministers, with strict confidence, to reveal the names of the churches involved and to determine the feasibility of proceeding further.
4. When steps 2 and 3 have been completed satisfactorily, the names of the ministers will be revealed to the councils to determine the feasibility of proceeding further. This also must remain in confidence.
5. When all the above steps have been satisfactorily completed the councils will reveal the information to the congregations and announce the name of the minister to be placed on mono for congregational vote on a specified date and place. If one congregation does not gain a majority vote to call the given minister, the call of the other church will be nullified. Dates of the congregational meetings should coincide very closely for the benefit of all concerned.

We request synod to authorize the committee to function as an assisting agency for pastoral exchanges, with the understanding that the procedure is subject to future evaluation.

We also request synod to authorize the committee to apprise the churches and ministers of this service.

Grounds:

- a. The original questionnaire indicated that this type of service should be considered by the committee.

- b. Several churches and ministers have requested this type of service.
- c. The procedure as outlined is in harmony with the church order.
- d. Churches and ministers who would currently appreciate such an exchange would profit by an objective party to assist them.

V. FINANCES

The operating expenses for the year 1975 were \$1064.54. An audited financial report will be submitted to the Finance Committee of the Synodical Interim Committee.

VI. NOMINATIONS

The term of Carl Vander Brug expires this year. He is subject to reelection. We submit the following nominations for your consideration.

Carl Vander Brug. Incumbent. Currently serving as our records secretary, volunteering his services for this time consuming task. He is a retired business man.

Garrett Keuning. Retired teacher. Capable with records and detail work. Lives in Lakewood, California.

VII. REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

The committee stands ready to send one of its members to synod at your request. However, to avoid the expense of such a trip we have an alternative which we trust will be acceptable to you. We have requested the Rev. Louis Dykstra, who will be at synod this year for other duties, to present our cause and to answer questions in our behalf. He has served on our committee until recently and is well acquainted with the activities and objectives of our committee.

VIII. PRAYER REQUEST

The committee is deeply aware of our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide the committee, the churches and the ministers in making responsible decisions. Therefore we covet your prayers.

The Ministerial Information Service Committee
Donald J. Negen, secretary

REPORT 17

MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

I. PENSION FUND

In 1940, the Ministers' Pension Fund was initiated. A group of far-sighted men in the denomination saw a basic weakness in our system—we paid our ministers for their active service, and then forgot about them in their retirement. It was basically felt that this was in direct violation to the "call letter" tendered to each minister during his active service, and so a post-active ministry fund was started for our retired ministers.

In 1970, the "funded" concept of our pension plan was adopted. The pension plan now became actuarially funded in concept, operated by our own people, with a resulting administrative cost control and providing flexible benefit determination. Our present position has grown and developed over the past thirty-five years from experience, governmental legislation, and a concern for good stewardship—coupled with a strong desire to give better pensions at a controlled cost. We can again be grateful for far-sighted men who charted our present course, and for their concern for anticipated federal legislation which is now crushing upon us as a reality. We can be equally grateful for frugal men who have managed and controlled our fund to see it grow to its present size in such a brief period of time. All of these blessings were not without a cost burden, and at times a sense of frustration by all of us. Changes are certainly upon us.

Another interesting development is now occurring within our denomination—congregational size per minister is shrinking. Consequently, fewer families are financing the retirement needs of more ministers. For instance, in 1955, within our organized congregations, we averaged 125 families per minister. This average peaked at 126 families per minister in 1958, and then began a steady decline. In 1966 we were yet at 120 families per minister; in 1970 we were down to 112 families per minister; and, for 1975 we averaged 101 families per minister. This certainly increases the cost per family quota for pension needs.

Yet, as the burden increased, our families have been steadily improving in their quota obligations to our fund. In 1974, we attained a 100% of budgeted quota money! In 1975 we should again come very close to 100%. We wish to convey to our constituency a "thank you" and word of appreciation for their faithful exercise of responsibility and obligation to us in providing the money for sound pension benefits and plan financing.

In 1975, the administrator visited the following classes: Cadillac, Chicago North, Chicago South, Eastern Canada, Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids South, Hamilton, Illiana, Kalamazoo, Orange City and Quinte. These personal visits continue to be most beneficial for the individual classis, our area emeriti, and the committee.

Also, in 1975, we converted our entire operation to a mini-accounting computer—Burroughs L-3000. This purchase has not only speeded up our accounting procedures, but has also given us a more detailed information print-out possibility. Our entire control over the flow of money has been greatly improved.

Beginning in 1976, we will have a second trustee agent serving us. Michigan National Bank will continue to serve us as trustee over all notes and bond investments. Now, National Bank of Detroit has been retained as our trustee for equity investments. Our first \$200,000 investment in this trust took place 1/31/76. Our present limit of investments into this equity fund has been set at 10% of the total reserve for the fund.

In our continued study of increased benefit need due especially to today's high housing costs, and the necessary increased quota cost if such need was realistically met in increased pension benefits, and in consultation with our Denominational Financial Coordinator, the committee is proposing to synod a new direction of concern. It is our joint recommendation that pension benefits remain at the present level for the next year, and that we encourage our Denominational Financial Coordinator to publicize the need for higher salaries in order for our ministers to establish a retirement housing reserve. Actuary and salary studies will be conducted throughout the year to determine if this is a feasible route to follow, or not. We fully recognize that not all problems are solvable in this approach, but do feel such a one-year study is crucial to our operation at this time.

A. *Deaths* since our last report to synod:

Rev. Richard Veldman	2/26/75
Rev. John H. Draisma	4/ 5/75
Rev. Marvin Vugteveen	4/25/75
Rev. John J. Holwerda	5/ 3/75
Rev. David Grasman	5/22/75
Mrs. Peter Holwerda	5/30/75
Mrs. L. P. Brink	6/ 5/75
Rev. John H. Groenewold	7/28/75
Mrs. J. P. De Vries	8/ 7/75
Rev. John D. De Jong	8/19/75
Mrs. Christian Huissen	9/15/75
Rev. Bert Vanden Brink	10/15/75
Mrs. Dirk Hollebeek	12/18/75
Mrs. John Voortman	1/ 3/76
Rev. Jacob J. Weersing	1/21/76

B. *Emeritations* since our last report to synod:

Rev. Marvin Baarman, because of health, Classis Florida, effective 1/15/75
Rev. Oliver Breen, because of age, Classis Chicago North, effective 10/1/75
Dr. Renze O. De Groot, because of age Classis Grand Rapids North, effective 5/1/75

- Rev. John Entingh, because of age,
Classis Northcentral Iowa, effective 2/1/76
- Rev. Henry J. Evenhouse, because of age,
Classis Grand Rapids East, effective 1/1/76
- Rev. Enno L. Haan, because of age,
Classis Zeeland, effective 10/1/75
- Rev. Paul Ouwinga, because of age,
Classis Minnesota North, effective 7/1/75
- Rev. J. Jerry Pott, because of age,
Classis Grand Rapids South, effective 9/1/75
- Rev. John C. Scholten, because of age,
Classis Illiana, effective 12/31/75
- Dr. Henry Stob, because of age,
Classis Grand Rapids East, effective 7/1/75
- Rev. John Van Harmelen, because of age,
Classis Chatham, effective 5/1/75

C. PENSION FUND FINANCIAL REPORT, FISCAL YEAR 2-1-75 — 1-31-76

MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

C. Pension Fund Financial Report, Fiscal Year 2-1-75 — 1-31-76

Ministers' Pension Fund

Position Statement January 31, 1976

Assets:	Michigan National Bank	\$ 3,763.98	
	Bank of Montreal	(142.02)	<u>\$3,621.96</u>
Equities:	Liability, uncashed termination payment	\$ 693.14	
	Net Worth 2-1-75	3,197,188.59	
	Fiscal Period Increase	673,053.61	
	Trust Reserve, toward unfunded liability—		
	Michigan National Bank	\$3,667,313.38	
	National Bank of Detroit	200,000.00	<u>(3,867,313.38)</u>
			<u>\$3,621.96</u>

MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

INCOME STATEMENT 2-1-75 — 1-31-76

	Actual	Budget	Percent of Budget
Income:			
Quota	\$1,275,565.62	\$1,402,600	91%
Participant Assessment	221,441.89	199,500	111%
Interest	199,544.70	—	
	<u>\$1,696,552.21</u>	<u>\$1,602,100</u>	106%

Expense:			
Benefits	\$ 965,673.95	\$ 800,000	120%
Moving	6,746.55	25,000	27%
Currency Exchange	4,914.91	2,500	196%
Administrator	16,800.00	15,000	112%
Phone & Supplies	2,456.83	2,000	123%
Office & Secretary	2,004.00	2,000	100%
Committee Meetings	638.34	1,100	58%
Fees	14,194.61	13,500	105%
New Equipment	7,371.09	—	—
Church Relations	2,698.32	3,000	90%
Reserve to Trust	673,053.61	738,000	91%
	<u>\$1,696,552.21</u>	<u>\$1,602,100</u>	106%

D. Proposed Budget, Fiscal Year 2-1-77 — 1-31-78

	Proposed Budget 2-1-77 — 1-31-78
Income:	
Quota 64,000 families @ \$24.50	\$1,568,000
Participant assessment payments 225 @ \$1,000	225,000
	<u>\$1,793,000</u>
Expense:	
Benefits (based on a pension of \$4,400, and widow benefit of \$3,520)	\$1,032,000
Amortization of unfunded past service liability, 40 year schedule	694,200
	<u>\$1,726,200</u>
Emeriti moving	10,000
Currency exchange	5,000
Administration	17,800
Telephone & supplies	2,000
Office & secretary	2,250
Committee meetings	1,250
Fees (trust agencies, actuary, audit)	25,500
Church relations	3,000
	<u>\$1,793,000</u>

E. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Mr. Jack W. Stoepker, administrator and/or any member of the committee be accorded the privilege of the floor.
2. That two appointments for full three-year terms be made from the following nominations (see appendix for information on each).

- a) Mr. Roger Helder* Mr. Gerrit Vander Riet
- b) Rev. H. R. De Bolster Rev. J. G. Klomps

*Indicates incumbent

3. That synod express appreciation to our retiring committee member Rev. John Van Harmelen, who has ably and faithfully served, and now completed, two consecutive three-year terms on our committee.
4. That synod approve a continuation of the \$2,500.00 housing allowance from ministerial pension benefits for United States income tax purposes (Section 107(2) of the Code).

Note — the law observes a 40% of benefit permission for such an allowance, or what is in effect, whichever is greater (40% of \$4,400 is \$1,760).

5. That synod approve a \$24.50 quota per family for 1977.

6. That synod approve a participant assessment fee for 1977 of \$1,000 for those serving outside of an organized church status.

II. SUPPLEMENTAL ASSISTANCE (above pension needs)

This fund continues to be in great need — the financial assistance requests continue to out-run the congregational contributions. We are at a point of crisis: to cut back on assistance, or our churches will have to contribute more to this denominational benevolent fund. We can only provide to others what you provide to us. Responses to our fall appeal are just now slowly coming in — for these we are grateful.

Supplemental Assistance Fund — Financial Report

Position Statement January 31, 1976			
Assets:	Michigan National Bank	\$ 4,548.51	
	Bank of Montreal	3,524.50	
Assets:	Savings	433.10	\$8,506.11
<hr/>			
Equities:	Net Worth 2-1-75	\$11,579.54	
	Fiscal Period Increase	(3,073.43)	\$8,506.11
Income Statement 2-1-75—1-31-76			
<hr/>			
Income:	Interest	\$ 265.09	
	Contributions	17,458.98	\$17,724.07
Disbursements:	Assistance	20,797.50	
			<hr/>
			(\$ 3,073.43)

Recommendation: That synod approve the Supplemental Assistance Fund of the Ministers' Pension Committee for one or more offerings.

III. CHAPLAIN DEPOSIT FUND

This fund continues to grow steadily, even if slowly. The urgency of this fund is not "today," but "tomorrow." Thus, the time schedule appears to be on-target to-date.

Chaplain Deposit Fund — Financial Report

Position Statement January 31, 1976			
Assets:	Michigan National Bank	\$ 447.68	
	Trust Fund	112,396.02	\$112,843.70
<hr/>			
Equities:	Net Worth 2-1-75	\$ 77,265.39	
	Fiscal Period Increase	31,477.87	
	Chaplain Committee—		
	January receipts, payable.....	4,100.44	\$112,843.70
<hr/>			
Income Statement 2-1-75 — 1-31-76			
Income:	Quota	\$26,894.60	
	Interest	4,744.46	\$ 31,639.06
Disbursement:	Administrative	161.19	
			<hr/>
			\$ 31,477.87

Recommendation: That synod approve a continuation of the 50¢ per family quota.*

*In consultation with the Chaplain Committee, we recommend synod continue this separate quota yet for another year, due to its unique function as neither an integral part of the Chaplain Committee nor of the Ministers' Pension Fund (Acts of Synod 1975, Article 84, II, B - page 80).

IV. VOLUNTARY GROUP LIFE INSURANCE for our ordained ministers.

We currently have 446 ministers enrolled, for a total insurance coverage of \$7,772,500 in-force. We only could wish all of our men were enrolled — there is such a difference in the widow facing her transitional life when she has such a financial "cushion" assisting her in her new needs. This is voluntary in participation, not a part of our quotas, with the cost borne by each insured party.

Ministerial Voluntary Group Insurance — Financial Report

Position statement January 31, 1976		
Assets: Michigan National Bank		\$14,134.31
Equities: Net Worth 2-1-75	\$19,994.21	
Fiscal Period Increase	(5,859.90)	\$14,134.31
Income Statement 2-1-75 — 1-31-76		
Income: Participants	\$45,705.80	
Disbursements: Group Cost	51,565.70	
		<u>(\$ 5,859.90)</u>

Ministers' Pension Fund
 Jack W. Stoepker, administrator
 Alden Walters, chairman
 James Harkema, secretary
 Peter Brouwers, treasurer
 Roger Helder
 Donald Oosterhouse
 Rev. John Van Harmelen
 Rev. John Van Ryn

APPENDIX

INFORMATION RE NOMINATIONS FOR COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Note: The terms of Rev. John Van Harmelen and Mr. Roger Helder will be completed in September 1976. Mr. Helder is eligible to run again and is willing. Rev. Van Harmelen has completed his two full terms and is not eligible for another term.

Roger Helder — Vice-President and Comptroller of Chrysler Corporation; member of Dearborn Christian Reformed Church. Attended Grand Rapids Christian High School, A.B. from Calvin College, and M.B.A. from University of Michigan. C.P.A. in the State of Michi-

gan; member of Michigan Association of C.P.A.'s and Financial Executives Institute. Married, three children, pre and post college age; past deacon, church treasurer and elder; past member Dearborn Christian School Board and Treasurer.

Gerrit Vander Riet — Vice-President of Detrex Chemical Industries; Calvin College graduate, M.B.A. from University of Michigan; member of North Hills Christian Reformed Church, Troy, Michigan.

Rev. H. R. De Bolster — Served the following churches: Immanuel, Brampton, Ontario; 2nd, Brampton, Ontario; Emmanuel, Calgary, Alberta; Maranatha, St. Catharines, Ontario.

Rev. J. G. Klomps — Served the following churches: Lindsay, Ontario; Bethel, Brockville, Ontario; 1st Hamilton, Ontario.

REPORT 18
SERMONS FOR READING SERVICES

This year marks the end of the second decade, the twentieth year of publication and distribution of the *Living Word* sermons. With gratitude to the Lord we look back on the years in which, under his guidance and with his blessing, we could be of service to our churches.

Our present publisher, Mr. C. C. VandeRiet, is retiring this year. We thank God for the diligent and faithful work on behalf of the church and this committee rendered by this brother and his wife. May they together enjoy for many years yet their well-deserved rest! In his stead we have secured the services of Mr. D. J. H. VanWyk of North York Reproductions Ltd.

We much regret the disruption in our services due to the mail strike in Canada the end of last year. This was indeed a matter beyond our control. Sermons are coming in very well this year, and we wish to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors. Volunteer sermons are still very much appreciated at any time!

We are not requesting any change in subscription rates at this time. Remuneration is now \$25 per sermon. Here is a short summary of our position in the past year:

American Churches	62 Subscriptions	(61 last year)
Canadian Churches	156 Subscriptions	(152 last year)
Australian-New Zealand Churches	6 Subscriptions	(6 last year)
Individuals	8 Subscriptions	(9 last year)

The total number of subscribers stands at 232, four more than last year. Of these 158 are English only and 74 are English and Dutch. We will again approach all our non-subscribing consistories, urging them to support this necessary work and participate by way of subscription. We also once again respectfully approach synod to endorse our efforts and express this by way of announcements in *The Banner* and *De Wachter*.

The terms of two of our members are expiring this year: the Revs. Alvin Venema and Charles T. Fennema. The former is eligible for re-election, having served only one term on the committee. We wholeheartedly recommend his reappointment by synod. To fill the vacancies we respectfully submit the following names:

- Rev. J. W. Postman of Georgetown
- Rev. J. Zanitingh of Dundas
- Rev. M. Lise of Holland Marsh

Recommendations:

1. That synod approve the publication of the *Living Word* sermons series from June 1, 1977 through May 31, 1978.

2. That synod fill the vacancies on the committee from among the following names: Revs. Venema (eligible for re-election), Lise, Postman and Zantingh.
3. That synod recommend to our churches that they subscribe to and use the *Living Word* sermons by way of announcements in *The Banner* and *De Wachter*.
4. That synod continue the Sermons for Reading Services Committee.

Sermons for Reading Services Committee

C. T. Fennema, chairman

A. Venema

M. N. Greidanus

H. D. Praamsma, reporter

REPORT 19

SYNODICAL COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS (SCORR)

Members of the Synodical Committee on Race Relations:

- Rev. Marvin Beelen, Muskegon, MI, 1978
 (Board of Publications representative)
- Mr. Wilfred Bowman, Gallup, NM, 1976
- Ms. Barbara Clayton, Chicago, IL, 1978
- Ms. Elsa Cortina, Grand Rapids, MI, 1978
- Mr. Dennis Crushshon, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977
- Mr. George Fernandez, Miami, FL, 1978
 secretary
- Rev. Vernon Geurkink, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977
- Mr. Stephen Jung, Los Angeles, CA, 1976
 vice-chairman
- Mr. Donald Minor, Falls Church, VA, 1976
- Rev. Virgil Patterson, Grand Rapids, MI, 1977
 chairman
- Rev. Hans Uittenbosch, Montreal, Canada, 1978
 (Board of Home Missions representative)
- Rev. Stanley Vander Klay, Paterson, NJ, 1976
- Mr. Leon Van Rees, Muskegon, MI, 1977
 (World Relief Committee representative)

After several years of experience, SCORR's central thrust has come to be this: to work with the denomination's agencies, boards, and committees in order to encourage and assist them in building policies and programs that ameliorate prejudicial and discriminatory results and promote racial justice and reconciliation. We believe that we have increased our effectiveness in doing this during the past year. Much remains to be done. One of the greatest dangers in this approach is that we are too easily satisfied, that changes arrived at with much time and difficulty look too good, when in reality they are only good beginnings.

Knotty questions persist: how do we report what was accomplished? As our job or the other agency's? How do we wind our way through the thickets of inter-agency relations with both charity and effectiveness? How do we maintain the kind of relationships that are characterized by trust and good faith, while retaining the willingness to say hard things when they need to be said? And then the knotty question of "style": can a committee like SCORR, created to deal with an issue that is urgent, complex and intensely controversial, walk the line between urgent demands for change that may alienate, and patient persistent quiet efforts that may accomplish little or nothing?

SCORR's activities may be seen as falling generally into categories: consultation with denominational agencies, and provision of resources.

I. CONSULTATION

In general this phase of SCORR's activity consists of conversations and liaison with other denominational agencies in order to increase

awareness, highlight issues, assist with problem-solving, and bring about change in race-related programs.

By its very nature, this important aspect of what SCORR does is difficult to report. Much time and energy may be spent at something which is of very low visibility and which may even *require* low visibility for its success. Also, it is often more appropriate that other agencies report to synod what they are doing that relates to race, even though SCORR may have been involved in the matter to some extent. Finally, it is often very difficult to document the results of such liaison, except to say that a new level of awareness was achieved or a difficulty resolved or a program accelerated in its development. Having said all that, here is a sketch of SCORR's involvements over the past year under the umbrella of consultation and liaison.

A. Indian Research

During the past year the final report of the study of reservation ministries was conveyed to the Home Mission Board. While the study itself is a valuable document for information and education, it also provides the denomination with an in-depth look at a mission that represents millions of dollars and seventy-five years of time and energy. Further, the study is a valuable tool for understanding and planning for the racial dimensions of Indian missions. It is our hope that SCORR continue to work with the Board of Home Missions in making maximum use of this study. In the coming months the second phase of this study, concerning off-reservation Indian missions, will be completed. We believe that these studies can well serve our denomination as we together meet the challenge of relating to the maturing and increasingly assertive Indian church(es).

B. RES Race Resolutions

In 1971 synod referred the revised RES race resolutions to SCORR and advised SCORR to seek advice from appropriate denominational agencies, with regard to continued study and possible implementation. SCORR has engaged in conversations with various agencies regarding these resolutions, requesting their consideration, inviting their suggestions for matters requiring further attention or possible implementation. Based on these conversations and SCORR's continuing consideration of these resolutions, we believe that efforts to produce a study of these resolutions themselves are not warranted; rather, the most useful way to regard them is as a set of guidelines about the church's basic teachings on race and a resource which stimulates planning for ways to live out those teachings. For example, as a result of conversations arising from those resolutions, the education committee is considering a suggestion from SCORR regarding a review process which could monitor the racial content of educational materials.

C. Roseland Christian Ministry Center

Two years ago SCORR was in conversation with the Back to God Hour regarding its proposed relocation and the future use of the old facility. Synod 1974 charged the Back to God Hour to exercise every

means to find a user for the old building who would use it for a Christian ministry to the neighborhood. At issue here was the urgent matter of the implications of moving a denominational institution out of an urban black community. Since then the Back to God Hour has worked diligently with a committee from the Chicagoland classes exploring the feasibility of a ministry center located in that building. A proposal for such a ministry has been endorsed by each of the three Chicagoland classes; SCORR has worked with that committee and has committed itself to initial funding of \$10,000.00; now conversations among SCORR, CRBHM, CRWRC and the committee continue regarding the shape of agency involvement and planning. SCORR notes the development of this concept up to this point as a significant happening; the possibility exists for bringing together local and denominational resources in an innovative ministry in an urban black community—a powerful ministry of reconciliation in a community where the results of racial alienation in our society are starkly visible.

D. Conference on Minority Students

In the context of our Reformed colleges' increase in minority students, some of the colleges convened a conference on issues relating to minority students on Christian college campuses. SCORR participated in planning and funding that conference, and has been working with the colleges on evaluating and implementing some of the ideas generated. Our concern here is to encourage and assist the colleges to serve minority youth with increasing understanding and compassion. Sensitizing students to racial issues, as well as developing curriculum changes that reflect and develop that sensitivity, are continuing challenges.

In a related effort, SCORR is working with Calvin Seminary on such matters as the preparation of minority students for ministry and the preparation of students for ministry in multi-racial or cross-racial settings.

Of course, these contacts with the colleges relate to the minority student scholarship program which is covered later in this report. SCORR is pleased that minority students are seeking admission to our colleges, and that the colleges are seriously addressing themselves to the issues that such admission raises on mostly white campuses. The challenge of learning to define problems and identify resources across racial lines is a continuing one.

E. Study Guide for Inquirers

SCORR is pleased to report this year the production by the education committee of a study guide to be used to introduce our denomination to adults who are not familiar with the CRC. The result of mutual conversations and planning, this guide has now been produced by the education department. It will meet a need often articulated by pastors of multi-racial churches for materials especially designed for heterogeneous ministries.

F. Summer Workshop in Ministries (SWIM)

This year SCORR is working with the United Calvinist Youth office in a concentrated effort to make the SWIM program more effective for

urban and multi-racial churches, and to increase their involvement in SWIM. Again, mutual discussion and problem-solving has occurred, and some changes in the SWIM procedures are being considered by UCY, so that those procedures will be as workable in less traditional situations as they are in traditional situations. SCORR acknowledges with gratitude UCY's responsiveness to the needs of the multi-racial churches.

G. North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPaRC)

During the past year SCORR has initiated efforts to put race relations on NAPaRC's agenda. We have been in conversation with our denomination's Interchurch Relations Committee, and are seeking to identify our own counterparts in the other NAPaRC churches. Our intention is to work for a NAPaRC conference on race, as a way to begin.

II. SCORR AS RESOURCE

Of course, many of the activities described above are ways of providing resources. Under "SCORR as Resource" we intend to present those activities of SCORR which relate indirectly to other agencies and in which resources are provided either for education in race relations or for enabling those engaged in multi-racial ministries.

A. National Teacher Education Project (NTEP)

In cooperation with the Education Department, SCORR provided assistance for persons in multi-racial settings to attend the NTEP workshop for church school teachers. Making training readily available for persons in multi-racial ministries is an important part of developing the resources of the multi-racial churches, of developing minority leadership, and of making financial resources available to congregations which typically have the least such resources available. We anticipate that we will continue to assist the education department in this dimension of their planning for adult education.

B. Christian Education in Multi-Racial Settings

A particular concern of synod, the responsibility for which was given to SCORR, has been the challenge of making Christian education available in multi-racial settings where financial resources are small. SCORR's approach to this challenge, as we have indicated in past reports, has been to encourage and assist local attempts to address this problem, believing that local initiative and local involvement is crucial. SCORR notes with joy the second year of operation of the Evangelical Committee for Christian Education Scholarships in Grand Rapids (ECCES). ECCES is dedicated to raising money for tuition assistance for covenant families with no other resources to meet the gap between tuition cost and what they are able to pay. As ECCES experimented with fund-raising methods, SCORR provided them with a grant to assist in their fund-raising campaign.

A very significant development in race relations and Christian education is taking place on the west side of Chicago, where the Chicago West Side Christian School Association has been operating for several

years. This group has recently begun planning for Christian education in its own community. Involving parents primarily in the Lawndale and Garfield communities, this association has come to SCORR for help in realizing their dream of Christian education in their own urban black community. SCORR has granted some initial funding for planning; and we anticipate receiving a proposal for helping them realize their dreams. Christian schools can be a vital tool in urban missions, and SCORR values highly this opportunity to make resources available—encouragement, advice, money.

C. Minority Student Scholarship Fund

This year some twenty-five minority students are receiving approximately \$17,000.00 in assistance at our church-related colleges. The majority of these students are black with a small percentage of Oriental or Spanish-surnamed. SCORR is pleased that several of these students are young people with whom we have had contact before. For many this is their second or third or fourth year of attendance at college. For others SCORR has played a role in their lives as we worked with the multi-racial churches in exchanging young people for multi-racial summer teams. And for some, SCORR has played a role in their home church's young people's activities.

These minority young people are an important resource to our denomination and to the colleges. Their presence enriches the lives of the colleges, and their leadership potential is a developing resource for the Reformed community. The problems and challenges they face on a white college campus are great. We thank God for their willingness to choose a Reformed Christian college, their willingness to wrestle with what it means for them to become educated at a white institution.

SCORR continues to believe that this program is an extremely important one, because of the options it makes available to minority young people, because of the exciting challenge it brings to our colleges, because of the opportunities it creates for fruitful cooperation between SCORR and the colleges, and because of its potential for helping to develop minority leadership in our Reformed community and in our society. The above-quota gifts we received for this fund, as well as the allocation we make to it from our budget, are important ways that the denomination channels its resources to building better race relations.

In another kind of resource-role that relates to the scholarship fund, SCORR again this past year cooperated with the Voices of God in co-sponsoring their tour. This singing group of black young people, members of the young people's group of Madison Avenue CRC in Paterson, New Jersey, toured in Wisconsin and Chicagoland, presenting a program of music, words and slides on the ministry of reconciliation they are engaged in in the city. The offerings received are for the scholarship fund. The celebration of Christ's reconciling power in the city that these young people communicate is a message that SCORR is glad to help bring to CR churches. Some of the young people from this group have also worked on summer staffs in other multi-racial churches in the denomination; some are now attending Calvin.

D. *Study of the Heidelberg Catechism*

One of the requirements for the community of believers to plan and act as ministers of reconciliation is an informed social conscience. SCORR is providing a resource for the churches in a study of the Heidelberg Catechism, a study which will set forth the practical and moral implications of this Form of Unity for a church seeking to be obedient in a society torn by prejudice and injustice.

E. *Miscellaneous Grants*

As SCORR seeks to empower those engaged in ministries of racial reconciliation, it sometimes provides some "getting started" money. Sometimes this means a small amount of funding for something that normal funding channels are unwilling or unable to do. Sometimes it means providing interim funds so an opportunity may be seized and a program carried on until normal funding sources can be tapped. For example, SCORR provided a grant to the Madison Square CRC in Grand Rapids to pay a black staff person until assistance was forthcoming from regular denominational sources. On another occasion SCORR provided partial funding for the Chinese churches to convene a conference on Chinese ministries. This year again SCORR anticipates giving financial and planning assistance for a conference of staff people from urban and multi-racial CR churches.

F. *Miscellaneous Materials*

We are still publishing a newsletter for urban and multi-racial churches and schools. We have during the past year sent mailings to ministers; we have sought out Banner articles on race-related topics; we have offered to Christian schools our recently completed *Resource Manual on Race Relations and Christian Schools*.

* * * *

Race relations is a controversial matter, and motivation for addressing so sticky a problem is now lacking in society. As SCORR seeks to assist the denomination in carrying out the ministry of reconciliation in the arena of race relations, we find ourselves stepping carefully between those who see even the existence of such a committee as too much, and those who find our activities far too limited. Along with all the others who serve the denomination in its boards and agencies, we earnestly solicit the continuing prayers and support of our brothers and sisters who together with us make up the Christian Reformed Church.

Synodical Committee on
Race Relations
Karl J. Westerhof,
Executive Secretary

SCORR FINANCIAL REPORT

1975

Cash Balance January 1, 1975.....		\$18,880.08
INCOME:		
Quotas	\$72,755.92	
Scholarship Fund	7,679.65	
Miscellaneous	654.76	
		\$81,090.33
EXPENSES:		
Staff and Office		
Salaries	23,659.03	
Travel	566.02	
Office Expense	6,591.72	
Functioning		
Meetings	5,766.09	
Produce and Distribute Materials	5,033.85	
Conferences, Seminars, Workshops	5,342.60	
Alerting Church	1,164.65	
Research	5,000.00	
Promotion	2,705.46	
Council and Advice	1,062.93	
Reconciliation	2,913.67	
Legal and Economic Assistance (Including Scholarship)	25,744.07	
		\$85,550.09
Cash Balance — December 31, 1975		\$14,420.32

COMMENTARY ON FINANCIAL REPORT

General

As our narrative report and budget categories reflect, the mandate and work of SCORR have a continuing "ad hoc" character. Ongoing programming as is typical of other agencies is not typical of SCORR. SCORR has committed itself to working with and through existing agencies and programs, and, because of the nature of our mandate, we are committed to staying as flexible and responsive to emerging situations as is possible.

Office Expense

This item in the budget includes all office supplies, and equipment, as well as all such costs as office space, utilities, insurance, services for SCORR done in Coordinated Services, and SCORR's pro-rated share of all general Coordinated Services costs.

* * *

Under "functioning" we are indicating budget categories by using phrases taken from synod's instructions to SCORR in 1971 regarding how it should carry out its mandate.

Produce and Distribute Materials

A major item here is the newspaper SCORR puts out for urban and multi-racial churches and schools. Other items include, for example, production costs for resource materials and fees to writers.

Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

SCORR sometimes convenes a conference itself, sometimes shares with others in the costs of a conference, and sometimes bears the cost of the participation of individuals in conferences run by others. Such activities range widely in nature, from a conference for black Christian college students, to the Christian Reformed Chinese Ministries Conference, to workshops on race relations.

Alerting the Church to Existing Racial Problems

Costs here may include writers' fees, mailings, speakers' fees, etc.

Research

During its early years SCORR was engaged in activities traditionally described as "research." Though the nature of this activity has changed over time, we still use this term. As we use it now, the term describes our contracting with researchers to work with us on analyzing a particular issue or situation and producing materials which are in effect *resource* materials. As for example, the manuals on Indian missions and race relations in Christian education.

Promotions

This category represents primarily promotions for the scholarship fund.

Council and Advice

Costs here are, for example, those incurred by providing materials or consulting services. In effect this category often functions as a contingency category depending on requests in particular situations, as when the Chicago West Side Christian School Association needed help in hiring a consultant.

Serving as Agents of Reconciliation

Of course all that SCORR does should be described under this rubric. Some things seem particularly suited to being so described, as when the young people of the Madison Avenue CRC go on tour the expenses come partly from this category.

Legal and Economic Assistance

This category covers grants of various kinds, primarily scholarship grants. In 1975 scholarship grants totalled \$22,189.00.

REPORT 20
SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH SYNOD TRUSTEES

During the past year the Synodical Interim Committee, meeting corporately as the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees, and as the Christian Reformed Church in North America, has met regularly and carried on its regular work as well as the special mandates committed to it by the synods of the Christian Reformed Church. We are pleased to report on the work of the committee since the meeting of the last synod.

I. ORGANIZATION

Synod appointed the following members and alternates to the committee:

Regular	Alternate	End of Term
Rev. F. De Jong.....	Rev. W. Ackerman.....	1976
Mr. E. Z. Blankers.....	Mr. J. N. Snapper.....	1978
Dr. P. Y. De Jong.....	Rev. S. Kramer.....	1977
Mr. H. Vermeer.....	Dr. S. Kanis.....	1978
Dr. M. G. De Vries.....	Mr. J. Jonker.....	1977
Mr. W. Sytsema.....	Mr. W. Van Lopik.....	1976
Mr. F. Hollebeek.....	Mr. H. Petersen.....	1978
Mr. B. Sevensma.....	Mr. A. Van Tuinen.....	1977
Rev. O. Breen.....	Rev. J. Verbrugge.....	1977
Rev. A. Hoogstrate.....	Rev. C. Greenfield.....	1976
Dr. G. Stob.....	Rev. I. Apol.....	1978
Rev. P. Van Egmond.....	Rev. N. B. Knoppers.....	1977
Rev. J. Van Harmelen.....	Rev. L. Tamminga.....	1978
Mr. M. Van Wijk.....	Mr. P. Feddema.....	1977

Stated Clerk, Denominational Financial Coordinator, and Synodical Treasurer, *ex officio*

The committee elected the following officers of the Synodical Interim Committee: The Rev. Oliver Breen, president; the Rev. Arthur Hoogstrate, vice-president; Dr. Marvin De Vries, recording secretary. The Stated Clerk functions as the general secretary of the Synodical Interim Committee.

The committee appointed the officers along with Mr. Fred Hollebeek and the Rev. John Van Harmelen to serve as members of the Church Polity and Program subcommittee. Mr. Jerry Jonker serves as the general alternate.

The Finance Committee for the current year consists of Mr. Fred Hollebeek, chairman; Dr. Marvin De Vries, secretary; Mr. Jerry Jonker; Mr. Herman Petersen; Mr. William Sytsema; Mr. William Van Lopik; and Mr. Arthur Van Tuinen. The Stated Clerk and the Denominational Financial Coordinator are *ex officio* members of the Finance Committee.

The trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees respectively elected the following corporation officers: The Rev. Oliver Breen, president; the Rev. Arthur Hoogstrate, vice-president; the Rev. William P. Brink, secretary; Dr. Marvin G. De Vries, assistant secretary; Mr. Lester Ippel, treasurer; Mr. Ronald J. Moll, assistant treasurer.

The Rev. Arthur Hoogstrate was appointed to serve as alternate Stated Clerk for the year 1975-76.

II. NOMINATIONS FOR SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The SIC presents the following nominations to fill the terms that expire at this time.

District	Regular	Alternate
Far West (U.S.)...	Rev. Nelson Veltman.....	Rev. William Van Peursem
	Rev. Louis Dykstra.....	Rev. Tenis Van Kooten
Central U.S.....	*Mr. William Sytsema.....	Mr. Bernard Scholten
	Mr. Russell Fredricks.....	Mr. Albert Rodenhouse
Central U.S.....	Rev. Leonard Hofman.....	Rev. John Meppelink
	Rev. Alvin Vander Griend.....	Rev. Douglas VanderWall

*incumbent

The Synodical Interim Committee expresses its deep appreciation for the dedicated services of members whose terms have expired, but who are not eligible for reappointment: the Rev. Frank De Jong (and alternate Rev. Walter Ackerman), Mr. William Van Lopik (alternate for Mr. William Sytsema), Rev. Arthur Hoogstrate (and alternate Rev. Charles Greenfield).

III. COORDINATION

A. Program Studies

According to its mandate "the Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible to synod for the planning, coordination, and application in regard to the work of synod" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 74).

This mandate involves both the *programs* and *financial expenditures* of the agencies of synod. Therefore synod has stated that "the Synodical Interim Committee shall receive regular *program* and *financial reports* from the agencies of synod and approved by synod to enable the committee to evaluate budget requests in the light of *current projects and goals* and make appropriate recommendations to synod" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 74, 75, italics ours).

Coordination of effort, by synod's definition, involves reception and study of both the programs and financial reports of synodical agencies. It also involves *mutual consultation*. Synod has ruled that "the Synodical Interim Committee shall be *available for consultation* with standing committees and agencies to secure program coordination of the total denominational efforts," and that "the Stated Clerk, in consultation with the Synodical Interim Committee, *shall consult with* the denominational agencies and denominationally related agencies and alert synod regarding the coordination of effort and procedures for mutual cooperation" (Acts of Synod 1971, pp. 75, 77).

During the past year our boards and agencies have consulted often with the Synodical Interim Committee through the offices of the Stated Clerk and the Denominational Financial Coordinator. The representatives of the Synodical Interim Committee have consulted often with the denominational agencies and the denominationally related agencies. We have been grateful for the measure of cooperation and the spirit of unity which have been displayed by the agencies of synod. We are happy to say that in many cases measures have been taken to achieve better coordination of the programs of our agencies, and cooperative action has had an effect in furthering financial efficiency and economy.

The Synodical Interim Committee continues to study *programs* and *financial reports* of the agencies of synod and agencies approved by synod.

Complete charts have been compiled of all approved non-denominational agencies setting forth their purposes, programs, plans for the future and areas of overlapping. Special attention is given to these charts in the processing of applications for accreditation. Where agencies fail to operate within their programs or overlap or compete with programs of others, the Synodical Interim Committee confers with them in the interests of coordination.

Upon approval of agency programs, the Finance Committee of the Synodical Interim Committee studies all financial reports of accredited agencies, and confers with them where necessary before recommendations are sent to synod.

At the present time the Church Polity and Program Committee is compiling for the Synodical Interim Committee a complete analysis of the programs of all the boards and committees of synod. These program studies will detail the history of the boards, the mandates of synod, and the rules, regulations, "orders," charters and by-laws adopted by the agencies and approved by synod.

Through the executives of our boards and committees each agency will be asked to review these program studies and indicate whatever changes or additions ought to be made.

The completion of the Synodical Interim Committee program studies of our boards and committees will be helpful in gaining a full understanding of the scope of our denominational programs and will give a sound basis for the furtherance of program coordination.

The Synodical Interim Committee program studies will also enable the Synodical Interim Committee to carry out more efficiently the mandate of synod: "The Synodical Interim Committee shall receive regular program and financial reports from the agencies of synod . . . to enable the committee to evaluate budget requests in the light of current projects and goals and to make appropriate recommendations to synod."

B. Coordinated Services Manual

In accord with the instructions of the Synod of 1975 (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 87), the Synodical Interim Committee along with boards, agencies and committees have appointed "representatives to review

the Coordinated Services Manual of Procedure and Operations" . . . and present a report stating approval of a "jointly conceived Manual at Synod, 1976." The appointed committee is making good progress and we trust the report of approval will soon be completed for presentation to synod.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

During the course of this church year, several official publications have been completed by the Synodical Interim Committee in behalf of synod.

The Acts of Synod 1975, and the Agenda for Synod 1976, were edited and prepared by the Stated Clerk with the services of his staff and that of our Christian Reformed Publishing House.

The Yearbook 1976, was published under the editorship of the Stated Clerk and with the assistance of Mrs. Mary Braat of our staff and of the Publications Committee.

The Finance Committee once again updated the material for the Handbook for the Christian Reformed Church entitled, "Your Church in Action." This handbook was sent to every consistory of the Christian Reformed Church. It contains not only financial data but a description of the work carried on by all of our boards, agencies and recommended causes. It also contains a section on how your church operates to serve as a guide for understanding. The third section of this handbook contains the updated and synodically approved Minister's Salary Survey, giving assistance and guidance to all of our churches for the presentation of a fair salary to our pastors. A fourth section of the handbook presents to all our consistories a complete list of films, programs, and materials available from all of our agencies for use in their churches and societies. Many of our churches are using materials from other sources when better materials are available from our own boards and committees. Our consistories have been urged to inform their societies and organizations of the availability of the above materials.

In addition to the written material in "Your Church in Action," a new cassette/slide program was sent for use at congregational meetings or for the entire congregation, or for meetings of any of the organizations within the congregation, giving a picture of the scope of our denominational work. The Synodical Interim Committee is grateful that our churches have received the cassette/slide program with enthusiasm. They have urged that materials be provided for further congregational meetings as information pertaining to the denominational effort for our Lord Jesus Christ.

In accord with the decision of the Synod of 1975, the Stated Clerk edited and the Synodical Interim Committee distributed the report of the study committee presented to the Synod of 1975, entitled *Synodical Decisions on Doctrinal and Ethical Matters*. Two copies of this useful booklet have been sent to every consistory, one to be inserted into the handbook for consistories as the fifth section of that booklet. The other copy is to be distributed to members of the consistory.

Along with the looseleaf copies of the booklet on *Synodical Decisions on Doctrinal and Ethical Matters* an order blank was sent to all of our congregations for the pamphlet form of the material to be printed at a

cost of approximately fifty cents per copy. It is hoped that all of our consistories will avail themselves of this material and will urge their congregations or consistories to purchase copies of the booklet.

In addition to the materials above, the Stated Clerk's office has completed work on a completely revised Index for Synodical Decisions. This Index will present to all who are interested in the work of the church a very convenient form of study of any of the previous decisions of the synods of the Christian Reformed Church from 1857 to 1975.

V. APPOINTMENTS

During the past year the Synodical Interim Committee was asked to approve the following appointments to boards and committees where memberships have been vacated.

A. The Synodical Interim Committee approved the following appointment of synodical functionaries:

Boards	Classis	Appointment
Calvin Board of Trustees.....	Chicago North.....	Rev. W. Witte, delegate
		Rev. A. A. Mulder, alternate
Foreign Missions.....	Eastern Canada.....	Rev. M. Geleynse, alternate
	Columbia.....	Rev. J. Peterson, delegate
	Huron.....	Rev. J. K. Boersma, alternate
Home Missions.....	Calif. South.....	Rev. D. Negen, alternate
	Chatham.....	Rev. P. Kranenburg, alternate
	Columbia.....	Mr. J. Omta, alternate
	Illiana.....	Rev. H. Vanderwell, alternate
	Minnesota North.....	Rev. N. Gebben, alternate
Board of Publications.....	Sioux Center.....	Rev. J. Admiraal, delegate
		Rev. W. Verhoef, alternate
	Hamilton.....	Mr. S. De Jong, alternate
	Pacific N.W.....	Rev. K. Slager, alternate
CRWRC.....	Chicago North.....	Mr. A. Hoving, delegate
	Huron.....	Mr. Klumpenhouwer, delegate
		Mr. H. Exel, alternate
	Minnesota North.....	Mr. R. VandenEinde, alternate

B. The committee also made the following appointments:

- Education Committee of the Board of Publications—Mr. Ken Horjus
- Fund for Needy Churches—Mr. Ray Schaafsma
- SCORR—Board of Publications representative—Rev. Marvin Beelen
- RES non-voting delegate—Rev. John Van Ryn
- Unordained Employees' Pension Committee—CRWRC representative
- Mr. Merle Grevengoed

C. The committee made the following decision concerning the membership of the committee on "Implications of Guidelines for Office and Ordination of Layworkers in Evangelism." The material cited is from the Church Polity and Program Committee minutes of July 16, 1975.

"A letter is received from the Rev. T. C. Van Kooten, chairman of the study committee on 'Implications of Guidelines for Office and Ordination of Layworkers in Evangelism.' The Rev. Van Kooten calls our attention to the fact that the Appointments Committee of the Synod of 1975 made a change in its committee membership, substituting the name of the Rev. Herman Leestma for that of the Rev.

Stanley De Vries. Apparently the Appointments Committee thought that because the Rev. Stanley De Vries had moved, it was wise to replace him.

"The study committee, through the Rev. Van Kooten, unanimously requests that synod retain the membership of the Rev. Stanley De Vries through the action of the Synodical Interim Committee. This request is made upon the following grounds:

1. No request was made by the study committee for replacement.
2. The committee is near the completion of its report which must be presented to the Stated Clerk by February 1976.
3. No added expense will be involved in retaining the Rev. Stanley De Vries because at this point the rest of the work can be accomplished through correspondence.
4. The addition of a new member to the committee would seriously hamper the work of the committee because it would demand the introduction and orientation of a new member at a very late time.

"In view of the fact that recommendations of study committees have precedence at synod and the factors listed above, the Church Polity and Program Committee decides that the Rev. Stanley De Vries shall be retained as a member of the committee on 'Implications of Guidelines for Office and Ordination for Layworkers in Evangelism.'

"A letter of explanation will be sent to both the Rev. Herman Leestma and the Rev. Stanley De Vries, with copies to be sent to the study committee chairman."

The Synodical Interim Committee requests synod's approval of this decision.

VI. STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk has edited and prepared for printing all official publications of the synod. He has carried on all the correspondence required by the actions of the Synod of 1975 and preparatory to the meeting of the Synod of 1976. All correspondence of the denomination both within and without our denomination during the interim between synod is handled through the office of the Stated Clerk. All correspondence, surveys, questionnaires, materials, reports, minutes and other materials produced for synod have been appropriately filed.

With respect to the standing and study committees of synod, the Stated Clerk has informed all persons who have been appointed by synod and has provided them with relevant data concerning their assignments. Minutes and/or progress reports have been received from all the committees appointed by synod, and the Stated Clerk has kept the Synodical Interim Committee advised as to the progress of the various committees.

Reports and minutes of our classes have been sent to the Synodical Office by the stated clerks of the various classes. These have been surveyed by the Stated Clerk and the Synodical Interim Committee has been kept abreast of the various decisions, activities and problems of the denomination. The Stated Clerk has given advice and information

with respect to the Church Order and the decisions of synod to committees of synod, the classes, consistories and individuals. Correspondence reaches the office of the Stated Clerk also from many sources outside of our denomination. In every case the Stated Clerk provides information and assistance in accord with the request. The average day in the Stated Clerk's office brings many requests by telephone and by mail requesting advice and information. In difficult or weighty matters, the advice of the Stated Clerk is given after consultation with the Synodical Interim Committee.

The Stated Clerk serves as an ex officio member of the Interchurch Relations Committee. He has represented our church at interchurch gatherings and in numerous meetings with representatives of other denominations. The Stated Clerk has responded to invitations to speak, to preach, and to meet with various classes, congregations, and groups. He counts it a privilege to represent the Christian Reformed Church and its witness for the Lord within our membership and wherever opportunity has presented itself. He has represented the Christian Reformed Church through the press and for the news media. He has also had opportunities to represent the Christian Reformed Church with members and with officers of many other denominations.

The Stated Clerk has implemented the decisions of the Synod of 1975 with respect to the observance of the United States bicentennial celebration by the churches of our denomination in the United States. Announcements of the program for the observance of the Day of Prayer on March 5, the Good Friday Day of Witness on April 16, and the Day of Worship on July 4, 1976, have been sent to all of our churches. Announcements have been and will be made in our church papers.

VII. DENOMINATIONAL FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

A. *General*

The organizational procedure of this office is still very much in process of formation. Coordination of the supportive services of the agencies will, hopefully, reach its conclusion through the acceptance of a Coordinated Services Manual by all boards and agencies. Coordination of programs of the agencies is in the process of research and study. A sample of the format, resulting from such research and study, has been reviewed and approved by the Synodical Interim Committee. These program studies will be submitted to each board and agency for their input and approval as part of our overall coordinating efforts.

B. *Coordinated Services* (Supportive)

The activities of this cooperative endeavor are under the capable management of Mr. Ronald J. Moll, general manager. In the past year approximately \$200,000 worth of work consisting mainly of mailing (bulk and ordinary), duplicating, purchasing, inventory control, telephone communication and other miscellaneous services were performed for the agencies, thereby eliminating such work by the agencies on an individual basis. These coordinative efforts are obviously productive of savings to all concerned. Further expansion of

these efforts are contemplated in the near future and upon final approval and implementation of the full operating manual.

C. Denominational Building

The management of the denominational building and grounds by the Synodical Interim Committee is now well organized. Mr. Ron Moll is the building general manager under the supervision of the DFC. Our agency occupants are charged monthly for their occupancy based on the true cost of building and grounds, maintenance, janitorial services, utilities, insurance, management overhead and other miscellaneous charges, allocated in ratio of agency's square foot space to entire building square foot area. During the year 1975 the combined agencies paid an occupancy cost in the total sum of \$68,100 or at a rate of \$1.70 per square foot annually. Average occupancy cost for similar office space in the area would amount to approximately \$7.00 per square foot.

The building and grounds are in excellent condition. We are pleased to report that orderliness and neatness are practiced by all occupants.

The detailed manual of management and operations of the building is now separated from the Coordinated Services Manual and is now the adopted Denominational Building Operations Manual of CRC in NA, the building title holder, as previously approved by the Synodical Interim Committee.

D. Ministers' Compensation Survey

The survey of ministers' compensation on a continuing basis as mandated by synod was commenced in December 1975, several months earlier than previous surveys. To date we have responses from approximately 48% of our ministers. In order to fairly analyze and compare to Bureau of Labor Cost of Living Standards in each area of the country on a good average basis, we need at least 60% of the responses of the churches in each classis. Report on the survey will, subject to sufficient response, be made as usual in supplemental report to synod when our study is complete. Completed surveys received to date indicate cost of living increases in most instances.

The Ministers' Compensation Survey data is being used by our Ministers' Pension Committee to assist them in their continuing actuarial and other studies of retirement benefits. (See Ministers' Pension Committee Report.)

Many of our ministers are concerned about their cost of housing requirements upon retirement when most of them will be minus housing. Both this office and the Ministers' Pension Committee are in the process of trying to reach a solution on this problem. Further information on this subject will be supplied in our supplemental report of the survey.

E. Tax Exemption

1. The subject of tax exemption of our churches, agencies and other entities becomes increasingly important. The Denominational Financial Coordinator as representative of the denomination recently

attended a three day Consultation on Churches and Tax Law, attended by 91 representatives of various denominations throughout the United States consisting of clergy, financial officers, attorneys, high ranking officials of the IRS Washington D.C. office.

The consultation provided everyone attending a broad but concise view on a wide range of topics related to tax exemption on the federal level under 501(c)(3) and Section 107(c) of the Internal Revenue Code and on the state and local level as it pertains to tax exemption of church properties.

While no statements were issued and no resolutions adopted by the Consultation group, the following points of general agreement emerging from the dialogue are highly significant to our churches and agencies:

- a) Churches, as distinct from religious organizations in general, are currently afforded unique standing in tax law, and church representatives should work collectively in developing strategies for countering the "chilling effect of government regulation."
- b) Churches and their agencies are threatened by governments on all levels with a narrowing of tax exemption; threats are more severe for church-related agencies (such as publishing operations, student centers and office complexes) than for what the U.S. Tax Code calls "churches, conventions and associations of churches."
- c) Questions about exemption are complicated by the absence of legal definitions of "church," "religion," "exclusively religious purpose" and other terms (such as "substantial" in the Tax Code restriction on lobby activity by exempt organizations).
- d) Churches, in carrying out what they see as their religious mission, should not be intimidated by possible legal and tax implications, even by the threat of punitive action.
- e) The consultation provided the bases for a network of continuing contact in assessing and reacting to tax laws.

Synod is informed that the Highlights from Consultation on Churches and Tax Law prepared by the DFC are available to our churches and that the office of DFC may be contacted in this connection. Also he is available to help clarify other tax exemption problems that the churches may encounter.

2. Our Internal Revenue Code Group Exemption Ruling under 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code dated February 28, 1975, calls for annual updating. We have complied with the rules with the assistance of our attorney, Mr. Berton Sevensma.

3. The status of our United States churches and classes with respect to recognition under the Group Exemption ruling and the mandatory requirements of IRS Employer Identification Number is as follows:

Churches:

Listed as recognized under 501 (c) (3) Group Exemption Ruling.....	485
Not listed as recognized under 501(c)(3) Group Exemption Ruling.....	120

Due to:	
Lack of Church ID Number, or.....	65
Lack of Consent to be listed under	
Group Exemption or.....	15
Both	40
Classes:	
Listed as recognized under 501(c)(3) Group	
Exemption Ruling	14
Not listed as recognized under 501(c)(3)	
Group Exemption Ruling.....	14
Due to:	
Lack of Church ID Number, or.....	7
Lack of consent to be listed	
under Group Exemption, or.....	5
Both	2

It is recommended that synod urge our churches and classes to maintain contact with the DFC's office relative to Tax Exemption problems and, by all means, to comply with mandatory requirements of IRS as to their individual Employer Identification Numbers. Recognition under Group Exemption Ruling, while optional, is nevertheless necessary for many reasons, particularly for assistance to church contributors whose gifts to the church may be questioned by an IRS tax examiner.

4. This report will be supplemental with other data for synod upon completion of various financial and other reports; however, a summarized Consolidated Balance Sheet and Statement of Income and Disbursements for year 1975 on Christian Reformed Church in North America and its subsidiary accounts is made part of this report. F. In view of the fact that the term of office of the Denominational Financial Coordinator expires this year, the Synodical Interim Committee recommends to synod that Mr. Anthony Vroon be reappointed as Denominational Financial Coordinator for a four year term.

VIII. FOR SYNODICAL ATTENTION

A. *Declaration of Candidacy*

The Synod of 1975 decided "that the Executive Committee be authorized to certify to the Stated Clerk that the two candidates (John Looman, John Klooster) have completed the academic requirement; and that the Stated Clerk be authorized thereupon to announce their candidacy in the church papers" (Acts of Synod 1975, page 13).

On August 26, 1975, in keeping with the above decision, the secretary of the Board of Trustees sent a letter to the Stated Clerk certifying that the academic requirements of the above candidates had been met and they might, therefore, be declared candidates for the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church.

In accord with the decision of synod, the Stated Clerk placed an announcement which appeared in The Banner of September 12, 1975, declaring the candidacy of Mr. Klooster and Mr. Looman. How-

ever, in the same issue and on the same page, there appeared an announcement of calls extended, noting that two churches, Maranatha-Woodbridge, Toronto, Ontario and Faith, Grand Rapids, Michigan, had already extended a call to Candidate John Klooster.

In the next Banner, September 19, 1975, along with the picture of the candidate for the ministry, Mr. John Looman, an announcement was attached saying "Mr. Looman has already accepted a call to Comstock Park, Michigan. The above is being run because information regarding him has not previously appeared. "Mr. John Looman was examined by Classis Grand Rapids North on September 16, 1975.

It would appear from the above information that there was some misunderstanding or problem with the decision of synod. Apparently at least three of our churches called the two candidates involved before they were publicly declared eligible for a call.

The Synodical Interim Committee decided to call this matter to the attention of synod, suggesting that action be taken to prevent such an occurrence in the future.

B. Ratification of Changes in Article 59 of the Church Order

The Synodical Interim Committee calls the attention of synod to the fact that action will be needed to ratify revision in Article 59 of the Church Order adopted by the Synod of 1975.

The revisions which need ratification are an amendment to Article 59, b, "Deleting the second sentence which reads: 'the same rules shall apply to those coming from other denominations with which the Christian Reformed Church maintains full ecclesiastical fellowship'"; and Article 59, c, so that it will read: "confessing members coming from churches in ecclesiastical fellowship shall be admitted to communicant membership upon presentation of certificates or statements of membership after the consistory has satisfied itself concerning the doctrine and conduct of the members. Persons coming from other denominations shall be admitted to communicant membership only after the consistory has examined them concerning doctrine and conduct. The consistory shall determine in each case whether to admit them directly or by public reaffirmation or public profession of faith. The names shall be announced to the congregation for approval."

The revisions of the Synod of 1975 along with the grounds for their action appear in the Acts of Synod 1975, pages 40 and 41.

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That synod honor the request of the Synodical Interim Committee that its president, the Rev. Oliver Breen, along with the Stated Clerk and Denominational Financial Coordinator, represent the committee at synod when matters pertaining to SIC are discussed; and that Mr. Fred Hollebeek and Dr. Marvin De Vries, chairman and secretary of the Finance Committee, also represent the committee when matters of finance are discussed.

B. That synod approve the interim appointments made to various boards and committees by the SIC (Section V, A, B, C).

C. That synod urge all of our ministers to cooperate in submitting salary questionnaires promptly and accurately to make the Ministers' Compensation Survey data as helpful as possible. (See Section VII, D.)

D. That synod urge our United States churches and classes to maintain contact with the DFC's office relative to tax exemption problems; and, by all means, to comply with mandatory requirements of IRS as to their individual Employer Identification Numbers. (See Section VII, E.)

E. That synod take appropriate action to clarify and maintain its rules re the date of candidates' eligibility for call (See Section VIII, A.)

F. That synod take action with respect to the ratification of the changes in Church Order Article 59 adopted by the Synod of 1975. (See Section VIII, B.)

G. That synod reappoint Mr. Anthony Vroon as Denominational Financial Coordinator for a four year term. (See Section VII, F.)

William P. Brink, Stated Clerk

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET

CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

DECEMBER 31, 1975

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash in Banks	\$15,811.61	
Accounts Receivable	28,917.82	
Inventories	<u>7,707.57</u>	
		\$52,437.00

FIXED ASSETS

Land	\$ 375,000.00	
Building	1,427,198.50	
Equipment, Furniture and Fixtures	<u>69,966.51</u>	
		1,872,165.01

CONTRACT RECEIVABLE

Board of Publication - for Debt Reduction		<u>119,000.00</u>
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TOTAL ASSETS

\$2,043,602.01

LIABILITIES

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 9,452.34	
Wages, Insurance and Payroll Taxes	1,618.95	
Inter-Agency Loans	<u>46,259.05</u>	
		\$57,330.34

LONG-TERM LIABILITY

First Mortgage Bonds - Denominational Building		<u>695,500.00</u>
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TOTAL LIABILITIES

752,830.34

EXCESS OF ASSETS OVER LIABILITIES

1,290,771.67

\$2,043,602.01

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF INCOME AND DISBURSEMENTS
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1975

INCOME

ORDINARY INCOME		
Denominational Quotas - Synodical Office-Expense	\$208,875.38	
- Denominational Building	52,891.97	
Interest and Miscellaneous Income	12,492.59	
Income from Agencies - For Services Rendered	213,864.73	
- For Building Occupancy	<u>68,085.84</u>	
TOTAL ORDINARY INCOME		\$556,210.51
OTHER INCOME		
Inter-agency Repayments		57,010.97
Proceeds of Sale of First Mortgage Bonds - Denominational Bldg.		<u>695,500.00</u>
TOTAL INCOME		<u>\$1,308,721.48</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

ORDINARY EXPENSES		
Staff Salaries and Wages	\$ 68,346.89	
Fringe Benefits	9,402.94	
Dues and Subscriptions	8,141.60	
Staff Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses	2,923.11	
Synodical Expense	81,881.51	
Printing Expense	51,393.97	
Church in Action Promotion	11,971.06	
Legal and Audit Expenses	3,401.07	
Office Expenses	30,367.32	
Interest on Bond Issue and Trustee's Fees	40,624.42	
Interest on Construction Loan	19,154.06	
Disbursement for Inter-Agency - Services	213,864.73	
- Building Occupancy	<u>68,085.84</u>	
TOTAL ORDINARY EXPENSES		\$609,558.52
OTHER DISBURSEMENTS		
Inter-agency Transfers		5,884.16
Architect Fees		2,476.07
Board of Publications (Proceeds of Bond issue for Debt Retirement)		<u>684,500.00</u>
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS		<u>\$1,302,418.75</u>
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER DISBURSEMENTS		<u>\$6,302.73</u>
DEFICIT - JANUARY 1, 1975	(\$11,187.07)	
LESS: EXCESS OF INCOME OVER DISBURSEMENTS	<u>6,302.73</u>	
DEFICIT - DECEMBER 31, 1975		<u>(\$4,884.34)</u>

REPORT 21

UNORDAINED EMPLOYEES' PENSION FUND

Your committee continues to supervise the administration of the Unordained Employees' Pension Fund which serves eligible employees of all of the denominational boards, employees of Rehoboth Christian Hospital, Christian Laymen's League, some Classical Home Mission Committees, and several churches. The Relief Fund administered by your committee continues to provide support for former employees or their dependents in cases where there is no pension or a pension is inadequate.

The committee is currently studying a proposal to further improve minimum pensions and the possibility of a disability benefit program. These studies are not complete, and no recommendations are submitted in connection therewith.

The term of committee member Al Bielema terminates this year and he is not eligible for reappointment. The term of Donald Oosterhouse will be completed this year and he is eligible for one additional term. Under the rotation plan approved by Synod of 1974, the term of Don Zwier, as representative of the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions will be completed this year, and he is to be replaced by a representative of Calvin College.

A financial report for 1975 is submitted herewith.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1975

STATEMENT OF FUND BALANCES (CASH BASIS)
UNORDAINED EMPLOYEES' PENSION COMMITTEE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

	PENSION FUND	RELIEF FUND
FUND BALANCES - 1-1-75	<u>\$67,258.33</u>	<u>\$12,764.55</u>
ADDITIONS		
Premiums from employing agencies	\$266,812.08	
Occidental Life Insurance Company of California - experience rebate (Life Plan)	\$25,800.00	
Interest on investments	_____	\$ 4,575.18
TOTAL ADDITIONS	\$292,612.08	\$ 4,575.18
DEDUCTIONS		
Occidental Life Insurance Company of California - current premiums	\$266,792.08	

Audit expense	325.00	
Miscellaneous expense	41.03	
Relief payments		\$ 9,583.50
TOTAL DEDUCTIONS	\$267,158.11	\$ 9,583.50
NET ADDITIONS (DEDUCTIONS)	\$ 25,453.97	(\$ 5,008.32)
FUND BALANCES 12-31-75	\$ <u>92,712.30</u>	\$ <u>7,756.23</u>

BALANCE SHEET (CASH BASIS)
UNORDAINED EMPLOYEES' PENSION COMMITTEE
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
December 31, 1975

ASSETS:

Cash		\$22,974.61
Accounts Receivable from participating agencies		11,993.92
Investments - at cost:		
Certificates of deposit	\$40,500.00	
Calvin College and Seminary 8% notes	\$25,000.00	<u>65,500.00</u>
		\$100,468.53

LIABILITIES:

None

EQUITY:

Fund balances:		
Pension Fund		\$ 92,712.30
Relief Fund		<u>7,756.23</u>
		\$100,468.53

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY SYNOD

1. Your committee requests that any member of the committee be accorded the privilege of the floor when the recommendations for action are considered by synod.
2. Your committee recommends that Lawrence D. Bos be appointed to the committee for a three-year term to replace Mr. Al Bielema. Mr. Bos is a member of Mayfair Christian Reformed Church and is vice president of the consistory. He is 44 years old and a chartered life underwriter. He has been active in the life insurance business for his entire working career.
3. Consistent with the desires of Calvin College, the committee recommends that Mr. Lester Ippel be appointed to the committee as the representative of Calvin College.

4. Your committee recommends that Donald Oosterhouse be reappointed to the committee.
5. Mr. R. Baukema, who was the representative of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee on the committee, has resigned and Mr. Merle Grevengoed has taken his place with the approval of the Synodical Interim Committee.

Unordained Employees' Pension Fund Committee

Donald F. Oosterhouse, chairman

Don Zwier, secretary

Al Bielema

Merle Grevengoed

Al Van Zee

REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

REPORT 22

AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

America's Bicentennial is here. Communities across the nation are planning how they will participate in one of the greatest celebrations this country has ever seen - and so are the churches of this great land.

The American Bible Society can help them. Although forty years younger than our nation, the ABS (born in 1816) grew up with the fledgling government and made sure that its citizens always had available copies of God's Word to guide them.

Today 160 years later the goal of the ABS is still the same—the translation, publication and distribution of the Scriptures in the language of the people without doctrinal note or comment and without profit. As a vital service agency to the churches the ABS works with the United Bible Societies around the world to provide the Scriptures to more people than ever before and in the languages they can readily read and understand. At least one book of the Bible has now been translated into 1576 languages. The number of Bibles, New Testaments, Portions and Selections distributed throughout the world annually runs into the hundreds of millions of copies with the Bible Societies utilizing every known technique of the communications media to reach all of the people who want and desperately need the saving knowledge of his Word.

Here are a few of the highlights of what the ABS and its partners in the Bible cause did in 1975 to meet the challenge.

Translation and Publication Update 1975

A milestone in the development of the common language translation will be reached in the fall of 1976 when the entire Bible in Today's English Version is published. To be released during the 160th anniversary of the American Bible Society, this new Bible will be the society's gift to America. The TEV Bible is a culmination of years of precise, painstaking translation work. It makes available for the first time the entire sacred text to people in a style of language they most easily understand.

Since translation work began on the Old Testament in 1967, ten Old Testament books have been published. The most recent one, Exodus, was released in January 1975.

In 1975, the ABS gave support to 562 translation projects around the globe. Highlights of these many projects were the completion of the New Testament in Today's Chinese and the New Testament in Today's Arabic Versions.

Good News for New Readers — Two Years and Growing

The dilemma of the new reader unable to improve his basic reading skills for lack of reading materials, is a problem all too familiar to the

Bible societies. Many governmental programs aimed at improving the literacy of the people are falling short of their goals. The societies therefore realize, as do the governments in many countries, that if "bridge materials" such as Good News for New Readers Scripture Literacy Selections are not available, most of these new readers will return to illiteracy and may never again have the opportunity to read God's Word for themselves.

This is where Good News for New Readers has stepped in. Its New Reader Scripture Selections, designed in several reading levels, take a new reader from the primer level to a reading skill that will enable him to understand Scriptures already available in his or her own language. In the past two years translation of Scripture Literacy Selections has been undertaken in a total of 247 languages. Translation of selections in Group A has been completed in 181 languages to date, and translation of the complete series of selections has been finished in Arabic, English, Nepali, Si-Swati, Sundanese and Spanish. Both church and government interest in this program has increased rapidly around the world, and though Good News for New Readers is only two years old, it has already made its mark among those who believe in God's Word and support the Bible cause. Here are a few examples:

North America/Europe

There are as many as twenty million people in the United States alone who want to read his Word but can't. Thanks to Good News for New Readers, Scripture Literacy Selections are being brought to new readers in the first three levels of English and Spanish, as well as the first two levels in French and the first level in Portuguese. Other languages now in translation include Navajo and Serbo-Coation.

Africa

On a continent with the fastest growing Christian population anywhere, Good News for New Readers is at work in fifty-three African languages spoken in almost half of the African countries. Scripture Literacy Selections are being distributed in twenty-one of these languages at the first level and in nineteen at the second level.

"A Way To The Word"

In September of 1975, the ABS released an exciting sequel to "New Light, New Hope," entitled "A Way To The Word." This fine color film photographed on location in Brazil, Bolivia, Guatemala and Mexico, shows vividly how these Scripture Literacy Selections are changing the lives of many new readers in South America and around the world. Since its release a few short months ago, the popularity of "A Way To The Word" has far exceeded all expectations.

Scripture Distribution

Scripture distribution in the United States during 1975 reached a total of 109,469,781 copies. This represents 41% of the total Scriptures distributed worldwide.

By taking advantage of opportunities for distribution when they arose, the ABS reached countless numbers of individuals, churches, and other local organizations with copies of Scripture. One such opportunity came

with the start of America's Freedom Train on a twenty-one month, 17,000 mile journey around the United States. At many stops along the way friends of the Bible Society presented copies of Scripture to the city's leading citizens and officials, as well as to the train's long line of visitors.

Another popular method of distribution was through ABS Scripture Dispensers. These dispenser boxes, containing quantities of Scripture Selections, were placed in many business establishments, recreation areas and other public places.

Good News for Modern Man

Nearly ten years ago the distinctly new translation of the New Testament called "Good News for Modern Man" was published as a tool for evangelistic outreach. Now on the eve of its tenth anniversary, distribution of this New Testament in Today's English Version has passed the fifty million mark, an achievement unmatched in United States paperback publishing history. The symbolic fifty millionth copy was presented to the Most Reverend Dr. F. Donal Coggan, 101st Archbishop of Canterbury and President of the United Bible Societies, at Bible House on January 13, 1976.

New Publications

The Bible Society expanded its service to the handicapped in 1975, with the production of a special Scripture Selection for the deaf. The new selection, "Jesus Stops a Storm," translates Mark 4:35-41 in Signed English. In November, the Bible Society's new publication, "The ABC's of Proverbs," became the most popular addition to the series of children's Scriptures that the ABS has been publishing in recent years.

Scripture Imprints

Custom and imprinted Scriptures constitute a significant part of the society's national distribution program. In 1975 alone, more than eight and a half million copies of new Scripture imprints were produced. Requested especially by individuals and church organizations, these Scriptures are circulated in a variety of life situations, including sporting events, state and county fairs, programs of evangelical outreach, and more.

Bible-a-Month Club

Members of the Bible-a-Month Club continued their support of Bible Society work in 1975. By year's end, more than 226,000 members were contributing monthly and helping to get the Word into the hands of those who desperately needed it.

Volunteer Activities

The total number of volunteer men and women serving in the Bible cause for the ABS now stands at 14,367. They are at work in all parts of the country, bringing Bible Society Scriptures to churches, hospitals, nursing homes, schools and places of business. Volunteers now operate 1,347 Scripture Courtesy Centers, with at least one Courtesy Center in each of the fifty states. Eleven are operating in Alaska, the northernmost Courtesy Center located at Point Barrow in Alaska's northern shore. Throughout the southern states 377,237 Scriptures were distributed at thirty-nine local and state fairs in the month of September alone.

Armed Forces

One of the highlights of last year's activities was the presentation of a specially embossed ship's pulpit Bible to the commanding officer of the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Nimitz. The society also donated 2,500 New Testaments for distribution to the ship's crew. This most recent Scripture presentation carries on a tradition that has resulted in the distribution of more than twenty million copies of Scriptures to men and women serving in America's Armed Forces since 1817.

Bible Society Activities Abroad

The American Bible Society contributed over \$5,600,000 to the UBS World Service Budget in 1975, giving crucial support to the Bible cause in many other parts of the world. More and more of these funds are being used by Bible Societies in Latin America and Africa to undertake local production of the Scriptures. This means new Bible Society translations are reaching people more quickly, and many costly administration and importation obstacles are being by-passed. World Scripture distribution by the United Bible Societies totalled 156,445,597 copies in 1975, including 2,231,736 Bibles, 3,721,255 New Testaments, 15,822,956 Portions, and 134,669,650 Selections.

Here are just a few ways in which the Bible Society is assisting the missionary activities of the Christian Reformed Church in countries abroad.

Brazil

For Brazil's well known literacy organization, MOBREAL, the Good News for New Readers Scripture Literacy Selections have become the best material available to give to its students just learning to read. Already, 600,000 selections have been distributed and more in Group "B" are expected soon. Meanwhile, translation work continues on the Common Language Version Old Testament in Portuguese. The Book of Proverbs in this new translation was published just recently in an edition of 100,000 copies.

Nigeria

The year 1975 witnessed the Bible Society of Nigeria's tenth anniversary celebration, as well as encouraging progress in Scripture translations. New Reader Scripture Selections have now been produced in Nupe at levels "A" and "B" and translation of these selections in the languages of Tiv and Efik has begun. In addition to these, the BSN published 3,000 New Testaments in Eggon in an illustrated edition.

Philippines

Early in 1975 the common language Hiligaynon New Testament was published and distributed after years of translation work. Four million people in the central and southern portions of the country will benefit from the new "common language" translation. Translation work on the Old Testament is continuing and the entire Bible could be ready for distribution by early 1977.

Eastern Europe Update

Eastern Europe has posed special problems for the United Bible Societies in its efforts to provide Scriptures for the millions of people ur-

gently in need of them. The work of getting the Word into these eager hands is going on quietly and steadily, and with encouraging results.

In the last decade almost four and one half million copies of Scripture have been distributed throughout the East European countries, and by the end of 1975 there were more opportunities than ever before.

In Poland, for instance, a vigorous program of distribution has developed and with the release of the new Polish "Millenium" Bible, a long needed addition to the less easily understood Gdansk Bible published 343 years ago, Bible work is receiving an even greater impetus.

Where the Bible societies are unable to participate directly in the translation and production of the Scriptures into the languages of the people, they have proven of valuable service by providing paper and production equipment for many projects. The first edition of the "Millenium" Bible in Poland, and the recent edition of 50,000 copies of the Bible in an updated Rumanian translation were all printed on paper supplied by the Bible societies.

Vietnamese Refugees - Filled With Hope.

As a result of the turmoil in Southeast Asia, 130,000 refugees fled the area and came to the United States, creating almost overnight a new audience for the witnessing of Christ and the distribution of his Word. In quick response to the urgent requests of church groups working in the refugee centers, the ABS printed 50,000 copies each of two Scripture selections in Vietnamese on the theme of hope. Copies of the New Testament in Today's English Version and New Reader Scripture Selections were also distributed throughout the different centers as aids in teaching the refugees the English language.

Financial Support

For the American Bible Society and its sister organizations around the world, 1975 was a year of many outstanding events and developments, a few of which are highlighted above. Yet, inflation, the effects of which are felt in the lives of every individual today, has continued to hamper the progress of Bible Society activity. Higher costs have led to a postponement of Bible Society projects in many countries around the world. The executive committee of the United Bible Societies recently pledged \$11.2 million for the support of its worldwide program in 1976. But these funds are not enough. More are needed if the society is to continue its task of getting God's Word into the language of the people where this is both necessary and urgent. The ABS, therefore, urgently requires continued and increased support from the churches.

Contribution from churches in 1975 increased 8.6% over last year to a total of \$1,453,920. For this, the American Bible Society is especially grateful. Financial support from the Christian Reformed Church totalled \$11,832 in 1975, an increase of approximately thirteen per cent over 1974.

1965	\$11,000	1970	\$11,446
1966	11,359	1971	8,346
1967	8,366	1972	10,123
1968	10,804	1973	9,405
1969	10,882	1974	10,499
		1975	11,832

In the face of increasing opportunities for sharing the Word of God, and the growth in the programs, we should set our goal for 1976 above the level of support we gave the society in 1975.

More importantly, we must continue to pray that the Bible Society, in partnership with the Christian Reformed Church and with all willing Christians around the world, may fulfill even more effectively its task of bringing the Word of God to all those who ask for it and who need it.

Douglas Bush
Synodical Representative

REPORT 23

CANADIAN BIBLE SOCIETY

The Canadian Bible Society knows what its purpose is. Its sole purpose is to translate, publish, and distribute the Scriptures so that anyone who wants a copy of the Scriptures can have one. To this end it carries on its work in Canada, and through the United Bible Societies in some 150 other countries.

In Canada — Total Scripture distribution in Canada through the society during 1975 numbered 3,619,793 units, an increase of 4.65% over 1974. Significant gains in distribution were made in Bibles and Testaments in French, Canada's second official language. However, Canada has many other languages among its native and immigrant population. To serve this diverse population, the CBS has established over three hundred stores and depots, and in 1975 provided Scriptures in ninety-two different languages, a record number for the society.

In national distribution projects, 39,064 Bibles and Testaments were given at Citizen Courts to people who became Canadian citizens during the year. Records and tapes supplied to the blind numbered 3,235, and students of ancient Hebrew and Greek were given 197 Hebrew and 681 Greek Testaments as the Bible Society's way of encouraging the study of these languages.

The Scripture distribution objective for 1976 is 4,370,000, a twenty percent increase over 1975. The CBS is cooperating with "Aide Olympique Chrétienne," an agency representing forty evangelical Christian organizations in coordinating various ministries planned for Montreal during the summer of 1976. The CBS is committed to supplying all of the Scriptures desired by these organizations. It is preparing special Scripture selections both in French and English for mass distribution at the Olympics and across Canada in 1976. There will be Gospels available free in every major language for Olympic participants.

Worldwide — The CBS cooperates with the fifty-five other national Bible Societies under the banner of the United Bible Societies. The 1976 World Service Budget of the UBS is \$11.2 million, with 1.5 million budgeted for translation work. The CBS has pledged to contribute \$1.1 million to the UBS during 1976.

Among the special projects accepted by the CBS in 1975 was supplying more than \$225,000 for translation and Scripture provision to Communist countries of eastern Europe. Where possible, Bible production is carried on within the country for which they are intended, with the Bible Society supplying the paper and other materials needed. In other cases completed Scriptures are imported through normal legal channels. Only in Albania is there a prohibition on all Bible work. All other countries permit either local production and sale or the importing of Scriptures for distribution.

Conclusion — The work of the Bible Society is not limited by opportunities for effective Scripture distribution, but the limits are set by the funds which are available. I have been impressed with the careful stewardship which the Bible Society exercises over the funds entrusted to it, and with the integrity with which it carries on its national and worldwide ministry. As your representative, I believe the Canadian Bible Society to be worthy not only of the continued prayer and financial support of our Canadian people, but of increased support. I would also encourage our Canadian churches to become more familiar with the variety of publications and audio-visuals available through the district secretaries and book stores in their areas. Our congregations would benefit by seeing again the power of the Holy Spirit working through the printed Scriptures as they are distributed to those who have never before read them in their own language.

Kenneth Verhulst
Synodical Representative

REPORT 24

CHRISTIAN LAYMEN'S LEAGUE

This is my first report to synod as a representative of the Christian Laymen's League. Already, I have become impressed with the dedication of these men; and therefore, I am pleased to present the following summary of the purposes and programs of the League.

Purpose

The purpose of the Christian Laymen's League can best be defined as it is set forth in their Articles of Incorporation:

"to promote increased Christian endeavors among its members in all of life, to further Christian fellowship, to work in association with denominational agencies in furthering the church of Christ, to help promote and further the evangelistic program of the Christian Reformed Church and agencies approved by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church, in the furtherance of the kingdom of God, to motivate and activate the laity of the Christian Reformed Church to effectively share Christ with others."

Programs

If such ambitious purposes and goals are to be attained, the League must program itself to make these ideals a reality. Three major programs have been developed to assist the League in promoting increased Christian endeavors to help to further the evangelistic programs of churches, and to motivate and activate lay people to a greater involvement in sharing the Gospel with others. These programs are *Christian television for children*, *back-yard Bible clubs*, and the *distribution of Bibles in Mexico*.

Progress

Christian Television for Children

During the past four years, the League has witnessed to millions of boys and girls in America on twenty-six television outlets which included ABC, NBC, and CBS affiliates. Our show was known as the *Blast Off* show. It was a space-oriented, segmented, fast-moving show which captivated young minds and kept them moving about from one segment to another, while they were constantly being reminded concerning the demands of Christ for their young lives.

How did this assist the League in furthering the evangelistic programs of churches? During one year of our television ministry, we enrolled more than ten thousand boys and girls into our Bible club programs. An average of eighty percent of these children completed the course and were encouraged to attend a local church and Sunday school. In the Michigan area, churches were visited and names presented to pastors for personal follow-through. In Hesperia, Michigan alone more than sixty children were added to the Baptist church as a direct result of our tele-

vision Bible club ministry. Each week the mailbag brought in letters which spoke of commitment to Christ by children and adults alike.

We now are preparing new scripts for a new series of shows. We plan to make this next effort a highly ecumenical endeavor in order to greatly extend the effectiveness of our television ministry to children. There is no better vehicle available for the furtherance of evangelical programs for the proclamation of the Gospel than television, and we hope to lay claim upon it for Christ!

Back-yard Bible Clubs

A series of thirty-six Bible club lessons have been prepared by the League as a follow-through of the television ministry. This program has been a most effective tool in fulfilling the purpose of motivating and activating the laity of the church. We are sorry to report that this has not been true particularly of the Christian Reformed Church, but this we cannot correct as a League.

Since 1972, more than a thousand clubs have been in operation involving several thousand adults on a weekly basis! Entire churches have become totally involved in the organization of our Orbitor Clubs on a city-wide basis. One Reformed church had fifty clubs operating as a summer project throughout their city. At one given time we had upwards of one thousand children enrolled in our Bible club ministry from Jonesboro, Arkansas alone.

The Christian Laymen's League believes that the combination of Christian television and Bible club follow-through is one of the finest ways available to *effectively promote and further the evangelistic programs of the Church* (Christian Reformed or other) and to motivate and activate the laity of the Church (Christian Reformed or other) to effectively share Christ with others.

We cannot be accused of being remiss in providing the tools to fulfill these purposes of our League. Past experience has proven that these programs are used of God to bring revival, commitment, rededication and growth to God's churches where they are put to use; but they must be prayerfully put to the test. "Try me and see"—God said it, so we better do it!

Project Bibles for Mexico

Bibles for Mexico has been in existence since 1968 and since that time we have been privileged to distribute approximately two million Bibles and New Testaments throughout Mexico. This has been accomplished by means of thousands of Mexican lay Christians who felt the concern for their unsaved fellowmen.

As a result of this vast ministry, thousands have come to know Christ as their Savior. Since this Bible distribution program is well-organized and not done in a haphazard manner, we have a record on file at the offices of the Mexican Home Bible League of those Christians who have been baptized and have become members of the evangelical churches in Mexico.

It is recorded that there are yet forty million Mexicans who have not been reached with the Gospel. It is our goal to place a copy of the Span-

ish Bible into every home in Mexico. We praise God for placing this challenge into our hands, and we hope to accomplish our work in Mexico by faithfully distributing the Word of God as we are given the means to do so by God's people.

At this time, those serving on the board of the Christian Laymen's League are: Mr. Kenneth L. Jordan, Mr. Herman Petersen, Mr. Willis Timmer, Mr. Henry Driesenga, Mr. Jerry Van Solkema, Mr. Lee Plas, and Mr. Arie Ver Kaik. Mr. Martin Keuning is director of the children's ministries of the Christian Laymen's League.

RECOMMENDATION

As synodical representative, I recommend that

1. Synod continue to name a representative to the Christian Laymen's League.
2. Synod recommend the continuation of placing the Christian Laymen's League on the approved list of non-denominational causes for financial support.

Douglas R. Vander Wall
Synodical Representative

REPORT 25

DORDT COLLEGE

We welcome the annual opportunity to report to the official body of the Christian Reformed Church by way of the Agenda and Acts of Synod. The ties which Dordt College has with the denomination are indeed, very close. Dordt receives both moral and financial support from the church, and Dordt, in turn, renders a significant service to the church.

Areas of Special Service to the Church

Perhaps the most significant area of service to the church which Dordt offers is in the number of Christian Reformed covenant youth who attend Dordt. The following table indicates the extent of this service.

Total students - 1975-76 — 976.

Geographical location of students from Christian Reformed Church:

California South	30	Muskegon	6
Central California	24	Northcentral Iowa	34
Chicago North	13	Orange City	93
Chicago South	3	Pacific Northwest	51
Columbia	27	Pella	44
Florida	6	Rocky Mountain	40
Grand Rapids East	7	Sioux Center	113
Grand Rapids North	3	Wisconsin	33
Grand Rapids South	4	Zeeland	4
Grandville	3	Alberta North	36
Hackensack	10	Alberta South	25
Holland	13	British Columbia	50
Hudson	3	Chatham	4
Illiana	31	Eastern Canada	2
Kalamazoo	8	Hamilton	17
Lake Erie	2	Huron	1
Minnesota North	46	Quinte	1
Minnesota South	71	Toronto	7

Dordt is also happy to report that there is a goodly number of Dordt graduates already in the ministry in the CRC and in attendance at our seminary.

Since the CRC is intimately involved in the cause of Christian education, it looks upon training its youth for work in our schools as being a significant service to the church itself. Dordt College has made a noteworthy contribution in this area. Hundreds of Dordt graduates are presently teaching or have taught in our Christian schools.

A special service which is seldom talked about and yet is of tremendous significance both for the college and the Christian Reformed church is the Dordt radio station KDCR. The station theme is: Proclaiming a God-centered Culture. We are already in our eighth year of broadcasting. Seven days of the week, from 6 a.m. until midnight each day, KDCR fills the air with a wide variety of programming covering a radius of from 59 to 75 miles. Both Sioux City and Sioux Falls are

within these boundaries, which gives some idea of the vast radio listener potential. The amount of programming which falls directly within the task of the instituted church is significant. Christian Reformed worship services are broadcast twice each Sunday; the Back to God Hour and special evangelical or specifically ecclesiastical programs are broadcast on Sunday. During the week a number of devotional programs, including the daily presentation of the Back to God Hour called Radio Today, is aired. The Radio Today program alone is a half hour production. One simply cannot overestimate the enormous value of KDCR in its service to the church as a wholesome evangelical arm, a meaningful missionary vehicle. KDCR, by its attempt to relate our faith to all of life and culture, serves to strengthen people's confidence in the Reformed faith, the Calvinistic, biblical world-and-life view. Furthermore, the battle against the forces of anti-Christ on all fronts of our social life comes through in a respectable, responsible, and yet decisive manner. Thus KDCR offers a strong fringe benefit relative to the church's task. It should not be forgotten that KDCR is primarily, however, an educational station and is an integral part of the college's total program. The above items are the most easily identifiable services which Dordt renders to the church. But there are others, less detectable yet important areas of service.

Plans for New Chapel, Fine Arts Facility

Speaking of other areas of service to the church one should not overlook the ministry on campus to the personal, spiritual needs of the Christian Reformed covenant youth. Leadership in this spiritual ministry is provided by the Reverend J. B. Hulst with the assistance of the Reverend Dr. James De Jong and the Reverend Wayne Kobes. The response of several consistories to this ministry on campus is most gratifying. Dordt seeks through its ministry, yes, its entire academic program, to undergird and promote the ministry of the instituted church. One of Dordt's main concerns is to strengthen the student's love and respect for the church and to deepen their understanding of and commitment to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.

To do a more effective job in this vital work, while at the same time meeting other pressing needs on campus, plans are in the making to build a chapel-fine arts, multiple purpose facility. The Dordt College board of trustees is presenting a campaign for one million and a half dollars to carry out this plan. Included in this campaign for funds are other academic needs of the college. The tentative title given this campaign is "Forward Thrust."

Dordt is looking ahead to its twenty-fifth anniversary, 1980. The "Forward Thrust" project will, the Lord willing, come to its conclusion at that date. Recognizing the remarkable growth and increasing support during the years, Dordt is encouraged to move forward. Enrollments, at least for the next few years, are promising. It is almost certain at the writing of this article that Dordt will for the first time exceed the one thousand mark. As Dordt is becoming better known and as more young people and parents have opportunity to see what Dordt

is all about through their acquaintance with Dordt's students and graduates, interest in Dordt continues to grow.

Financial Support

A matter of concern to all who are engaged in higher education is the explosive increases in costs being experienced with no relief in sight. This has also been true of Dordt College.

Although every effort is made to keep costs down, enrollment increases and inflation have pushed operating expenses up dramatically. Increases in constituency support have not kept up with cost increases, forcing a constantly increasing proportion of the cost load onto the student.

Perhaps it is time for a study to be made of how Christian higher education could have greater support from the denomination and how such support could be more equitably distributed among denominationally related colleges.

Dordt College is grateful to God for the strong tie which it has with the Christian Reformed Church. This has been of inestimable blessing and help in doing the awesome task of Christian higher education. At the same time Dordt is happy that it can play a vital role in promoting and advancing those principles and programs which are central in the life of the church. Our main goal is to develop appreciation of and to strengthen commitment to the best in our Reformed heritage through the medium of responsible Christian scholarship.

Nicholas Vogelzang,
Synodical Representative

REPORT 26

FAITH, PRAYER AND TRACT LEAGUE

The year of our Lord 1975 was not only the biggest in the fifty-three year history of the Faith, Prayer, and Tract League, but the increases were larger than any previous yearly increase.

Tracts sold went up from 24,883,000 in 1974 to 28,956,000. Tracts sent out free (which includes all our foreign printing programs) went up from 10,992,000 in 1974 to 14,098,000.

So our total distribution went up from 35,875,000 in 1974 to 43,055,000! That this tremendous growth of seven million tracts took place in a year of general business sluggishness makes it all the more remarkable.

All of this was possible because of the blessing of God and the faithfulness of our distributors and donors. As you will note from the financial report, gifts from both churches and individuals increased.

We could not personally hand out 43,000,000 tracts. But when 78,000 customers in this country and thousands of distributors overseas all share in the work, mighty things are accomplished.

Our foreign programs expanded in all of our three major areas: India, Spain, and Indonesia. India had good rains in 1975 for which we thank God. This made electricity available for the printing of tracts. Except for additional printings in Portugal, no new countries were added. The greatest increase was in Spain where 1,520,000 tracts were printed compared to 950,000 in 1974. As postage rates zoomed here in the United States, we find it wiser to send Spanish tracts to South America directly from Spain.

Of course, printed material without the working of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the readers is useless. But the more tracts distributed means the more are reached by the Gospel, because "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Romans 10:14) We have many evidences that the Spirit is using these tracts. The fact that so many tracts are sold indicated that ever greater number of individuals and churches feel that this type of literature is effective in their ministries.

We ask your continued assistance in this world-wide ministry by recommending our league to our churches for their moral and financial support, and that you appoint a representative to serve on the board.

Herbert Kramer,
Synodical Representative

REPORT 27

LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE OF CANADA

Your representative has attended two board meetings of the Alliance in 1975. At its May meeting the board appointed the undersigned to serve as a member of the board of directors, a position which has enabled me to take part meaningfully in the affairs of the LDAC.

The Synod of 1974 instructed its representative to the LDAC to provide for the 1975 agenda material on which the synod could assess the program. Due to circumstances this request could not be fulfilled last year. However, the following account of the Alliance's activities should give ample material to make this assessment.

The purpose of the LDAC is well-documented in the objectives which were adopted at the time of its incorporation in 1973:

- a. To preserve Sunday, the Lord's Day, as a national day of rest with its attendant opportunity for common worship.
- b. To affirm the physical, moral, and spiritual values of the Lord's Day.
- c. To cultivate the conviction of the Canadian people that the preservation of Sunday as the national weekly day of rest is necessary for the well-being of the individual and the nation.
- d. To watch and examine carefully all legislation concerning the Lord's Day, and take whatever action which may be necessary.
- e. To unite in a strong and effective organization of all societies and groups that share in these objectives.
- f. To promote, support and assist other bodies that have as their purpose the need for a national weekly day of rest.

With respect to membership in the LDAC, some changes were made at that time. Prior to incorporation, membership in the organization was by invitation. Now membership in the incorporated body is open "to religious denominations, companies, unions, associations, corporations and members at large whose application for admission has received approval of the board of directors. Individual members are assessed a fee of not less than twenty dollars per year and organizations not less than fifty dollars per year."

The activities of the LDAC during 1975 give evidence of real concern for the preserving of the Lord's Day in our nation and seek to fulfill the objectives of the Alliance in concrete ways.

During August the LDAC submitted a brief to the Law Reform Commission of Canada concerning existing legislation on the Lord's Day Act (Canada). In the introduction of this brief the purpose of this submission is clearly stated: "The Lord's Day Alliance of Canada is pleased to submit herein its views on the content and enforcement of the Lord's Day Act (Canada) to the Law Reform Commission of Canada, which body has been charged with a review of the statute. The

views contained are respectfully commended to the attention of the commission. Our interest has often led directly to concern as we have witnessed progressive deterioration of certain aspects of the legislation, as well as in different and frequently unequal enforcement within differing jurisdictions. It is the contention of the Alliance that the problems noted in the previous paragraph often have created disrespect and even contempt for the Lord's Day Act (Canada). Such a situation serves the ends of neither the Parliament of Canada nor the judicial system." In the brief itself attention is called to failure of provinces to enforce federal Sunday legislation, the outdated system of fines for contravention of the Acts, and the neglect of the Canadian Transport Commission to observe federal legislation regarding Sunday trucking. The following recommendations were submitted on the above mentioned items: 1) That, due to jurisdictional power, international commitments and the need for national uniformity, the Government of Canada maintain Sunday observance legislation. 2) That, in order to reinstate respect for the Lord's Day Act (Canada), certain amendments to the Act be considered. 3) That, in order to correct unequal application of the law between provinces, as well as burdensome procedures for Attornies General and police forces alike, Section 16 of the Act which requires enforcement agencies to seek leave from the various Attornies General to prosecute be revoked. 4) That fines for contravention of the Act be sufficiently raised to a level which would produce an economic deterrent, and that escalating fines be instituted for those who would habitually contravene the Act. 5) That the Canadian Transport Commission be required to undertake much broader solicitation of public views at hearings concerning applications for licenses to transport goods on Sunday.

Up to this date no communication has been received from the Law Reform Commission of Canada in response to the submission.

Another significant contribution of the LDAC concerns Sunday legislation in the province of Ontario, as it applies to Sunday retail selling.

In 1969 an *ad hoc* committee on Sunday Retail selling came into being with the purpose of asking the Government of Ontario to review and update Sunday retail selling legislation in the province. Membership in this committee represented the following organizations: the Lord's Day Alliance, the Anglican Church of Canada, Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, Canadian Retail Hardware Association, Loblaw's Limited, Miracle Food Mart, A & P Stores, Dominion Stores Limited, Retail, Wholesale Department Stores Union, Union of Canadian Retail Employees, Consumers' Association of Canada, Ontario Federation of Labour, the Oshawa Group Limited. On various occasions the committee has striven to encourage the Government of Ontario to enforce conscientiously the Lord's Day Act (Canada), or to legislate on a provincial basis to stop and reverse the trend toward more and more stores open for business on Sunday.

The committee prepared a submission to a select committee of the Legislature which was to prepare a review and amendments on Bill 5, An Act To Regulate Holiday Closings for Retail Business. On December 18, 1975, after some amendments, Bill 5 was proclaimed law and went into force on January 1, 1976. It is known as the Retail Business Holidays Act, 1975. In this act no retail establishment may be open on Sunday or Holiday as specified in the act with some exceptions. Every person who contravenes this act is guilty of an offence and on summary conviction is liable to a fine of not more than \$10,000. The *ad hoc* committee has now reached its aim and therefore will cease its existence.

The General Secretary, the Rev. Gordon A. Walker, has made visits to the western provinces this past year and attempted to establish contact with representatives of the provincial governments, but of little avail. Also meetings were held with church leaders for the purpose of furthering the cause of the Alliance. Here are a few excerpts from his reports: "The Government of British Columbia is very reluctant even to discuss its own Lord's Day legislation. Therefore local organizations and individuals will need to be encouraged to bring pressure on the provincial government to think about this matter. Further visits to British Columbia will be necessary during this coming year." "It would seem that the desire of Dr. Davidson (Saskatoon) to establish a regional committee in Saskatchewan will be fulfilled sometime this fall and it will be necessary to re-visit the province and orient the new committee to its task."

Finances

The 1975 budget called for an income of \$26,000, whereas the actual income was \$22,283.05. The expenditures on the budget were set at \$37,000, with a deficit of \$11,500. The actual expenditure was \$32,913.58 with a deficit of \$10,630.53. The budget for 1976 is set for an income of \$24,000 and expenditures of \$32,290, with a deficit of \$8,290. From these figures we discover that there is cause for concern and that the Alliance is in financial trouble, and will have to increase its income because the reserve fund will have been depleted by the end of this budget year. The Alliance is planning a campaign during the course of this year among the present membership as well as solicit the cause of the LDAC to other organizations. Another matter which is of great concern to the Alliance is the need to expand the work into the other provinces west of Ontario. The Maritime provinces, Quebec and Ontario have now updated legislation concerning the Sunday, but this is not yet the case in the western provinces. If progress is to be made, much more time and work is to be spent there. With these prospects in mind, the Alliance needs to have an operating budget of about \$70,000 to accomplish its aims.

The Alliance is very grateful for the contributions of the Christian Reformed Churches of Canada. Thirty of the 162 congregations in Canada have donated a total of \$2,162.98 during 1975.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That synod place the Lord's Day Alliance of Canada on the list of recommended causes for 1977.
2. That synod urge all the churches in Canada to become members of the Alliance and thus help provide in the financial need as well as in the need for expansion of its work into the western provinces.

John Zantingh
Synodical Representative

REPORT 28

LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE OF THE UNITED STATES

The Lord's Day Alliance, organized in 1888, is located in Atlanta, Georgia, in the new Baptist Center. The alliance is controlled by a Board of Managers composed of representatives of fourteen denominations and five other organizations. The alliance is the only national organization whose sole purpose is the maintenance and cultivation of the first day of the week as a time for rest, worship, Christian education and spiritual renewal. Denominations that are in harmony with the objectives of the alliance are welcome to nominate representatives to the board.

The purpose of the alliance is: "to promote the first day of the week, the Lord's Day, as the Christian day of renewal and worship according to the Scriptures; and for that purpose to gather and diffuse information, to publish documents, to use the press, to cause the public addresses to be made and use other means as shall be expedient and proper to the end that the blessings of the Lord's Day shall be secured for all people."

The new Executive Director, the Rev. James P. Wesberry, conducts the business of the alliance from offices in the Baptist Center, Suite 107/2930 Flowers Road, South, Atlanta, Georgia 30341. The following are the officers of the alliance for the coming year: The Rev. Charles A. Platt, S.T.D., Pastor Emeritus, Presbyterian Church, Ridgewood, New Jersey, president; the Rev. Andrew R. Bird, D.D., First Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Virginia, vice president; Mrs. Wm. A. Fickling, Jr., Atlanta, Ga., secretary; Mr. Larry Eidson, Trust Company of Georgia, Atlanta, Georgia, treasurer; Mr. John A. Nix, Atlanta, counsel; and Mr. Fred Fisher, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Tampa, Tampa, Florida, Denominational Representative Christian Reformed Church, counsel.

The year of 1975 has been a year of marked changes at the headquarters of the alliance. Our Executive Director, the Rev. Marion G. Bradwell, has retired as of November 1, 1975. It is fitting, I believe, to pay tribute to a man who can truly be described as a "vigorous, dynamic individual." He worked hard for the alliance and laid a strong foundation on which his successor can build. Dr. Bradwell loved the Lord's Day Alliance and its work and he possessed a vision of what should and could be done for the promotion of the purpose of the alliance. He gave of his time, his thought, his prayers, and his love to the calling he had received from God as the director of the alliance.

At the Board of Managers meeting held in Nashville in October of 1975, a new Executive Director was chosen. He is the Rev. James P. Wesberry, pastor emeritus of the Morningside Baptist Church of Atlanta, Georgia. Dr. Wesberry is a soft-spoken, white-haired "man of God" who calls his new job "the greatest challenge of my life." Presently he is serving as a member of the Administration Committee of

the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and as a trustee of Mercer University. He has written several books entitled, "Meditations for Happy Christians," "Evangelistic Sermons," and "When Hell Trembles." Dr. Wesberry has had contact with individuals and groups from many different areas of this country. In addition, he has had contact with groups similar to the alliance in England, Australia, Nigeria and in Canada. He has accepted the challenge of the alliance by preaching, teaching, writing and talking wherever the opportunity presents itself. His motto is, "The Bold Advance of the Lord's Day Alliance of the United States During our Nation's Bicentennial, full steam ahead." I feel sure that the Board of Managers in total, have and will give him whole-hearted support.

The Communication Committee has the responsibility for the publication, preparation and dissemination of all media of the alliance. The committee reports that they have secured a special gift of \$500.00 designated for the production of the Norman Vincent Peale tapes for radio spot announcements. The cassettes made of speeches at Consultation '75 are being advertised and promoted and requests for their use are being received. Requests come from almost everywhere asking all kinds of questions, for availability of help, and for our literature. Our Executive Director is distributing hundreds and even thousands of the pamphlet, "What is the Lord's Day Alliance?" He has made a collection of pamphlets from the Lord's Day Observance Society of England and other similar organizations. The committee is in conference with American Bible Society considering the possibility of producing a Bicentennial bulletin insert to be prepared for churches or anyone desiring to use them. The American Bible Society will help the Alliance print appropriate and attractive pamphlets. The committee plans to get out more articles and news stories to newspapers and religious magazines and to television and radio news announcers.

The Executive Director, as editor of our SUNDAY—quarterly magazine of the alliance—is endeavoring to make the magazine as attractive and helpful as possible. A copy of the Bicentennial Edition will be in the hands of thousands very shortly. The editor has added a thousand or more names to those receiving this magazine. The purpose of this magazine is to be of the greatest possible helpfulness in promoting the preservation and proper observance of the Lord's Day. The editor hopes to make a careful study of those receiving the magazine to try to determine its use.

The State and National Affairs Committee continues to be concerned about Sunday business. They see this as a real problem. The committee is making efforts through the National Alliance to advise denominations, church councils, etc., throughout the land of the right of individuals under the Civil Rights Act to refuse to engage in Sunday employment. The committee continues to appeal to the economic understanding of the people demonstrating the part that Sunday business continues to play in our escalating inflationary trends. They point out the number of companies which have resorted to Sunday business that find themselves in financial dilemmas. This committee was involved

in the public hearings conducted in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, last October. Efforts to repeal Sunday laws were opposed by the Pennsylvania Council of Churches and the Pennsylvania Catholic Conference. Similar efforts to relax or repeal Sunday laws were opposed in the areas of Montgomery and Prince Counties in Maryland by the officials of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of the District of Columbia. Working jointly with members of other groups is a goal of this committee and one in which they are meeting with some success.

Dr. Samuel Jeanes, chairman of this committee, reports that Ocean Grove, New Jersey, a community well-known throughout the nation for its strict observance of the Lord's Day was recently challenged in a court case, stating the community had no right to prohibit the delivery of newspapers on Sundays. However, the Superior Court of New Jersey ruled that Ocean Grove cannot be stopped from protecting the serenity of the sabbath. This committee is recommending appeals either directly or through the various church bodies to governing officials to include the church leadership in Bicentennial plans and that the July 4th Lord's Day be kept intact for religious observances and that parades and other civic functions be conducted on Monday, July 5th.

The Committee on Extension realizes the necessity of extending to many other denominations invitations to join the efforts of the alliance, should their views be in accordance with those of the alliance. They report that the Executive Director has corresponded with many leaders of other denominations with a view to getting them to join hands with us in our efforts to preserve the Lord's Day in the United States. Fifteen denominations have so far been contacted and many individuals are asked to consider joining with us. During the past year the alliance was privileged to present its work at various gatherings. An attractive exhibit was a fine display of materials which we are using as effectively as possible was displayed at twelve different gatherings. Our Executive Director wishes to use as many board members as possible in representing and speaking for the alliance.

The Finance Committee manages the Lord's Day Alliance investment programs, plus the handling of the financial records. During the year of 1975 churches of various denominations contributed a total of \$16,873.91 to the Alliance. It is with much pride that I report that the Christian Reformed Churches contributed the largest proportion of this amount. A total of \$6,276.71 was given by our churches in 1975, with the Presbyterian Church in the United States contributing about \$4,957.69. However, the total amount contributed by churches during 1975 was less by about \$2,000.00 than during 1974. Individual contributions likewise had decreased during the year 1975. Our income from investments had increased this past year over the previous year. More expenses than expected resulted from Consultation '75 and so the alliance did experience a financial deficit during the year of 1975. Interestingly enough, the Board of Managers did succeed in raising \$1,500.00, which amount will be increased \$1,000.00 by an anonymous donor, during the regular annual board meeting held in Atlanta in February of 1976.

Efforts are being made by the Financial Committee to extend the "Fellowship of One Hundred." This fellowship is made up of those individuals and churches who contribute \$100.00 a year or more to the alliance. The goal of the alliance is to reach a membership of five hundred. The alliance is grateful to the churches and individuals for their support.

"Consultation '75": On October 13-14, 1975 one hundred and twenty-five persons from fifteen states, the District of Columbia and Canada met in Nashville, Tennessee for a Consultation on the Lord's Day and Contemporary Culture. The program had been designed to deal with almost every aspect of modern life in relationship to the Lord's Day. The treatment given the various subjects discussed were pitched to a high level and those present found both intellectual and spiritual stimulus as they listened and participated in the discussion. Tape recordings of the addresses are available and can be secured through the office of the Lord's Day Alliance. There were, I feel, various practical suggestions that emerged from the consultation. The emphasis was upon education and individual choice, rather than upon legal enactments and governmental support in a pluralistic society. It emphasized the fact that it is still possible to maintain the spiritual principles embodied in the fourth commandment, even though we may not obey the letter of the law. One of the great lessons of the consultation, says Dr. Richards, is that we must find some new way in which to confront the conscience of the church. It is a time for hard thinking, for earnest prayer, and for unceasing effort on the part of all who believe that observing a weekly day of rest and of worship is essential to man's highest welfare.

I was appointed as the synodical representative by the Synod of 1971 and was re-appointed by the Synod of 1974. I am grateful for the opportunity to be able to serve the Lord and the church in this way. I attended the consultation in Nashville in October of 1975, and also the regular Board of Managers meeting in Atlanta on February 4-5, 1976. The alliance continues to look to the church and to individuals for support. The alliance, I feel, is interested in obtaining suggestions from individuals, groups and churches so that our work may be continued with vigor. I would personally solicit suggestions from any member group or church in our denomination relative to the work of the Lord's Day. Any material can be forwarded to the Stated Clerk and it will be sent to me.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That synod maintain representation to the Lord's Day Alliance Board.
2. That individuals in our denomination and our churches be urged to become members of the "Fellowship of One Hundred" for the purpose of furnishing the alliance with much needed funds so that programs proposed by the alliance can be put into effect.

Fred Fisher
Synodical Representative

REPORT 29

THE LUKE SOCIETY, INC.

It is a pleasure to present this report to members of synod. The Luke Society has experienced much blessing in its projects during the past year. Now eleven years old, the society is increasingly aware of the opportunities God has given us, particularly in New Mexico and Mississippi, and we are struggling to meet these challenges. We rejoice in the continued support of the church and praise God for the privilege of serving him through this outreach.

The Luke Society—a namesake of the “beloved physician”—was formed to give to Christian Reformed physicians and dentists the opportunity to become more personally involved in medical missions. To date we have 220 members and forty affiliate members in our organization. The society members are kept informed regularly through the board minutes and through the CONTACT, our publication.

At our office Barbara Waller, along with several assistants, continues to handle all correspondence, receives contributions, and carries out the board's policies and directives. The office address is: The Luke Society, Inc., 3401 South Bannock, Englewood, Colorado 80110.

There are seven members on the Board of Directors. Their names are affixed to this report. The newly elected members (Harry Holwerda, M.D. of De Motte, Indiana and Charles Van Dyken, D.D.S. of Grand Rapids, Michigan) were chosen by the society for a 3 year term. They replace William Bouman, M.D. of Grand Rapids and Peter Boelens, Sr. D.D.S., of Three Rivers, Michigan.

Four board meetings are held annually. Two of these are held at the sites of our projects, i.e. Cary, Mississippi and Gallup, New Mexico. The other two are usually held in Grand Rapids and Denver.

MISSISSIPPI EVANGELISTIC MEDICINE (MEM)

Mississippi Evangelistic Medicine is now in its fifth year. Dr. Peter Boelens and his staff of twelve continue the successful medical mission work among the very poor people in and around Cary, Mississippi, which is northwest of Jackson and about twelve miles from the Mississippi River.

During the past year the medical staff moved out of its 12'x60' mobile medical trailer, and is housed in new medical offices built in the wing of the main building, commonly called the Cary Christian Center. Most of the materials and labor to build these facilities were donated by our church people and we are grateful for this kind of support, too. This new medical clinic was dedicated in April, 1975. The mobile home has been converted to provide housing for volunteers who come to Mississippi to assist in the work.

In the past twelve months, Dr. Boelens and his staff made 411 obstetrical visits and 3,011 home visits. The staff examined and treated

3,242 children, and 183 children are enrolled in the Head Start program.

Dr. Boelens' influence has been felt in several other areas. As a member of the pediatric staff at the University of Mississippi, Dr. Boelens has been able to enlist the help of the University Medical Center in meeting the needs of the Cary people. The Medical Center uses the Cary Christian Health Clinic as an important training ground for nurse practitioners and medical students. Who can measure the effect the Christian atmosphere of concern, love and the pursuit of excellence has on these students? Also, using government funds, Dr. Boelens has helped establish a Regional Newborn Center at the Kuhn Memorial Hospital (the state charity hospital in Vicksburg), and in addition has improved the pediatric care in the hospital.

Cary Christian Health Center

The Center—the name given to the completely renovated school building—continues to serve the local people. Bible classes, crafts, arts, sewing and nutrition classes and recreational programs are held on a weekly basis throughout the year.

Working in conjunction with the official agencies in the state of Mississippi the staff was able to secure a quarter of a million dollars worth of food supplements for use in the two counties where our work is located. (Over 50% of the 14,000 residents live below the poverty level.) The center is being used as a distribution point and for storage of the food.

The Daily Vacation Bible School of the summer of 1975 was one of the best ever held. There were ninety volunteers who conducted four consecutive Bible Schools. The program included Bible study, prayer, special tutoring and organized activities for community children. In addition there were Bible classes for adults.

One young man who worked at the center in maintenance for 2½ years is now studying at the Reformed Bible College. After completion of his education, he is planning on returning to Cary to conduct a spiritual ministry.

During 1975 a local plantation owner gave the mission one acre of land on which local families could raise their own vegetables. Fourteen families took advantage of this opportunity—another step in the self-help program.

A slide tape program on Mississippi Evangelistic Medicine is available. Churches and societies are invited to request this program through the Luke Society office.

CHRISTIAN ECONOMIC CORPORATION

In the project in Mississippi, certain phases of the work are not strictly medical. Therefore the board thought it wise to set up a special corporation in the state of Mississippi to administer the non-medical aspects of the work. The corporation board members are four in number (three men in the field of business and one Luke Society member). The contribution of these men is very helpful because economic development is sorely needed.

The Christian Economic Corporation operates the two Thrift Shops which have been set up . . . one in Cary and one in Vicksburg. Many people throughout the denomination have donated items and without these the Thrift Shops could not operate.

The latest project is a tie-making-and-selling business. The material is beautiful; the designs are elegant; and the unemployed of Cary and environs have the joy of making the ties. They are being sold through the United Calvinist Youth Organization.

The Christian Economic Corporation is a non-profit corporation and any excess funds are donated to the Mississippi Evangelistic Medicine project.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL

The hospital is governed by a local Board of Governors elected by the Luke Society Board. It consists of twelve men and women, seven of whom are Christian Reformed and five are Christian representing the local community.

In the past year the Board of Governors, with the approval of the Luke Society Board incorporated into its bylaws the following statement of philosophy which also is inscribed on a bronze plaque at the hospital's entrance:

A STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY FOR REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN HOSPITAL

Rehoboth Christian Hospital originates and exists on the basis of the biblical command to love God and to love our neighbor. Realizing that human beings are plagued with problems of mind, body, and spirit, this institution is dedicated to their diagnosis, treatment and prevention. It is the goal of Rehoboth Christian Hospital to embody the medical facilities and spirit of mercy that result in physical healing. Medical knowledge, skill, and healing are gifts from God and to the extent that they are represented at Rehoboth, his name is glorified and his purpose served. It is the compassion and love of Christ which set the example for the staff and it is hoped that this provision of Christian setting will provide patients opportunity to encounter Christ, the Great Physician.

Rehoboth Christian Hospital seeks to function as an agent of the Christian Reformed Church and the Luke Society in the area of medical care to the needy, but ultimately seeks to restore to all harmony and health of body, mind and spirit. To God be the glory.

More specifically the purposes are as follows:

1. To provide for the persons suffering from illness or disability which require that they receive hospital care with equal rights to all and special privileges and to prevent any practice from being conducted within the hospital which would be injurious or detrimental to the health and welfare of any patients.
2. Carry on any educational activities relating to the care of the sick or injured, or the promotion of health which in the opinion of the

Board of Governors may be justified by the facilities, funds, personnel, or other requirements that are, or can be, available.

3. Promote and carry on scientific research related to the care of the sick and injured insofar as in the opinion of the Board of Governors can be carried on or in connection with the hospital.

4. Participate, as far as circumstances may warrant, in any activity designed and carried on to promote the general health of the community.

5. To guard against any activity carried on in the hospital that would have, or tend to have, a bad effect upon the hospital as an institution, its reputation, or the service it renders.

6. To provide the type of working environment which will enable the personnel of the hospital to receive true satisfaction in service.

7. To provide and assist in the spiritual need of patients either under the supervision of the hospital chaplain or department head.

The Medical Arts Building—adjacent to the hospital—is working out very well. Six qualified physicians treat patients, make rounds in the hospital, and provide emergency care.

On July 24, 1975, Paul Lang, administrator of the hospital, resigned to accept a position elsewhere; and Mrs. Ann Schauman, the new administrator is doing a commendable job.

In December, 1973, the Rehoboth Christian Hospital was given a two year approval by the Joint Commission of Hospital Accreditation—an achievement which all hospital administrators and boards covet. We are currently awaiting a favorable decision of approval of the hospital from the Joint Commission for the next two years. We humbly thank God for this recognition.

A renal dialysis unit has been added to the hospital's equipment. The initiation of this service—the only one in the immediate area—has resulted in the successful management of many patients with kidney impairment. This disease is especially common among the Indians. We pray to God that through the patients' constant contact with hospital personnel their spiritual lives may also be enriched.

After the Luke Society took over the hospital from the Board of Home Missions, the latter provided a subsidy to help pay for the hospital costs of Indian students and other Indians who became ill. As of this year the subsidy has been discontinued, and the Luke Society has assumed this financial responsibility when there is no money or insurance to cover the cost.

The Women's Auxiliary of the hospital through its volunteer program and money raising effort has contributed much to the support of the work. In 1975, this group gave a record-breaking \$23,000 to the hospital plus 11,207 donated hours of time. Even the teenagers were involved, giving over 670 hours in volunteer work.

It has long been felt that a full time chaplain is needed at the hospital and the Luke Society is still looking for a qualified person who will accept this great challenge. Meanwhile, Rev. Rolf Veenstra, pastor of the Rehoboth Christian Reformed Church, serves effectively as part-time chaplain.

RETREAT IN NEW MEXICO

In September, 1975, the Luke Society sponsored an eight day retreat to visit all aspects of the work in the great southwest where our church has been involved with missions for over seventy years. Twenty-nine people, mostly from the Northcentral states, enjoyed this tour, which began and ended in Albuquerque. The trip was educational and inspirational and stimulated a new interest in Indian missions. The reception by both the missionaries and the people of the reservation was outstanding. The shared fellowship will long be remembered. (Anyone interested in joining such a tour in September, 1976, should contact the Luke Society office.)

MEDICAL MISSION TRAVEL FUND

This fund was established to aid Luke Society members go on long or short term missionary trips to fill in where there is a need. Substituting for missionaries on furlough, sharing new methods and medicines, providing relief and assistance for understaffed clinics and hospitals, providing medical help in overseas disaster areas, etc.—all of these needy areas challenge physicians and dentists to donate time and talent to heal the sick in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the expense is great and this fund was set up to provide financial relief. Members who feel led by the Spirit of God to work in medical missions are urged to write to the Luke Society.

MEDICAL MISSIONARY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This fund is particularly available to students preparing for work in medical missions. Several students are presently receiving this assistance. One is an extern who is spending three months in the Takum hospital in Nigeria. We need more funds as students apply.

EXTERNS

Every year externs apply to work either at Rehoboth Christian Hospital in Gallup or to assist Dr. Peter Boelens and his staff in Cary. This can result in a two-fold benefit: (1) the medical missionary on the field is given an assistant; (2) the student's interest in medical missions is aroused and whetted. Ministers especially are urged to confront the medical students in their congregations with this opportunity for service.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Mr. Orie Hamstra of Grand Rapids, Michigan offered to serve as our public relations man. He is therefore known as our "Roving Ambassador." He travels here and there to inform the Christian Reformed constituency of the activities of our society. Anyone in the church who would like to hear about our work in any aspect can contact Mr. Hamstra through our home office.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As synodical representative, I recommend that:

1. Synod grant a Luke Society representative the privilege of the floor when this report is under consideration.

2. Synod continue to place the Luke Society on the approved list of non-denominational causes recommended for financial support.
 - a. The continuing need for free care, medical equipment and mortgage payment assistance at Rehoboth Christian Hospital which the Luke Society operates at synod's request.
 - b. The need for personnel, medicines and equipment in the Mississippi Evangelistic Medicine program.
 - c. The continuation of the Medical Mission Scholarship program to assist in staffing Christian Reformed projects.
3. Synod reappoint Everett Van Reken as synodical representative.

Everett Van Reken, M.D.
Synodical Representative

Board of Directors

Gary Vander Ark, M.D., President
Charles Van Dyken, D.D.S., Vice President
James Biel, D.D.S., Secretary
Gary Ritsema, D.D.S., Treasurer
Marvin P. Vanden Bosch, M.D.
Harry Holwerda, M.D.
Everett Van Reken, M.D., Synodical Representative.

REPORT 30
REFORMED BIBLE COLLEGE

As liaison between synod and Reformed Bible College, I am pleased to present this report on the educational program of this Institution from March 1975 to February 1976. Incorporated in 1959 as Reformed Bible Institute, the school has completed thirty-six years of service for Christ and his kingdom.

1. *Function and Foundation*—RBC continues to provide specialized training for the unordained worker in local church, overseas mission, and many other endeavors. All instruction is based upon the infallible Word and its Reformed interpretation.

2. *Enrollment*—The Winter Semester registration (January 1976) listed 199 students, besides 125 adults in evening extension courses at RBC and in Muskegon and Zeeland. A class also met under direction of the Rev. Rolf Veenstra at Rehoboth and Crown Point, New Mexico.

3. *Graduates*—At commencement in May 1975, BRE degrees were awarded to seventeen four-year graduates, and sixteen ARE degrees were given to two-year graduates. The first Certificate of Biblical Studies also was awarded (upon completion of the one year course for college graduates).

4. *Faculty*—Faculty strength remains at eleven full time members, besides President and Librarian. Part time teachers assist in a number of curriculum areas.

5. *Students*—RBC continues to draw students from Christian Reformed, Reformed, and other denominations. Overseas students this year have come from Belize, Greece, Guatemala, India, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, and Switzerland. Pastors, parents, and counselors in Christian Reformed congregations are urged to advise young adults about RBC services.

6. *Facilities*—During the current academic year Vice President for Development, Mark Vander Ark, and National Chairman, Marty Ozinga, of Evergreen Park, Illinois, have led the appeal for Schaal Resident Hall Construction funds. The minimum of \$160,000 required to begin construction appeared to be available by spring. The Walters Campus Center also is scheduled for construction.

7. *Mexico Summer Training Session*—The eighth STS season took place during June-August 1975, with forty-nine participants (from U.S., Canada, and Mexico) and a staff of twelve. Mexico STS offers an academic and practical orientation in Christian missions for prospective cross-cultural workers, which churches, boards, and agencies may use profitably for worker training.

8. *Training and Service Corps*—In the Fall of 1974, the RBC Board approved an extension of Summer Training Session, called "TASC."

This two-year program is designed to place participants in Bible teaching assignments with churches and missions in Latin America for training and service, and it will begin as qualified applicants are available (college graduation or equivalent required).

9. *Finances*—We thank God for the continued support of many CRC congregations and members. As funds are received for expansion of campus facilities, gifts for the educational work of RBC continue to be needed.

10. *Planning*—The Lord willing, the Schaal Residence Hall and the Walters Campus Center are to be erected in the next two years. RBC also trusts that additional faculty can be appointed in missions, anthropology, and Christian education. The growing demand for directors of Christian education in local churches and the continuing need for translators, evangelists, and missions specialists give RBC graduates many opportunities to serve the Lord. Gradual expansion to graduate-level studies also may materialize.

11. *Administration*—The Rev. Calvin Bolt serves as Board Chairman. Dr. Dick Van Halsema in 1976 completes ten years as President. Harold Bruxvoort is Academic Dean and William Jansen is Business Manager (see also paragraph 6).

RBC is eager to serve the churches and their members by providing training in evangelism, missions, and Christian education. We thank God for this privilege.

D. M. Stravers
Synodical Representative

REPORT 31

THE EVANGELICAL LITERATURE LEAGUE (TELL)

I am pleased to make this annual report to synod concerning the work of TELL. Providing Christian literature as a means of bringing salvation to millions in Latin America is a work that gives great satisfaction. We are grateful to God that he has provided the means for this work to go on for more than fifteen years now. Thousands have responded to the messages sent to them by TELL and have expressed gratitude to us as well as to God. This makes the work a pleasure and we want you to share in it.

Again during the past year more than thirty thousand books have been distributed to twenty Latin American countries, to many European countries, and to several areas in Canada and the United States having Spanish-speaking people. Missionaries, seminaries, and Bible Institutes are increasingly turning to TELL for aids and educational materials. Good evangelical Christian literature is not plentiful in Latin countries. This makes the work of TELL such an important ministry to these people.

Producing literature in a foreign language is a long and tedious procedure. Translating books, especially those which are doctrinal in content, requires skilled people. Typesetting in the Spanish language is costly. Determining the quantity of a first printing must be done judiciously because not all books sell well. Distributing books at the lowest possible cost to the purchaser means subsidizing many. Financially speaking, TELL is a non-profit organization in the truest sense of the word. By God's grace it is very profitable in the spiritual sense.

During the past year TELL has continued to work on producing the Erdman 17 Volume New Testament Commentaries. The first eight have been published and three others are being finished. Berkhof's *Reformed Dogmatics* has also been printed and sells well. Others are being translated, revised, and reprints made. We are nearly ready to produce Dr. E. J. Young's *Introduction to the Old Testament*. Berkhof's *Manual of Christian Doctrine* will soon be translated. Hendriksen's *More Than Conquerors* is scheduled for reprinting.

TELL continues to be the distributor of literature produced by the Spanish Literature Committee of our denomination. Many of their productions have proved to be books much in demand by Latin American Christians. Their Bible story book is a good example of such a need. Vacation Bible School materials which were originally produced by the committee are being reproduced by TELL to meet the demand. The SLC and TELL have a wonderful work relationship and continue to consult with each other on the needs for Latin America.

A note of thanks is due to all those involved in the work of TELL. Dedicated board members continue to give time and wise direction to the work. The director, Mr. Hubert Van Tol, has guided the efforts

of TELL for the past six years. Miss Joyce Van Houten, the able secretary carries on her duties efficiently in a wide variety of responsibilities. Part-time workers deserve thanks. Most of all the work of Dr. William Rutgers deserves praise. His zeal and effort for the work of TELL is well known.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to the thousands who remember TELL in their prayers and gifts. Individuals, churches, and societies have supplied us with funds to carry out the work. Without them we could not function.

It is our prayer and request that synod will again be inclined by our Lord to endorse the work of TELL for financial support by the churches. Truly this is the Lord's work and he has wonderfully blessed it. It is also our prayer that we may continue to be found faithful in sending out the message that alone can bring salvation to many. Pray for us.

William Schultze
Synodical Representative

REPORT 32

TRINITY COLLEGE

In presenting the second annual report to the synod of the Christian Reformed Church, Trinity Christian College is thankful for the fine working relationship that has continued with the Christian Reformed denomination as evidenced by the financial and prayer support received during the past year.

Dedicated to helping young Christian men and women develop into strong leaders of tomorrow in both the church and society, Trinity has been faithful in establishing and expanding sound academic programs based on reformed Christian beliefs which answer the questions and needs of today's youth.

Now in its seventeenth year, Trinity has also looked to the educational needs of other Christian community members by expanding the evening continuing education program to accommodate them. In addition to the increased interest in the evening school program, Trinity is thankful for another enrollment increase. Particularly significant is the fact that Trinity is attracting increasing numbers of Christian students who are not familiar, by background, with Christian education. Their enthusiasm for Christian higher education has been an inspiration for other students, faculty and staff.

In an effort to share ideas with other colleges in the Reformed faith, Trinity has helped organize the Association of Reformed Colleges. Membership in the organization is comprised of: Calvin, Central, Covenant, Dordt, Geneva, Hope, Northwestern, and Trinity. The aim of the association is to "assist each member college to cultivate, maintain, and develop the distinctive Christian perspectives on learning which should characterize the genius of these schools."

Since the choice of careers for many young people has been increasingly more difficult, Trinity held its first Interim Program from January 12 through January 23. In order to introduce students to various careers and assist them in selecting and determining careers for which they are particularly suited, the major phase of the Interim Program afforded students with similar interests an opportunity to work together and investigate various careers. Approximately 50% of the student body utilized the vast resources of the greater Chicago area as they interviewed people involved in programs that extensively treated contemporary topics such as cancer research, alternative ministries, ethnicity in Chicago.

Trinity has been privileged to accept six Vietnamese refugees into its educational programs. Through the work of two Trinity alumni, one of whom was active with the Vietnamese relocation project in Arkansas, these six students are being sponsored cooperatively by area Christian Reformed Churches and individuals, by the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and Trinity Christian College. We

praise God that two of these six have made public profession of their faith in Jesus Christ and are now members of a local Christian Reformed Church.

As a result of the expanded business administration program of the College, a Christian business group, Christians for the Advancement of Business Leadership Education, has been formed. CABLE has as its avowed purpose the strengthening and encouragement of Christian business persons. Business has attracted an increasing number of Christian people and one of the aims of the organization is to motivate and strengthen Christians involved in business throughout the United States and Canada. Special speakers, seminars and informational meetings have been held for Christian business persons.

As was reported to Synod in 1975, the Board of Trustees has implemented a debt reduction campaign during the latter part of 1975. The fifty-acre campus in Palos Heights, an extremely valuable asset, is encumbered by a short-term debt that requires a larger part of the general budget than is desirable. Trinity is thankful for the positive results thus far and the board is optimistic about further reducing the debt through the continuation of the campaign, and about plans to expand it to all areas of our church in the United States and Canada served by Trinity and its alumni.

As a result of the disbandment of the West Evergreen Park Christian Reformed Church, Trinity is pleased to have received two gifts totalling \$25,000 during the past year. The College is thankful for the dedication shown by the officers of this congregation and is grateful for the wisdom in extending God's kingdom through its investment in young people.

We are thankful to our covenant God for the blessings which he has provided during this past year. The responsibility of preparing young people for further service to him is an awesome responsibility. In this task, Trinity is blessed with an excellent faculty fully dedicated to Christian instruction, and is thankful for the prayers that sustain us. The continued prayers and financial support of the church are coveted by the College so that it can continue to assist young people in becoming responsible citizens, accountable to our covenant God who continues to provide more than we can ask or think.

Arnold Hoving
Synodical Representative

REPORT 33

UNITED CALVINIST YOUTH

Calvinist Cadet Corps

Serving as your representative and liaison with the Calvinist Cadet Corps continues to be a personal delight and an opportunity for both service and growth. Thank you for the privilege of being your emissary.

As I've served over the last few years one of the things that impresses me is how God is blessing this organization with growth. There is numerical growth seen in the fact that there are now over twenty-five hundred men who serve as models for boys (they're called counselors) and over ten thousand boys (they're called cadets) who are involved with these Christian men in a wide variety of activities and studies. These men and boys are predominantly members of the Christian Reformed Church but an increasing number of the Reformed Church in America congregations are adopting the cadet program as the best means of ministering to the boys of their churches. In places RCA ministers function as council chaplains and RCA laymen are serving on some council boards. There are clubs in a few other churches as well. Growth is seen not only in quantity but also in quality. The new guidebook and program are increasingly effective tools to reach boys with the Gospel. I'm still convinced there is no other boy's program in the nation which can as effectively be used to reach boys. The growth in quality is reflected in the attitudes of counselors as well. There is an amazing sense of cooperation and almost no negative criticism. Over six hundred fifty counselors and wives gathered for the biggest ever convention at the Amana Colonies last summer. The convention was marked by deep spirituality and open Christian fellowship. Local cadet councils are increasingly getting involved in leadership training programs which are used by the men.

I note an increasing sense of responsibility also. It is incredible to me that a staff of only four people can produce the amount of material that comes out and serve the needs of so many counselors, clubs and cadets so effectively. It is possible only because the staff are conscious that they are ministers of Jesus Christ and want to be responsible in doing it. That same sense of responsibility is seen among the counselors in local clubs. Men give of themselves, their time, their money, their abilities, because they minister in the name of our Lord. Local congregations are increasingly showing a new sense of responsibility for this ministry by supporting cadeting with prayers, interest and funds.

All of this would be meaningless if some worthwhile goals were not being met. All of the programming and meeting and planning is aimed at giving Christian men the tools and training they need to minister to boys. This is happening. Boys are being reached with the Gospel by means of a program which integrates God's Word and its demands upon us into a total life style for both the men and the boys they reach.

Thank God for a boys' program which is theologically sound, which effectively integrates the Word of God into life situations, and which God is using to build his church. Support these great men who serve as counselors in local clubs and councils, who spend hours on the national board and executive committee, who minister for us in Jesus' name (all without pay, of course). Encourage the staff as you have opportunity so that they can continue to delight in the ministry to which God called them.

Elton J. Piersma
Synodical Representative

Calvinettes

Having capably and lovingly served our Calvinette organization for seven years, Mrs. Cele Mereness has left us for a challenging, new field of work with our denomination. For that reason, I would like to use this report to summarize the highlights of those years.

Our Calvinette program was about ten years old and had a membership of ten thousand girls when Mrs. Mereness came as its third part-time director. Because the Lord has blessed us with remarkable growth, we are now staffed by a full time director and an assistant director who serve our organization from the United Calvinist Youth building constructed in 1971.

Today Calvinettes claims a membership of seventeen thousand girls, with 452 United States clubs, 164 Canadian clubs and one foreign club. Our last year's budget of \$144,225 was more than \$100,000 higher than seven years ago. Growth has taken place in three ways: 1) New clubs were organized in Christian Reformed and Reformed churches where there previously were none, 2) two new programs were added, Advanced Calvinettes for older girls and Busy Bees for younger girls, and 3) the Calvinette program has attracted community girls so that they now make up about 25% of our membership.

Calvinettes has expanded its services under Mrs. Mereness' leadership. Conventions for counselors began in 1970. Last year's convention in Wheaton, Illinois was by far our largest with five hundred counselors attending. Plans are being made for our 1976 convention at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. *Touch*, a magazine for girls was first published in 1970 and now totals 14,500 subscriptions. Revisions were made in our Junior and Senior Calvinette programs and new handbooks and leader's manuals were prepared. Two new programs were initiated, Busy Bees and Advanced Calvinettes.

We as board members, council presidents, counselors and others who have worked with Mrs. Mereness have no doubt about her love for Calvinettes and for the women and girls she has served. We thank her for sharing herself and her gifts with us. She left us with this challenge: "I hope that as an organization you continue to develop a real sense of mission. That is, that you continue to strongly encourage counselors and show them how to use the club situation to bring girls into a living relationship with Jesus Christ so that the girls may love and serve him always and everywhere."

We thank all counselors for loving effort spent for the enrichment of our youth. We thank our denomination for prayers and generous financial support. We thank our God for blessing us richly. May it continue to be so.

Joanna Meyer
Synodical Representative

Young Calvinist Federation

I want to start my first report by thanking you for the trust and the responsibility of being your representative to the Young Calvinist Federation. I am grateful for the way our Lord has enriched my life and as a result has given me a new awareness of this ministry. Our denomination is truly blessed with an organization that is being used to bring youth into a living relationship with Christ. I have been able to observe an enthusiastic and talented staff manifesting the "fruit of the Spirit" in their daily work. I have observed the great ministry being accomplished through the director who is faithful to his calling.

By way of administration reorganization, I am happy to report that our director has recently been given the opportunity to devote one hundred percent of his time to Young Calvinist Federation business and we thank God for that.

In behalf of the federation, I have been asked and hereby make a request that some time be allotted in the agenda for our Director, the Rev. James Lont, to give a brief report by addressing the Synod of 1976.

This has been another year of growth for the federation. A noted increase in membership has resulted in 660 youth groups officially belonging to the federation to date. I have been given many opportunities to meet the people involved in this growth pattern and I am impressed.

There are literally hundreds of volunteers in this organization who make things happen at every level. A review of our director's schedule tells the story. He has focused attention on getting leaders to lead by holding many area leadership conferences, by providing the dynamics which have resulted in excellent leadership training programs and by constantly interacting with leaders everywhere. This type of focus, although peppered with many disappointments, has paid off well. There are many good, hard-working leaders in the federation. We give thanks for the board members, presidents, leadership training and volunteer service coordinators, youth group leaders and committee members who invest untold hours in this great ministry at the local level and also the executive committee members as they give in order to insure administration and programming so that others may properly minister.

These efforts have not gone unrecognized by the members of our denomination. The contributions and the results of the last "Give Youth a Boost" campaign are indicative of the love the entire church has for its youth. The campaign alone produced \$162,600 and that kind of support has enabled the federation to reach a level of efficiency which fosters effective and continual growth. We commend all the

supporters and thank you for allowing the federation to operate "in the black."

The federation has truly become a service center for programs and program aids that, if used, will "guide youth and unite them for fellowship and service that they may be well-prepared servants of Jesus Christ . . ." Let me briefly share some of these with you.

The SWIM program is a blessing and has been abundantly blessed. Over four hundred "swimmers" participated (45 Canadians and 357 Americans) in this coast to coast program of missions this past year. The enthusiastic acceptance of this program year after year offers some proof that the Spirit is indeed working through this ministry.

The annual convention is where the federation comes alive! The 1975 convention was held in the great Pacific Northwest area at Bellingham, Washington. The theme was "Come alive in 75." This was a new experience for me personally and because I was not pre-conditioned, I believe my observations to be fairly objective. I am excited about the quality of our young people as they displayed themselves on the Washington State campus. It certainly is a thrill to witness and hear testimony about the well-behaved twenty-six hundred Calvinist young people. I was excited about the quality of the people in the host churches who could not do enough for us visitors. I was overwhelmed with the Spirit of our living Lord as it worked in and caught hold of the lives of many young people and leaders at the convention. I am also happy with the continual positive response that I see and hear about in the lives of many who attended the convention.

Our publications, the Insight magazine and corresponding Input magazine for leaders are recognized as one of the better publications available to and for youth organizations. Group experience is the key focus in producing these magazines. Input has been produced in cooperation with our friends in the Reformed Church of America. Our servicemen continue to receive the Insight magazine and other devotional materials produced by the federation.

After several years of experimentation in leadership training approaches, the federation has produced a series of training packages which, if used, should produce the kind of leadership we are all striving for in youth groups and leagues. Alive Leader 1 was produced for a late fall of 1975 training seminar and evaluation has shown very positive results. Alive Leader 2 is in process at the time of this writing. In addition to all this, the federation makes available a storehouse full of resource material for young people and their leaders.

Our denomination should be grateful to God that he has produced men of vision in the past who were inspired to create the Young Calvinist Federation and for the present leadership that is producing dynamic results in the changing world. Pray that God will continue to raise up people of faith that are well prepared to serve him always and everywhere.

Bob Menkveld
Synodical Representative

REPORT 34

WORLD HOME BIBLE LEAGUE

The World Home Bible League made available, during 1975, thousands of Bibles, New Testaments and Gospel portions to the church for distribution in Canada and the United States. The New Testament versions available for distribution are the New International, New American Standard, King James, and the paraphrased Living New Testament. During 1975 Vietnamese Scriptures were also made available to churches for distribution among the refugees who came to our country.

Foreign

The World Home Bible League is involved in an exciting program of placing New Testaments as textbooks for reading and study in the classrooms of various countries of Latin America. This is an entirely new dimension in Scripture distribution. Last year over 425,000 copies of *Lo Mas Importante es el Amor*, the Living New Testament in Spanish, were sent to Bolivia. This Spanish edition was checked by some of our own missionaries. The Minister of Education of Bolivia declared this Testament an official textbook in their schools. The Department of Education distributes the copies from their main warehouse in La Paz to all schools throughout the country. All arrangements for this program were made with the Minister of Education and high government officials.

A program similar to the one in Bolivia has also been initiated in Peru and Guatemala. Each country has received one hundred thousand copies for placement in their classrooms. Thousands more New Testaments will be needed to complete these projects in Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala. The opportunity to expose the youth of these nations to the Bible is most exciting for us who believe that it is the power of God unto salvation.

The League continues to negotiate with officials in other countries of Latin America and Africa to initiate similar programs. Other countries may also approve the placement of New Testaments in their schools for study and reading.

The World Home Bible League is happy it could serve missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church throughout the world. Mexico, Japan, Taiwan, Nigeria and India continue to be primary countries for distribution. The World Home Bible League was able to provide 2.8 million pieces of Scripture for distribution in the country of India alone.

Project Philip

1975 for Project Philip can be characterized as the year of transition. Many programs have been started and are now in their third and fourth years of testing. We have been engaged in an in-depth analysis of the programs and are making necessary adjustments to insure the fact that

they will be a potent force for continuous evangelism in the life of the church. An example of this is the experiment conducted on the Nigerian mission field—an experiment which is now under the direction of Mr. John De Jager. In the first enrollment campaign, forty-thousand people were enrolled in the Project Philip courses. Twenty-eight thousand actually completed the course. The churches, being inundated by the wave of work that this evangelism program brought, and the unexpected response, have taken a second look at their participation in it. This has caused Project Philip to re-examine its initial thrust and to go in the direction of more intensive training and indepth church planning.

Our Project Philip program in Taiwan continues to exceed all expectation, averaging between one thousand and fifteen hundred graduates per month from the three hundred churches which are using the program.

In Mexico, the Rev. Larry Roberts is conducting an experiment with Project Philip in conjunction with training theological students on the field. We are most eager to receive the results of this experiment and to provide materials for these students as they go out in the establishment of their own churches.

Bicentennial

In this Bicentennial year of the United States many churches throughout the country are using the Bicentennial Prayer—a program designed to help the churches to understand the message of the Bible for our nation and to communicate it to their neighbors. Well over 150,000 copies of the first study guide in this program have been distributed as of December 31, and we pray for God's choicest blessing upon this program.

Wycliffe Bible Translators' Publications

In 1975 the World Home Bible League published Scriptures translated by Wycliffe Bible Translators in 113 different languages. One hundred and fifty-eight Scripture portions, Gospels and New Testaments were published by the League for distribution. The estimated cost of publications that Wycliffe is requesting the Bible League to sponsor in 1976 is over a half million dollars. The Bible League has agreed to publish translated Scriptures of Wycliffe branches in Africa, Central America, North America, Indonesia, Asia, New Guinea, Philippines, Bolivia, Brazil, Mexico and Peru.

The World Home Bible League is a service organization of the church. It is eager to serve our churches, missionaries and pastors in their programs of Scripture distribution. The Board of Trustees of the League, which is well represented with members of our denomination, is deeply grateful to our denomination for its interest and faithful support of its ministry of Bible distribution.

We request that you continue to support the World Home Bible League with your prayers and gifts.

John A. De Kruyter
Synodical Representative

STUDY COMMITTEE REPORTS

REPORT 35

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

PREFACE

The Synod of 1975 referred Report 38, Marriage Guidelines, to the churches for study as the committee had requested.

We want to take this occasion to thank the consistories and individuals who responded to our report. We were gratified by the many responses that commended the report and expressed agreement with it. We benefited greatly by those responses that pointed out weaknesses in the report. The committee considered seriously every response and every criticism.

In resubmitting the report it will be noted that in addition to minor alterations the most extensive changes are to be found in II. Biblical Teaching Regarding Divorce, C. *The Scope of Porneia as Possible Grounds for Divorce*, and in III. Biblical Teaching Regarding Remarriage, B. *The Remarriage of Persons Divorced on Grounds Not Recognized as Being Legitimate in the Bible*.

The following altered report is, we believe, an improvement over the one submitted last year. It is our belief that the report is true to the teachings of Scripture. We have struggled long and hard with difficult passages. We were genuinely concerned to determine what the requirements of Scripture were regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. We believe the report and the guidelines will serve our churches well if the recommendations are seriously considered. The problems in marriage and divorce are rapidly increasing; the church must be prepared to deal with them.

THE MANDATE

The Synod of 1973 appointed the undersigned to serve as a committee on Marriage Guidelines. Our mandate reads as follows: “. . . to provide guidelines in the light of: a. previous synodical decisions; b. the study committee report (1973); c. the reactions of the synodical advisory committee (Report 4, B, Art. 62, 1973); d. the original overture (Overture 18, 1971)” (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 59).

HISTORY OF THE MANDATE

This mandate has its source in an overture sent to the Synod of 1971 by Classis Toronto. That classis overtured Synod of 1971 “to appoint a study committee to draw up new guidelines for pastors and consistories in their care of (a) couples contemplating marriage, (b) couples involved in marital difficulties, (c) divorced persons, and (d) those who have been divorced and contemplate remarriage.” Classis Toronto then adds its study on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage (Acts of Synod 1971, page 632, Overture 18).

In response to the overture of Classis Toronto, synod appointed a study committee. This committee reported to the Synod of 1973 (Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 595-607), interpreting its mandate as follows:

“Our mandate is thus twofold:

1. to study and evaluate the issue of divorce and remarriage in the light of the 1956 synodical decision as compared with the Toronto overture. (cf. Overture 18, 1971), and
2. to formulate guidelines for pastors and consistories in dealing with the problems of:
 - (a) couples contemplating marriage
 - (b) couples involved in marital difficulties
 - (c) divorced persons
 - (d) divorced persons contemplating remarriage.

“The synodical decisions of 1956 which we are to consider are the following:

1. The consistories are urged most earnestly to guard the sanctity of marriage, and warn unceasingly against every violation of the marriage bond through unbiblical divorce or through adultery, keeping in mind the need for true repentance on the part of all who seek admission to the church.

2. The consistories are advised that people who are guilty of unbiblical divorce, or who are divorced as the result of their own adultery and having remarried, seek entrance or re-entrance into the church, shall be expected to show their sorrow and genuine repentance during an adequate period of probation. Such cases shall not be settled without the advice of classis.

3. These declarations are referred to the consistories for their guidance so that they may deal with the concrete cases which come before them in accordance with the given situations, the demonstrable teaching of Scripture on marriage, divorce, repentance, and forgiveness, and the general provisions of the Church Order.

"Some of the conclusions of the Toronto study which require our attention are:

a. The term *biblical* and *non-biblical* grounds for divorce are not biblical and ought not to be used.

b. The church acknowledges that marriage is essentially indissoluble.

c. Since we live in a broken world, the church ought to recognize divorce in cases of a complete breakdown of the marriage relationship."

The marriage guidelines submitted by the committee reporting to Synod 1973 have considerable merit. In dealing with this report the synodical advisory committee had recommended some extensive and drastic revisions. In considering these revisions synod concluded that it would be more advisable to appoint a new study committee rather than to proceed with the laborious procedures of revising a document. Synod then decided to appoint our committee with the mandate quoted at the beginning of this report.

It is worthy of note that the Synod of 1973 did adopt the following as presented by the synodical advisory committee:

That synod do not adopt the committee's recommendation that synod accept Part II as in accord with biblical teaching on marriage and offer it to the churches as a guideline in their pastoral task (Acts of Synod, Report 40, p. 601).

"Grounds:

a. Synod is not convinced that Part II is in its entirety in accord with the biblical teaching on marriage. For example:

1. Whereas the study committee maintains that the Greek word *porneia* as used in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 has a broader meaning than illegitimate sexual intercourse we question whether that interpretation can be substantiated from Scripture.

2. The contractual, covenantal nature of marriage is minimized in favor of a "relationship of fidelity," thus opening the possibility for thinking that a marriage's real beginning and ending depends on some undefined personal commitment to each other by the parties involved (Report 40, pp. 597, 598).

b. A number of statements are made and a number of expressions are used, that are ambiguous and capable of various interpretations: for example, the phrase 'dead marriage,' the words 'fidelity' and 'infidelity,' and the definition of adultery.

The remainder of the report was not acted upon by synod since this was committed into the hands of our committee and became part of our materials as matter to be studied. We quote for the purpose of reflecting the advisory committee's reactions:

"That synod observe the following with respect to the study committee's second recommendation" (Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 606, 607).

a. Though it is true that there is a distinction between "internal marital breakdown" and "legal divorce," the former is not necessarily a biblical ground for the latter" (Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 599, 600).

b. We reject the statement, "Adultery be viewed in its broad meaning as marital infidelity," because this statement leaves open the possibility for a wide variety of grounds for divorce and in this way would be in conflict with 1956 synodical decisions on divorce.

c. Though we recognize that these terms can be misunderstood and misapplied, we reject the committee's recommendation that "talk of 'biblical' and 'unbiblical' divorce be discontinued as at best confusing." While agreeing that any divorce is tragic, we reaffirm that a "biblical divorce" is one which is granted on the basis of the ground which Scripture allows.

d. We reject the recommendation that "the practice of necessarily excluding a person guilty of so-called 'unbiblical divorce' from church membership be dropped" since we judge that what is said here is not in fact the present practice.

This latter quotation from the advisory committee's report as well as the preceding section that was adopted by synod received considerable attention in our studies since we judged these to be substantive in criticism of and objection to the study committee's report.

The remainder of the synodical advisory committee's report contains recommendations regarding Part III and IV of the study committee's report. Our committee has reviewed these recommendations and judges them to be essentially modifications of the study committee's report. Our presentation of guidelines will reflect the material presented by both the study and advisory committees.

PREVIOUS SYNODICAL DECISIONS

To summarize past synodical decisions would unduly lengthen this report. It can be said that prior to 1956 our church's preoccupation was with the problem of church membership for persons remarried following a non-biblical divorce. Divorce and remarriage has been listed on the agenda of synods twenty-eight times between the years of 1900 and 1950. From 1950 to 1971 marital problems appear in twelve Agendas for Synod.

The decision of the Synod of 1956 constitutes the stand of the Christian Reformed Church regarding divorce and remarriage at the present time. These decisions are:

"1. No substantial and conclusive scriptural evidence has been produced to establish the thesis that parties remarried after being divorced on the ground of their own adultery, or divorced on non-biblical grounds, are living in continual adultery.

"2. No substantial and conclusive scriptural evidence has been produced to warrant the demand that a person remarried after being divorced on the ground of his own adultery, or divorced on non-biblical grounds, must, in order to prove the sincerity of his repentance, cease living in the ordinary marriage relationship with his present spouse."

Having taken this position, synod further declared what may properly be called procedure:

"1. The consistories are urged most earnestly to guard the sanctity of marriage and warn unceasingly against every violation of the marriage bond through unbiblical divorce or through adultery, keeping in mind the need for true repentance on the part of all who seek admission to the church.

"2. The consistories are advised that people who are guilty of unbiblical divorce and have remarried, and seek entrance or re-entrance into the church, shall be expected to show their sorrow and genuine repentance during an adequate period of probation. Such cases shall not be

settled without the advice of classis. (Note: the Synod of 1968 decided to drop the last sentence of the above, namely, "Such . . . classis." Synod did state that it becomes the responsibility of classis in case of appeal. See Acts 1968, p. 61.)

"3. These declarations are referred to the consistories for their guidance so that they may deal with the concrete cases which come before them in accordance with the given situations, the demonstrable teaching of Scripture on marriage, divorce, repentance, and for forgiveness, and the general provisions of the Church Order" (Acts 1956, Art. 96, p. 59 and Art. 152, p. 118).

MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

I. BIBLICAL TEACHINGS REGARDING MARRIAGE

In attempting to formulate guidelines for pastors and consistories in dealing with marriage and marital problems it is important to understand the nature of marriage itself. The biblical view of marriage, divorce and remarriage can be summarized as follows:

A. *Basic Biblical Teaching*

Marriage may be described as a mutual relationship, a social arrangement, a legal agreement, but it is much more than these terms imply. According to Scripture it is divinely ordained and instituted so that Christian marriage is holy and sacred, a truth that is in need of constant emphasis.

Consider the following facets of biblical teaching:

1. The male and female identity is rooted in God's creative activity. We are told that God "created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:27). From the succeeding context it is clear that this basic similarity (image of God), with the essential difference of sex (male and female), envisions the close and intimate union of man and woman as husband and wife. Jesus emphasized this truth when he said, "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'? So they are no longer two but one. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:4-6).

2. There is clear evidence of the divine intent that the woman shall complement the man; she shall be his helper. God himself declared, "It is not good that the man shall be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him" (Gen. 2:18). On man's part there evidently was a deeply felt need as indicated by his exclamation when the woman was brought to him, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). Marriage as God ordained it and sex as God created it are among the highest, holiest, and happiest gifts God has bestowed.

3. The closeness and intimacy of the marriage bond, as God intended it, is indicated in the manner in which he created the woman. Fashioned from Adam's rib, she is indeed flesh of his flesh (Gen. 2:23) and this is followed by the divine instruction, "Therefore, a man leaves his father

and his mother and cleaves to his wife, *and they become one flesh*" (Gen. 2:24). The marriage relationship is then the most intimate of all human bonds or relationships.

4. The fact that marriage is divinely instituted is also beautifully underscored by the statement, ". . . and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into woman *and brought her to the man*" (Gen. 2:22).

5. The permanency of the marriage bond is emphasized by the divine injunction that a man shall leave father and mother and cleave unto his wife (Gen. 2:24). This is strengthened by the biblical emphasis on faithfulness, by the constant warning against and condemnation of adultery, and by the instruction of Jesus in Mark 10 (see also Matt. 19) concerning marriage and divorce.

6. The biblical norm for marriage is monogamy—one man and one woman. This fact is substantiated in such references as Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:4-6; I Corinthians 7:2; Ephesians 5:33.

Conclusion:

The fact that God created man male and female, created the woman of Adam's rib and brought her unto him; and the injunction that a man leave father and mother and cleave to his wife, clearly indicate that marriage is divinely ordained and instituted. This must be emphasized lest any conclude that marriage is simply a man-formed relationship. It is not of human origin.

When God blessed that first union and added, "Be fruitful and multiply . . ." it would indicate that this has much to say as to the purpose of marriage, the maturity of the individuals involved, the permanency of the marriage relationships, and the enrichment and strengthening of the bond of love by the birth, blessing and training of children. (See also Psalm 127 and 128.)

B. *Distinctive Character of Christian Marriage*

Marriage is a unique union between husband and wife, built upon love and characterized by fidelity.

The distinctiveness of the Christian marriage relationship is found in the following:

1. The marriage relationship is rooted in a divinely created sexuality. By means of marriage God intends to enhance the glory of each by causing the man and woman to complement each other. "The Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him'" (Gen. 2:18). This declaration by God indicates that the expected state for the majority of mankind is the marriage of one man and one woman. Scripture, however, clearly allows Christian individuals the right to choose the unmarried state. This position is set forth in the study on homosexuality adopted by the Synod of 1973. (See Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 624, 625.) I Corinthians 7 is frequently cited as scriptural evidence favoring the unmarried state. However, the chapter clearly indicates that Paul advocates the unmarried state because of his concern for total commitment to the cause of Christ under certain circumstances.

2. True marriage can come to its own only where there is real love. For the Christian this love is distinctive: It has its source in God. "Love

is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love" (I John 4:7, 8). "We love, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). Love in the human heart is born of the love of God. Only those who are new creatures in Christ can love as God loves (I John 3:10, 4:11f). This love is implanted in the human heart by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 5:5), and is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22). The law requires that we love others as we love ourselves (Matt. 22:39); however, Christ has set before us a higher standard: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34, 35). This love can find one of its richest expressions in the marriage of two Christian individuals. Love is beautifully described in I Corinthians 13. Such love seeks the welfare of the other (Rom. 15:1-3; Gal. 6:20); gladly forgives injury (Eph. 4:31, 32); and gives the place of honor to the other (Rom. 12:10).

Mature marital love is composed of romantic pleasure (*eros*) and companionship of the highest order in sharing life with one another (*philia*). Christian marital love is unique because it can be characterized by what is called *agapic love*—the capacity to forgive, to seek the welfare of the other, to find fulfillment in giving, to love when love is not returned. Christ becomes the pattern and inspiration for mature, Christian love in marriage. "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). Such love rules out and prohibits selfishness and self-centered ambitions in marriage.

3. Marital love is expressed in the sex act. The marriage bond warrants the sexual relationship and is confirmed and consummated by it. Outside this union in marriage all human sex acts become sinful. Agapic love transforms the sex act as in the highest way seeking to satisfy mutual fulfillment and enrichment. It rules out the lust of seeking self-satisfaction or arbitrary withholding without considering the marriage partner.

4. The marriage relationship is exclusive. It tolerates no encroachment upon or violation of this sacred union. Illicit sexual encounter (*porneia*) is so serious a violation of the marriage union that our Lord recognized that it could be considered permissible ground for divorce (Matt. 5:32).

5. In marriage the two parties enter into a contractual, covenantal relationship. Solemn vows are given and received in marriage—vows that are recognized by God and fellowmen. In these vows love is promised and fidelity is pledged. Fidelity involves loyalty, trust, love, devotion, reliability. The breaking of the vow and the betrayal of the trust involves sin against the marriage partner and guilt before God. It is destructive of the basic structure of society and generally involves great suffering for families. The church must recognize the obligation to define clearly the responsibilities of marriage to those contemplating marriage and to remind believers repeatedly of their solemn duty to keep their vows.

6. Marriage vows must be taken without reservation and the covenanted marriage is intended to last until death terminates the relationship. "A woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the

husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress" (Rom. 7:2, 3). "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6).

C. *The Husband as Head*

In marriage the husband is the head of the wife. Ephesians 5: 22-31 spells out in a beautiful way the relationship between a husband and wife. This pointed paragraph about marriage is introduced by a leading thought, viz. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (vs. 21). The overarching principle is set forth as a relationship of mutual subjection.

The Ephesian passage continues with the much debated words: "Wives be subject to your husbands" (vs. 22). Paul recognizes a divinely ordained hierarchy in the order of creation. When the wife recognizes and accepts her submissiveness to the husband she does so "as unto the Lord," acknowledging his ordinance. It is clear that this concept of submissiveness does not contain an idea of inferiority. Submissiveness is an act of yielding to the other person, voluntarily, out of love, for the sake of what is recognized as God's order.

The husband is said to be the head of his wife as Christ is head of his church (vs. 23ff). The husband is head (kephale), not lord. Headship does not suggest the function of giving orders or of final authority over every matter. We are guilty of a serious anachronism if we take head as a directing, controlling organ of the body. In Paul's day, according to popular psychology, both Greek and Hebrew, a man reasoned and purposed not "with his head" but "in his heart." Headship, as Paul makes clear in his analogy of Christ and the church, means to give oneself in love for the body. Headship also involves responsibility. As head of the marriage relationship the husband assumes obligations to his wife. The husband is to take the lead in setting the religious directions of the marriage, its meaning, goals, and purposes. In the exercise of these obligations he should merit the respect of his wife. This headship also has bearing upon the family relationship. The husband and father assumes a representative role and becomes accountable to God in a very special way.

The subjection of a wife to her husband, therefore, is not that of compulsive, slavish fear, but that which comes spontaneously from freedom. Furthermore, such an attitude exists and may be expected to endure, only if and when the husband manifests Christlike devotion and love.

D. *Relationship of Marriage to State and Church*

The institution of marriage is interrelated with both state and church in so intimate a fashion that for Christian marriage the role played by both state and church may not be taken lightly. The biblical command to "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" unavoidably places marriage in a foundational position for society in general and the

church in particular. Marriage, and the family which emerges from it, serves as the meeting place for the past and the future so that human society may continue and the heritage of the faith be committed from one generation to the next. The family as the expected result of marriage is both the basic unit of society and the basic covenantal unit of the Christian church. It is, therefore, very important to define the relationship between marriage and both the state and the church.

1. Marriage and its Relationship to the State

The state serves as a jural (legal, judicial) association which integrates its members within a given territory in a public judicial manner. It binds its citizenry together and provides the context of order within the public domain into a jural order. The qualifying aspect of the state, that which serves as the criterion by which its character should be shaped, is justice. Governmental agencies of every type and on every level, therefore, must be characterized as administrative agencies for the realization of justice within a given territory. As the administrator of justice, the government acts as God's agent within the state to provide the just order that God requires for the fulfillment of the lives of the citizenry.

This understanding of the character of the state has significant relevance for marriage.

Marriage is the bi-unity of man and woman for the service of God in this world. It differs from other societal relationships in that it does not emerge (or evolve) in the process of historical differentiation as most other societal relationships do. Rather, marriage was established by God at the very dawn of history. "Societal relationship," therefore, is an inadequate term for marriage, since it is a fundamental anthropological matter. That is, God ordained that in this bi-unity alone human life unfolds itself in fulfillment of the original commandment, the creational mandate to be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth. This implies, among other things, that marriage does not owe its existence to the state and marriages are not established by the state through any of its agencies.

But whatever precisely the nature of marriage is, whether the all-embracing life integration of two sexually different people or an ethically qualified social relationship, the people who unite into this bi-unity are also citizens of a state. This means that in the public, legal aspect of their lives they are members of a jural community, and they ought to submit themselves to the public legal order within the state (cf. Rom. 13). They should desire the recognition and sanction of the state to be assured that their marriage contributes to the order of justice which is necessary for the integration of citizens within the public domain.

To state it somewhat differently, as members of the state, the men and women who marry change their position within the state as of the day of their wedding. From that day on they are no longer merely two individual beings, but a bi-unity, which has implications for the public legal domain such as, the change of names, the ownership of property, and the possibility of having children who will also be members of the state, and the responsibility of the state for integrating these

new members into the public order. With good reason Paul's admonition to submit to every ordinance for the Lord's sake include marriage laws, such as the postponement of the marriage plans of those whose blood test reveals active venereal disease, lest the public order be adversely affected.

The function of the state is both the recognition and the sanctioning of a marriage. The state does not establish a marriage relation since marriage is far more than a legal relationship. But the state legitimizes a marriage and proclaims, as it were, that from now on, all others in the state are under obligation to recognize and respect two particular people as married. Marriage partners, on their part, ought not to consider themselves married until such recognition and sanction is given.

2. Marriage and its Relationship to the Church

The Bible speaks of the church both as the body of Christ and as instituted, local, congregations of believers with their office bearers. As the body of Christ, the church comprises all believers everywhere, a spiritual temple of which Christ is head. As a local worshipping community of believers with its office bearers, the church is a fellowship comprised of Christian families, as the basic covenantal unit, whose head is Christ. The task of the church as institution is to faithfully proclaim the Word of God for all life, which, of course, includes the Word in its relevance for marriage. It is the church in this latter sense upon which we focus our attention in considering the relation of the church to marriage.

The church is the covenant community. That is, it is the believing, worshipping, and serving community of those who acknowledge God's gracious promise to be our God (in the fullest most comprehensive sense), and the God of our children. This covenant, first made explicit with Abraham, is assured to his seed, whose seed we are since we are Christ's (cf. Gal. 3:7-29). Through its faithful proclamation of the gospel, the church presses home the implications of the covenant both to parents and their children. A high priority matter among these implications is the need for prayerful selectivity regarding the Christian commitment of one being considered as a marriage partner. To a large extent the covenant faithfulness of the succeeding generation depends on the Christian character of the marriage relationships of the current generation. To be sure, the church, by God's grace, will always include "many who are far off, as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him." But the membership of the Christian church is comprised predominantly of those who, raised in the bosom of the covenant, accept the obligations and privileges of the covenant upon reaching the age of mature discernment.

Recognizing that the quality and character of marriage carries far reaching consequences for the church and its continuing ministry, Christians should desire to be guided by the church in every stage leading to marriage. Further, the recognition and sanction of the church should be desired at the time of marriage as well as throughout their marriage, and the partners in marriage should be expected to openly accept, in

the midst of the believing community, the responsibilities to which the biblical teaching of covenant calls them. This might well be recognized by some liturgical activity to indicate the blessing of the church upon the marriage. This is not to say that marriage is an ecclesiastical relationship, but the church does acknowledge the Christian legitimacy of the new relationship which two people who marry begin, and proclaims to the believing community that through a particular marriage a new covenant unit has been initiated.

Marriage at its heart is the bond of fidelity to which a man and a woman commit themselves before God. But it is not a purely private matter between two individuals. The order of human society and the organic unity of the body of Christ which is the church, necessarily requires that two people committing themselves to each other do so in recognition of the fact that both church and state are agents of God through which his approbation upon their marriage is assured.

II. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING DIVORCE

Jesus placed strong emphasis upon the permanence of marriage. "And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, 'Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one'. So they are no longer two but one. 'What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.' They said to him, 'Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away'? He said to them, 'For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery'" (Matt. 19:3-9; see also Mark 10:2-9). It is evident that Jesus confirms the creation ordinance that marriage is intended to be binding for life. In this time of easy divorce (in some areas, without cause) it is most important that the permanence of marriage be emphasized.

While Jesus emphasizes the permanence of marriage it would appear that he allows for justifiable cause for breaking the marriage relationship, that is *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. Since there are differences of opinion regarding the specific meaning of *porneia*, the word and its usage in Matthew 5 and 19 deserve careful study.

A. *The Specific Meaning of Porneia in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9*

1. Current Interpretations

a. The study committee in its report to the Synod of 1973 has argued that "adultery" covers "all the ways in which infidelity in marriage can take place" (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 598). Again: "At this juncture the committee re-emphasizes that adultery must be viewed in its broad meaning as marital infidelity—the breaking of fidelity which can happen in many ways" (p. 600). Out of this background they approach Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. They distinguish *porneia* (fornication) from *moicheia* (adultery) and assert that in Matthew it is the Greek trans-

lation for the "some indecency" of Deuteronomy 24:1. This itself causes problems when the passage is read to make adultery a ground for divorce: it talks of fornication (p. 601).

A bit later the committee states: "at present many exegetes tend to consider *porneia* distinct from adultery in that it refers to infidelity within marriage. If that is true, the interpretation given above would be strengthened" (p. 601). Again, in the same paragraph: "In any case, it is not possible to limit fornication to physical infidelity" (p. 601).

We confess that we do not understand everything that is stated and claimed in the last full paragraph on page 601. For example, we do not know what they mean when they say: "He is not referring to such cases of fornication in this instance." And we do not know who the "many exegetes" are who are alleged to be tending to consider *porneia* as referring to infidelity within marriage. But the main drift of their argument is clear.

b. On the other hand, the Synod of 1973 did adopt one part of the report of her advisory committee in which the committee offers the following as one example of the fact that Part II of the study committee's report is not in its entirety in accord with the biblical teaching on marriage (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 59): "whereas the study committee maintains that the Greek word *porneia* as used in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 has a broader meaning than illegitimate sexual intercourse we question whether that interpretation can be substantiated from Scripture." The advisory committee (and, therefore synod) did not say specifically what they thought *porneia* specifically means in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, but the implication seems to be that they regard *porneia* to mean "illegitimate sexual intercourse." This is the position of many exegetes, though there is some variety on whether and to what extent *porneia* here should be limited to adultery or also to include pre-marital unchastity.

c. Some exegetes (many recent Roman Catholic exegetes, but not exclusively so) understand *porneia* in these passages to refer to physical sexual intercourse but argue that (pushing hard the distinction between *porneia* and *moicheia*) the word refers exclusively to "premarital sexual intercourse." (One such exegete is E. J. Mally in *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, N.T., p. 44.)

d. Other exegetes (once again mostly Roman Catholic) understand *porneia* in these two passages to refer to "Christians who, prior to their conversion, had married within prohibited degrees of blood relationship as stated in Leviticus 18:6-18," or, in other words, to an "unlawful union of concubinage." (The first quotation above is from *The New American Bible*, N.T., p. 31 and the second from J. L. McKenzie in the *Jerome Biblical Commentary*, N.T., p. 72.) It should be noted that these two positions (items c and d here) now taken by recent Roman Catholic exegetes differ from the older and traditional Roman Catholic position which claimed that adultery was not a permissible ground for complete divorce; rather adultery can be a ground for what they call "separation from bed and board." (For this position, one may consult still *The Jerusalem Bible*, N.T., pp. 45f.)

There may be other interpretations of the word, but as far as we could determine these are the four major interpretations. In our study we must come to some judgment about the correctness of these positions.

2. Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The study committee (1973) may have overstated their case when they said that "in Matthew it (the reference to *porneia*) is the Greek translation for the 'some indecency' of Deuteronomy 24:1" (p. 601). But they were correct, as almost all exegetes allow, that there is a close connection with the problematics of Matthew and Deuteronomy 24:1. This is obvious from especially two things. (1) The reference in Matthew 19:3 to divorce "for any cause" clearly places this question in the context of the rabbinical discussions which centered around the interpretation of the ground for divorce in Deuteronomy 24:1 ("because he found in her some indecency," *'erwah dabar*). And though in Matthew 19:4ff, Jesus shows them that their question is a wrong one, he nonetheless seems to come back to it in Matthew 19:9. (2) The phrase in Matthew 5:32 "except on the ground of unchastity" employs a rather unique Greek construction (*parektos logou porneias*) which, especially because of the similarity between *logos* and *dabar*, seems to be structured according to one of the interpretations of Deuteronomy 24:1 which read it as *dabar 'erwah*. In any event, one can hardly escape looking at Deuteronomy 24:1-4 as background for *porneia* in Matthew.

First of all, it must be noted that Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not institute divorce, it merely acknowledges the existence of the custom and, to some extent, regulates it. The correct translation of the verses is that found in the RSV in which the first three verses are all part of the introductory section of the conditional sentence and verse 4 gives the conclusion. In this sense, this passage deals only indirectly with divorce, in that its main contention is the prohibition of the reunion of partners after a divorce and remarriage.

Nevertheless, in the process the passage does make reference to a situation in which after a man and woman are married, "if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her. . . ." The phrase translated "some indecency" is very difficult to interpret and that phrase (Heb.: *'erwah dabar*) was the center of an exegetical controversy among the great rabbis who lived at the time of the New Testament. Shammai insisted that it would be understood in such a way that divorce be permitted only for adultery (with emphasis upon the *'erwah*) while Hillel taught that for a wide variety of reasons (with emphasis upon the *dabar*) divorce could be granted, including such trivial causes as inferior cooking.

But what did the phrase mean to the author of Deuteronomy? It means literally "nakedness of a thing," and was translated in the Septuagint (LXX) as a "shameful matter" (*aschemon pragma*). The exact meaning of the phrase for the Deuteronomist is difficult to define, since it occurs only one other time in the Old Testament and that in Deuteronomy 23:14(15) where it refers to a kind of ceremonial uncleanness in connection with human excrement. J. Murray (*Divorce*, pp. 9-12) argues that one must locate the meaning somewhat midway between the

interpretations of Shammai and Hillel. It seems to mean something short of adultery since there are other prescriptions and punishments given for adultery and divorce is not one of them (cf. esp. Deut. 22:13-29). On the other hand, it means something more than the trivial interpretation of Hillel since the context demands some sort of shameful conduct (cf. also the LXX translation) and since the other occurrence of the phrase points to ceremonial defilement. Also to be noted is the fact that the word *'erwah* by itself is used frequently in connection with illicit sexual relations (esp. Lev. 18 and 20). Perhaps Murray's statement is the best we can do: "while falling short of illicit sexual intercourse it may well be that the indecency consisted in some kind of shameful conduct connected with sex life" (p. 12).

To the extent that Deuteronomy 24:1 may lie behind the exceptive clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, it is clear that one cannot simply equate *porneia* with adultery in the strict sense. On the other hand, to the extent that the interpretation of Shammai may lie behind the exceptive clauses, there appears to be support for understanding *porneia* as sexual unchastity.

3. *Porneia* in the Old Testament and elsewhere in the New Testament

It is generally agreed that originally *porneia* meant "fornication," that is, the unfaithfulness of a woman before marriage. Specifically, it often designated prostitution, so that a *porne* was a female and a *pornos* a male prostitute. But it also came to have a broader reference to indicate unchastity or every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse.

In the LXX the word *porneia* translates a number of words that stem from the Hebrew *zanah*. In the Old Testament it refers to harlotry, in connection with Tamar, Genesis 38:24. It can also be used of a married woman, Hosea 2:2; 3:1, and in Hosea 2:2 *porneia* is used interchangeably with adultery. It is used also in a figurative sense to describe "unfaithfulness to Yahweh" (cf. Hos. 1-3; Jer. 3:1-4; Ezek. 16 and 23, etc.).

In the New Testament the word *porneia* is used some twenty-two times. Only in the book of Revelation is the term used in the figurative sense to designate apostasy from God (cf. Rev. 19:4; 14:8; 18:3; perhaps also 2:21). For the rest the word is used to refer to every kind of illicit sexual relationship and thus sexual immorality in general (cf. I Cor. 6:13, 18; II Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; and Col. 3:5). In I Corinthians 5:1 it designates incest (a man married to his father's wife) and some think that the references in Acts 15:20, 29 and 21:25 are to marriage within forbidden degrees of consanguinity (Lev. 18), though this is disputed. Occasionally *porneia*, by being used in a list with *moicheia*, is distinguished from that latter term (cf. Mt. 15:19 and Mk. 7:21). On the other hand, the warning against *porneia* in I Corinthians 7:2 and I Thessalonians 4:3 are structured in such a way so as to include illicit sexual intercourse on the part of married persons. That *porneia* can refer to adultery on the part of married persons (and thus as a synonym for *moicheia*) can best be seen in the quotation from Sirach 23:22, 23: "So it is with a woman who leaves

her husband and provides an heir by a stranger . . . she has committed adultery (*moicheuthe*) through harlotry (*porneia*) and brought forth children by another man."

4. *Porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9

We find little real support for the 1973 study committee's interpretation of *porneia* in these passages. It is true, as they point out (pp. 598f), that *moicheia* (adultery) and *porneia* (fornication or harlotry) can be and is used in both the Old Testament and New Testament to refer to a breaking of trust or fidelity over against God. But if they were to draw the logical conclusion from this observation for the meaning of *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, then these passages would teach that the only legitimate ground for divorce is "apostasy from God," a kind of "spiritual adultery." As a matter of fact, this interpretation was advocated by St. Augustine, which had the happy conclusion of bringing Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 into a kind of easy harmony with I Corinthians 7:10-16 (cf. P. E. Harrell, *Divorce and Remarriage in the Early Church*, pp. 122f). The study committee report is correct in saying that it is difficult to interpret these two texts as if *moicheia* were in the text and not *porneia*.

Now even though *porneia* and not *moicheia* appears in the Matthean exceptive clauses, we must take seriously the possibility that *porneia* in a given context may refer primarily to *moicheia*, or "adultery," that is, the sexual infidelity of a marriage partner. The survey given above indicates that this is certainly a possibility. The setting here in Matthew suggests that in the exceptive clause *porneia* does refer primarily to adultery since Jesus is speaking about married persons. This primary reference to adultery in these passages is also supported by the fact that the interpretation of "some indecency" of Deuteronomy 24:1 as referring to "adultery" may lie behind the formulation of the exceptive clause. Thus there is much in favor of, and nothing against, understanding the primary reference of *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 to be "adultery," that is, sexual infidelity on the part of one of the marriage partners.

Yet if Jesus wished to limit the meaning to "adultery," it is strange that he did not use the word *moicheia*. And even though the primary reference in the exceptive clauses may be to adultery, this does not preclude the fact that *porneia* was specifically chosen in order to cover more than adultery alone. Here the following additional considerations are in order. (1) One interpretation, particularly from the Roman Catholic side, suggests that *porneia* means here "marriage within prohibited degrees of blood relationship" as stated in Leviticus 18:6-18. *Porneia* certainly has that meaning in I Corinthians 5:1 and may have that meaning in Acts 15:20, 29. Although it appears incorrect to limit the meaning of *porneia* to that in Matthew's exceptive clauses, it is certainly possible that such kinds of "unchastity" could function as one aspect of *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. (2) Since the word *porneia* covers illicit sexual relationships in general, it can be suggested that other forms of sexual vice, such as, e.g., homosexuality, would be included here. (3) Finally, the suggestion has been made that since

the word *porneia* was closely associated with "harlotry" and "prostitution," the word suggests a kind of persistence in sexual vice. Thus it would seem to connote a kind of persistent and unrepentant adultery or unchastity (cf. D. W. Shaner, *A Christian View of Divorce*, p. 50).

Thus, in summary the following points should be made: (1) *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 does not refer to "spiritual adultery" or "infidelity of any kind," but refers to sexual infidelity; (2) although the meaning of *porneia* is broader than *moicheia*, its primary reference in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is to adultery; (3) the word *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 should be translated as "unchastity" and be understood to include such sexual infidelity as incest and homosexuality; and (4) because of the association of *porneia* with "harlotry" and "prostitution," the accent appears to fall on persistent and unrepentant unchastity rather than on the single act itself.

B. The import of the Exceptive Clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 in Relation to the Teaching of the Rest of the New Testament on Marriage and Divorce.

1. The Problem of Interpreting the Exceptive Clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 as Expressions of a Principle or the Application of a Principle to a Specific Situation.

a. A large number of New Testament scholars argue that the exceptive clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 do not represent the authentic or original teaching of Jesus but are additions made by Matthew in adapting the message of Jesus to his audience. The argument, all too briefly, runs like this. Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18 basically represent the original teaching of Jesus. They do not contain the exceptive clause. They clearly assert that God's intention for marriage is that it be permanent, that there is to be no divorce, and that if there is divorce there ought to be no remarriage. It is argued that Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18 basically represent the original and authentic teaching of Jesus for at least three reasons: (1) such direct and unqualified pronouncements are typical of Jesus' teaching in the gospels; (2) I Corinthians 7:10, 11 does not contain an exceptive clause and Paul expressly appeals here to a teaching of the Lord; and (3) Mark, it is argued, has no significant reason to omit such an exceptive clause, while Matthew had every reason to insert it in order to make the teaching fall in line with Jewish thought.

Although Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18 are regarded as giving basically the teaching of Jesus, it is usually pointed out that Mark 10:12 does contain a bit of Markan adaptation of the original message. Mark 10:12 recognizes the woman's right in initiating a divorce. This was a possibility under Roman law but not under Jewish law. In this part, Mark is seen to be adapting Jesus' message to Mark's Roman audience, just as Matthew, by adding the exceptive clauses, is adapting Jesus' original teaching to his more Jewish audience. Thus the exceptive clauses are said to be evidence of how the original message of Jesus was adapted by the gospel writer in order to meet the needs of the church served by him.

b. Your committee is not convinced that the exceptive clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 are part of Jesus' original teaching and that, for various reasons, the exceptive clauses are not mentioned in Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18 and I Corinthians 7:10, 11. The following points may be fairly raised in supporting the argument that the exceptive clauses do belong to the original and authentic teaching of Jesus.

(1) Jesus' ministry took place in the context of disputes with the Pharisees and their scribes. In that sense, it may be postulated that the interests of the Matthean community (which was more Jewish in character) were closely allied with the original historical setting in which Jesus' public ministry took place. Thus it would not at all be strange if Jesus himself had addressed himself to the various differences within the rabbinical teaching.

(2) Mark may, after all, have had a very important reason for omitting the exceptive clause. For Mark's purpose it may have been enough simply to remind his audience of the abrogation of the Mosaic provision concerning divorce. This takes on all the more force if the immediate occasion for Mark bringing up the question of divorce was related to John the Baptist's denunciation of the conduct of Herod Antipas and Herodias. Even though that denunciation story is recorded earlier (Mark 6:17ff), it is recorded in Mark 10:2 that the Pharisees came "tempting Jesus" and Mark elsewhere notes that the Pharisees and Herodians cooperated (cf. 3:6 and 12:13; for this argument, see Wm. Lane, *Commentary on the Gospel of Mark*, pp. 354-358). This immediate historical interest may be part of the reason why Mark did not wish to include the exceptive clause, for the exception could be misunderstood as giving validity to Herodias' desertion of her former husband, Philip, for Antipas, since she had sent Philip a letter of separation.

(3) Paul also may have had sufficient reason for not mentioning the exceptive clause in I Corinthians 7:10, 11. In the immediate context Paul has expressly argued that marriage is an important safeguard against fornication (7:2, 5). In this context, it might have been considered to be inappropriate to mention the exceptive clause. Furthermore, there is clear evidence in I Corinthians 6 that Paul regarded *porneia* as being destructive of the marriage relationship. In I Corinthians 6:13-17, Paul asserts that through fornication a man becomes "one flesh" with a prostitute. Here fornication, or adultery, is seen to have profound, even "metaphysical," implications. Although in I Corinthians 6:13-17 Paul does not apply this immediately to the marriage relationship, this pericope does give credence to the argument that the idea of the exceptive clauses may have been an unexpressed assumption underlying I Corinthians 7:10, 11.

(4) Finally, and generally, it should be noted that there may well be unexpressed assumptions behind biblical teaching that are and remain unexpressed because they are regarded as axiomatic or more or less universally accepted. For example, it is taken for granted that Matthew 5:31, 32; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18 and I Corinthians 7:10-16 do not exclude the possibility of remarriage after the death of the spouse. Yet they do not mention it, for it appears to

be assumed and comes to more or less incidental expression in I Corinthians 7:39 and Romans 7:3. So too the exceptive clauses may have been almost axiomatic and therefore not always expressed but rather assumed.

2. *Porneia* as a Possible Permissible Ground for Divorce.

The view here defended gives to the exceptive clauses (Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9) a more universal and principal importance than when they are viewed as a Matthean adaptation to meet the needs of a particular community. It is this basic and universal import of the idea of the exceptive clauses that is here maintained for the New Testament view of marriage and divorce. Implicit in this view is the basic importance of the physical act of sex in marriage as the highest symbolic act in regard to the meaning of marriage. Physical union in sexual activity becomes the central symbol of two people becoming one flesh. In that sense, physical fidelity to the marriage partner has a unique status among all of the "faithful acts" in a marriage. Physical union brings all of the rest into focus as the most full and free expression of love and fidelity.

Therefore, infidelity on the physical level becomes a permissible ground for divorce. It may be that precisely because among all other "unfaithful acts" in a marriage, it is unique. Physical infidelity symbolizes the epitome of unfaithfulness and strikes at the very heart and center of the marriage relationship. As the supreme act of infidelity it may be evidence for the fact that the marriage breakdown is so complete that the restoration of that marriage relationship becomes impossible.

It should be noted, however, that *porneia* in marriage does not demand divorce. It is only a *possible* ground for divorce. Especially if both partners in a marriage are Christian and the partner who is guilty of physical infidelity confesses his/her sin in genuine repentance then the other marriage partner should accept that confession and, recognizing his/her own weaknesses, seek restoration and healing in the marriage. Such confession and forgiveness is in harmony with our Lord's teaching on the importance of (confession and) forgiveness (Matt. 6:14, 15; Matt. 18:21-35; cf. also Col. 3:12 and Eph. 4:32). In fact it might be said that only prolonged adultery that is not repented of qualifies as a permissible ground for divorce. This may even be suggested by the use of the word *porneia* instead of *moicheia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, since it may suggest, because of its association with harlotry, "persistent and unrepentant adultery" instead of the single act of marital unfaithfulness in the sex act.

In all of this, care has been taken not to speak of *porneia* as "the biblical ground for divorce." For to speak of the "biblical" ground for divorce not only may suggest that the Bible approves of divorce but may also suggest that the Bible encourages unchastity as the approved means to that end. Although that idea was not intended by such terminology, the terminology is susceptible to that interpretation and may have fostered that kind of mentality. Therefore, it would be better to discourage the use of that terminology. Consequently in this section we have used the phrase "possible permissible ground" for divorce. Of course, behind

that expression is the assumption that the Bible gives the criteria for what is possible and permissible to be regarded as ground for divorce.

3. The Scope of *Porneia* as a Possible Ground for Divorce.

The Christian Reformed Church has been hesitant to accept grounds other than adultery for divorce. Only for two years (1894-1896) did the Christian Reformed Church agree that "wilful desertion as Paul prescribes in I Corinthians 7:15" could be allowed as an accepted ground for divorce. It has been thus the near uniform judgment of the Christian Reformed Church that the Holy Scriptures allow for the dissolution of marriage only for fornication or adultery as taught in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9.

Perhaps part of the reason for rejecting "wilful desertion" as a so-called second ground for divorce was the danger of casuistry in constructing the biblical evidence. For this brought up at least two very distinct problems: is "separation" (Gk. *chorizomai*) the same as or different from "giving a bill of divorce" and is it necessary that the precise conditions of I Corinthians 7:12-15 be met, namely, that the one who separates or departs be an unbeliever and (presumably) the believer one who had become a believer since the time of marriage? Certainly in this way we run the danger of treating the Bible as a casebook of canon law. It is important that we avoid treating the Bible in an unwarranted legalistic way. Yet, the question remains, does not I Corinthians 7:12-15 have something to say about the problem of marriage and divorce?

In this difficult area, the following is suggested. If our interpretation of the sense of the exceptive clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is correct, then physical infidelity, precisely because it is unique and symbolizes the epitome of unfaithfulness, may be reckoned as a permissible ground for divorce. We argued that it was so regarded because physical sexual union symbolizes the quintessence of the marriage union. Conversely, therefore, physical infidelity is unique in that it symbolizes the ultimate in marriage breakdown and dissolution. In that sense *porneia* stands as the unique possible ground for divorce.

There may, however, be other kinds of actions, situations, and conditions that in the judgment of a consistory can only be judged to be the *equivalent* of unrepentant unchastity in signalling the complete breakdown of a marriage and the unlikelihood of its restoration. Exactly what actions, circumstances, and situations would qualify for being the equivalent to unrepentant adultery would be difficult to say. But here I Corinthians 7:12-15 may point the way. Wilful desertion, while not in itself a so-called second ground for divorce, may be judged to be tantamount to physical infidelity and therefore also indicate that the marriage relationship cannot function in any meaningful way. Certainly in the case of *wilful* (prolonged and unrepentant) desertion, any kind of meaningful marriage relationship is impossible. It is conceivable that other actions, circumstances, and situations could likewise be judged to be the equivalent of prolonged and unrepentant unchastity. In such cases then, also, divorce might be recognized as the only viable course of action.

But who is to make such a judgment? Certainly in the case of a Christian partner in marriage, the person would not wish to make that judgment alone. He would wish to seek the wisdom of the Christian community by seeking the judgment of the consistory. They represent the Christian community and are obligated to give guidance and to apply the teachings of Scripture to given situations. If the consistory judges that there is prolonged and unrepentant adultery or a situation equivalent to it (such as prolonged and unrepentant wilful desertion), then one may, albeit with mourning and repentance, legitimately seek a divorce. This ought not to be construed as opening the door to all kinds of justifications for divorce. The central teaching of Scripture is still paramount—marriage is intended for the life of the partner.

The committee is well aware that the "equivalent of unrepentant adultery" is a guiding norm that entrusts each consistory with decisive moral responsibility in making judgments concerning divorce. Such responsibility we think is warranted on the basis of Scripture. (See explanation of I Cor. 7:12-15). Scripture does contain regulative specifics that must guide our decision making. Every consistory must begin with the biblical principle that the only possible permissible ground for divorce is unchastity (porneia). But as a statement of moral principle it can only be applied by a morally responsible agent, such as a consistory.

Part of the burden of application is interpretation not just of the principle but also the circumstance in which application takes place. We realize that situations are often extremely complex, especially when it comes to obstinate evil and guilt. The term "equivalent" anticipates this complexity. It places a responsibility on each consistory which at times may be agonizing. Such agonizing is the price that moral integrity often demands of us in a sinful world.

III. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING REMARRIAGE

Remarriage in Scripture is never directly under discussion. It arises as something incidental to other subjects. In Scripture the stress is on the permanence of marriage and the responsibility of marriage partners to foster and support this permanence.

A clear and uncontested situation in which remarriage may take place is when one of the marriage partners dies. (See Romans 7:1-3, I Corinthians 7:39.)

A. *The Remarriage of Persons Divorced on Permissible Grounds*

Matthew 19:9 states: "And I say unto you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery." The exceptive clause (except for unchastity) gives the grounds for divorce. (See II, B, 2 above.) However, the sentence within which this exceptive clause is found discloses more than just what is a permissible ground for divorce. Within this sentence there are two verbs, "divorce" and "marries another," which are coordinate because they have a common subject, "whoever." The "whoever" is predicated as engaging in two possible actions, "divorce" and "marrying another." Without the exceptive clause the verse would read "whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery." The exceptive clause excepts other "whenevers," that is, those who divorce because of the unchastity of their

mate and remarry. The conclusion therefore is that these, because of the exceptive clause, may remarry without committing adultery.

By inference this permissibility of remarriage should be granted to any Christian divorced on grounds of unrepentant adultery and its equivalent. (See II, C above.)

B. The Remarriage of Persons Divorced on Grounds Not Recognized as Being Legitimate in the Bible

The following material is a presentation of the major interpretations of the biblical material dealing with remarriage as found in Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:11, 12, Luke 16:18 and I Corinthians 7:10, 11:

1. Some interpret biblical data on remarriage to teach that every remarriage after divorce is an act of adultery (Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11, 12). The consequence of such an interpretation is that the only advice that the church can give to divorced persons is that of I Corinthians 7:10, 11, "Let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband." This position would not even allow the remarriage of the so-called innocent party in cases where adultery (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) was the cause for divorce. In general this interpretation represents the traditional Roman Catholic position. This position concludes that the prohibition against remarriage in Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18 is unconditional and universal.

2. (a) Very few churches, however, maintain this unconditional stand against the remarriage of divorced persons. A more common interpretation of the biblical data is to say that the apparent absolute prohibition of remarriage of divorced persons in Luke 16:18; Mark 10:11, 12 and I Corinthians 7:10, 11 is to be qualified in at least one way. In the light of the exceptive clause present in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, it is usually inferred (cf. III, A, above) that the so-called innocent party in a marriage broken by unchastity is indeed free to remarry without thereby committing adultery.

(b) A further complexity in this context is how to judge the right of remarriage of the so-called innocent party who is divorced with no adultery involved. In such an instance the question can be raised, is such an innocent party free to remarry? Although the Bible does not speak directly to this question, the biblical principle of permanency requires that an innocent party remain unmarried so long as there is reasonable hope for reconciliation. If in time reconciliation proves to be impossible, remarriage of an innocent party is legitimate.

3. In the interpretation of our Lord's teaching on remarriage in Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:11, 12, Luke 16:18 and I Corinthians 7:10, 11, perhaps a further qualification can be defended. This qualification centers around the intention of the persons involved. The crucial importance of intention comes to the fore when one seeks to do justice to the emphasis that Jesus places on the factor of permanence in marriage. In most instances, e.g., Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18a, it is clearly stated that a person who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery. This close conjunction of divorce and remarriage suggests that Jesus is speaking specifically against people dis-

solving their present marriage with a view to remarriage. To dissolve a marriage with such an intention in mind displays a complete disregard for God's will for marriage, namely, its permanency.

In Luke 16:18b (compare Matt. 5:32b) there is not a close conjunction of divorce and remarriage but rather the added statement, "and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery." But even this statement should not be taken out of its historical context. R. C. H. Lenski (*Commentary on Luke*, pp. 843f.) points out that Jesus is inveighing against the Jewish practice of putting away a wife for any and every cause. By so doing, the person involved "commits adultery," that is, he contributes to the breakdown of marriage, the very nature of which is permanency. Whatever contributes to such a breakdown is prohibited. Lenski's interpretation here is helpful:

"Fornication on the part of the husband or a wife, of course does that (Matt. 5:32 [that is, contributes to the breakdown of the marriage institution and disregards its permanent character]) but so does every Jewish dismissal of a wife for other reasons or for no special reason at all. And that is why Jesus here includes, as being equally guilty, the Jew who marries a wife who is dismissed by a Jewish husband and says of him as he says of the other: *moicheuei*, he helps to ruin the permanency of marriage. These Jews and Pharisees were all alike; none of them regarded marriage as having been made a permanent relation by God and his Word. All of them regarded marriage as being something that was to be dissolved at pleasure. The man who married a discarded wife married her only in this way, i.e., himself to discard her when he so pleased. In the very act of marrying her . . . he thus violated God's law of marriage."

But what about I Corinthians 7:10, 11? Here Paul says: "To the married I give charge, not I but the Lord, that the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband) —and that the husband should not divorce his wife." Does the parenthetical material here contain an unconditional and universal prohibition of remarriage? If it does then the only advice that the church can give to any and every divorced person (who is not the innocent party) is, be "reconciled" to the one whom you divorced or "remain single." No doubt, the advice, "be reconciled to your husband (or wife)" is advice consistent with the Christian notion of the permanency of marriage and of the propriety of reconciliation. The question can be raised, however, whether the advice to remain unmarried represents a universal principle that must be maintained over against all those who seek remarriage.

There is some evidence in the text that the advice to remain unmarried should not be regarded as a principle of universal application. In the first place, the main statement of the text—and that which Paul then explicitly attributes to the Lord—is that a wife should not separate from her husband and the husband should not divorce his wife. The parenthetical material is an insertion on the part of Paul, not a direct quotation from the Lord's teaching. Therefore, the parenthetical material may well have been occasioned by the special circumstances as described elsewhere in I Corinthians 7. Secondly, Paul's material in I Corinthians 7

contains much advice concerning marriage and celibacy. In general it can be said that although Paul never says that marriage is in any way sinful, he does prefer, if the person has the necessary gift, the unmarried state (cf. I Cor. 7:7, 8, 32-35 and 38). Why Paul prefers the unmarried state is indicated in his references to the "present distress" (vs. 26) the fact that "the time is shortened" (vs. 29), and the possibility of the unmarried person giving "undivided devotion" to the Lord (vss. 32-35). The precise meaning of these phrases is debated. But, whatever their precise meaning may be, they do form the reasons for the wide spread conclusion that Paul's preference for the unmarried state does not have universal applicability. These reasons that led to Paul's preference for the unmarried state as reflected in I Corinthians 7, may also have occasioned his advice in verse 11, "let her remain unmarried." At the very least then, it is dubious whether this advice from Paul should be regarded as excluding every remarriage.

4. In the light of the above evidence the committee concludes that each consistory must make an individual judgment with reference to those seeking remarriage after a divorce granted on grounds not considered legitimate in the Bible. In making a judgment the central concern is and remains the attitude toward the permanency of marriage on the part of the person contemplating remarriage. For example, did such a person divorce in order to remarry? If so, the person thereby indicates disregard for the permanency of marriage as taught in Scripture. In this connection a further question may be asked as to a person's attitude toward the contemplated remarriage. Does he or she regard this marriage as a permanent union? If not, the person thereby indicates disregard for the permanency of marriage as taught in Scripture. Such a remarriage is sinful and should not receive the blessing of the church!

5. It is the judgment of the committee that any individual who is sincerely repentant for his or her part in the breakdown of a previous marriage and who demonstrates the biblical attitude toward the permanency of marriage should be forgiven and restored to the full fellowship of the church. Within such forgiveness and restoration of fellowship, remarriage may be legitimately considered.

IV. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

A. The church has its own task, toward marriage and family. Through its preaching and pastoral ministry the church is to strengthen the faith-confession and life-commitment of its members. Since it is mandated to preach the Word for all of life, the church's ministry also points the way to obedience in marriage and family.

B. Since a healthy, vibrant fellowship of believers cannot be maintained if there is marriage failure and family breakdown, the pastoral ministry of the church has a special concern with life in these central areas. It is highly important that ministers diligently seek to build healthy marital relationships by faithfully preaching what the Bible declares regarding marriage. In applying the clear teaching of God's Word to daily living, ministers must not forget to make clear reference to the marriage relationship. The permanence intended in marriage must

be fully declared as the teaching of the Word is made to apply to the marital state and the gravity of the sin which allows breakdown of this relationship must be stressed.

C. The church in its pastoral care ought not only busy itself with situations which are clearly in need of special help, it must above all be concerned with helping its young members find the right way in their life activities. In this light the committee recommends to synod the following approaches:

1. Education for Living or Family-life Education

The teaching ministry of the church should emphasize how one's confession of his Lord integrates his life. Concern should center on leading young people to come to grips with themselves as people, giving them the freedom and responsibility to take up their task in God's world.

Education for family living is a broader concept than preparation for marriage. It includes a child's total life experience through all the developmental stages of maturing to the point of assuming responsibility for self direction—at which juncture consideration of preparation for marriage is appropriate. The conscious aim of this broader education should be the development of a clear understanding of the real meaning of love in relation to all of life, prerequisite to its application in marriage.

A plan should be developed whereby church, school, and home would make conscious, coordinated, consistent and ongoing efforts to explicate the Christian concept of love and help all individuals at all ages to interpret and apply this most basic principle as their primary motivation in all their various interactions. In guiding the young person through the successive developmental stages, the same message of love must be consistently presented by church, school, and home, each reinforcing the other. This foundation would make the superstructures of specific programs such as premarital counseling, more effective and therefore should be given priority.

It is obvious but an often neglected consideration that church, family, school, peer groups, etc., together share in the responsibility for this general preparation for life. For that reason churches ought to be aware of and stimulate families, schools, etc. in their programs to lead children in the direction of the Lord.

As part of such general education for living, both church and school should pay specific attention to family and marriage in their education programs. The content of such courses should include a biblical discussion of love and marriage as well as treating in some detail the matters of physical sexuality, emotional compatability, economic budgeting, common interests, division of household tasks, etc. How and in what detail such matters should be treated is dependent in the developmental stage of the children and young people involved.

2. Pre-Marital Counseling

a. The burdens and responsibilities of marriage and family are such that young couples contemplating marriage should be instructed under

the leadership of a qualified person or team of persons, concerning the nature of marriage and family. This is especially needful in our time because the permanence and nature of marriage are being challenged. Marriage breakdown often results because marriages are begun with only superficial, if any, preparation. Immediate steps need to be taken to prevent such situations which often lead to tragedy. The initiation of pre-marital programs would be an important positive step. The content of such programs should include a biblical discussion of love and marriage as well as certain other specifics mentioned in above (1.). The church should call upon all possible resources for guidance to the couple such as economists, lawyers, gynecologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, psychologists, internists, etc. Let the professionals share their gifts in helping to build healthy marriages.

b. In addition, all couples contemplating marriage should be involved in private, pastoral counseling sessions in which there is ample opportunity to discuss more personally and individually the ensuing marriage. The pastor in preparing pre-counseling sessions might well consider several sessions. The following pattern is suggested:

(1) The first session could be used for the purpose of the pastor to become better acquainted with the couple and should include aiding the couple in formulation of wedding plans, ceremony, music, etc.

(2) The second session could deal with the general topic of what is involved in a Christian marriage. Emphasis should be placed on the realization that this type of marriage takes work, concentration and the honest, open interpersonal relationship of the Christian couple as seen in their relationship with Christ.

(3) In the third session, the couple could write out what they consider is involved in ideal marriage. They could discuss what they expect to give to each other in the marriage and what they expect to receive from this marriage. Personalities might well be discussed to be certain that the persons know and understand each other. They might be encouraged to offer what they would like to change about themselves. Their personal strengths and weaknesses should be reviewed. (Prepared forms for inventory and analysis are readily available from such sources as Family Life Publications, Inc., Box 427, Saluda, North Carolina 28773.)

(4) In the fourth and fifth sessions the pastor could discuss with the couple the basic facts of interpersonal communications as they apply to the marriage relationship, how to deal with conflict, how to develop understanding, recognizing traps that can produce anxiety, etc. Special problems that may have surfaced in the consultations should be discussed openly and honestly.

(5) There should be follow-up counseling sessions after the marriage to determine if problems have arisen and if they have been resolved. Each pastor involved in a marriage should have deep personal concern for the success of every marriage solemnized.

3. Marital and Family Counseling

a. Due to the stress on life in marriage and family today, there is

great urgency for marriage and family enrichment programs. In such programs husbands and wives, fathers and mothers as well as children, can explore together ways to strengthen marital and family ties and help each other face marital and family conflicts. Such programs would also be concrete ways in which Christ-confessors can show genuine concern for each other's welfare. People would learn that every marriage and family has its tensions and periods of crisis. They would learn that ignoring or hiding the problems only further complicates the situation.

A more healthy climate must be created in which concern, compassion and help can be more freely offered and more freely received. People involved in difficulties would then feel free to seek help at the onset of problems or at least at an earlier stage in their development.

b. For couples involved in marital difficulty, counseling should be constructive, and should attempt to help the partners face up to the problems and discover ways to rebuild and heal. Openness, concern, understanding, trust, authenticity, and patience are required.

In general, the counselor should attempt to help the partners face up to the problems and discover ways to rebuild and heal. Openness, concern, understanding, trust, authenticity, and patience are required.

Often it will be advisable for pastors and consistories to enlist the help of marriage counselors or other professional personnel both for consultant and referral purposes.

c. Where divorce has taken place, the church should have special concern for the persons involved in this traumatic experience. Divorce often triggers deep feelings of guilt and failure, even of spiritual distress. The church's ministry can really come to its own among such needy persons and the guidance and counsel offered will be highly important when remarriage is contemplated. Even where there is great guilt in divorce with no apparent repentance, the church has solemn obligations to carry on patient and persistent work.

4. Remarriage Counseling

a. When the previous marriage has failed, persons contemplating remarriage should be doubly aware of what they are doing. The basic material as to the nature of marriage and its obligations which has been emphasized should be openly discussed. In addition to acknowledging his or her responsibility in previous marital failure, the couple should show evidence that they are seeking a mature understanding of marriage in the Lord.

At the same time, divorced persons require special understanding. They have experienced marital failure and frequently strong feelings of guilt, shame and anger linger. Thus the pastor has the difficult task to help them realize that God's forgiveness is also possible for them. The pastor can do this by accepting them as they are. He does not set them apart by virtue of their past failures, but points them to the possibility of new life, even in a previous area of failure, in Jesus Christ.

Exclusion from the Lord's Supper and subsequent excommunication from the church should only follow when, in hardness of heart refusing to heed the admonitions of the consistory, the persons involved do not acknowledge and repent of their sins involved in divorce and remarriage.

b. In all situations of need there should be concern, compassion and love to help the persons involved reorder their lives so that the *shalom* which comes from obedience to the Word of God may more and more be an experienced reality.

V. GUIDELINES FOR PASTORS AND CONSISTORIES

In view of the preceding, consistories and pastors are urged:

1. to maintain the biblical view of marriage, and to warn unceasingly against every violation of the marriage bond.

2. to promote a forgiving, sympathetic, open fellowship in which concern, compassion and help can be more freely offered and more freely received.

3. to ascertain whether those who seek entrance into the marriage state are sufficiently aware of the nature of marriage and the problems which so often occur before they extend the blessing of the church.

4. to include in the pastoral family visiting from time to time a discussion about the biblical directives for marriage. The elders must be sensitive to the marital health of the families entrusted to their care.

5. with patience and understanding to seek to heal situations of marital breakdown employing all the resources at their disposal.

6. to recognize that marital breakdown and divorce should produce sadness for the breaking of vows and genuine repentance for any guilt in which either party may have been involved, and which contributed to the destruction of the marriage.

7. to understand that marital breakdown and divorce must not necessarily entail loss of church membership but ought to be pastorally dealt with in the same way as any other serious shortcoming.

8. to remember that divorced persons require help rather than condemnation and to support divorced persons pastorally in a way similar to the manner they support members involved in other personal difficulties.

9. to withhold the blessing of the church on remarriages that conflict with the biblical teaching concerning the permanency of marriage. When such marriages are, nevertheless, consummated contrary to the advice of the church, the consistory should continue to display pastoral concern for such errant members and work toward their restoration to full fellowship within the church (See III, B, 4).

10. to extend the blessing of the church to a remarriage involving a divorced person if that person contemplating remarriage is:

(a) the so-called innocent party in a divorce granted on the grounds of unchastity (see III, B, 2, a); or

(b) the so-called innocent party in a divorce granted on grounds other than unchastity and who had sincerely sought reconciliation in attempting to preserve the former marriage (see III, B, 2, b); or

(c) the so-called guilty party in a divorce (for example, one guilty of unchastity or one who sued for divorce on grounds not recognized in Scripture) but one who has manifested genuine repentance for that sin, who has been restored to full fellowship in the church, and who demonstrates the biblical attitude toward the permanency of marriage (see III, B, 3, 5).

VI. GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH

Because of the great importance of the stable family for the health of society; and because the welfare of the church in no small way is dependent on good family units; and since the covenant is transmitted from parents to children through healthy marital and parental relationships; and in view of the rapid increase of divorces, frequently on the basis of "no fault"; therefore synod urgently directs the following to the churches:

1. Churches be reminded of the need to proclaim the full implications of the gospel for marriage.

2. The church should acknowledge the new relationship established when two people marry and make appropriate announcement of such recognition.

3. The Education Committee, Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, be urged to continue preparing Christian life courses and provide premarital counseling materials, coordinating its efforts with those of other institutions, especially schools.

4. The Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary examine the seminary pastoral training and continuing education programs as to how the programs can be strengthened to increase the pastor's sensitivity in premarital counseling and to marital problems and their solutions.

5. Church programs be initiated in which members, especially office-bearers, are assisted in gaining sensitivity to the nature of interpersonal relationships and the personalities involved.

6. Consistories should develop and implement programs for family life education, premarital education, marriage and family enrichment. Consistories should encourage and finance specialized training for their pastors in the field of marital counseling.

7. More attention be given to developing Christian counseling centers to which pastors can both refer parishioners and from where they can enlist various resource personnel (psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, ethicists, etc.) as consultants.

8. Increased attention be given to making it possible for churches to use more readily the various counseling resources, referral and consultant, which are already in existence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That synod recognize the Revs. George Gritter and William Vander Haak and Dr. Andrew Bandstra as representatives of the committee at synod and that they be given the privilege to speak when this report is under consideration.

2. That synod:

a. accept Part I of the report as being basically in accord with the biblical teaching on marriage;

b. accept Parts II and III of the report as being basically in accord with the biblical teaching on divorce and remarriage, including specifically the following:

1) that *porneia* be understood as being the only permissible ground for divorce that is sanctioned in the Bible (see II, B, 2);

- 2) that *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 refers primarily to adultery, but may also include such things as homosexuality and marriage within prohibited degrees of blood relationship (see II, A, 4);
- 3) that the scope of *porneia* be understood to include certain other illicit sex related acts, as well as wilful and prolonged desertion which in the judgment of the consistory can only be regarded as the equivalent of unchastity (see II, B, 3);
- 4) that the right of remarriage with the church's blessing be granted to a divorced person only if the divorced person contemplating remarriage: a) is the so-called innocent party in a divorce granted on the ground of unchastity (see III, A, and B, 2, a); or b) is the so-called innocent party in a divorce granted on grounds other than unchastity and who has sincerely sought, over a reasonable period of time, reconciliation with the former marriage partner (see III, B, 2, b); or c) is the so-called guilty party in a divorce but one who has manifested genuine repentance for that sin, who has been restored to full fellowship in the church, and who demonstrates the biblical attitude toward the permanency of marriage (see III, B, 3, 5);
- c. endorse Part IV as a helpful description of the church's responsibility toward promoting the biblical view of marriage.
- d. adopt Parts V and VI as specific guidelines for pastors, consistories, the church as a whole, and specific synodical boards and committees.
3. That synod declare the committee's mandate fulfilled and, therefore, discharge its committee.

Marriage Guidelines Committee

George Gritter, chairman
 Wm. Vander Haak, secretary
 Andrew J. Bandstra
 Derke Bergsma
 Michael De Vries
 Thomas Duthler
 Theodore Minnema
 Cornelius Van Valkenburg

NOTE: The Rev. Adam Persenaire has served faithfully with the committee during our studies. However, his name does not appear with this report since he is in disagreement with parts of the material presented. He has requested of the committee the privilege of presenting the following postscript.

POSTSCRIPT

With the following I do not intend to submit a formal minority report. I just want to give account of the fact that I cannot in good conscience subscribe to the report as submitted above. But before I do so, I wish to express my appreciation for the patience with which the other members of the committee listened to my objections, and for the courtesy they now extend to me to add this postscript.

Perhaps the best way to present my objections would be to go through the report, as submitted, step by step, and to show both where I agree and where I disagree.

First of all, I wholly agree with the position which the committee takes in regard to marriage, and is subsumed under:

I. THE BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING MARRIAGE

The committee rightly begins by stating that marriage is not a man found relationship, but is divinely ordained and instituted. Furthermore, it stresses the contractual, covenantal character of the marriage relationship, placing as secondary its social and legal aspects. And finally, it lays the emphasis on the exclusiveness and permanency of the marriage relationship. Also the role that the state and the church play in regard to marriage is clearly set forth in the report. With all this I am in hearty agreement.

II. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING DIVORCE

Again, I am able to agree with what is offered under "A" of this section. The committee has shown clearly what is meant by "porneia" in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. And, in general, I can also subscribe to what is found under "B." For example, the committee is correct, when it maintains that only "porneia" is "a possible permissible ground" for divorce. The only objection I might have is found in the wording of II, B, 1, namely: "The Problem of Interpreting the Exceptive Clauses in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 as Expression of a Principle or the Application of a Principle to a Specific Situation." I will refer to this later.

However, my real disagreement with the report begins with what is offered under section II, B, 3. In last year's report this was II, C, and had as its heading: Other Possible Permissible Grounds for Divorce in the Bible. Now this section reads: The Scope of Porneia as a Possible Ground for Divorce.

The committee made this change because it realized that, after it had argued that porneia offered the only exception to the principle, enunciated by Christ ("Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery"), it was then quite inconsistent to ask the question: are there, indeed, other possible permissible grounds for divorce?

But, although this section has a different heading now, its contents are essentially the same. The committee still refers to "other kinds of actions, situations, and conditions, which in the judgment of a consistory can only be judged to be *equivalent* to unrepentant unchastity. In other words, at this point the committee seeks to deal with *applications* of a principle to certain situations or conditions which are not directly covered by the principle itself. The principle, as enunciated by Jesus in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, states that porneia is the only possible permissible ground for divorce. But the committee states that in applying that principle consistories may judge *other* actions, situations, and conditions to be *equivalent* to unrepentant unchastity. True, the committee admits that it is difficult to say "what actions, circumstances, and situations would qualify for being the equivalent of unrepentant adultery." But then it suggests that I Corinthians 7:12-15 may point the way. Wilful desertion might be called one such an equivalent situation.

In fact, the committee goes even further, and states: "It is conceivable that other actions, circumstances, and situations could likewise be judged to be the equivalent of prolonged and unrepentant adultery. In such cases then, also, divorce might be recognized as the only viable course of action." But again, the committee does not state what those *other* actions, circumstances, and situations might be, which would make a divorce viable. It only avers that the judgment concerning these should not be made by the persons involved, but rather by the Christian community, as it is represented by the consistory. "If the consistory judges that there is prolonged and unrepentant adultery or a situation equivalent to it (such as prolonged and unrepentant wilful desertion), then one may, albeit with mourning and repentance, legitimately seek a divorce."

The committee states further that the "equivalent of unrepentant adultery" is a *guiding* norm that entrusts each consistory with decisive moral responsibility in making judgments concerning divorce." And in this connection again it refers to I Corinthians 7:12-15, as giving consistories such a guiding norm. In other words, in all these cases of equivalency consistories are not to be guided by the *principle*, clearly enunciated by Christ himself, but rather by their own interpretation which they may have about the *application* of this principle. Does it apply, for example, to the case of wilful desertion? May it apply also to a number of other situations which consistories might judge to be equivalent to porneia?

The committee states that wilful desertion may be a ground for divorce because it would make "any kind of meaningful marriage relationship impossible." But would not this also be true in the case of a wife whose husband is in a mental institution; or of a husband whose wife has had a severe stroke? And so one can go on mentioning other possibilities which make a meaningful marriage relationship impossible. It all comes down to this—that each consistory can make its own interpretation of what constitutes the equivalency of porneia. The committee which reported on this matter to the Synod of 1973 stated that porneia might be construed as any kind of infidelity, and a so-called "dead marriage" might make divorce a viable option. It is my conviction that this vague and indefinite reference to equivalency would open the door wide for the danger of casuistry, and would certainly water down the only exceptive clause mentioned in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9. Nor do I believe that the committee's rather casual reference to I Corinthians 7:12-15 adequately supports its position. On the contrary, I am convinced that its failure to give any exegesis of this passage does not give it the right to draw the conclusions from it which it does.

Yet, since the passage in I Corinthians 7 seems to be so crucial in the committee's argumentation for "equivalency," allow me to give a short resume of the thorough exegesis of I Corinthians 7:10-15 which was given by the committee on *Marital Problems* to the Synod of 1957 (Acts of Synod 1957, pp. 335-347). This was the same committee that reported to the Synod of 1956, and persuaded that body to radically change the church's position on divorce and remarriage, making it possible for "a person remarried after being divorced on the ground of his own adul-

tery, or divorced on non-Biblical grounds," to be admitted or re-admitted to church membership, provided he or she truly repented of these sins, and otherwise lived a godly life. The following is my resume of this committee's exegesis of I Corinthians 7:10-15:

"G. *The teaching of Paul in I Corinthians 7:10, 11.*

"But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband): and that the husband leave not his wife.

". . . In these verses, in contrast to those that follow (12-15), Paul is addressing himself to believers who have believing mates. What Paul tells these people who are married in the Lord is that they may under no circumstances separate. Reiterating Christ's teaching in Mark 10:11 and Luke 16:18, he unqualifiedly forbids divorce on any ground whatever . . . But should one of them depart from the others, in violation of Christ's command, then he or she is nevertheless still bound — bound either to effect a reconciliation or to remain unmarried.

"H. *The teaching of Paul in I Corinthians 7:12-14*

"But to the rest say I, not the Lord: If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she is content to dwell with him, let him not leave her. And the woman that hath an unbelieving husband, and he is content to dwell with her, let her not leave her husband. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.

"The marriages in view in these verses are, unlike those in the preceding, 'mixed' marriages. Paul speaks here to Christians who are married to pagans, to Christians who in all probability became followers of the Lord only after they had taken a (pagan) husband or wife. These Christians were in trouble . . . They wondered whether they had the *right* to live any longer with their pagan mates, . . . Was it not a sin to be thus unequally yoked with unbelievers? . . . Was it not the duty of a pious wife to go out from the pagan husband's house, and be separate? To this Paul replies in clear and unmistakable language: The Christian is not to depart. He must do *nothing* to break the marriage. . . . In the sacred bond of marriage the believer is not polluted by his unbelieving spouse, and the unbeliever is sanctified by his believing spouse. Let the believer, therefore, not depart.

"But what if the unbeliever departs? . . . Well then, says Paul, just let him leave. Don't hinder or restrain him. 'The brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.' What is the import of these words? Is there here a second ground of divorce . . .? This can be determined only by a sustained look at verse 15.

"I. *The teaching of Paul in Corinthians 7:15*

"Yet if the unbelieving departeth, let him depart: the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us in peace.

"1. *The Unbelieving One.* — The action contemplated in verse 15 is taken by the unbelieving one, and is taken against the brother or the sister who believes. It should be evident, therefore, that there is no warrant in this text for extending its teaching to parties both of whom are Christians. If such an extension is made, if the text is generalized to apply to 'homogenous' as well as 'mixed' marriages, the extension and generalization must be recognized for what it is, an *inference* resting upon the logical principle of *analogy*, a notoriously weak foundation. Most careful exegetes accordingly understand Paul here as granting a certain liberty not to every Christian whose spouse 'departs,' but only to that much smaller group of Christians whose departing spouse is an 'unbelieving one.' On no account does Paul permit divorce in all cases of 'desertion.' . . .

" . . . Paul's teaching . . . has relevance to every situation in which an 'unbeliever' is involved, regardless of whether he is a 'heathen' or a 'neo-pagan' standing within historic Christendom.

"But he must be really 'unbelieving.' He cannot . . . be one whose 'unbelief' is defined by his 'desertion' as A. A. Hodge supposed. To declare, as Hodge does, . . . that 'one who is guilty of such wilful, causeless, and incurable desertion is exposed thereby as an unbeliever' is to be guilty of circular definition and to introduce under the cover of this fallacy the very generalization that the text excludes. The man of whom Paul speaks is not an unbeliever by virtue of his deserting: he is one who prior to his deserting is, and is known as, an unbeliever. . . . this Scripture is applicable only to marriages . . . in which one of the parties denies the Christ whom the other affirms.

"It must be said, therefore, the separation in view flows from a basic religious disagreement . . .

"2. *The Departure.* — The unbelieving one is contemplated as in process of departing (chooretzetai). What is to be understood by this departing? What is the unbeliever doing? Is he abandoning his wife? Is he thrusting her out of his house? Is he filing suit for divorce?

"These questions are not easy to answer, and for a number of reasons. For one thing divorce in Paul's day was not nearly as formal a thing as it is in our own, and its difference from what we call desertion was consequently not so obvious. In the second place, in the pericope constituted by verses 10-15 Paul uses two different words (aphieemi and choorizoo) to express the action contemplated, and thus leaves the interpreter wondering whether the change from one word to another is meant to point up a significant difference, or whether it is merely a rhetorical device to introduce variety. . . ."

The committee (of 1957) believed that "Paul is speaking here of divorce, and that then there is no need to raise the question whether the believing spouse may or may not file suit for divorce. Divorce, in the situation contemplated, is an accomplished fact, or is in the process of becoming so, and it is the unbeliever who seeks to get it. Divorce *action* on the part of the believer is not so much as hinted at; and since divorce cannot be a ground for divorce, no *ground* for such an action is here provided.

"3. The *Acquiescence*. — Marriage is holy. A Christian may not break it, and he must do everything to preserve it. This is what Jesus taught. 'What . . . God hath joined together,' he said, 'let not man put asunder.' Jesus condemned divorce, and by implication at least, condemned acquiescence in it. But he made one exception. In the case of adultery the innocent party was permitted to sue for divorce. In no other case might he do so, and in no other case might he leave uncontested his spouse's suit for divorce.

"But in I Corinthians 7:15 Paul says to the Christian: If the unbelieving divorce you (not on the ground of adultery, but on religious grounds), let him divorce you. He obviously means: Acquiesce in your unbelieving spouse's action. . . . Don't feel obliged to preserve the marriage he is about to break, and don't feel obliged to restore it once he has broken it. Let separation take its course.

"That is Paul's counsel, and he introduces it by declaring (in verse 12): . . . 'I say, not the Lord . . . ' This declaration does not mean, of course, that Paul is hazarding a private opinion. He is speaking with the authority of an Apostle, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The declaration simply means that he can quote no word of Jesus that will apply to the case under consideration. Jesus did not contemplate mixed marriages . . . In the course of the history of revelation it was left to Paul to give the directions and to provide the counsel. And this is his counsel: Acquiesce in the divorce.

"Now, what have we here? . . . If adultery is the only legitimate ground for divorce, as Jesus teaches, then this was an illegitimate, a sinful, an unbiblical divorce. How then can Paul advise the Christian spouse to acquiesce in it? Should he or she not rather bend every effort to prevent the divorce and preserve the marriage . . .? Is not this what Jesus would have counseled. . . .

"The answer is that there exists no explicit Word of Jesus about acquiescence or non-acquiescence in this kind of divorce. What Jesus explicitly teaches is that no one (. . .) may get a divorce, saving for the cause of adultery. And he adds that whosoever shall marry a wife put away for a cause other than adultery himself commits adultery. Paul does not change this teaching of Jesus in the least. He simply comments on the *attitude* a believing wife may take toward a sinful divorce initiated and effected by her unbelieving husband. If we did not have this word of Paul we might suppose, indeed, that Jesus' teaching about the high sacredness of marriage necessitated non-acquiescence in any divorce not based on adultery. But now we learn from Paul what before we did not know, that acquiescence is appropriate to a Christian in the case of a divorce effected by an unbelieving spouse and grounded in a basic religious disagreement. This does not contradict Jesus' teaching: it merely elaborates and extends it.

"4. *The Freedom*. — It is apparent, therefore, that Paul gives the Christian a certain freedom in the case cited. ' . . . The brother or the sister,' he says, 'is not under bondage in such cases.' His words are plain: The Christian is not obliged to contest the divorce; he is not obliged to prevent the departure.

“But is this all that his words mean? Many exegetes do not think so. They believe that the words ‘not under bondage’ (*ou dedoulootai*) mean that the Christian is free of the marriage, that the marriage bond is broken by the departure (divorce) of the unbelieving spouse, and that the Christian is therefore free to enter into a new marriage . . .”

Some members of that committee (of 1957) had this opinion: “Marriage, they declared, may be dissolved in three ways: by death; by divorce action on the ground of adultery; and by being (passively) divorced by an unbeliever for a religious cause.”

Other members, however, regarded the arguments adduced for this position inconclusive. “For them the biggest obstacle to the view that Paul is here freeing the Christian wife from the marriage bond and thus giving her permission to marry is the word of Jesus in Matthew 5:32: ‘Every one that putteth away his wife—saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.’ Unless we adopt the untenable position that Jesus in Matthew 5 and 19 is merely citing adultery as an example of several unnamed grounds for divorce rather than as the only ground, one brings Paul into conflict with Jesus by interpreting him as allowing remarriage after divorce on grounds of religious hatred.

“What then is the freedom that is here accorded the believer? The answer is: The freedom, in good conscience, to let the husband go! This is no small freedom. It is freedom from absolute enslavement. When Paul tells the believer that he or she is not under bondage, he does not mean that they are not bound *in* the marriage tie. What he means is that they are not bound *in* the (continuing) marriage tie. That is, they are not so enslaved by the marriage institution that they are compelled to preserve the ‘living together’ at all costs. The demand to live together is central in marriage, to be sure, but it is not an absolute demand. The demand need not be met if it causes continuous unrest at the deepest (i.e. the religious) level of one’s existence, and if by it one is under constant temptation to surrender the faith. It is significant that the word used here is not *dedetai* as in verse 39, which is properly translated ‘bound’; but the word *dedoulootai*, which is properly translated ‘enslaved.’ The usage indicates that the marriage is *binding* indeed, but not *enslaving*. The marriage *holds*, thus preventing the believer from remarrying, but it does not *enslave* by compelling the believer to pursue her unbelieving husband.

“J. *The Summary*” (Adopted by the Synod of 1957).

“1. The teaching in I Corinthians 7:15 pertains only to Christians whose *unbelieving* marriage partners ‘depart’ for deeply-seated *religious* reasons.

“2. The teaching in I Corinthians 7:15 does not provide the Christian with a (second) ground for divorce.

“3. The teaching in I Corinthians 7:15 absolves the Christian from the obligation to preserve a marriage broken or about to be broken

by the divorce-proceedings of an unbelieving spouse acting from religious motives."

III. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING REMARRIAGE

It is especially this section that I cannot endorse. I do agree with what is said under "A," namely, that only the so-called "innocent party" who has obtained a divorce on the one possible permissible ground (Matthew 5:32; 19:9) has the right to remarry. But I cannot agree with section III, B. True, the material under this section in the present report is a substitution for what was found in last year's report. Yet in essence the committee still comes to the same conclusions as it did then.

For example, this time the committee introduces a qualification in the interpretation that should be given to our Lord's teaching on remarriage in Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18; and I Corinthians 7:10, 11. This qualification centers around the *intention* of the persons involved. If such people dissolved their present marriage with the intention of marrying another, then they disregard God's will regarding the permanency of marriage, and thus commit adultery, when they remarry. But, if at the time they obtained their divorce such intention was not present, then, by implication, they may remarry, and would not be guilty of adultery. It is this implication that I deny, and that for the following reasons: First of all, there is no indication apparent within these passages that Jesus was addressing himself *only* to those who divorced *in order to marry* someone else. The question the Pharisees asked him had to do with the legality of divorce itself, and upon what grounds. Contemplation or intention is an unwarranted importation into the text, and certainly cannot be used to weaken its abiding requirements. Secondly, there is proof that Jesus was not thinking about intentions here. For he includes in his warning against remarriage even the woman who is put away (passive!) on grounds other than unchastity. Surely she could hardly be accused of trying to get a divorce in order to remarry. And then Jesus goes on to warn even a person *twice removed* from the original divorcing party and warns him that it would make him an adulterer, if he marry the one wrongfully put away.

When there is a total absence of any mention of intention, and warnings against becoming guilty of adultery by marrying someone who has been the *victim* of a divorce action, it seems very strange that the committee can introduce *intention* into these passages and by it reduce their relevance to our present problem of dealing with those divorced for reasons not recognized in the Bible. In fact, later on the committee recommends that the church can even bless that which Jesus calls adultery.

The committee's appeal to R. C. H. Lenski's commentary is not very convincing either. One could quote many other commentators who disagree with Lenski. For example, Dr. F. H. Grosheide in his commentary on Matthew 19:9 writes: "Fornication is the factual breaking of the marriage. . . . But Jesus adds explicitly 'and marries another,' for then only we are able to say that the putting away of the first wife has become an accomplished fact, that the first marriage is now irrevocably broken."

Charles R. Erdman has the following on this same passage: "Among the Jews the granting of a divorce carried with it the right of remarriage. It is well for us in the present day to distinguish between these two ideas. There seems to be a common belief that even the guilty party in a suit of divorce has a right to remarry. This case Jesus does not discuss. It may indeed be advisable for parties who are guilty of immorality to secure legal separations to bear the name of divorce. It is surely allowable for a divorce to be granted in case the marriage tie has actually been broken by unfaithfulness; but it is quite another matter to teach that one who has been at fault is justified, when a divorce has been granted, in marrying when and whom he will. There is something peculiarly searching in the words of the Lord, 'Whoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery: and he that marries her when she is put away, commits adultery.'"

But what about the committee's argument that I Corinthians 7:10, 11 also does not apply to our present day, because what Paul says there is not to be regarded as a principle or universal application? In this passage Paul states: "But unto the married I give charge, yea not I, but the Lord, That the wife depart not from her husband (but should she depart, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband): and that the husband leave not his wife."

According to the committee this statement of Paul may well have been occasioned by the special circumstances described elsewhere in I Corinthians 7. For various reasons, it says, Paul preferred the unmarried state, and it was this preference that occasioned his advice in verse 11: "Let her remain unmarried." Therefore, so the committee reasons, "It is dubious whether this advice from Paul should be regarded as excluding every remarriage."

Now, of course, we must agree with the committee that what Paul says here does not exclude every remarriage. For example, in verse 39 Paul says that a widow has the right to remarry. So has the so-called innocent party in a divorce based on the one exceptive clause in Matthew 5:32. But what has this to do with the wife whom Paul is talking about in I Corinthians 7:11? What Paul stresses there is that the wife should realize the permanency of the marriage bond by remaining single, or else by seeking reconciliation with her husband. For again, if she remarries, how can Paul say, "let her be reconciled to her husband"? Would not remarriage make this other option impossible?

But let us ask this question: Does the committee *really* mean to say that Paul advises the wife who departs from her husband, contrary to the command of the Lord, to remain unmarried because in the "present distress" the single state is preferable, and because it would give her the opportunity to devote herself more fully to the Lord? In other words, should she disobey Christ's command in order to serve the Lord better? But then how could Paul leave her the other option of being "reconciled to her husband," if this would bring her back in the less preferable state of marriage? Is not this whole line of reasoning illogical?

Yet the report states that "in the light of the above 'evidence' the committee concludes that each consistory must make an individual judg-

ment with reference to those seeking remarriage after a divorce granted on grounds not considered legitimate in the Bible? And once more the committee appeals to the same argument which it presented previously, namely, What is this person's *attitude* toward the permanency of marriage? Is it scriptural, or not? To this I would reply: Surely, the person who divorces his spouse on a ground not recognized as legitimate in the Bible does not have the right view of the permanency of marriage. So, too, when he marries again, while he did not seek to be reconciled with his former spouse, he can hardly be said to believe in the permanency of marriage. For when he marries some one else, he no longer keeps the door open for the grace of God to work reconciliation.

IV. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSIBILITY REGARDING MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

There is much in this section which is excellent material and to which I can heartily subscribe. But again, I have very serious objections to what is said in the last part thereof in regard to situations where divorce has taken place and remarriage is contemplated.

V. GUIDELINES FOR PASTORS AND CONSISTORIES

On the whole, I can accept all that is found under points 1 to 8, even though I wish that the committee had said some of these things differently. But I cannot agree with what is stated under 9 and 10.

Although it is stated in point 9: Consistories are "to withhold the blessing of the church on remarriages that conflict with the biblical teaching concerning the permanency of marriage," it does not say directly that the church should discipline those who consummate such marriages nevertheless. It only states that "the consistory should continue to display pastoral concern for such erring members and work toward their restoration to full fellowship with the church." And, in another place, the committee urges consistories to deal with "marital breakdown and divorce . . . in the same way as any other serious shortcoming."

But is an unscriptural divorce merely "*a serious shortcoming*" among many others? Should we not rather say that such a divorce is a gross, public sin, giving great offence to both God and his church? Does not such a divorce often break up two families, and cause terrible anguish to the deserted spouses, as well as have traumatic consequences for the children involved?

It seems to me that the advice, found in a Report on *Marital Problems*, presented to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod of 1953, is more to the point. It reads as follows:

"He who divorces his marriage partner and marries another party, wilfully transgresses the holy commandment: thou shalt not commit adultery.

"It is a combined *deed* of complete breach of marriage or adultery. It is a very serious sin, the height of transgression.

"If this sin is committed by a communicant member of the church, then there is no doubt that, for the benefit of the sinner and for the appeasement of the offence given in the congregation, church discipline

must be charitably enforced and this member be excluded from the fellowship of the holy sacrament."

My main objection, however, is to what is found in "b" and "c" under point 10 of this section. I believe the church may never extend its blessing to those who contemplate remarriage after being guilty of a sinful divorce. For it is exactly the remarriage that is the sin of adultery. For Jesus said: "Whoever shall put away his wife . . . and shall marry another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9a). Moreover, he added, "And he that marries her when she is put away commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9b; Luke 16:18). This is the direct opposite of what the committee suggests in point 10.

VI. GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH

I can accept this section.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

In the light of what I have written in the foregoing, I need not reiterate that I cannot endorse these recommendations in toto. I only wish to point up that what is said in 2, b, 3) is not exactly the same as what the committee has stated in the report itself (see II, B, 3). Here the scope of porneia is defined as including "certain other illicit sex related acts, as well as wilful and prolonged desertion which in the judgment of the consistory can only be regarded as equivalent of unchastity." But in II, B, 3 the committee stated that besides "wilful (prolonged and unrepentant) desertion" being equivalent to porneia, "it is conceivable that other actions, circumstances, and situations could likewise be judged to be the equivalent of prolonged and unrepentant unchastity."

In conclusion, I wish to call synod's attention to the fact that, if these recommendations of the committee are adopted, then our Christian Reformed Church would, definitely, be changing its position on marriage and divorce, and that in the following directions:

1. it would sanction a divorce not only on the one ground of fornication or adultery; but also on a second ground of wilful desertion (Cf. Acts of Synod 1906, pp. 21ff., Acts of Synod 1957, p. 106).

2. it would sanction, under certain circumstances, the remarriage of the guilty party in a divorce. This would be contrary to the position taken by the Synod of 1956, which stated clearly that, after a sinful divorce, the *remarriage itself* was an adulterous act. That synod only stated that this second marriage was not "a living in continual adultery." Thus, according to the mind of that synod, "Jesus condemns as adultery in Matthew 19:9 not a *state* (of marriage) but an *Act* (of marrying)." (See Acts of Synod 1956, p. 321.)

3. it would sanction the remarriage of a person who was divorced by his spouse on a ground not recognized in the Bible. The church has never taken this position previously, except that it did, perhaps, leave open that possibility for those who were deserted by their spouses for "deeply-seated religious motives." (See Acts of Synod 1957, p. 106.)

Adam Persenaire

REPORT 36

CHRISTIAN REFORMED MINISTERS SERVING
IN OTHER DENOMINATIONS

I. BACKGROUND

A. *The Occasion for this Study*

1. The Overture of Classis Holland

This present study is occasioned most directly by an overture from Classis Holland (Overture 14) presented to the Synod of 1974. In this overture Classis Holland notes that "with increasing frequency, ministers in the CRC are finding opportunity to engage in ministerial tasks in ecclesiastical agencies, churches, and/or institutions outside the CRC. We judge this to be significant in that it provides us opportunity to be a wholesome influence in certain broader spheres of activity, in which a need for leadership and encouragement exists." Classis Holland believes that there are conditions under which it may not only be justifiable but also desirable that our ministers enter into ministerial work in other denominations. In view of these considerations, Classis Holland overtured the Synod of 1974

"to declare that Church Order Article 13 be understood in such a way as to cause the article and rule to allow for Christian Reformed ministers to enter upon such extraordinary service as described herein. Specifically, we ask synod to declare:

1. that it is within the province of the denomination to speak to situations in which ministers find opportunity to enter upon labors in other denominations and/or undenominational churches and agencies. *Ground:* A man ordained into the ministry in the CRC is not simply a minister in a local church, but he is a minister within the denomination.

2. that Article 13 of the Church Order be applied in the case of ministers seeking to enter upon labors in other churches and/or undenominational churches and agencies, as long as the work is spiritual in character, directly related to the ministerial calling, and is in keeping with his position as a minister in the CRC.

Grounds:

a. While the nature of that work may be very similar to what he might do in the CRC, such labor for an agency outside the Christian Reformed denomination is certainly 'extraordinary' too.

b. No other article of the Church Order appears to deal with this matter of extraordinary service of a minister in another church or agency."

2. The case of a Pastor in Classis Holland

It must be noted that there is a specific case which gave occasion to the overture of Classis Holland, as the overture itself indicates.

A minister of Classis Holland was offered employment by an independent congregation in the Chicago area. He accepted the opportunity

through an arrangement in which his present consistory loaned him to this independent church, doing so under Article 16 of the Church Order. When this matter was reported to classis in September of 1971 by the counselor of the St. Joseph Church, a question arose concerning this arrangement. As a result of the discussions which followed, classis decided that the status of the minister involved should be dealt with under Article 13 of the Church Order and therefore, according to the requirements of that article, requested the presence of the synodical deputies at the May meeting of classis for the purpose of dealing with the status of the minister involved. At this meeting the synodical deputies were also "requested to express their judgment concerning the necessity of proceeding under Article 13. . . ." In response the synodical deputies decided that:

"It is the judgment of the synodical deputies that this does not come under the regulation of Article 13, and therefore we cannot concur with the decision of classis:

1. We judge that the focus of Article 13 is on the task of the minister as being extraordinary, rather than on the agency as an extraordinary one.
2. We judge that the visitation evangelism is an ordinary ministerial task, not an extraordinary one about which Article 13 speaks."

Classis Holland appealed this decision of the synodical deputies. Synod, however, approved the work of the synodical deputies and added this observation: "We recognize that Article 13 has been used to maintain the ministerial status of men working for non-ecclesiastical agencies, but it has not been applied in situations in which men worked for other than Christian Reformed Churches." (Cf. Acts of Synod 1972, Art. 43, IV, p. 53 for the above background and decisions.)

In view of the above decisions of the Synod of 1972, and in view of Classis Holland's belief that there are conditions under which it may not only be justifiable but also desirable that our ministers enter into ministerial work in other denominations, Classis Holland addressed its overture to the Synod of 1974.

3. Decisions of Synod Relative to Overture 14

In answer to Overture 14 (Classis Holland) the Synod of 1974 adopted the following recommendations:

- "1. That synod declare that it has already spoken to the situations in which ministers serve in institutions or agencies related to other denominations (See Acts of Synod 1961, Art. 83, IV, D, 3, p. 58, and Art. 83, VI, C, 2, p. 59).
- "2. That synod judge that Article 13 of the Church Order cannot properly be understood as applying to the ordinary task of a minister serving in a local church of another denomination or an undenominational church.

Ground: In 1972 synod approved the work of synodical deputies who judged that the work of a minister as assistant pastor for visitation, an ordinary ministerial task, did not come under the regulation of Article 13 of the Church Order (See Acts of Synod 1972, Art. 43, IV, A and B, p. 5).

"3. That synod appoint a committee to study the question of a minister of the Christian Reformed Church engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church, taking into account such considerations as have bearing on his call to that ministry, his fidelity to his ordination vows, and the supervision of his life and ministry, etc.

Grounds:

a. The practice of ministers serving in other denominations is becoming more and more prevalent, as indicated in the background information of Overture 14.

b. There is a growing need for clarification with respect to the use of phrases such as ministers being on 'leave of absence' or 'on loan' as these are related to their serving in other churches. —*Adopted.*" (Acts of Synod 1974, Art. 74, I, B, p. 83)

B. A Related Question

1. An Aspect of a Larger History

The recent events that occasion this study are part of a larger and important development in the history of the CRC. In recent years the CRC has received increasing opportunities to use ordained men in a diversity of ministerial tasks. More and more of our ministers have entered into an increasing variety of "extraordinary tasks." The Acts of Synod of 1961, Report 23 (pp. 234-242), call our attention to these historical developments. The Synod of 1961 particularly addressed itself to this development and provided for engagement in such "extraordinary takes," but simultaneously circumscribed such ministries with definite regulations. Since 1961 classes and synods have approved many ministers for extraordinary positions. These "extraordinary tasks" of the ministry are regulated by Article 13 of the Church Order. The Acts of Synod of 1961 provide more specific regulations for such extraordinary ministries (Art. 83, IV, D, 3, p. 58). The Acts of Synod 1964 also provided additional regulations in adopting "uniform procedures to be followed in dealing with credentials of ministers serving in extraordinary positions" (Acts 1964, Art. 94, III, pp. 57-59).

It is evident from the foregoing decision that the present question, concerning ministers "engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church," appears to be, in some respects, closely related to the question of a minister serving in "an extraordinary ministerial task." Now since, as the decision of the Synod of 1974 declares, "it (synod) has already spoken to the situations in which ministers serve in institutions or agencies related to other denominations (See Acts of Synod 1964, Art. 83, IV, D, 3, p. 58, and Art. 83, VI, C, 2, p. 59)," could not these same regulations apply to ministers "engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church"?

2. A Necessary Distinction

It must be observed at this point, however, that while there is a relationship between these two matters there is also a definite distinction between the two. It must be noted that the specific question dealt with by the Synod of 1961 and regulated by Article 13 of the Church Order

is this: Are these extraordinary tasks, to which some ministers are being called or assigned, *in harmony with their ministerial calling*? Are they in harmony with their ordination as ministers of the Word and sacraments? Can a minister occupy that particular position and continue to be an ordained minister? That was the specific problem that confronted the Synod of 1961, and that is the matter that is regulated by Article 13 of the Church Order.

The specific question confronting Classis Holland in the case before it in 1972 and the question confronting our committee and synod is this: Can a CR minister serve in *an ordinary ministerial task* in a local church of *another denomination or undenominational church and still remain a minister in the CRC*? The synodical deputies present at Classis Holland, and reporting to the Synod of 1972 declared that "this does not come under the regulation of Article 13." The Synod of 1972 approved the judgment of the synodical deputies. Classis Holland itself acknowledges the correctness of this judgment in its overture when it states in the second paragraph of its overture: "Instead, synod rightly approved the work of her synodical deputies."

Classis Holland, however, in Overture 14 (1974) requests synod to declare, "that Article 13 of the Church Order be understood in such a way as to cause the article and rule to allow for Christian Reformed ministers to enter upon such extraordinary service as described herein." In other words, Classis Holland desires that synod declare that a minister serving in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or in an undenominational church be regarded as serving in an extraordinary task and that Article 13 be made to apply. Our mandate arises out of that request, and must be seen in the light of that request.

II. MANDATE

A. *Given by Synod*

The Synod of 1974 appointed the undersigned "to study the question of a minister of the Christian Reformed Church engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church, taking into account such considerations as have bearing on his call to that ministry, his fidelity to his ordination vows, and the supervision of his life and ministry, etc.

Grounds:

a. The practice of ministers serving in other denominations is becoming more and more prevalent, as indicated in the background information of Overture 14.

b. There is a growing need for clarification with respect to the use of phrases such as ministers being on 'leave of absence' or 'on loan' as these are related to their serving in other churches." (Acts of Synod 1974, Art. 74, I, B, 3, p. 83)

B. *Analysis of Mandate*

1. *Limitation*

Our mandate does not ask us to study the legitimacy of ministers in various extraordinary ministerial tasks. Article 13 of the Church Order deals with this matter, and the Synods of 1961 and 1964 have spoken

specifically to give guidelines and regulations with respect to such ministries. Synod has approved many such extraordinary ministries both in principle and in practice, such as chaplains, educators, editors, etc.

2. Specific Mandate

Our specific mandate is to study the question whether a CR minister may engage in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or an undenominational church and still retain his status as a minister of the CRC.

3. Related Matters Stated or Implied in the Mandate

There are also other matters either stated or implied in the mandate such as the following:

- a. To consider what bearing the call to the ministry, fidelity to ordination vows, and the supervision of life and ministry, have on engaging in such a ministry in churches outside of our denomination.
- b. To study the propriety of using the phrases "on leave of absence" or "on loan" to cover situations in which ministers engage in tasks outside the ecclesiastical framework of the CRC.
- c. To offer advice, in the light of our study, concerning the position taken by the Synods of 1972 and 1974 that Article 13 of the Church Order does not apply to ministers engaged in ordinary ministerial tasks in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church.
- d. To consider whether "opportunities to extend help to other churches and/or agencies requesting it" (Overture 14, Classis Holland), justify a new interpretation or application of Article 13 of the Church Order, or require some other solution involving the formulation of regulations which will circumscribe and delineate such possible exceptional ministries.

III. DENOMINATIONAL DISTINCTIVENESS AND THE ORDINATION VOWS

One of the matters raised in our mandate concerns the question of what bearing it would have on his fidelity to his ordination vows if a CR minister would serve in a local church of another denomination or in an undenominational church. We must therefore address ourselves to the question of the nature and scope of ordination to the ministry and what implications denominational distinctiveness has for the ordination vows.

A. *Denominational Distinctiveness*

The CRC is a separate and distinctive church body. Her reasons for separate and distinctive existence are various.

The historical reasons for her separate life include nationalistic, lingual and cultural factors.

Today, however, her doctrinal standards stand foremost among her reasons for being a distinctive denomination. Her Church Order also plays an important role in distinguishing her from certain others by regulating the church's offices, assemblies, worship, ministries and discipline.

These, the doctrinal standards and the Church Order, do not yet completely distinguish the CRC as a separate body in the church world, however. They rather identify her with that part of the church world which is known as Reformed. The CRC holds these things in com-

mon with other Reformed bodies with which the CRC feels a certain kinship and also carries on more or less fellowship.

In addition to the doctrinal standards and the Church Order, the CRC has her record of synodical decisions (Acts of Synod). By these decisions she has elaborated upon and given further interpretation and explanation of her doctrinal standards. By these decisions she has also declared herself to be for things and against things. To mention some of the most outstanding, the CRC has declared positions that distinguish her with respect to the lodge, Christian education, covenant and catechism, Christian amusements and the film arts, the WCC and NCC, and kingdom enterprising in general. These, therefore, distinguish her and give her practical reason for separate denominational existence.

Thus, the CRC is a distinct denomination with an ongoing national and international program of missions, mercy, and kingdom which she has permeated with the "substance" of her confessional doctrines and synodical decisions. In all these endeavors she feels obligated to maintain her ecclesiastical and confessional integrity.

B. *The Ordination Vows*

The distinctiveness and the demand for ecclesiastical and confessional integrity noted in section "A" above also calls for a distinctiveness in the ministry of the CR minister and therefore has implications for the ordination vows of the CR minister.

The specific question that arises at this point is this: Is a minister ordained as a minister of the church of Christ in general or is he ordained as a minister in and of a specific denomination and/or congregation? Is his ordination specific and therefore defined and circumscribed by the denomination or church that ordains him or not?

Part V of our report dealing with "The Church Order and Our Mandate" also relates to this question in some respects but we would make some specific observations on this question at this point.

On the one hand, it may be said that a minister is ordained as a minister of the church of Christ. Thinking now specifically of CR ministers, they are ordained according to the liturgical form provided by synod. According to that form ministers are ordained in the universal church of Christ. Properly the liturgical form is so written as to transcend any church or denomination in the worship form while ordaining a pastor. The form sounds as if the man is ordained in the one church which Christ has; and such is indeed the case. The church properly acknowledges the universal church in this act of worship in ordaining a pastor.

There is hardly any reference in the ordination liturgy or vows that indicates that the CR minister is minister exclusively in his church or denomination. The only suggestion of limitation is found in these words: "and to submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church."

It is, no doubt, for this reason that when a minister leaves one denomination to become a minister in another denomination he, ordinarily, is not re-ordained. While he may be required to submit to an examination before being admitted to the new denomination, yet his previous ordination is usually recognized and honored.

On the other hand, it is clear that a minister of the Word is not merely ordained as a minister of the church of Christ in general. It is evident that ordination to the ministry does not give one the right to occupy the pulpit of each and every Christian church. Rather, according to CR church polity, one is ordained as a minister of the church of Christ as that church comes to concrete expression in a particular denomination and/or congregation. Therefore a minister who is ordained in the CRC is a minister in and of the CRC.

This becomes very clear in the light of the provisions and requirements of the Church Order. While we address ourselves to some of these matters more fully in Part V of our report, we would call attention to the following at this point.

It is evident from Articles 2-4 of the Church Order that only those who are officially called or ordained by a local congregation "shall hold and exercise office in the church" (Art. 3). Thus ordination is very definitely in and by a local church to an office in that particular church.

Furthermore, Article 5 plainly indicates that the ordination of a CR minister ordains him specifically into the ministry of the CRC when it says, "All officebearers . . . shall signify their agreement with the doctrine of the church by signing the Form of Subscription." A minister ordained in the CRC is thus obligated to express his adherence to and his intent faithfully to teach and defend the doctrines of the CRC as expressed in its Forms of Unity.

Still further, Articles 6-22, under the heading, "The Ministers of the Word," spell out the provisions which regulate the office and functions of the minister, all of which make him subject to the doctrinal standards, the Church Order and the decisions of the synod of the *Christian Reformed Church*.

It is a necessary conclusion then that the minister ordained in the CRC is, according to the ordination liturgy, set apart for a life of service in the church of Christ, but specifically as that church comes to concrete expression in the CRC. He is therefore ordained in the ministry of the CRC, by virtue of the required subscription to the Form of Unity and by all the prescriptions (regulations) in the Church Order that pertain to the office and functions of a CR minister.

What all of this adds up to is that the CR minister represents the CRC. His ministry must be a CR ministry.

C. *The significance of the Above Observations as Pertains to our Mandate*

It should be evident that the foregoing is very relevant to the question of the CR minister "engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church." Any decision to allow such a ministry outside the CR denomination must be carefully and cautiously made. The body (consistory or classis) making such a decision must make sure that it preserves and upholds the confessional integrity of both the CRC and the CR minister, and principles and practice of the Church Order, and the distinctive stance of the CRC as provided for in her synodical decisions.

The CR minister, as we have seen, is not merely a minister of the church of Christ in general, but he is specifically a minister of the CRC.

His ordination is defined and circumscribed by the CRC. The pastor, in whatever task he fulfills, must represent the CRC with all that she professes and purports to be and do, by doctrinal standards, Church Order, and synodical decisions. His ministry cannot be divorced from the fact that he is Christian Reformed. In his ministry he must not only be free to, but he is compelled to promote that for which the CRC stands. His ordination vows and his signature to the Form of Subscription demand no less of him. He, therefore, may not, through his ministry, aid and abet a cause or church that is opposed to the stance of the CRC.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH AND UNDENOMINATIONALISM

The mandate given to us by synod asks us "to study the question of a minister of the Christian Reformed Church engaging in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church." This reference in our mandate to the possibility of a CR minister serving in an "undenominational church" requires that we give some attention to the question of the attitude of the CRC to undenominationalism or congregationalism.

Now it may be said at the outset that while the CRC believes that there are at the present time sufficient and legitimate reasons for maintaining a separate existence as a denomination (as set forth in point III above), at the same time, she stands opposed to unnecessary separation, isolation and independentism.

While a direct, specific statement to that effect may be hard to find, it is apparent and expressed in many ways that the CRC believes that individual churches should seek fellowship with one another in denominational unity and thus seek to give visible expression to the desire expressed by Christ that the church be one. This is a principle that perhaps is not explicitly stated but is simply assumed and taken for granted in the CRC. Our ecumenical activities, through specific conversations with certain other denominations and through the RES show our Reformed principles of seeking unity and affiliation with others of like mind.

One of the most explicit statements of the ideal of unity is found in Article 49 of the Church Order which states that "synod should appoint a committee to correspond with other Reformed churches so that the CRC may exercise Christian fellowship with other denominations and may promote the unity of the church of Jesus Christ." In connection with the implications of Article 49 (Art. 48 of the old C.O.) the synod of 1944 expressed "agreement with the substance of the twelve propositions set forth in Agenda II, pp. 95-99 (Supplement 21)" (Acts of Synod 1944, Art. 123, C, 2, p. 85). We quote the following propositions as found in Supplement 21 of the Acts of Synod of 1944, pp. 358-360:

"3. Though denominational consolidation is not, as some would have us believe, the paramount interest of the church, it is not on that account negligible. It goes without saying that the spiritual unity of all the true churches of Christ should come to expression, as much as is physically possible, in ecclesiastical unity and uniformity on the score of doctrine, polity, and liturgy."

"7. . . . Pluriformity in the current sense of the term is contraband. Hence our church cannot properly acquiesce in it but must in deference to the dic-

tates of Scripture put forth every effort of which it is capable to nullify it as much as possible, though, of course, under no circumstances at the expense of the truth. If the Christian Reformed Church is the nearest historical approach to the ecclesiastical ideal of Scripture, as it modestly but confidently affirms, then it cannot consistently assume such an attitude toward the other churches of Christ in the face of their doctrinal, canonical, and liturgical delinquencies as is expressed in the notorious question: Am I my brother's keeper? Nor can it forget the pronouncement of the Holy Spirit in Psalm 133:1: 'Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell in unity,' as it thinks of its fellow Reformed churches, or even more particularly of those Reformed churches which are truly Reformed both in word and deed."

"11. Correspondence as spoken of above (sub 10) is out of order in regard to faithful Reformed churches from which we are not separated by prohibitive distances and differences of language. All truly Reformed churches on our North American continent should, as a matter of scriptural, i.e., divine requirement, be confederated. Accordingly steps should be taken, in due order, to bring this imperative confederation about. These churches have no right in the sight of God to remain ecclesiastically divided. . . ."

These propositions certainly imply that the CRC stands opposed to unnecessary separation and against all independentism. Churches of a like mind should be confederated.

Van Dellen and Monsma in *The Revised Church Order Commentary* express themselves similarly. In their comments on Article 26 of the Church Order, dealing with the Assemblies of the Church, they state: "Reformed church polity therefore upholds the integrity of the local church, but at the same time does full justice to all the churches federally united, and the spiritual unity underlying the federation. Also because of this spiritual unity in Christ and confessional unity doctrinally, by God's providence, federation is not left merely to the judgment of each church. There is a very definite spiritual obligation flowing forth from a real spiritual union and agreement *which makes ecclesiastical federation and its implications mandatory upon the churches*" (italics ours, committee; p. 113).

Thus it may be said that CRC polity, practice, and attitude stands opposed to congregationalism and undenominationalism. Individual churches (congregations) should seek to give expression to the unity of the church of Christ by uniting denominationally with other churches of like mind.

It is important to emphasize this in our present time, for there are many today who would depreciate the importance of denominational identity and loyalty. Instead, many non-denominational movements are springing up and flourishing. The structures and traditions of the established denominations are regarded as being too restrictive by some who are going off on their own to establish an independent work. But such independent movements must be opposed for two reasons: first, as we have already pointed out, they fail to give expression to the unity of the church of Christ which Christ desires; and, secondly, they are by their very nature parasitic. They are dependent upon the denominational churches for most of their resources and many of their members. They build upon that which denominational churches are and have been partaking of their resources and wealth in terms of theological development, study materials, schools, clergymen, etc. These independents cannot exist

without resources drawn from denominations while they in turn fail to contribute their share to the denomination.

We must, therefore, look with disfavor upon undenominationalism and independentism. It would, therefore, also be inappropriate for a CR minister to give support to or to serve a congregation which is *determined to remain independent*. If in special circumstances a CR minister is allowed to serve an independent church he should be permitted to do so only when he acknowledges it as his duty to bring such a church into fellowship and eventual federation with the CR denomination, or at least into a Reformed fellowship of churches which is similar to the CRC. He ought not to continue to labor indefinitely in such a church if it does not intend to seek affiliation with the CRC or possibly some other orthodox Reformed denomination.

V. THE CHURCH ORDER AND OUR MANDATE

A. *A Minister is Subject to the Consistory that Called Him*

A basic element in the problem raised by the mandate is whether a minister in the exercise of his ministerial office or in the performance of his ministerial duties can, according to our Church Order, be subject to the regulation of a consistory (or its equivalent) of a church other than the one which has called him to, and ordained or installed him in his office. It is clear from Article 92 of our Church Order that a minister can be subject to two consistories as regards supervision of his *doctrine and life*, but what we are concerned with is the regulation of his *official task*. Since our mandate deals with those cases involving service to a non-CR church a full answer to the question in each concrete case would require knowledge of the church in question and of its rules. Nonetheless, at this point we are concerned about the general provisions of our CRC polity which guide our churches as they confront such cases rather than about the cases themselves. Some of the provisions of our Church Order do carry implications for this question of whether or not a minister can be responsible simultaneously to more than one consistory (or its equivalent) as pertains to his official task, and we turn to those now.

The Church Order speaks about the relationship of the minister to his congregation in Article 3. "Confessing male members of the church . . . are eligible for office. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church." It is evident from the second sentence of Article 3 that the reverse situation from that of our mandate would not be permitted in the CRC. That is, no minister from a non-CR denomination could be permitted to exercise the ministerial office in one of our churches since only those who have been officially called and ordained may do that. However, it is not that fact itself but the reason for it that interests us. That reason is clear from a reading of these early articles of the Church Order. The reason is that the offices which Christ institutes are instituted in the church (Art. 2) and that the men whom He appoints to them are appointed by way of the call of the church (Art. 4). The references to consistory, congregation, membership, etc. mentioned in these articles make it clear that what is meant by "church" here is first of all the local

congregation; and it is in this local church that Christ institutes offices and it is by the call of this local church that Christ appoints men to these offices.

In harmony with this primacy of the local congregation, Article 34 specifies that all delegates to classis and synod are to be office bearers, that is, of the local congregation, and Article 27a indicates that the authority of the consistory is original whereas that of the classis and synod is delegated. It is because the offices of the church are instituted in the congregation that Article 3 restricts eligibility to members, and it is because men are appointed to office through the call of the congregation that no one may exercise that office without the call. Furthermore, these things are true of the ministerial office not only when the call is to serve the congregation as its local pastor, but also when the call is to serve in some other place or way as provided for in Articles 12 and 13 of the Church Order, for there is no limitation in Article 3 of its provisions to the duties of the local pastor. Thus, when any CR minister performs his ministerial duties, no matter how distant he may be from his calling church, he is exercising his ministerial office as an office bearer of his calling church and under the terms of its call.

The provisions of the Church Order regarding the minister's relationship to consistory are in harmony with the foregoing points. The duties of the minister are outlined in Article 11 and, though this article does not specifically state that the minister is subject to regulation by the entire consistory as he carries out these tasks, such regulation is included in the duties of the elders as set out in Article 24 and in the duty of mutual censure as described in Article 36b. The responsibility of the consistory to regulate the minister's work is also covered by stipulation of Article 35a that the consistory is responsible for the general government of the church. This consistorial responsibility of regulating the ministerial duties is not abrogated in the special cases covered by Articles 12 and 13, for when these articles specify that a consistory may regulate the ministerial duties in cooperation with the committee or agency in question they make it clear that the consistorial regulation must continue. The fact that this arrangement is a concession to special circumstances underscores the importance of this consistorial regulation. We emphasize again that we are speaking about consistorial regulation of the exercise of the ministerial office or the official performance of the ministerial duties, not about consistorial supervision of the minister's personal doctrine and life. Thus, according to the provisions of the Church Order a minister holds his office only in and as an office bearer of his local congregation and exercises that office only in response to the call of this congregation and under the regulation of its consistory. It is only in this way that Christ authorizes the minister to work in His name.

B. A Minister Cannot be Subject to Two Consistories.

Now, if we return to the question posed by our mandate we must conclude that the provisions of the Church Order do not allow a CR minister who is exercising his ministerial office as an office bearer of his calling church and under the terms of its call, also to exercise his ministerial office in full and regular service to a non-CR church under

regulation by its governing body, for the responsibility he is under to his CR congregation as outlined above is incompatible with the like responsibility to another church. It is true that Articles 12 and 13 both speak about consistorial regulation of a minister's duties in cooperation with other bodies, but in each case the ministerial work regulated in this cooperative way is an appropriate responsibility of the calling church. It may be that other churches share the responsibility for this work and that may be one reason for the desirability of cooperative regulation. In situations covered by our mandate, however, the duties in the non-CR church which the CR minister proposes to assume under regulation by the governing body of that church are not the responsibility of his calling CRC.

It is conceivable, of course, that the CR minister and his calling church might consider the non-CR church in question to be so defective as a church that regulation by its governing body would not qualify as ecclesiastical regulation, and in that case they might claim that an arrangement of the sort we have been discussing is covered by Article 12 of the Church Order. It seems unlikely to us, however, that any non-CR church would acquiesce in that kind of judgment itself.

There may also be cases in which a congregation is considering affiliation with the CRC and requests the services of a CR minister to assist it in the proposed transition. In such a case, though, the CR minister continues to act as minister of his calling church and does not act as minister of the second church.

So long, then, as the non-CR church which the CR minister proposes to serve is to be regarded as a genuine church our Church Order does not allow for such an arrangement. We judge, in fact, that were such an arrangement to be made it would be in violation of Article 95 of the Church Order which forbids any church to interfere with the responsibilities of another.

C. *Articles 16 and 18*

Up to this point we have been discussing the ministerial office in its full, regular and unrestricted exercise. However, we now raise the question as to whether a minister who retains his office but is released from exercising it under the provisions of Article 16 or 18 may properly arrange to serve a non-CR church. The first part of our response to this is that both of these articles are intended to make it possible for a minister to retain his office when there are good reasons for releasing him from exercising that office, and in our judgment it would be to go contrary to the spirit and intent, if not the letter, of these articles in their present form if their provisions were used to release a minister from the exercise of his office in the CRC only so that he may exercise that office in a non-CR church.

D. *Provision Should be Made for Extended Witness*

We cannot ignore the fact, however, that, as sections VI and VII of our report also indicate, our denomination is receiving increasing opportunities to extend our Reformed witness through CR pastors serving non-CR churches. Provision should be made to allow for exceptional oppor-

tunities of extended witness in certain cases. The need for our assistance in the indigenous church established by our mission work gives us but one example among others where such an extended ministry in another denomination is both desirable and appropriate.

We, therefore, after much discussion and reflection, submit that it is advisable to amend Article 16 of the Church Order so as to allow for service to a non-CR church in exceptional cases.

Such an arrangement must, however, be carefully restricted and regulated. Other parts of this report will indicate what some of those restrictions must be. In this section of the report we would point out that the matter of supervision of the pastor's official duties must be carefully worked out. We have seen from the above study that our Church Order indicates that a minister is subject to the congregation and consistory which has called him to office, and that it does not allow for supervision of his work by two consistories at the same time. A real difficulty arises, therefore, if he is to be appointed by a non-CR church. The consistory (or its equivalent) of such a church will, no doubt, demand the right of supervising his official duties which he must perform in that non-CR church. If, therefore, such an arrangement is to be allowed it must be done by way of an exceptional and temporary leave from his calling CR church, and according to proper restrictions and regulations. It would seem that in such a case the CR consistory involved before granting such a "leave," must make sure that the work of the minister will be in harmony with his ministerial calling and in full harmony with the CR stance, as to doctrine, church polity, and practice. The non-CR church would then exercise supervision over the official duties assigned to him. Should such a minister become subject to discipline the non-CR church which is serving should have the right to suspend him from his service to that church, but suspension from office and/or deposition should be applied by the CRC.

VI. CRC AND REFORMED WITNESS IN OUR TIMES

A. *Opportunities for Reformed Witness*

While investigating the aspects of the question of CR ministers serving in undenominational churches or in churches of another denomination, we must also take a look at our witness opportunities as Overture 14 of Classis Holland suggests (Acts, 1974, p. 639).

We submit, we should recognize the privilege and responsibility we have in being confessionally Reformed. That we are Reformed, and that we are such with our own distinctiveness, is reason for our separate existence, while we, simultaneously, believe in the universal church. It is important to note that the *reasons* for our separate and distinct existence as CRC denomination are at the same time *cause* for us to want to witness to the Reformed faith and to share with others the heritage that we hold precious because we deem it to be biblical and adequate as the expression of doctrine and world-view. That which we hold dear and which distinguishes us as a denomination is the same thing that makes us want to share it.

We should recognize further that while there is a faith, a heritage, a life-view, a life-style called Reformed that we have and are compelled to

share, simultaneously there is a need and/or a desire among other groups, congregations, and denominations for that which distinguishes us as the CRC. Churches and denominations are finding their identity as they emerge out of missionary efforts, and through indigenous developments in new communities and nations. These seek assistance. In the meanwhile, in our own countries, there are groups, congregations and denominations that are separating from or forming outside of main-line, historic denominations that have departed from historic Christianity. From both sides we have already been receiving requests for CRC assistance in the way of CR pastors.

In the past the CRC has demonstrated a willingness to share the Reformed faith-and-life-view that distinguishes us, with those who desire it. We have given assistance to the Reformed Churches of Ceylon, New Zealand, and Australia. We have given assistance to the Reformed witness by providing CR pastors to the group that has become the Washington, Pennsylvania, CRC. Classis Sioux Center has been offering assistance to groups and congregations in the middle west that are of German Reformed background which have expressed interest in the CRC. These may become part of the CRC, as some have, but in any case, they have desired the Reformed witness as represented and presented by the CRC. In 1975 the CR Board of Foreign Missions made arrangements with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, which the Synod of 1975 approved, to loan a pastor to serve in that church. Whenever indigenous churches have organized on our mission fields, we have been ready to share the Reformed witness through the loaning of ordained men. We can anticipate further opportunities at home and abroad in which churches or denominations request our assistance in this way.

The foregoing leads us to suggest that we should be prepared with synodically approved stipulations that are in accord with the Church Order by which we can be ready to offer a witness to our Reformed heritage by loaning CR pastors. While our mandate arises out of a specific case, we should be cognizant of the scope of other opportunities.

That leads us, however, to make some necessary observations and qualifications.

B. Observations and Qualifications

The first observation is very important in view of what we have been saying above. We should not construe any and all evangelistic or ecclesiastical opportunities as challenges to loan CR pastors. We must distinguish between opportunities in which ordained men are to be loaned. There must be a desire for *Reformed* witness, or there must be real opportunity for such *Reformed* leadership in any church outside our denomination that seeks our ordained men. A CR minister, being a minister in a confessional church in which pastors sign the Form of Subscription, which also implies an allegiance to the CRC more generally, can honestly only offer himself for the sake of a real Reformed witness. If pastors go for other reasons, of which there can be almost an endless number, they should resign from the CR ministry.

A second observation concerns the selection of ordained men called to serve in another church. We must be assured that congregations and/

or denominations seeking the service of CR pastors are not being selective of pastors only for their personal qualities and skills in preaching or pastoring, but, rather, that they are actually and primarily seeking assistance of CR pastors to promote Reformed religion.* Such churches must demonstrate a desire to be, or to have, what the CRC represents theologically and in church polity. That the qualities and skills of pastors called to serve in such situations will enter the consideration is clearly understood (in all calls the qualifications of a pastor are considered to a certain degree), but this must be secondary in the calls here understood. Consideration of skills and qualities may be important in calling ministers, but such cannot be the consideration of a consistory or classis in giving approval for loaning a CR pastor to a non-CR church.

We must make an additional observation at this point since synod has implicitly mandated this committee to examine the position which the Synods of 1972 and 1974 have taken with respect to the problem brought before Classis Holland. It is one thing when a CR congregation calls a pastor within our own denominational framework to work in various ministries determined to be related to the ministry of the Word and sacraments; it is quite another thing when our ministers are called to engage in ordinary ministries in non-CR churches. *In the former it is assumed* that the ministry will be Reformed, for he is still working under the jurisdiction of a CR consistory; *in the latter we must be assured* that it will be a promotion of the Reformed religion because of the different ecclesiastical, and perhaps also different confessional, framework. This distinction must be understood and kept clear in the light of the above paragraphs and other parts of this report. In the light of this study and what is being reported here, the conclusion should be drawn that the synodical deputies' advice given to Classis Holland in 1972 was correct when they said that Article 13 of the Church Order does not apply when ministers are called to do ordinary ministerial tasks in a church outside our denomination. The Synods of 1972 and 1974 approved that advice and reaffirmed that position respectively. It is apparent that Article 13 of the Church Order was intended to apply to other than ordinary ministries within the calling framework of our denomination, not only by its location in the Church Order, but because of what is said above. It would appear necessary, as suggested in Part V, that provision for ministers serving outside of our denomination should come under Article 16 which deals with "leaves of absence" and where provision for a "loan" can be spelled out.

To conclude these paragraphs, the CRC should be ready at once to *protect* her distinct confessional, theological and ecclesiastical stance, and to *promote* the Reformed religion by sharing it. CR pastors in particular should do so. Therefore, the CRC should entertain opportunities to loan pastors only to non-CR churches that are desirous of the Reformed religion and seriously contemplate affiliation with the CRC or some other orthodox Reformed body, or that are already in a Reformed commun-

* By "Reformed religion" as used in this report we do not mean something other than the Christian religion but we mean the Christian religion as understood from the Calvinistic perspective, including Reformed doctrine, church polity, and world-and-life view.

ion and seek to bolster such religion. The CRC, being a confessional church with a distinct Reformed heritage, ought not to provide pastors in other churches that seek to keep and foster a blend or confusion of church doctrine, church polity, and a Christian life-style which does not harmonize with the CRC stance. If we did the latter, we would be sharing our CR ordained men, but not promoting the Reformed religion. We must always promote Reformed religion should we loan ministers to churches outside our own denomination. To do otherwise would be to act against our ecclesiastical and confessional integrity as a denomination.

VII. THE TERMS "ON LEAVE" AND "ON LOAN"

A. *Need for Clarification*

In its decisions of 1974, synod included the following in the grounds for the decision calling for this present study: "There is a growing need for clarification with respect to the use of phrases such as ministers being 'on leave of absence' or 'on loan' as these are related to their serving in other churches."

Accordingly, our committee has discussed at length and surveyed the usage of these terms in general, and particularly as these have been used to cover situations in which ministers engage in tasks outside the ecclesiastical framework of the CRC.

We have surveyed the 1975 Yearbook of the Christian Reformed Church and corresponded with the stated clerks of classes to obtain a general picture of the usage of the terms mentioned. While our survey is not exhaustive it did indicate that the Synod of 1974 was correct in stating that there is a need for clarification as to the usage of this terminology. It is evident from our study that there is considerable confusion in the usage of the terms "on leave of absence" and "on loan." On the other hand, however, we do not find that there has been much usage, and much less a confusion of usage, of these terms as these pertain to CRC pastors in ministries in other churches. Perhaps this is due to the fact that the instances of such ministries in other churches are still relatively few.

B. *Summary of Survey*

To sum up our general survey, however, we can generalize as follows. At the time of our study there were approximately one hundred and ten ordained men who were called within the CRC calling framework, i.e., according to the provisions of Article 13 of the Church Order, to serve in extraordinary ministerial tasks. At least 34 of these were reported as being "on loan" to these various institutions or agencies that employed them.

We noted seven ordained men who were called by the CRC congregations to be "loaned" to agencies and institutions outside the CRC. These also have the approval of classes and synodical deputies.

We noted sixteen ordained men who were on leave of absence at the time of our study. At least eight of these were on leave for study. Concerning the others we are not sure of the reason for their leave of absence

since these leaves are granted by consistories, no classical approval being required.

While our study is being made one pastor is on leave of absence from his CR calling church to serve as pastor in an undenominational church. Another pastor is on loan to a church in another Reformed denomination. Still another pastor has been processed through the Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions to be officially called by a church of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil to be installed in Brazil as a pastor of that church. The ministerial credentials of the CR minister going to Brazil will remain in the CRC, where his status will be that of a minister on leave of absence and loaned to the Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil.

These statistics may not be complete, but they do offer a general picture of the usage of the terms "on leave of absence" and "on loan" as these pertain to ordained men in other than ordinary ministries.

In our study of this terminology we find that some consistories are using the expression "to be loaned to. . ." when calling ministers to extraordinary ministries, while others do not. In those cases in which the agency employing a CR minister is a non-CR agency the expression "to be loaned to. . ." is quite generally used. But there is no set rule or consistency in practice. Confusion as to when these terms apply definitely exists.

C. *Suggested Usage*

We submit that the term "on leave of absence" should apply and be used only when a minister "for weighty reasons desires a *temporary* (italics ours) release from service to the congregation" as prescribed in Article 16 of the Church Order. During this period the consistory of his calling church continues to have supervision over him.

As to the usage of the term "on loan" we submit first of all, negatively, that the term should not be used in those cases in which ministers are called to serve in extraordinary ministerial tasks according to the provisions of Article 13 of the Church Order. Those ministers should not be regarded as being "on loan" since their call is to that specific task and they work essentially for the calling church while only incidentally for another agency. No loan is involved. These extraordinary tasks must be judged to be spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling and therefore wholly consistent with ordination in the CRC. If the consistory, classis or synodical deputies do not judge the extraordinary task to meet the requirements of Article 13 they should neither call nor approve the call.

Positively, we submit that the term "on loan" should be used exclusively in those cases in which we are dealing with another denomination or non-CR church. We suggest that at present this is a very adequate term (perhaps the best term we can find) to describe this kind of mutual aid to other churches.

We would add this further observation concerning the term "on loan." A loan by its very nature is intended to be temporary. Therefore any "on loan" arrangements should be made for a definitely limited period of time. If a minister should enter into what is intended to be a perma-

ment ministry in another denomination or undenominational church he ought to resign from the CR ministry and become a minister in and of the denomination or undenominational church which he will be serving. Both honesty and practical considerations would require that he do so.

In the light of our study we submit that provisions for those opportunities in which men may legitimately serve in other churches should be made under Article 16 of the Church Order as instances of "temporary release" for the purpose of being "on loan."

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of our reflection and study of the question whether or not a CR minister may serve in an ordinary ministerial task in a local church of another denomination or undenominational church and still retain his status as a minister of the CRC we draw the following conclusions.

A. We conclude that the synodical deputies were correct when in the case of the minister in Classis Holland they declared that "this does not come under the regulation of Article 13" (of the C.O.), and that the Synod of 1972 was correct in approving their work. This is a different problem than that dealt with by Article 13 and therefore requires different regulations. (See Sections I & VI.)

B. From our study we conclude that a minister ordained in the CRC is set apart for a life of service in the church of Christ, but specifically as that church comes to concrete expression in the CRC. His ministry is defined and circumscribed by the CRC and it must, therefore, present the CRC stance as to doctrine, church polity, and synodical decisions. His ministry must in a very real sense be a CR ministry. His signature to the Form of Subscription demands no less than that. (See Section III.)

C. Our study indicates that CRC polity, practice and attitude stands opposed to congregationalism and undenominationalism. It would, therefore, be inappropriate for a CR pastor to minister in a congregation which is determined to remain independent. (See Section IV.)

D. Our study of the pertinent articles of the Church Order indicates that the official task of the minister is to be regulated by the consistory of the local church which has called him to office. When any CR minister performs his ministerial duties he is exercising his ministerial office as an office bearer of his calling church and under the terms of its call. (See Section V.)

E. Our study shows that the provisions of the Church Order do not allow a CR minister to perform his ministerial task under the supervision of two consistories at one and the same time, and therefore a CR minister cannot exercise his ministerial office in full and regular service to a non-CR church unless he is released from active service to his calling church. However, to grant a leave under the provisions of Article 16 or 18 for the purpose of permitting a minister to serve a non-CR church would go contrary to the spirit, if not the letter, of those articles as they read at present. (See Section V.)

F. We conclude that, in view of opportunities presented to us today, there may be circumstances under which it may be desirable and ap-

propriate for a CR minister to serve a local congregation of a non-CR church. Synod, therefore should provide for such exceptional cases. We are convinced, however, that such an arrangement should definitely be regarded as exceptional and temporary, and must be carefully regulated so as to preserve the integrity of the CRC and the CR ministry. In all such arrangements the CR minister must be free to and is, in fact, obligated to promote the Reformed religion as expressed by the CRC. (See Section VI.)

G. We conclude that Article 16 of the Church Order should be amended to provide for granting a leave for the purpose of being loaned for temporary service to a non-CR church with classical and synodical deputy approval, and in accordance with synodical regulations. (See Section VII.)

H. We conclude that the CRC ought both to protect and promote her Reformed confessions, theology, and polity. Therefore, the CRC should entertain opportunities to loan pastors only to non-CR churches that are desirous of the Reformed religion and seriously contemplate affiliation with the CRC or some other orthodox Reformed body, or that are already in a Reformed communion and seek to bolster such religion. (See Section VI.)

I. We conclude that the term "on leave of absence" should apply and be used only when a minister "for weighty reasons desires a temporary release from service to the congregation" as prescribed in Article 16 of the Church Order. The term "on loan" should be used exclusively in those instances of "leave" in which a minister will be serving a non-CR church. It should also be apparent that both of these terms describe an arrangement that is intended to be *temporary*. (See Section VI.)

IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. We recommend that during the discussion of this report the Rev. John Fondse, chairman, and the Rev. Paul Bakker, reporter, be given the privilege of the floor.

B. Recognizing that as a denomination we are being given the opportunity to present the Reformed witness to a broader ecclesiastical world through the use of our ministers, and having shown that the Church Order as it reads at present does not allow a CR minister to serve in a non-CR church under regulation of its governing body, we recommend that synod revise Article 16 of the Church Order by the addition of part "b", the present paragraph of Article 16 becoming part "a", the proposed addition to read:

"b. A minister may be granted a temporary release from service to the congregation for the purpose of serving a local church outside of the Christian Reformed Church, but only with the approval of classis, the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, and in accordance with synodical regulations."

C. We recommend that synod adopt the following regulations to govern those cases in which a CR minister serves a local church outside the Christian Reformed Church under the provisions of the proposed revision of Article 16 of the Church Order.

1. A minister whose service is requested by a local church of another denomination or independent church may, by way of temporary leave, be permitted to serve such a church and retain his CRC ministerial status provided that:

a. there is a demonstrated need for a CR ministry in the non-CR church which he will serve.

b. the church seeking the CR minister is desirous of the Reformed religion and seriously contemplates affiliation with the CRC or some other orthodox Reformed body, or is already in a Reformed communion and seeks to bolster such religion.

c. the minister's duties are spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling; and that he shall be at liberty to and shall be expected to carry on his ministry in full harmony with the Reformed stance of the CRC as stated in its Form of Unity, its church polity, and its synodical pronouncements as required by his signature to the Form of Subscription.

d. the minister contemplating service in an undenominational church acknowledges it as his duty to bring such a church into fellowship and eventual federation with the CR denomination, or at least into a Reformed fellowship of churches which is similar to the CRC confessionally and practically.

2. Such an arrangement shall be subject to the following regulations:

a. In those cases in which the non-CR church which is to be served by a CR minister is in close proximity to a CR church (or churches) of another classis (or classes) the approval of that classis (or classes) shall be required, in addition to the approval of the classis of the church in which the minister's credentials reside and of the synodical deputies.

b. Such an arrangement shall be for a two year period. If the church and minister involved desire to extend the arrangement after the two year period is completed the classis (or classes) involved, together with the synodical deputies, shall review the case. Upon their approval a two year extension may be granted. All such cases shall be reviewed every two years. (Synod may desire to allow for a different time period in the case of foreign missionaries.)

c. The CR church in which his ministerial credentials reside shall continue to be responsible for the supervision of his doctrine and life. The specific duties which he is to perform shall be assigned and supervised by the non-CR church which he serves.

d. Should the minister become subject to discipline, the non-CR church which he is serving shall have the right to suspend him from his service to that church, but suspension from office and deposition may be applied only by the CRC.

e. Continuation under the CRC Pension Plan shall require that the minister, or the non-CR church which he serves, shall contribute to the Ministers' Pension Fund the amount which is determined annually by the Minister's Pension Fund Committee for ministers serving in extra-ordinary positions.

D. We recommend that synod declare that the term "on leave of absence" should apply and be used only when a minister "for weighty

reasons desires a temporary release from service to the congregation" as prescribed in Article 16 of the Church Order. The term "on loan" should be used exclusively in those instances of "leave" in which a minister will be serving a non-CR church. Both of these terms describe an arrangement that is intended to be temporary.

E. We recommend that this report and its recommendations, in addition to what synod has already declared in Article 74 of the Acts of Synod 1974, page 83, be declared synod's answer to Overture 14 of Classis Holland, 1974.

Christian Reformed Ministers
Serving in Other Denominations Committee
J. Fondse, chairman
P. Bakker, reporter
E. De Vries
M. De Young
J. Vander Laan

REPORT 37

IMPLICATIONS OF THE GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE
AND ORDINATION AND "LAYWORKERS IN EVANGELISM"

A. Majority Report

I. INTRODUCTION

Our committee came into being as a result of the decisions of the Synod of 1973 on ecclesiastical office and ordination. The committee was mandated to study the implications of the newly adopted guidelines for office and ordination, especially as they relate to "layworkers in evangelism" (Acts 1973, Art. 64, F, 3, p. 64).

The historical context of the 1973 decision on ecclesiastical office and ordination demanded that priority be given to the longstanding question of "layworkers in evangelism."

The committee struggled with this issue and came to the Synod of 1974 with the proposal that "the layworker in evangelism" be ordained as an elder evangelist. However, the Synod of 1974 did not accept this proposal and instead instructed the committee to explore the possibility of ordaining the "layworker in evangelism" to a special (a fourth) office (Acts 1974, Art. 70, III, C, 2, p. 75).

II. HISTORY

Before we address ourselves to our mandate, we present a brief historical survey of the study of the place and status of the "layworker in evangelism" in the Christian Reformed Church. The "layworker in evangelism" appeared upon the scene in the early 1900's, but it was not until 1946 that synod addressed itself to the question of the official position of the "layworker in evangelism" in our church. Since he was doing the work of the church by appointment and under the supervision of the church, it was felt that he should have some standing in the official structure of the church. Various solutions were proposed to synod, such as "installation as elder," "limited ordination as minister," "office of evangelist," "licensed evangelist," and "ordination via Article 7 of the Church Order." None of these solutions was accepted by synod.

In 1969 the proposal to ordain the layworker via Article 7 of the Church Order was tabled and synod adopted the following:

"For many years the Christian Reformed Church has been seeking to define the precise status of layworkers in evangelism. Valuable information has been provided the church in study reports presented to the Synods of 1965, 1967, and 1969. It has become evident that the precise status of the layworkers in evangelism cannot be determined until *the nature of ecclesiastical office and the meaning of ordination have been clarified.*

"C. *Recommendations:*

"1. Synod appoint a committee to study the nature of ecclesiastical office and the meaning of ordination as taught in the Scripture

and exhibited in the history of the church of Christ" (Acts 1969, Art. 121, p. 85).

Out of this study of ecclesiastical office and ordination the Synod of 1973 adopted twelve guidelines which were set within the framework of six observations. In adopting these guidelines and observations, synod realized that it had not yet answered the questions of the official status of the "layworker in evangelism." Therefore its concluding recommendation was to appoint the present committee with the following mandate:

"To study the implications of the GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE AND ORDINATION, especially as they relate to 'layworkers in evangelism,' and to report to the Synod of 1974" (Acts 1973, Art. 64, F, 3, p. 64).

(For a complete history of synodical action on the matter see the following Acts of Synod:

- 1946, pp. 74, 296-298, 310-317 (Report Board of Foreign Missions)
 - 1947, pp. 94, 408-412 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1948, pp. 79-81, 160-182 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1954, pp. 52-53, 214 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1965, pp. 70-72, 267-277 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1967, pp. 63-65, 324-334 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1969, pp. 72-73, 85, 355-370 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1972, pp. 94-95, 419-478 (Report of synodical study committee)
 - 1973, pp. 61-64, 635-716 (Report 44, basis of the 1973 decision)
 - 1974, pp. 72-75, 568-575 (Report of synodical study committee)
- See also Acts Reformed Ecumenical Synod, 1972, pp. 52-60, 167-204.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE MANDATE

Our mandate is now "to study the implications of the guidelines for understanding the nature of ecclesiastical office and ordination, especially as they relate to ordaining 'layworkers in evangelism' to a special (a fourth) office."

Although the mandate speaks of a broader study of the implications of the guidelines for understanding the nature of ecclesiastical office and ordination, we understand that we are directed by synod to address ourselves first of all to their implications as they relate to the possible ordination of the "layworker in evangelism" to a fourth office. Our mandate, then, requires that we study the implications of this possible fourth office with respect to the Confessions and the Church Order.

IV. THE LAYWORKER IN EVANGELISM

If we are to determine the "official status" of the "layworker in evangelism" and where he belongs in the organizational structure of the church, we must know who he is and what he does. The church *de facto* has recognized his presence and his work within the body of the church. The church is not now trying to create something new, but to identify officially someone who for many years has been performing a "particular ministry of the church." The church has treated his place and work as a legitimate and necessary ministry within the church, but has not been able to define his official position.

The following is a general profile on the "layworker in evangelism" as we know him today:

A. The "layworker in evangelism" is not ordained to the ministry nor to any other office in the church. With some exceptions he serves as a full-time worker at a chapel. He comes under the jurisdiction of a local church, a group of churches, a classis, or the entire denomination as represented in a board.

B. His task is to engage in personal evangelism and to provide leadership in the frontier area of the church. In this setting he brings the Gospel and teaches the Word.

C. There are a number of factors which prevent identifying him with the minister of the Word:

1. The work of the "layworker in evangelism" is usually limited to a foundational work in the outreach of the church.

2. He neither holds an office in the church nor is he officially recognized by the denomination.

3. He may not administer the sacraments nor pronounce the greeting and benediction at worship services.

4. His pulpit ministry is officially referred to as exhorting and not preaching.

5. He is limited in the area of his operation and is not bound to his work for life by any formal arrangement with the church. He serves when, and if, and as long as, a church or agency engages him for that service and he is pleased to engage in that service.

6. He may not serve an organized church as its pastor.

7. Generally he is not examined in any systematic dialogue by any ecclesiastical body as to his scriptural knowledge and doctrinal position.

8. He has not received the prescribed formal training for the ministry of the Word.

With this profile in mind we now turn to the question of his ordination in the light of the guidelines as adopted by the Synod of 1973.

V. THE GUIDELINES AND ORDINATION

According to Guideline 9 ordination is "the appointment or setting apart of certain members of the church for particular ministries that are strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry" (Acts 1973, Art. 64, p. 63). The word "ordination," then, is reserved for those appointments in the service of the church that are "strategic" for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry.

Does the work of the "layman in evangelism" fall in this category? Is it "strategic" in the overall task of the church? We say, "Yes." By this time our denomination has a long record of the work done by numerous "laymen in evangelism," giving ample evidence of the need for their services within the denomination. Time and again the church has seen fit to appoint new "laymen in evangelism" to fill positions that required some form of leadership in the area of missions or evangelism. By now the work of the church would be seriously hampered without these people.

Although the church never ordained the layworker, it did appoint him. Guideline 9 says that appointment to a strategic ministry basically is ordination. Since the work of the layworker is strategic to the church, it follows that ordination is in order. Moreover, our lengthy history of dealing with this matter in itself indicates that the church wants to find a way of officially recognizing the layworker.

The real issue of the place of the layworker in our ecclesiastical structure has been less a question of *whether* he should be ordained than *to what office*. Although the church kept appointing layworkers, proposals to define their official place in our denomination were repeatedly found unacceptable. By this time so many such proposals have been turned down that it is impossible to provide synod with an entirely new alternative. Nevertheless, the guidelines adopted by the Synod of 1973, coupled with the suggestion of a fourth office made by the Synod of 1974, do provide us with some new insights and possibilities.

The question then is: to what office shall the layworker be ordained? There are essentially three possibilities:

1. He could be ordained to the office of elder as an evangelist.
2. He could be ordained to the office of minister with certain restrictions.
3. He could be ordained to a fourth office, the office of evangelist.

Your committee concludes that the fourth office concept is the answer.

VI. REASONS FOR THE FOURTH OFFICE

A. *Ordination to the Office of Elder*

Article 24 of the Church Order describes the office of elder in terms of supervision over the congregation and fellow officebearers, exercising admonition and discipline, and seeing to it that everything is done decently and in good order. This description of the office of elder does not do justice to the function and task of the evangelist. The evangelist was not called to do the work of a regular elder in the congregation. His task does not imply supervision over his fellow officebearers: ministers, elders, and deacons. He is not involved in the regular visiting program of an elder. He does not exercise pastoral care over the congregation which called him to office. Rather he is called to the specific task of evangelism.

The Church Order does state in Article 24 that the elder is to engage in and promote the work of evangelism. However, this one aspect of the work of an elder should not receive the central focus at the expense of the main function and task of an elder. Here it becomes evident that the term "elder of evangelism" really is a contradiction in terms. Elders are appointed to be elders, not to be evangelists. Already the study committee that reported on this matter at the Synod of 1965 stated this: "... the work of the elder is primarily that of ruling. This should remain so In given situations it would be possible for such a worker to be an elder in the church, but your committee is convinced this would not work as a general practice" (Acts 1965, p. 272).

In 1974 synod steered away from the direction of ordaining layworkers in evangelism to the office of elder with the extraordinary task of evan-

gelism by reiterating that the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ in all circumstances (Acts 1974, Art. 70, III, C, 2, c, p. 75). The adaptation or modification suggested by synod itself was "a special (fourth) office."

B. *Ordination to the Office of Minister*

Since the work of the evangelist does involve the bringing of the Word and will include the administration of the sacraments according to Guideline 8, the description of his task seems to place him within the category of the office of minister of the Word. Since in this respect he is like a minister, why not simply ordain him to the office of a minister?

It is significant that previous synods have repeatedly sought a solution in this direction: by way of limited ordination, ordination by way of Church Order, Article 7, and other modifications. However, it is also significant that no synod has found a solution there. A number of considerations make this indeed an unsatisfactory solution in spite of the similarities between layworker in evangelism and minister.

1. Ordaining layworkers to the office of minister of the Word is to open that office to persons who would not otherwise qualify for it according to general standards of training and preparation. This is all the more apparent in view of synod's decision to raise the academic requirements for the ministry to the level of a master's degree in theology.

In rejecting the proposal for "limited ordination" to the office of minister, already the Synod of 1948 was concerned about this very matter of qualification. It said that limited ordination "would betray a gross underestimation of the importance and difficulty of the work of the missionary. Missionary ministers, to work effectively, are generally in need of *more* rather than *less* training as compared to other ministers" (Acts 1948, Art. 122, p. 79).

Likewise we interpret the reluctance of various synods with respect to ordination under Article 7 as coming from the same concern for maintaining high standards for the office of minister of the Word. The Synod of 1947 said, "This article should never be used as a means to ordain all layworkers who may desire such, and whose prestige would be increased by such action. The churches are reminded that the regular door to the ministry is a thorough academic training. This must be maintained in theory and practice" (Acts 1947, Art. 163, p. 94). Although the Synod of 1958 did in fact give the go-ahead to ordination of layworkers via Article 7 on the Indian field, this practice was never adopted throughout the denomination. There is a good reason for this: Article 7 provides for ordination of persons who in spite of not having received the prescribed training prove to be "singularly gifted" and therefore qualify for the office of minister of the Word.

It may be objected at this point that we are subtly shifting our discussion from function to qualification, so that the difference between the minister and the evangelist is one only of qualification and not of function. This is not the case. Function and qualification are

inseparable. Where and how a person will function in the church depends largely on his qualifications. Guideline 3 rightly states that appointment to special tasks follows only when the church "has discerned the required gifts." The average person ordained to the office of minister would likely function quite well as evangelist, but most evangelists would not be qualified to function in the regular ministry.

2. If the evangelist were to be ordained to a limited version of the office of minister of the Word, it would mean the introduction of the first minister with restrictions placed on his ordination. Until now anyone ordained to the office of minister was free to accept any position within the scope of that office. To ordain the evangelist to the office of minister with such restrictions would create an undesirable hierarchy within that office. It is far more preferable to define clearly the particular office of evangelist and to ordain him to that office.

3. Similarity of tasks between the minister and the evangelist does not require ordination to the same office. There are many similarities between the offices of elder, deacon, and minister. Each in his own way brings the Word, rules in the name of Christ, and administers the mercy of Christ. Yet each is a distinct office.

The Bible itself shows the openness of the early church to a plurality of offices in spite of their similarity in task. We would be hard pressed to distinguish clearly the four (or five?) offices mentioned by Paul in Ephesians 4:11. To the best of our knowledge, all these may have participated in the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the sacraments, yet they must have been sufficiently different to warrant different names and different offices.

4. As noted before, there are also marked dissimilarities between minister and evangelist. The evangelist lacks the prescribed formal training for the ministry of the Word. His field of operation is the area of evangelism, which is only one part of the over-all ministerial task. It must be stressed that the evangelist is a person who has prepared for work in the area of evangelism and has chosen not to be a minister.

C. The Three-fold Office Concept

Introducing a fourth office into our ecclesiastical structure raises the question whether our present acceptance of only three offices is based on any hard and fast rules from which the church may not depart.

We begin by examining the alleged relationship between the threefold office of Christ and the three offices known to us. The synodical study committee of 1972 already pointed out that "certain Christian Reformed commentators have tended to identify the three recognized ecclesiastical offices with the prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices of Christ," and quoted the Revised Church Order Commentary by Monsma (p. 24), as one example. We agree with that committee when it calls this assertion "a theological gloss of the New Testament, where support for this contention is lacking" (Acts 1972, p. 472). Nowhere in the New Testament, including all the passages that most specifically deal with the offices of the church, is any attempt made to deduce their number or their function from the threefold office of Christ and consequently limit the offices in the church to three.

There has been little agreement throughout the history of the church with respect to the number of ecclesiastical offices.

1. This is the opinion of some outstanding Reformed authorities: "There is a great deal of disagreement in the Christian church regarding the number of offices that Christ has instituted in his church" (gemeent) (Dr. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, vol. iv, p. 419).

"There has always been disagreement regarding the number of ministries" (diensten) (Dr. J. Jansen, *Korte Verklaring Van De Kerkenorde*, p. 6).

2. Some Reformed scholars feel that arguments for one or for two offices out of which other offices have developed have as much validity as those which stress three:

"The church's diakonia in its entirety was originally performed by the elders, and out of this have developed through the centuries the three-fold offices of ministers of the Word, elders, and deacons, a trinity of which the lines of demarcation eventually became much too sharp, and in which the unity must be rediscovered and put into practice" (Dr. K. Dyk, "Ambt" in *Christelijke Encyclopedie*, vol. 1, p. 164).

"The offices instituted by them (the apostles) are not many in number; actually there are only two, that of the elder and of the deacon, though the former is further split into that of teaching and of ruling elder" (Dr. H. Bavinck, *Magnalia Dei*, p. 611).

3. Creedal statements and church orders of the Reformation do not show a consistent adherence to three offices:

a. The Helvetic Confession, 1566; Wesel, 1568, 's Gravenhage, 1596, Middelburg, 1581, Dordt, 1618-19, and our own church order until 1965, all recognized four offices.

b. The Confessions of Emden, 1571, Dordt, 1574 and 1578, and the Belgic Confession all mention three offices.

A mere summary of these church orders and confessions does not even tell the real story. Comparison of the various synodical pronouncements of those days indicates a remarkable flexibility in thinking about office, the names used to designate each office and the description of their various mandates. Wesel, for instance, not only mentions "prophets" (people who may proclaim the Word in the worship services) besides the four offices, but also strongly encourages the practice of having two kinds of deacons, those who "serve tables" and those who visit the sick.

We consider it important to point out here that to speak of Christ as having "instituted" the offices of the church is misleading (Article 2, Church Order). Surely we do not mean that Christ instituted the offices of the church in the same way he instituted, for example, the Lord's Supper. The only particular office that Christ instituted in a sense is that of apostle. Also when the Belgic Confession states that the church must be governed by that spiritual polity "which our Lord has taught us in his Word," it obviously neither teaches nor implies that the three offices mentioned were directly instituted by Christ. Neither the Scriptures nor the historic creeds make this claim. What is clear is that the

church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit called into existence a number of offices as the need for them arose.

This takes us back to the guidelines of 1973. "Because the Scriptures do not present definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances" (Guideline 12).

We find then, that there is no justification for insisting that there should be exactly three offices in the church. It does not follow from the threefold office of Christ. The history of the church shows no consistency regarding this matter. Both Scripture and the guidelines suggest that the church may, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, adjust the nature and the number of offices according to its need (cf. Report 44, pp. 650-691, Acts 1973).

D. Focus in Office

At this point we wish to elaborate on our previous observation (VI, B, 3) that similarity to tasks need not require ordination to the same office. Here we would like to introduce the concept of focus in office.

Even though an elder brings and teaches the Word, engages in and promotes the work of evangelism and engages in and promotes the work of mercy, nevertheless he is ordained to the office of elder because overseeing the flock is primary in his work. In the same way, even though a minister engages in and promotes the work of evangelism and engages in and promotes the work of mercy as well as doing the work of an elder, nevertheless he is ordained to the office of minister of the Word because proclamation of the Word is primary in his work. Even though a deacon brings the Word, engages in and promotes the work of evangelism, nevertheless he is ordained to the office of deacon because the ministry of mercy is primary in his work. Likewise, though an evangelist brings the Word, engages in and promotes the work of mercy and does some of the work an elder might do, nevertheless he ought to be ordained as an evangelist because evangelism is primary in his work. Each office is distinct from the others, not because it is totally unlike them, but because it has a different focus.

The guidelines adopted by the Synod of 1973 establish the concept of office as being functional without giving a clearcut description of each particular office. Neither in Scripture nor in the history of the church have we come to sharply defined or delineated offices. Scripture names many functions as ministries validated by Christ's authority. Offices cannot be so clearly circumscribed as to distinguish one from the other in terms of inclusion and exclusion. Rather each function has its peculiar focus.

This concept of focus, then, admits of a plurality of offices, and at the same time acknowledges that there are indeed areas of overlap functionally, yet it recognizes that each ministry or office has its unique focal point. Therefore we conclude that the task of the evangelist is sufficiently distinct to require his ordination to a fourth particular office.

E. *Confessions*

The advisory committee to the Synod of 1974 asked whether the introduction of a fourth office would be in harmony with our confessions. We have already referred to the confessions under VI, C, 3, of this report and have concluded that the Belgic Confession, even though it mentions but three offices, does not necessarily limit the number of offices.

Even though Articles 30 and 31 speak of three offices (minister, elder, and deacon), it is obvious that these relate to the "governing" body, the "council," of the local church. There are no indications that the Belgic Confession limits offices to the three mentioned. "In its historical setting the Confession described the *way* the church was to be governed in terms of contrast with forms of government found in Romanism and Anabaptism," rather than the *number* of offices (Acts 1973, p. 710).

Therefore we conclude that our recommendation of a fourth office is fully in harmony with the Belgic Confession. The Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort do not address themselves to this issue of the number of offices in the church.

VII. THE OFFICE OF EVANGELIST AND THE CHURCH ORDER

We are now ready to zero in on the particulars of the fourth office and its place in our ecclesiastical structure. We see the task of the evangelist as bringing the Gospel and administering the sacraments in the outreach or pioneering ministry of the church.

Provisions will need to be made to help appointing agencies to determine whether a candidate for the office of evangelist has the qualifications necessary for that office. Each candidate must be suited to the specific field in which he is to work, in terms of personal godliness and required gifts.

A method will have to be determined by which people who aspire to the office of evangelist can be properly examined. This examination, it seems to us, can best be carried out by classis. We have considered that it be done by the local consistory in conjunction with neighboring churches. But the evangelist working under the auspices of a particular local church represents more than just that local congregation. His ministry is also characterized as a part of the outreach of the larger Christian Reformed community in terms of its biblical and creedal perspective. Furthermore, there is a need for a general uniformity among those holding this office. Uniformity as to qualifications and standards will benefit the church. And this can best be achieved by means of classical involvement.

Although no requirements for academic training comparable to those for the office of minister of the Word will be made of the candidate, the church must find some way of setting down minimal educational requirements for the office of evangelist commensurate with the needs of his field of labor.

Since the nature of the evangelist's task will differ considerably from one field to another, the office of evangelist naturally has a local flavor and should function only in the field to which he has been called for a specified period of time. This then will mean that the credentials

of the evangelist will not be automatically transferred from one classis to another. Each new appointment will follow the same procedure for calling and ordaining the candidate into office.

In view of the fact that the evangelist will be called by a consistory for work specifically in the area of evangelism either in the local congregation or in the field under its supervision, it should be understood that the office of evangelist does not in any way participate in the government of the calling congregation unless the evangelist is also appointed an elder there.

Although there may be situations in which an evangelist will work under the jurisdiction of a denominational board, his calling consistory should have supervision over him, for he holds an ecclesiastical office.

Proper provisions will have to be made for the support of the evangelist, and the responsibility for that will lie with the calling church.

We propose the name *evangelist* for this office because it is the most obvious choice. The office functions specifically in the area of evangelism, so that the name evangelist carries a meaning descriptive of the office. We are well aware that the name evangelist as used in the contemporary ecclesiastical world also has other connotations, for instance, with respect to mass evangelism, but we do not consider that a weighty objection. The name evangelist has some biblical precedence, though we agree with most commentators that very few specific conclusions can be drawn from that. In any event, we propose the name with the understanding that the church is at liberty to give a new or additional meaning to the name evangelist.

In view of all this, the introduction of the fourth office of evangelist requires the inclusion of a new section in the Church Order, The Evangelists. In order to safeguard the office of evangelist and to assure that only qualified persons will be ordained into it, the church will need to make certain stipulations to guide consistories and other appointing agencies.

Also Article 2 of the Church Order needs some adjustments. It stands to reason that the office of evangelist is to be added to the list of offices. And in harmony with our remarks under VI, C, 3, that the word "instituted" is misleading, we conclude that the text of Article 2 must be brought in line with the thoughts expressed in the Guidelines adopted by the 1973 Synod.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. That synod give the privilege of the floor to the following representatives of the study committee when the report is discussed: the Rev. Howard Spaan, reporter, who will represent the majority position, and the Rev. Tenis VanKooten, chairman, who will represent the minority position.

B. That synod approve the ordination of the layworker in evangelism to a fourth office in the church, that of *evangelist*.

Grounds:

1. For many years the church has recognized the work of the layworker in evangelism as strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry.

2. "Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances" (Guideline 12, Acts of Synod 1973, p. 64).

3. The historic creeds of the Reformation do not bind the church to a specific number of offices.

4. The office is sufficiently distant from the three present offices to warrant a fourth office.

C. That synod authorize the evangelist to administer the sacraments.

Ground: "There is no valid biblical or doctrinal reason why a person whom the church has appointed to bring the Word may not also be appointed to administer the sacrament" (Guideline 8, Acts of Synod 1973, p. 63).

D. That synod make provision for the official recognition of the evangelist in our denominational structure by introducing the following changes in the Church Order:

1. Article 2 presently reads: "The offices instituted by Christ in his church are those of the minister of the Word, the elder, and the deacon. These officers differ from each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor."

Your committee recommends the following revised reading: "In obedience to Christ's command to carry out his work in the world most effectively, the church from the beginning has appointed and ordained some persons to particular ministries. These ministries include the minister of the Word, elder, deacon, and evangelist. These offices differ from one another only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor."

Ground: This brings Article 2 in harmony with the Guidelines.

2. Addenda, numbered D. The Evangelists (under section I, The Offices of the Church).

a. The task of the evangelist is to bring the Gospel and to administer the sacraments in the outreach ministry of the church.

b. Prior to a decision to nominate an evangelist the consistory shall evaluate the prospective candidate in terms of his godliness, humility, spiritual discernment, wisdom, and gifts required by the task and field to which he is called.

c. Ordinarily the evangelist shall have received a satisfactory formal training in these areas: general education, communication, biblical theology, and evangelism.

d. The candidate for the office of evangelist shall submit to an examination by the classis of his calling church.

e. The evangelist shall serve in his office for the duration of the appointment to the specific field to which he was called. To serve another field the qualifications of the evangelist must again be ascertained by his consistory and classis in the light of the requirements of the new field to which he is called.

f. The evangelist does not function as a member of the consistory of his calling church unless he is also called as elder by that consistory with the approbation of the congregation.

g. The calling church shall provide for the proper support of the evangelist.

Ground: The Church Order under "Offices of the Church" contains these divisions: general provisions, the ministers of the Word, and the elders and deacons. Since your committee is recommending a fourth office, this requires a fourth division in this section of the Church Order.

3. We recommend the inclusion of a new statement in Article 74.

a. Each church shall bring the Gospel to unbelievers in its own community. This task shall be sponsored and governed by the consistory. (no change)

b. The consistory may call an evangelist to assist in fulfilling this task more effectively. (new statement)

c. This task may be executed, when conditions warrant, in cooperation with one or more neighboring churches. (no change)

4. We recommend that Articles 88 and 91 include the term *evangelist* in their listings.

E. That synod instruct the Liturgical Committee to draw up a form for ordination for the office of evangelist and a letter of call.

F. That synod consider the mandate given to the committee completed as it relates to the "layworker in evangelism."

Howard B. Spaan, reporter
Jakob H. Kits
Dick Pierik
Peter Van Egmond

REPORT 37

**IMPLICATIONS OF THE GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE
AND ORDINATION AND "LAYWORKERS IN EVANGELISM"****B. Minority Report****I. INTRODUCTION**

Our committee came into being as a result of the decision of the Synod of 1973 on ecclesiastical office and ordination. The committee was mandated to study the implications of the newly adopted guidelines for office and ordination, especially as they relate to the "layworkers in evangelism" (Acts 1973, p. 64, F, 3).

The historical context of the 1973 decision on ecclesiastical office and ordination demanded that priority be given to the longstanding question of "layworkers in evangelism." The committee struggled with this issue and came to the Synod of 1974 with the proposal that "the layworker in evangelism" be ordained as an elder evangelist. However, the Synod of 1974 did not accept this proposal and instead instructed the committee to explore the possibility of ordaining the "layworker in evangelism" to a special (a fourth) office (Acts 1974, p. 75, C, 2).

II. HISTORY (See Section II of Majority Report - WPB)**III. ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT MANDATE**

In response to the above mandate given in 1973, the present committee proposed to the Synod of 1974, "That synod approve the principle idea of ordaining 'layworkers in evangelism' as an elder with the extraordinary task of evangelism" (Acts 1974, p. 573). The expressed purpose of the committee in asking for such approval was that if approval was given to the idea, the committee would then work out the specifics of such an "office" and present these to a future synod for final approval.

In answer to the proposal the Synod of 1974 submitted the following mandate to the committee.

"That synod mandate the committee to study the implications of the **GUIDELINES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE NATURE OF ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE AND ORDINATION**, especially as they relate to ordaining, 'layworkers in evangelism' to a special (a fourth) office, and to report to the Synod of 1975.

Grounds:

a. This was the intent of the mandate of the Synod of 1973 (see observation above).

b. 'From the beginning these particular ministries were functional in character, arising under the guidance of the Spirit in the interest of good order and efficiency in the church, to enable the church to carry out Christ's work in the world most effectively' (Guideline 4 adopted by synod, 1973, Acts 1973, p. 63).

c. 'The Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ in all circumstances' (Guideline 12b adopted by synod 1973, Acts 1973, p. 64).

It is evident from the mandate given and the considerations upon which it was based (See Acts 1975, pp. 72-75) that: (1) synod rejected the "idea" that the "layworker in evangelism" be ordained as an elder with the extraordinary task of evangelism; (2) synod has explicitly stated that the "layworker in evangelism" can (or should) be ordained; (3) synod has decided that ordaining the "layworker in evangelism" to a special (fourth) office is an option with enough validity to merit further study. Thus synod mandated the committee to explore this option and come with a rationale and implications for ordination to such an office.

IV. INTERPRETING THE GUIDELINES FOR OFFICE AND ORDINATION

One of the main thrusts of the report of the committee on "Ecclesiastical Office and Ordination" (Report to the Synod of 1972, and the expanded report in 1973, Acts 73, pp. 635-716) was that the Scriptures do not present an exact pattern for office and ordination for the church. The Scriptures do not furnish a well defined church-organizational structure with reference to office and ordination. Two quotations are pertinent here.

"The study of these Old Testament 'officers' (prophets, priests, and kings) . . . does not offer us a normative pattern for ecclesiastical office and ordination in the church today (Acts 1973, p. 652). These (New Testament) materials contain guiding principles significant for the church of every age. But they do not present a definite church-organizational structure to which the church must remain bound for all time. Neither do they describe the offices of the church with such finality that no changes may be permitted in their number or in their functioning" (Acts 1973, p. 673).

And, concerning Calvin's viewpoint:

"He saw that the offices were not an end in themselves, but a means to the end of the building up of the people of God, 'for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry' (Ephesians 4:12). Calvin therefore allowed for the establishment of what he called extraordinary offices 'as the need of the times demanded'" (Acts 1973, p. 684).

These quotations, and the supporting arguments in the original report, suggest a flexibility with reference to office and ordination.

The Advisory Committee also recognized this flexibility when it stated: "Synod of 1973 endorsed the thrust of this report by adopting 12 statements as 'guidelines for understanding the nature of ecclesiastical office and ordination.'"

These guidelines open in principle the way for returning to the New Testament flexibility as far as office and ordination is concerned. To quote two guidelines:

"9. 'Ordination' should be understood as the appointment or setting apart of certain members of the church for particular ministries that are strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry.

In this sense of appointment or setting apart, ordination has biblical precedent, and is valuable for the good order and well-being of the church (Acts 1973, p. 63).

"12. Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances" (Acts 1973, p. 64; Acts 1974, p. 74).

The guidelines emphasize that there is not an inflexible, rigid, pattern of office found in Scripture, but rather that a flexibility is present which allows for different possibilities as the need should arise in the church.

This flexibility can be seen in two ways: (1) *Creating an entirely new office for a particular service as the need for such a service arises.* (Office is here spoken of as it appears in the Church Order). If such an office (or offices) were created it would mean that one or more offices would be added, which would parallel with the offices of minister, elder, and deacon. (2) *Ordaining one to an already existing office but making certain specifications with regard to the service covered by that office.* The result would not be a new office as under option (1) above. However, you would have a different kind of minister, or a different kind of elder, or a different kind of deacon. The office as such would not be new as in option (1)—no new office would be added in the Church Order. However, there would be a new office in this sense, that the one so ordained could only operate within the specifications laid down. He could only enter and remain in his particular office (service) in terms of the specifications cited in the description of his office (or service). For example, if one were ordained to a certain kind of elder or a certain kind of minister, he could not pass from being one kind to the other except according to the specifications laid down for each kind.

From the report of the "Advisory Committee to the Synod of 1974," from the present mandate to our committee, and in view of the Majority Report of our committee there appears to be movement toward option (1). We agree that option (1) is a possibility. However, we believe that option (2) is both possible and legitimate under the guidelines, and in the case of the "layworker in evangelism" option (2) furnishes the proper solution to the long standing problem of the official position of the "lay-worker in evangelism." We also believe that option (2) may very well prove to be the best course to follow in any future instance of the expansion or of the variation of present ministries in the church.

To demonstrate that option (2) is a viable position under the guidelines, we observe the following:

(1) The guidelines and the supporting arguments emphasize that there is a flexibility with regard to the concept of office and ordination in the Scripture.

(2) That this flexibility applies to both options as cited above, is evident from both the report and the guidelines arising from the report of the Committee on "Ecclesiastical Office and Ordination." The

italicized statement speaks explicitly of both options, i.e. a possible change in the number of offices, and possible changes in the functioning of any particular office.

“The study of these Old Testament ‘officers’ (prophets, priests, and kings) . . . does not offer us a normative pattern for ecclesiastical office and ordination in the church today (Acts 1973, p. 652). These (New Testament) materials contain guiding principles significant for the church of every age. But they do not present a definite church-organizational structure to which the church must remain bound for all time. Neither do they describe the offices of the church with finality that no change may be permitted in *their number or in their functioning*” (Acts 1973, p. 673). (Italics added)

Guideline 12 does not state that the possible adaptations and modifications refer to the number of offices, but rather allows the church to make modifications in a particular existing office.

“Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, *the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances*” (Acts 1973, p. 64). (Italics added)

Synod did circumscribe the implications of all the guidelines, by the adoption of six observations which would serve as the framework in the light of which the guidelines were to be understood and acted upon (Acts 73, p. 62). Observation 6 is particularly pertinent here.

6. These guidelines are intended to offer helpful direction to the churches as they continue to seek practical solutions to the questions pertaining to the status and functions of “layworkers in evangelism” and related questions. *These guidelines do not re-define the basic types of service currently assigned to deacons, elders and minister*; nor do the guidelines now authorize anyone other than ministers to administer the sacraments along with the preaching of the Word. *In keeping with our church polity, such changes may be introduced only by way of revision of the Church Order as decided by synod* (Acts 1973, p. 62.) (First italics added)

Synod here said that “*These guidelines do not re-define the basic types of service currently assigned to deacons, elders and ministers.*” It is here stated that the present offices each have a clearly defined and explicitly stated type or area of service (ministry). The guidelines in and by themselves “do not re-define the basic types of service currently assigned to deacons, elders and ministers.” There is something stable and fixed in the services performed by each of the already existing offices. The guidelines allow for flexibility, but they do not declare that everything is in flux. Therefore the warning word is added that any proposed change or innovation must not violate the polity of the church, and must have the approval of synod.

Although the guidelines allow that the present threefold division of offices found in the Church Order is not necessarily the only proper one, neither do the guidelines declare that the present division is not allow-

able or good. The point that is emphasized is that variations are not only allowable but may be desirable, but only for the purpose that the church shall be the better able to accomplish its total ministry, c.f. especially Guidelines 9 and 12.

The question before the church at this point is: Where should the "layworker in evangelism" be placed in the ecclesiastical framework of the church (i.e. his place in the C.O. and the Confessions) so that the church can best carry out the service expressed in this particular ministry?

V. "LAYWORKER IN EVANGELISM?"—HIS PRESENT FUNCTION AND RELATIONSHIP TO THE CHURCH

If we are to determine the "official status" of the "layworker in evangelism" and where he belongs in the organizational structure of the church, we must know who he is and what he does. The church *de facto* has recognized his presence and his work within the body of the church. The church is not now trying to create something new, but to identify officially someone who for many years has been performing a "particular ministry of the church." The church has treated his place and work as a legitimate and necessary ministry within the church, but has not been able, or willing, to define his official position.

Looking at the "layworker in evangelism" as he appears in the church, we see the following:

A. The "layworker in evangelism" is not ordained to the office of the minister of the Word or to any other office in the church. Yet he serves as a fulltime missionary or evangelist, either in a home mission or in a world mission context. He usually works in a chapel or with a group of believers not yet officially organized as a congregation; or if organized then not yet ready to call a pastor of its own. He may also be working in a world mission or home mission context where he is not directly related to a specific place of worship and service. (The latter is also true of many regularly ordained ministers of the Word.)

Usually, if not always, he performs his work under the jurisdiction of a particular organized church. This jurisdiction may be exercised either directly by the consistory of that church, or indirectly through the agency that represents those who support the evangelist in his work, e.g. a group of churches, a classis, or the entire denomination as represented in one of its mission boards.

B. His task as "layworker in evangelism" is to proclaim the Gospel to all whom he can reach with the message. He not only calls sinners to reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ, but he also nurtures believers to maturity in the faith and in the life of the kingdom of God. He is also called to the service of prayer in behalf of those under his care. Teaching in the faith is another of his chief concerns. This may be carried on in Sunday school classes, pre-confession classes, post confession classes, and in a number of societies, clubs and Bible study groups.

Usually when a small group of believers have been gathered together a "steering committee" is selected, who together with the evangelist shepherds the people of God at that place. This involves counseling them, encouraging and admonishing them, even to the point of initiating the

steps of discipline in accordance with the articles of the Church Order. Of course, such discipline cannot be officially carried out by the "not yet organized church" acting through the "not yet ordained members" of a steering committee who are led by a not ordained "layworker in evangelism." However, the official body which does take action in the matter can only carry out the discipline officially as directed by those who are involved in the situation, viz: the "layworker in evangelism" and the steering committee. It then becomes apparent that the "layworker in evangelism" is already acting in a quasi-official capacity.

It should also be recognized that "the discipline of, and by the church" in the total implications of that concept, refers to the full ministry of the Word as it is brought to bear upon the lives of men. The "layworker in evangelism" operates in the whole length of the process, only he cannot act officially in the final steps, i.e., either in the final official steps of receiving one into the fellowship of the church, or in the final steps of removing someone from the roles of the church. In substance he is active in the full length of the process of discipline, but officially he must be silent since he holds no office.

C. The "layworker in evangelism" is appointed to his task by the church. He is not one who operates on his own, or for a group of like minded people. He is officially appointed by the church either through a consistory, classis, or by synod to do the work of the church.

D. As described above, the task (the ministry or service) of the "layworker in evangelism" is essentially the same as that of the ordained minister of the Word who is working in an organized church as its pastor; and his task is identical to that of the ordained minister of the Word who is working as an evangelist or home missionary. This is evident from Article 11 of the Church Order where the task of the minister of the word is described:

"Article 11.

a. The task of the minister is to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, and catechize the youth in order that the church may be built and unbelievers won for Christ.

Although all ministers share this common task, each shall discharge it in accordance with his particular calling, whether he is a minister in a local congregation or a missionary at home or abroad.

b. The minister, with the elders, shall have supervision over the congregation and his fellow office-bearers, exercising admonition and discipline and seeing to it that everything is done decently and in order. He shall, with the elders, exercise pastoral care over the congregation, and engage in and promote the work of evangelism."

The task of the minister is spoken of in more detail in the "Form for the Ordination (or: Installation) of Ministers of God's Word" (Psalter Hymnal: Doctrinal Standards pp. 101-102). The Form contains an exposition and particularization of what is said about the task of the minister of the Word in the Church Order.

We call attention to the fact that we are referring only to those elements in Article 11 of the Church Order and in the "Form For Ordination of Ministers" that describe the work of the minister of the Word. There are also elements both in Article 11 of the Church Order and the

"Forms" that refer to his official status and the place this has in the exercise of his duties. Two things should be pointed out here: (1) It is exactly in the latter area (i.e. his official status and the place this has in the exercise of his work)—where the problem of the "layworker in evangelism" has focused during all the years. The problem has not been "What is he doing?" The problem has been, "In view of what he is doing, what is his official status." (2) Furthermore, it should be recognized as already cited in B above that in carrying out his task the "layworker in evangelism" could not do his work properly without conducting it at least in a quasi-official manner. That has been the anomaly of the "layworker in evangelism's" position in the church. He has been doing the "official work" of the church "unofficially."

The difficulty has been that in the case of the "layworker in evangelism" the church has been separating office from work. The guidelines point out that it is the appointment to a particular service or ministry that makes the office (See especially Guideline 9.) The office that the work of the "layworker in evangelism" points to is the office of the minister of the Word.

E. However, there are a number of differences between the regular minister of the Word and the layworker. He differs from the regular minister in the following.

1. He neither holds any office in the church nor is he officially recognized by the denomination;
2. he may not administer the sacraments nor pronounce the greeting and benediction at the worship services;
3. his pulpit ministry is officially referred to as exhorting and not preaching;
4. he is limited in the area of his operation—he serves only in the specific area to which he has been appointed;
5. he is not bound to his work for life by any formal arrangement with the church—he serves when, and if, and as long as a church or agency engages him for that service and he is pleased to engage in that service;
6. he cannot serve an organized church as its pastor;
7. generally he is not examined in any systematic dialogue by any ecclesiastical body as to his scriptural knowledge and doctrinal position;
8. he has not received the prescribed formal training for the ministry of the Word.

VI. THE "LAYWORKER IN EVANGELISM"—HIS PROPER POSITION IN THE LIGHT OF THE GUIDELINES

- A. The Guidelines on the position of the "Layworker in Evangelism."
1. Guidelines 1 and 2 declare that "office" in the Greek New Testament is *DIAKONIA* or service and that in this basic sense all believers share in the comprehensive ministry of the Church of Christ in the world (Acts 1973, p. 63).
 2. Guidelines 4, 5 and 6 declare that the church has always appointed to particular ministries (or service); and that these particular ministries are functional in character, carrying out Christ's work in the world. The particular ministries are distinguished in function, i.e. in

the kind of service each performs. "The particular ministries are characterized by service, rather than by status, dominance or privilege" (Acts 1973, p. 63).

3. As applied to a specific "office" or ministry in the Church, the matter is summarized in Guideline 9:

"Ordination should be understood as the appointment or setting apart of certain members of the church for particular ministries that are strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry. In this sense of appointment or setting apart, ordination has biblical precedent, and is valuable for the good order and well-being of the church" (Acts 1973, p. 63).

and Guideline 12:

"Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances" (Acts 1973, p. 64).

4. The following points, as gleaned from the guidelines—including the observations—are pertinent for the present problem.

a. The basic point made throughout is that "ordination or office" consists in a ministry or service performed by someone for the church. "Office or Ordination" derives from the function, or the service performed. (See Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 9.)

b. Particular ministries refer to particular functions. The particular ministries derive from the various functions. (See Guidelines 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12.)

c. Persons are appointed to these particular ministries by the church. They do not take it upon themselves. This is clearly implied by the guidelines (e.g. Guidelines 7, 8, 9, 12). It is explicitly stated in the observations (cf. Observations 4, 5).

d. It is the church which judges that the particular ministries are "strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry" (Guidelines 9, Acts 1973, p. 63).

e. Guideline 8 declares that there is no reason "why a person whom the church has appointed to bring the Word may not also be appointed to administer the sacraments." In fact, the practice of the church as reflected in the Church Order and the Confessions has always been that the ministry of the Word and the sacraments belong together.

f. Persons appointed to a particular ministry act with the authority of Christ, and for Christ. (cf. Guideline 5, and Observations 4, 5, and 6.)

B. The "layworker in evangelism" should be *ordained* to an office in the church.

One of the cardinal points made in the guidelines is that "ordination or office" consists in a ministry or service performed by someone for the church. "Office or Ordination" derives from the function or the service performed (Guidelines 1, 2, 3, 9). Particular ministries refer to particular functions (Guidelines 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12). The church appoints to these

particular ministries because it judges them to be "strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry" (Guideline 9).

Concerning the "layworker in evangelism" it should be observed: (1) that he performs a particular ministry for the church; (2) that he was appointed to this ministry by the church; (3) that his particular ministry has been judged to be "strategic for the accomplishment of the church's total ministry."

The "layworker in evangelism" in the church has not been one who acted on his own. He has been appointed to his particular ministry by the church—either by a single consistory, by a group of churches, by a classis, or upon occasion by the entire denomination as represented in one of its mission boards. That his work has been judged by the church to be strategic is evident from the fact that he has continued to be appointed by the churches over a period of more than fifty years. During all those years the appointments have continued in spite of the fact that the official place of the "layworker in evangelism" has constantly been the object of critical scrutiny, and questioning debate. During all this debate the "layworker in evangelism" has continued to perform a particular service for the church.

The church has been remiss during all these years when it assigned persons to a particular service (a full time ministry of bringing the Gospel) and did not recognize such persons to be "in office" in the church. The church has been separating function (or service) from office.

C. The "layworker in evangelism" should be ordained as a *minister of the Word*.

If being appointed to a particular service (or ministry) by the church means that the "layworker in evangelism" should be ordained to an office in the church, the next question is to what office he is to be ordained? The answer to this question lies in the particular ministry to which he has been assigned. It is the particular ministry that makes the particular office. Function and office belong together. At this point we should take another look at the service to which the "layworker in evangelism" is appointed, for that service will point to the particular office to which he should be ordained.

The "layworker in evangelism" serves as a full-time missionary or evangelist, either in a home mission or in a world mission context. He usually works at a chapel or with a group of believers not yet officially organized as a congregation; or if organized, then not yet ready to call a pastor of its own. He may also be working in a world mission or home mission context, where he is not directly related to a specific place of worship and service. At this point it should be noted that the above is also true of many regularly ordained ministers of the Word, who work either in a home mission or a world mission context.

The task of the "layworker in evangelism" is to proclaim the Gospel to all whom he can reach with the message. He not only calls sinners to reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ but he also nurtures believers to maturity in the faith and in the life of the kingdom of God. He is also called to the service of prayer in behalf of those under his care. Teaching in the faith is another of his chief concerns. This may be carried on in Sunday school classes, pre-confession classes, post con-

fession classes, and in a number of societies, clubs and Bible study groups.

Usually when a small group of believers has been gathered together, a "steering committee" is selected, who together with the evangelist shepherds the people of God at that place. This involves counseling them, encouraging and admonishing them, even to the point of initiating the steps of discipline in accordance with the articles of the Church Order. Of course, such discipline cannot be officially carried out by the "not yet organized church" acting through the "not yet ordained members" of a steering committee who are led by a not ordained "layworker in evangelism." However, the official body which does take action in the matter can only carry out the discipline officially as directed by those who are involved in the situation, viz: the "layworker in evangelism" and the steering committee. It becomes apparent that the "layworker in evangelism" is already acting in a quasi-official capacity.

It should also be recognized that "the discipline of, and by the church" in the total implication of that concept, refers to the full ministry of the Word as it is brought to bear upon the lives of men. The "layworker in evangelism" operates in the whole length of the process, only he cannot act officially in the final steps, i.e. either in the final official steps of receiving one into the fellowship of the church, or in the final steps of removing someone from the roles of the church. In substance he is active in the full length of the process of discipline, but officially he must be silent, since he holds no office.

As described above, the task (the ministry or service) of the "layworker in evangelism" is essentially the same as that of the ordained minister of the Word who is working in an organized church as its pastor: and his task is identical to that of the ordained minister of the Word who is working as an evangelist or home missionary. This is evident from Article 11 of the Church Order where the task of the minister of the Word is described.

"Article 11.

a. The task of the minister is to preach the Word, administer the sacraments, conduct public worship services, and catechize the youth in order that the church may be built and unbelievers won for Christ. *Although all ministers share this common task, each shall discharge it in accordance with his particular calling, whether he is a minister in a local congregation or a missionary at home or abroad.*" (Italics added)

Referring to Article 11a above, it should be observed that the Church Order distinguishes (without citing any particulars) between the minister of the Word who serves a "local congregation" and the minister who serves as a "missionary at home or abroad." The Church Order mentions the "particular calling" of each but looks upon both of them as ministers of the Word. It has never been a question in the church whether the regular missionary was to be called to the office of minister of the Word or not. He has always been so considered. Neither has this been the question in the long discussion concerning the "layworker in evangelism." The question has always been, and still is, his official status, not his work. The work of the "layworker in evangelism" coincides with that of the regularly ordained minister of the Word.

The task of the regular minister of the Word is spoken of in more detail in the "Form for the 'Ordination' (or: Installation) of Ministers of God's Word," (Psalter Hymnal: Doctrinal Standards, pp. 101-102). What is found in the "Forms" is an exposition and particularization of what is said about the task of the minister of the Word in the Church Order.

We also call attention to the fact that we are referring only to those elements in Article 11 of the Church Order and in the "Form For Ordination of Ministers" that describe the work of the minister of the Word. There are also elements both in Article 11 of the Church Order and the "forms" that refer to his official status and the place this has in the exercise of his duties. Three things should be pointed out here: (1) it is exactly in the latter area (i.e. his official status and the place this has in the exercise of his work) where the problem of the "layworker in evangelism" has focused during all the years. The problem has not been, "What is he doing?" The problem has been, "In view of what he is doing, what is his official status?" (2) It should be recognized that in carrying out his task the "layworker in evangelism" could not do his work properly without conducting it at best in a quasi-official manner. That has been the anomaly of the "layworker in evangelism's" position in the church. He has been doing the "official work" of the church "unofficially." (3) One of the chief points of contention with regard to the work of the "layworker in evangelism" has been that he could not administer the sacraments. Now Guideline 8 states: "There is no valid biblical or doctrinal reason why a person whom the church has appointed to bring the Word may not also be appointed to administer the sacraments." This guideline would indicate that the "layworker in evangelism" who has been appointed by the church to preach the Gospel should also perform the official task of administering the sacraments.

The difficulty has been that in the case of the "layworker in evangelism" the church has been separating office from work. The guidelines point out that it is the appointment to a particular service or ministry that makes the office. (See especially Guideline 9.) The office that the work of the "layworker in evangelism" points to is the minister of the Word.

D. The "layworker in evangelism" should be ordained as a minister of the Word—*Evangelist*—i.e. he should be ordained to be a particular kind of minister of the Word.

1. The name "Evangelist" declares most precisely what he is doing and what he is.

a. An "evangelist" is one who announces the "Good News", i.e. the Gospel. The word, the name, and the function are biblical. Ephesians 4:11 designates the "evangelist" as a particular class or ministry. There were those who performed this function and had the name. However, the Apostles also performed the function (Acts 8:25; 14:7). Timothy was charged to "do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5). The work to which Timothy is called is described in verses 1-5. The job description for Timothy coincides quite well with that of the "layworker in evangelism." Phillip, one

of the original seven deacons, was also called an "evangelist" (Acts 21:8).

b. Evangelist (evangelism) refers to a service, a function, and appropriately describes the task of the "layworker in evangelism."

c. It appears that the church has always understood the matter as described in "a" and "b" above, since the person involved has always been known as the "layworker in *evangelism*." Evangelist and evangelism has always been the name and the function which described him and his work.

2. There are differences which warrant that the "layworker in evangelism" be ordained to be a special kind of minister of the Word.

a. His work is *always* on the frontier of the church. He is *always* and *only* engaged as an evangelist. He is to be ordained only in the specific locale of his service. His ordination is specific in its reference, he cannot exercise his office beyond the boundaries of the particular service to which he has been ordained. Unless by special provision, he cannot serve an organized church as its pastor. However, in the area of his service he performs all the functions of a minister of the Word—including the administration of the sacraments (cf. Guideline 8).

b. The duration of his particular service (ordination) is also specific. He serves when, and if, and as long as a church engages him for that service and he is pleased to engage in that service. This is the way it has always been with the "layworker in evangelism," and this would remain so if he should be ordained as a "Minister of the Word—Evangelist."

c. The precise formal training required of a minister of the Word is not required for ordination as a "Minister of the Word—Evangelist," although he may have received some specialized training in theology and evangelism. However, he will have to pass an examination which must demonstrate his competence to perform the particular service to which he has been appointed.

3. The guidelines and their supporting arguments emphasize that there is a flexibility with regard to the concept of office and ordination which also applies to variations within the same office.

a. "The study of these Old Testament 'officers'" (prophets, priests, and kings) "does not offer us a normative pattern for ecclesiastical office and ordination in the church today" (Acts 1973, p. 652). These (New Testament) "materials contain guiding principles significant for the church of every age. But they do not present a definitive church-organizational structure to which the church must remain bound for all time. Neither do they describe the offices of the church with finality that no changes may be permitted *in their number or in their functioning*" (Acts 1973, p. 673, italics added).

b. Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, *the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify*

its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances" (Acts 1973, p. 64, italics added).

E. The "Minister of the Word—Evangelist" is not to be seen as a limited ordination in the sense of ordination to a lesser office than "Minister of the Word."

It should be recognized that every ordination is limited. Each refers to a particular service and each is limited to that service. That is true of ministers, elders, and deacons. The church has always insisted—and the guidelines reiterate (guideline 5)—that there is no hierarchy of offices. All are equally "ordained." If one contends that one who is ordained to a minister of the Word—evangelist is thereby ordained to a lesser edition of ordination than the minister of the Word, then he is assuming that the ordination of the minister of the Word is *the ordination*. In his eyes any ordination to that office which would circumscribe the particular service of the office would be less than an ordination to the minister of the Word.

It may be observed at this point that a legitimate concern to maintain an educated ministry, has played a definite role in the long search to find an official place for the "layworker in evangelism." There have always been those in the church from the very beginning of the search, who have seen that his task suggested that he belonged in the area of the minister of the Word. The following proposals have been made by them: limited ordination, ordain as an evangelist, license as evangelist, ordain under Article 7 of the Church Order. These proposals were made over a period of about thirty years. All were rejected because such a solution would impinge on the office of minister of the Word, i.e. an educated ministry.

VII. THE "LAYWORKER IN EVANGELISM"—OUR RESPONSE TO A NEW (FOURTH) OFFICE

The Guidelines say very clearly that it is function (particular service) which makes an office. It would follow that the only valid ground for ordaining the "layworker in evangelism" to an entirely different office would be that he was performing a distinct work, differing from that performed by those in any other office. How would one define the work of the "layworker in evangelism" and demonstrate that it was different from that of the minister of the Word, when Article 11a of the Church Order places both the work of the home and world missionary in the area of the minister of the Word? Although there is a reference to the world missionary in the synodical regulations regarding Article 13 of the Church Order, it is simply a reference to the fact that his ministerial credentials must reside with a local church at home. It is very clear that the world and home missionary is not considered in extraordinary ministerial service because neither the classis nor the synodical deputies are asked to decide whether his task is "spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling."

The church has never said, or even suggested that the missionary is engaged in an extraordinary ministerial task. In fact the church declares explicitly that the missionary does the ordinary work of the Minister of

the Word (Article 11 a of the Church Order). To try to differentiate this task and work of the minister of the Word (missionary) and the "layworker in evangelism" is either an exercise in words or pertains to matters other than the work as such. If it were possible to walk along with these two for a whole year, one would find that both are doing *exactly the same thing*. If the work of "layworker in evangelism" is considered so distinct from that of the minister of the Word as to warrant an entirely new office, then the minister of the Word who performs missionary work must also be placed in the same new office because the work of the two is identical.

If the church is going to make a special (fourth) office for the "layworker in evangelism," whose work has always heretofore been judged to belong to that of the minister of the Word (Cf. Article 11a of the Church Order), then the most elementary consistency would demand that all those ministers of the Word now engaged in an "extraordinary ministerial task" should be ordained to a special office or offices, fitting the work he does.

Considering the task of the "layworker in evangelism" and comparing his work with the task of all those operating under the provisions of Article 13 of the Church Order, then the "layworker in evangelism" has the least reason (according to Article 11a of the Church Order, he has no reason at all) to be placed in another office from that of the minister of the Word. If those working under Article 13 are left in the office of minister of the Word and the "layworker in evangelism" is placed in a special office, then we would have a new office for the one doing the *ordinary* work of the minister of the Word, and those performing "*extraordinary* ministerial work" would be in the office of the minister of the Word.

That the work of the missionary is in no way extraordinary with relation to the ministerial task is also the judgment of Martin Monsma. In writing on Article 13 of the Church Order, he says:

"The task of the ministry is set forth in Article 11 of the Church Order. It aims to indicate the normal, the regular, task and duty of the minister of the Gospel. *This regular task pertains either to the work in a congregation or on a mission field, at home or abroad.* Article 13 concerns itself with ministers who perform extraordinary ministerial tasks" (*The New Revised Church Order Commentary*, Martin Monsma, p. 61, italics added).

It is evident that Monsma judges that the missionary is engaged in the regular ministerial task, and that he comes under Article 11 of the Church Order.

The only real solution is that the "layworker in evangelism" be ordained as a *different kind of minister of the Word*. And that is *exactly what he is*. His function, his task, his work, his service, (and that is what makes office) is that of the minister of the Word. If the "layworker in evangelism" is placed in a separate office then consistency demands that the missionary also be in that office and that all "ministers of the Word in extraordinary ministerial service" be placed in new and separate offices according to their differing functions. This would result in a proliferation of office in the church and would necessitate a revision of

offices of the Church Order may not be the only possible division one the very structure of the Church Order.

The three fold division of service that forms the foundation of the three offices of the Church Order may not be the only possible division one might legitimately have and be faithful to Scripture. But the fact is that this is the one we have, and it by no means violates Scripture—it has much scriptural warrant. What the church is now discovering is not that there are entirely new services that were never thought of before. Did Paul perhaps already serve both as a campus pastor (Acts 17:16ff) and as an industrial chaplain (Acts 18:1-30; II Thess. 3:7-9)? What the church is discovering is that there is need for variations and particularizations of service already assigned to these offices because these highly particularized services have become full time.

It is the position of this committee that there is no warrant to make a new office for the “layworker in evangelism.” We would urge that synod consider carefully the implications of launching out in the direction of a new office for one who has always been doing the ordinary work of the minister of the Word. Furthermore, it is well to consider whether the entire spectrum of different kinds of services and particular services that the present situation calls for cannot most properly be met by different kinds of ministers, different kinds of elders, and different kinds of deacons. For example, there could be the need for a counseling elder or deacon who would work abroad, of whom a more than average knowledge of Scripture would be demanded. The church would not make new offices for each, but would designate them as different kinds of ministers, elders, or deacons. And that is really what they would be. They would be specializing in a particular service that was already defined as belonging to one of the existing offices. These kinds of ministers, elders, or deacons would be described, and this description would fit into the Church Order under the respective office. These could be added and dropped as the need arose. This could be done without changing the basic structure of the Church Order.

We are not proposing the above as the reason for not placing the “layworker in evangelism” in a new office. *We believe he belongs, by virtue of his work, in the office of the minister of the Word.* However, if he is placed in an entirely new office, the door has been completely closed to the suggested possibility of different kinds of ministers, elders and deacons, unless one is completely inconsistent in dealing with offices in the Church Order. *Furthermore, what does “extraordinary ministerial task” mean and how will it be defined if the church places the “layworker in evangelism” in an entirely new office?*

VIII. THE “MINISTER OF THE WORD—EVANGELIST”—THE PROCEDURE FOR ENTERING AND FUNCTIONING IN HIS OFFICE

1. Prior to the decision to nominate an evangelist the consistory shall evaluate the prospective candidate as to his godliness, humility, spiritual discernment, wisdom and his knowledge of the Word and his ability to present the Word in the context of the particular service to which he is to be appointed.

2. Although specific formal training is not a requisite to the office, such training is highly desirable. In any case, the evangelist must demonstrate his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Confessional Standards of the church, and his ability to communicate these. He must have an acceptable knowledge of the principles and practices of evangelism.

To determine whether the candidate possesses this competence, he shall submit to an examination by the classis of the calling church. The importance of this examination is indicated by the following considerations:

- a. The church has had no previous formal contact with the candidate as it has had with the candidates for the ministry who graduate from the Seminary.
- b. This person is to be working on the foundations of a new congregation of the church, both in the lives of those coming into the church, and the church itself. It is exactly on the work done in this area that the apostle Paul presents so many and precise instructions, e.g. what he writes in I and II Timothy and Titus.
- c. It must always be seen that the service of this office is crucial in the life of the church.

The duration of the examination is to be determined by classis—what it judges to be sufficient on the competence of the candidate. That examination shall include the following.

- (1) Knowledge of Scripture
- (2) English exegesis of the Old and New Testament
- (3) Doctrines of the Church (Systematic Theology)
- (4) Standards of the Church
- (5) Church History
- (6) Church Order
- (7) Missions (Principles, Methods, Objectives)
- (8) Practica
- (9) He shall present two sermons: one in person, either to classis, or audited by a delegation from classis, and one in writing.

3. The evangelist shall serve in his office for the duration of the appointment to the specific field to which he has been called. To serve another field the qualifications of the evangelist shall again be ascertained by the consistory and the classis in the light of the new field to which he is being called.

4. In his office the evangelist shall exercise all the functions of a minister of the Word—evangelist—including the administration of the sacraments (Guideline 8). However, he only exercises his office in the particular service and field to which he has been called.

5. Unless by special provision, he cannot serve an organized church. This special provision would be that his consistory must demonstrate to the classis where he serves that a certain organized church would be served best by a minister of the Word—evangelist. This special provision in every instance would be decided by classis and subject to review by classis every two years.

6. The evangelist shall function as a member of the consistory of the calling church only in so far as the consistory (and classis when classis

is directly involved in that function) judges that such is essential to the performance of his task. However, in any case he only exercises his office within the boundaries of the church where he holds office, e.g. he could never be delegated to synod as a minister of the Word—evangelist.

7. While he is functioning as a minister of the Word—evangelist, he shall not be ordained as a minister of the Word, elder, or deacon.

8. A consistory can appoint an evangelist for *one* provisional period of two years. During that time he cannot be ordained, nor does he exercise any official functions of the office. The consistory does not need the approval of classis for such a provisional appointment. However, classis must be appraised of the fact.

9. The calling church shall provide for the proper support of the evangelist.

IX. THE “MINISTER OF THE WORD—EVANGELIST,” IN RELATION TO THE CHURCH ORDER AND THE CONFESSIONS:

If the “layworker in evangelism” is ordained as a minister of the Word—evangelist, this will entail no change in the Church Order nor in the confessions on the point of the number of offices in the church. There would continue to be three offices, ministers, elders, and deacons. We do not see it as our responsibility to defend the three-fold division. We only recognize the division that is present, take cognizance of the service ascribed to each office, and observe that the services assigned to the “layworker in evangelism” coincide with those assigned to the minister of the Word. But since there are variations in operation between the two, the “layworker in evangelism” would be considered to be a certain kind of minister of the Word. All synodical regulations with regard to him would appear under Article 11 of the Church Order where the task of the minister of the Word is described. The minister of the Word—evangelist would cooperate as circumscribed in these regulations pertaining to him. He would operate as a certain kind of minister of the Word. It is also understood that he could not automatically become a minister of the Word, except according to the provisions of the Church Order.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. That Synod ordain the “layworker in evangelism” as a minister of the Word—evangelist.

1. That he be *ordained* to an office in the church.

Grounds:

a. “Ordination is . . . understood as the appointment or setting apart of certain members of the church for particular ministries that are strategic for the accomplishment of the church’s total ministry” (Guideline 9).

b. The work done by the “layworker in evangelism” constitutes such a particular ministry.

c. He has been appointed to this particular ministry by the church over a period of many years.

2. That he be ordained as a *minister of the Word*:

Ground: His task coincides with that of the minister of the Word

as acknowledged and described in Article 11a of the Church Order, as described in the "Form For Ordination of Ministers of God's Word," and as that task has always been understood and described by the church.

3. That he be ordained as a minister of the Word—*Evangelist*. (His office in terms of the Church Order would be "Minister of the Word—Evangelist." The name which would distinguish him would be Evangelist.)

Grounds:

- a. The name "Evangelist" declares most precisely what he is and what he is doing. The church has always believed that the title "Evangelist" and the term "Evangelist" have appropriately described the functions of the "layworker in evangelism."
 - b. There are differences which warrant that the "layworker in evangelism" be ordained to be a specific kind of minister of the Word: his work is only in the frontier area of the church, his ordination is only to be for a limited time, and he does not have a full seminary training.
 - c. The guidelines and their supporting arguments emphasize that there is a flexibility with regard to the concept of office and ordination which also applies to variations within the same office (cf. Guideline 12).
- B. That synod make provision for the official recognition and place of the Minister of the Word—Evangelist in the ecclesiastical structure of the church by adopting the following as a set of regulations to be placed under Article 11 of the Church Order.

Regulations concerning the minister of the Word—Evangelist.

1. His office in terms of the Church Order is "Minister of the Word—Regulations concerning the minister of the Word—evangelist.
2. Prior to the decision to nominate an evangelist the consistory shall evaluate the prospective candidate as to his godliness, humility, spiritual discernment, wisdom and his knowledge of the Word and his ability to present the Word in the context of the particular service to which he is to be appointed.
3. Although specific formal training is not a requisite to the office, such training is highly desirable. In any case, the evangelist must demonstrate his knowledge of the Scriptures and the Confessional Standards of the church, and his ability to communicate these. He must have an acceptable knowledge of the principles and practices of evangelism.

To demonstrate whether the candidate possesses this competence, he shall submit to an examination by the classis of the calling church. The duration of the examination is to be determined by classis—what it judges to be sufficient to judge on the competence of the candidate. The examination shall include the following:

- (1) Knowledge of Scripture
- (2) English exegesis of the Old and New Testament
- (3) Doctrines of the Church (Systematic Theology)

- (4) Standards of the Church
 - (5) Church History
 - (6) Church Order
 - (7) Missions (Principles, Methods, Objectives)
 - (8) Practica
 - (9) He shall present two sermons: one in person, either to Classis or audited by a delegation from Classis; and one in writing.
4. The evangelist shall serve in his office for the duration of the appointment to the specific field to which he has been called. To serve another field the qualifications of the evangelist shall again be ascertained by the consistory and the classis in the light of the new field to which he is being called.
 5. In his office the evangelist shall exercise all the functions of a minister of the Word—evangelist—including the administration of the sacraments (Guideline 9). However, he only exercises his office in the particular services and field to which he has been called.
 6. Unless by special provision, he cannot serve an organized church. This special provision would be that his consistory must demonstrate to the classis where he serves that a certain organized church would be served best by a minister of the Word—evangelist. This special provision in every instance would be decided by classis and subject to review by classis every two years.
 7. The evangelist shall function as a member of the consistory of the calling church only in so far as the consistory (and classis when classis is directly involved in that function) judges that such is essential to the performance of his task. However, in any case he only exercises his office within the boundaries of the church where he holds office, e.g. he could never be delegated to synod as a minister of the Word—Evangelist.
 8. While he is functioning as a minister of the Word—evangelist, he shall not be ordained as a minister of the Word, elder, or deacon.
 9. A consistory can appoint an evangelist for *one* provisional period of two years. During that time he cannot be ordained, nor does he exercise any official function of the office. The consistory does not need the approval of classis for such a provisional appointment. However, classis must be appraised of the fact.
 10. The calling church shall provide for the proper support of the evangelist.
- C. That synod decide upon two matters with regard to the evangelist.
1. Whether he shall be inducted into office with the use of the present form for the ordination of minister—with the appropriate modifications—or whether an entirely new form shall be drawn up. (It is our opinion that the former is acceptable at least while the latter is being considered.)
 2. Whether he shall be included in a pension plan, and if so, how the plan would operate.
- D. That synod study the guidelines and their implications along with Article 13 of the Church Order and its implications, observing how they relate to each other.

Grounds:

1. The guidelines for office and ordination adopted by the Synod of 1973 describe one's office in terms of his function. This raises questions as to the office for those who have entered what has been called "extraordinary ministerial tasks."
 2. The guidelines for office and ordination adopted by the Synod of 1973 indicate that for a task to merit ordination to an office in the church it must be "strategic for the accomplishment of the *church's* total ministry." In the past an increasing variety of tasks have been judged to be "spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling." But to what degree are these tasks a ministry *of the church* and *for the church*? Are some of these tasks in the area of the kingdom rather than in the area of the church?
 3. A constantly recurring question confronts the classes and the synodical deputies as to what constitutes an "extraordinary ministerial task." One example: Overture 25 from Classis Alberta South to the Synod of 1971 (Acts 1971, p. 43) asking for clarification on that point. The overture was referred to the study committee on "Ecclesiastical Office and Ordination." Upon the recommendation of this committee the Synod of 1973 decided "to return Overture 25 from the Acts of 1971 (p. 643) to Alberta South, asking that classis to reconsider it in the light of the guidelines given above" (Acts 1973, p. 64). It should be observed that it is synod who has the guidelines. Synod should say how these guidelines bear upon the interpretation of Article 13, which was already a problem before the guidelines were in existence.
- E. That Tennis C. Van Kooten, reporter for the minority, be permitted to represent the minority before synod and its advisory committee. (Tennis C. Van Kooten is also chairman of study committee.) That the same privilege be accorded to Howard Spaan, reporter for the majority.

Committee on "Implications of Guidelines
for Office and Ordination"—

Minority Report

Tennis C. Van Kooten, chairman, reporter

Walter H. Ackerman

Stanley De Vries

REPORT 38

REVISION OF THE FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION

A. Majority Report

The committee was called into being by the Synod of 1974; its mandate appears on pages 104 and 105 of the Acts of Synod 1974:

"a. To review the history, nature and functioning of the Form of Subscription, especially in the Christian Reformed Church.

"b. To study the decisions of the Synod of 1973, the overtures and communications that occasioned these decisions and the reactions to these decisions that have been received by the synod in 1974.

"c. To correspond with other churches (denominations) which use the same historic Form of Subscription as to developments in this regard.

"d. To solicit comments, responses and suggestions from all consistories and office bearers or others who are required to sign this form (e.g., teachers at Calvin College, etc).

"e. To advise the synod and make recommendations for whatever action its study and investigation would indicate."

In our report that follows, we address ourselves to each of these matters under separate heads, but in a different — in our judgment more appropriate — order (namely, b, d, c, a, e).

I. THE DECISION OF THE SYNOD OF 1973 AND THE RELATED DOCUMENTS BEFORE THE SYNODS OF 1973 AND 1974

(Section b of our Mandate)

The history of the revision of the Form of Subscription as we are concerned with it in this report begins with two overtures submitted to the Synod of 1973. Overture 18 was submitted by Dr. Harry Boer. His overture had been submitted to Classis Chicago South, but did not receive its endorsement. In this overture he asked synod "to undertake the writing of a new instrument to replace the present form which

"1. will be theologically and practically congruous with the Reformed conception of the church,

"2. will make the obligation of the church to the office bearer as explicit as that of the office bearer to the church,

"3. will reflect this mutuality in a new name for the Form of Subscription, such as The Ordination Covenant,

"4. will recognize the fallible human aspect of the creeds and qualify the statement that the creeds 'do fully agree with the Word of God,'

"5. will include the provision that the submission of a gravamen carries with it both the right of the proposer to defend his view publicly and the right of the church as a whole to reflect openly on its scriptural validity or non-validity,

"6. will provide that no synod shall accept a gravamen unless it has first been acted upon by the lower assemblies, namely, by the consistory according to its competence, of which the classis shall judge: and by the classis in terms of *examination* and *judgment*,

"7. will require consistories, classes and synods to act on any gravamen that may be submitted to them with all deliberate speed" (Acts 1973, pp. 730, 731).

Dr. Boer also refers to a series of nine articles on this subject written by him and published in *The Reformed Journal* from October 1970 to August 1971.

Classis Chicago South did not adopt this overture, but addressed an overture of its own to synod (Overture 7, pp. 720, 721). In this overture classis expressed sympathy with some of Dr. Boer's contentions, especially the argument that the present form does not sufficiently involve all the members of the church. Attaching its overture especially to point 5 of Dr. Boer's request, it submitted a proposal that synod add a sentence to the present form, reading as follows:

"By submitting such sentiments to the consistory for examination we shall obtain the right to discuss and defend them publicly, except in our preaching or official teaching, and the church may openly reflect upon them until the way of appeal is exhausted by synod making its judgment concerning them."

Two grounds, reflecting some of Dr. Boer's arguments as they bear on this specific point, were adduced by Classis Chicago South for making their proposed change.

In addition to these two overtures, the Synod of 1973 had before it a communication from the Consistory of First Denver endorsing the request of Dr. Boer (Communication 25).

The report of the advisory committee, and the decisions of synod based on its recommendations, is recorded in Article 89, Acts of Synod 1973, pages 96-99. Following a brief survey of the background, the committee explored four possible courses of action. Taking no action and retaining the present form found no favor. The committee considered keeping the form intact and advising adoption of a synodical declaration that would explain and clarify some of the problem areas in the present form, such as the meaning of "until," and the specifying of procedure in presenting a gravamen; this, too, it rejected as unsatisfactory. Thirdly, it considered writing a new form. In this connection it discussed three of Dr. Boer's contentions about the present form: namely, that it is hierarchical, that the church should make explicit commitments, as well as expecting the office bearer to do so, and that the form elevates the creeds to equality with Scripture, contrary to Article 7 of the Belgic Confession.

Having eliminated these courses of action, the advisory committee chose the way suggested by the overture from Classis Chicago South. It proposed an amendment to add the following sentence to the form:

"After revealing such sentiments to the consistory, classis, or synod for examination we shall have freedom to discuss and defend these sentiments publicly, except in our preaching or official teach-

ing, always with a spirit of meekness and love, and we understand that the church as the body of believers may openly reflect upon them until the matter has been conclusively adjudicated by consistory, classis or synod."

Minor amendments to make the incorporation of this sentence fit more smoothly into the form were also adopted by synod. The complete form as amended appears on page 99 of the Acts of Synod 1973. Upon recommendation of the advisory committee synod also decided to "delay final ratification of these changes in the Form of Subscription until Synod of 1974" (Acts, Art. 89, D, 5, p. 99).

The Synod of 1974 received many reactions from consistories and classes to the decision of the Synod of 1973. The report of the advisory committee to the Synod of 1974 lists twenty-one documents: eight overtures from classes and consistories, eight communications from consistories, four informative communications from consistories and one from an individual (Acts, Art. 82, II, pp. 101-105). "Of the total of twenty-one communications received, sixteen request that synod do not ratify the decision of 1973, four advise ratification, two of these also suggesting further amendments, one suggests withholding action and one to postpone action" (Acts 1974, p. 103). Synod's advisory committee mentioned four possible courses of action open to the Synod of 1974:

1. to ratify the changes;
2. not to ratify the decisions of 1973;
3. to ratify the decisions and make some additional amendments as suggested in some communications;
4. to postpone action for more study by the churches and/or a study committee.

It advised against ratification and called instead for a more thorough study of the issues involved, listing seventeen questions that "are raised in the literature before synod in 1973 and in the reactions before synod in 1974, or surfaced in our discussions as an advisory committee" (Acts 1974, pp. 102, 103).

The Synod of 1974 adopted the advice of the advisory committee to postpone action on the ratification of the action of the Synod of 1973, and also accepted its recommendation to appoint a committee with the mandate stated in the beginning of this report. The grounds given and adopted were:

- "(1) Some of the reactions to the new version of the form show that there are several questions and problem areas that need to be studied in the interest of understanding the implications of the action of the Synod in 1973.
- "(2) As indicated in the grounds under 1 above (postpone action on ratifying), the revision of this important historic document should be done more responsibly than is possible under the circumstances of a synodical gathering in piece-meal fashion.
- "(3) The pressures for amendment of the Form of Subscription are not unique to the Christian Reformed Church. Other churches face similar problems."

Section b of our mandate instructs us to study the decisions of the Synod of 1973, the overtures and communications that occasioned these decisions and the reactions to these decisions that have been received by the Synod of 1974. This we as committee have done, but since the material contained in these documents will be discussed in our fourth section (section a of mandate), we do not think it necessary to go into detail at this juncture in our report.

We call attention, however, to the unique status of the decisions of the Synod of 1973, as compared with all the other documents before the Synods of 1973, 1974, and also before synod at this time. The amendment of the form by which a sentence was added and two other additions were made to the form, was *adopted* by the Synod of 1973, subject to *ratification* by the Synod of 1974. The latter synod, however, withheld ratification and called for an in-depth study of the many issues involved in the formulation and functioning of the Form of Subscription. This means that the amendments approved in 1973 have not gone into effect. But it raises the question as to the present status of these amendments. It may be argued that, having failed of ratification by the Synod of 1974, they no longer have any official status, and so come to the Synod of 1976 as merely one of the documents to be taken into consideration. On the other hand, we have judged that the action of the Synod of 1973 should not be dismissed so lightly, but should be duly recognized as the judgment of a *synod*, to which final approval or disapproval should be given. We shall, accordingly, make specific recommendations concerning these provisionally adopted amendments. At the same time, we judge that the action of Synod of 1974, and the scope of our mandate opens the way for additional considerations.

It might be argued that the action of the Synod of 1973 in not adopting Dr. Boer's overture and in taking over that of Classis Chicago South (with some change in language) means that Dr. Boer's overture has been disposed of and should not be considered in this report. However, section b of our mandate expressly mentions the overtures (plural) that occasioned the decision of 1973, and therefore we have addressed ourselves to the arguments of Dr. Boer and the historical review found in his articles.

From the summary quoted from the report of the advisory committee to the Synod of 1974 it is evident that by far the majority of the reactions to the decisions of 1973 were negative. Most of the classes and consistories expressed themselves as being satisfied with the form as it is, and as being fearful that the adopted amendments would open the door to confusion and license. It would appear that some of the fears expressed are due to the failure to take into account the fact that the freedom of debate and examination would be allowed only *after* a gravamen had been submitted. Although involving more opportunity for expression of opinion, the amendment does not open the door to indiscriminate attacks on the confessions. At the same time, the documents, both for and against the amendment, show that many questions are not answered by the amendment, and that there were many areas that needed further study.

II. RESPONSES FROM CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS (Section d of our Mandate)

Section d of our mandate is "to solicit comments, responses and suggestions from all consistories and office bearers or others who are required to sign this form (e.g., teachers at Calvin College, etc.)." This was done by placing notices in *The Banner* and *De Wachter* and sending letters to all consistories, missionaries serving under the Home and Foreign Mission Boards and the staffs of Calvin College and Seminary. In these letters we asked not merely for a reaction for or against the amendments of 1973, but for reasons for the positions taken and also for opinions on the Form of Subscription not covered by the amendment.

One hundred and sixty one (161) replies have been received, eighteen (18) from individuals and the rest from consistories. We are thankful for the time and effort put in by many consistories and individuals. Some of the letters were very brief and merely stated a position for or against the action; others went into the matter at considerable length. This, from the nature of the case, is especially true of those who are advocating even more extensive and radical changes than adopted by the Synod of 1973.

It is not always possible to classify every reply as for or against the amendment, since several take a qualified position, and a couple of consistories informed us that they could not reach an informed decision. With the understanding that the lines cannot always be clearly drawn, we classify ten of the replies from individuals as in favor of change in the form and eight against any change; one hundred and ten consistories expressed themselves against change and thirty-three in favor of the amendment or even more change. Thus there are a total of forty-three replies that favor revision of the form while one hundred eighteen would keep it as it is, although a few of the latter could accept minor editorial changes, or a new translation in more up to date language.

The arguments used by those who oppose change as adopted in 1973 repeat for the most part the arguments used in the documents before the Synod of 1974. Most of these arguments can be found in the overtures as printed in the Acts of Synod 1974. Several point out that the freedom sought by the amendment already is provided by the form and past practice, and that the amendment is therefore unnecessary. Several of the responses favoring change indicate that their concern with the present form is not so much with freedom to discuss issues submitted by way of gravamen as with the nature of subscription to the confessions in the statement that all the points of doctrine contained in the creeds "do fully agree with the Word of God." Several agree with Dr. Boer that a completely new and different kind of form is needed to do justice to our relationship to the confessions in our present situation. A couple of letters raise the issue of creedal subscription *per se*, and question the basic position underlying the understanding of truth and "agreement" with Scripture expressed in the Form of Subscription.

How are we to evaluate this response from churches and individuals? The question naturally arises how representative 161 responses from

688 churches and 1,065 ministers, plus several college teachers and lay missionaries who have signed the form, really are. Limited to consistories 143 out of 688 is a little more than one fifth. Is it legitimate to conclude that the proportion of about three to one against the amendment holds for all the churches of the denomination? Is the failure of so many to respond due to indifference? Are there perhaps many consistories and individuals for whom the whole matter of subscription is merely a customary formality that has lost its significance? But if the responses are an adequate cross section and sample as used in opinion polls, then the overwhelming majority are against revision of the form by a margin of approximately three to one.

Since the material submitted in the responses received concerns understanding of the nature and function of the form, we defer further discussion of the content of these communications to a later part of the body of this report.

III. CORRESPONDENCE WITH OTHER REFORMED DENOMINATIONS (Section c of our Mandate)

In our mandate (section c) we were asked to correspond with other Reformed denominations that have historically used the Form of Subscription of Dordt as to development in their use of it. We wrote letters to the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland, the Reformed Churches of Australia, the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, and the Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa. In addition we obtained a copy of the form in use in the Reformed Church in America, and also studied forms in use in the United Presbyterian Church.

The Reformed Churches in Australia use the form as adopted by the Synod of Dordt with some modifications to accommodate the use of the Westminster Confession as a standard in addition to the three we have. The Gereformeerde Kerk in South Africa uses the traditional form, but in addition has a provision in their Church Order for procedure in submitting a gravamen, one which permits public discussion. The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken use the old forms for ministers, elders and deacons and also have one for professors of theology which is substantially the same as that for ministers.

From the Reformed Churches in New Zealand we received copies of reports submitted to their synods and also decisions of these synods about subscription to the creeds and revision of the Form of Subscription. Like the churches in Australia, they have modified the form by adding the Westminster Confession of Faith to the list of confessions subscribed to. An overture from one of the presbyteries to the Synod of 1974 proposed changing the form to read: "declare by this our subscription that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort, and the system of doctrine taught in the Westminster Confession do fully agree with the Word of God." No action was taken on this overture, but a special committee was appointed to study the Form of Subscription and report to the next synod. Thus these

churches are very much interested in what is happening with the Form of Subscription in our church.

Of special interest in this connection is a report by a committee to the New Zealand Synod of 1971 on "The Binding of the Confessions." This committee was appointed in connection with problems that arose in adding the Westminster Confession. The Synod of 1971 adopted the following statements as to what is involved in subscribing to the creeds. Since the matters dealt with in this report are frequently referred to in the documents before synod and in the responses from consistories and individuals, we reproduce these statements in full.

"1. The binding by the Form of Subscription: Synod (of 1971 of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand) adopted the recommendations that synod declare that subscription by office bearers is understood in the following way:

"a. That the person making subscription subscribes to *all* the doctrines set forth in the confessions, as being doctrines which are the teaching of the Word of God;

"b. that the subscriber so subscribes to all these doctrines, be they understood in the eyes of men as being MAJOR or MINOR doctrines of the Christian faith, without any reservation on his part, and that he confesses these doctrines to be his own understanding of the teaching of the Word of God, desires to maintain such, and rejects all other teaching which would contradict the same;

"c. that the subscriber DOES NOT by his subscription declare that the statements of these doctrines are formulated in the best manner, or with the use of the best words, or that the Confessional Standards of our denomination cover ALL the teaching of the Scriptures on the matters confessed, or that every teaching of Scripture is dealt with by our Confessional Standards, or that the Confessional Standards of our denomination refute all the heresies that now exist;

"d. that only the doctrines intentionally conveyed binding, and not such allusions, or incidental remarks, or propositions which can be derived from the confessions, are binding. Nevertheless, no one is free ultimately to decide for himself or for the church what is or what is not a doctrine contained in the standards. If such a question shall arise, the Form of Subscription itself specifies quite clearly that it is the decision of the court of the church that shall be sought, reached and acquiesced in, in every case."

The Actuaris (Stated Clerk) of the Gereformeerde Kerken (hereafter GKN) in the Netherlands sent us a copy of a report to the Synod of 1971 on "Binding Aan De Belijdenis" and references to decisions taken concerning a new Form of Subscription adopted by that synod, and recorded in the Acta. Section 6 of this long report about subscription to the confessions deals specifically with the Form of Subscription. As a result of this report the GKN decided to discontinue use of the traditional form and substituted a new one which embodies the guidelines suggested in this report. There had been previous study committees and proposed revisions. In this work, the well-known Dr. A. D. R. Polman took a prominent part. Reporter for the committee "Binding Aan De Belijde-

nis" was Dr. H. B. Weijland, who, together with Dr. Wind, represented the GKN at our synod in 1974, and sat in on most of the sessions of the advisory committee when it dealt with the question of the Form of Subscription.

At the risk of doing less than justice to section 6 of this report we venture the following brief summary of its discussion of the Form of Subscription. There are seven divisions of this section (6.1 - 6.7). Division 6.1 stresses that it is of the very essence of a Reformed church that there be a binding subscription to a church confession. Division 6.2 points out that recent developments within the GKN raise the question of whether the confessions, with their prevailing historical orientation, still function in the church. A growing independentism endangers the very life of the GKN and the church must address itself to this in a pastoral way.

Division 6.3 mentions objections that have been voiced against the current Form of Subscription, a somewhat modified version of the form adopted by the Synod of Dordt. From its origin in the days of the Synod of Dordt, 1618-'19, the form had a strongly juridical character and was intended to be "watertight" in checking inroads of error. The concern of the subscription to the standards was to regulate preaching and catechism teaching. Historically this strictness has resulted in making the gravamen procedure almost impossibly difficult. Three main difficulties with the form are spelled out:

- a. It seems to put Scripture, the ecumenical creeds and the Reformed Confessions too much on a par, and in practice this has sometimes been extended to later decisions of synods.
- b. It doesn't distinguish between ministers in the pastorate and theologians in the schools.
- c. Its sanctions seems to be too absolute; there is only the alternative of suspension and deposition. After discussion of these points in detail the conclusion is drawn that a way must be found to retain a more meaningful binding (*gebondenheid*) and to allow greater freedom.

Division 6.4 discusses and rejects "het voorstel van Polman," a proposed new form suggested by Dr. Polman, as having many commendable features, but going too far in its description of what is involved in subscription to the confessions.

Division 6.5 makes a new attempt at guidelines for a new form. Such a form must incorporate three things: obedience to the Scriptures as final rule of faith and practice, binding to the ecumenical symbols, standing for the confession of the church as stated in the three forms of unity. In accord with these requirements, the report advocates that, instead of the juridical-literal direction of the old form, the church should seek a more dynamic kind of subscription.

In Division 6.6 four points are developed briefly:

- a. The brotherly-official relationship (*verkeer*) between office bearers;
- b. need for self-denial, i.e., a readiness, in the interest of maintaining the "*koinonia*," not to publish one's ideas,
- c. "nuancing" in official censure (some less drastic measures of

church censure should be open in dealing with those who have problems with the confessions”.

In conclusion (division 6.7), the committee suggests adoption of a new form incorporating the changes they have discussed.

A new committee was appointed which drew up such a form while the synod was in session and this was adopted. We give it in translation as made for the advisory committee of Synod 1974 by Dr. Philip Holtrop and approved by Dr. Weijland as accurate:

“We, ministers of the Word, belonging to the Classis of the Reformed churches, declare by our subscription that we acknowledge the Holy Scripture as the Word of God, the authoritative revelation of God’s gospel in Jesus Christ, and therefore, as the only rule of faith and life.

“We promise, in the unity of true faith, to hold resolutely to the church’s confession, which the fathers brought to expression in the three ecumenical creeds and in the three formulas of unity. Therefore we shall oppose and help to avert all that contradicts this confession.

“We declare ourselves ready, if we come to a sentiment departing from that confession, compelled by brotherly love, to lay this matter for examination before the ecclesiastical assembly (council, classis or synod).

“At the same time we recognize the right of the ecclesiastical assembly (council, classis or synod), if it feels there is sufficient reason, to ask for a further explanation of our sentiments.

“And if the ecclesiastical assembly adjudges, in regard to any point of doctrine, that we contradict the Holy Scripture in a clear and impermissible manner, and therefore violate the unity of the faith, we promise to submit to her judgment and to conduct ourselves in accord with the stipulations ascertained by synod in that regard.

Signed.....”

We have reported the action of the GKN in some detail, not only as a matter of information that will be of interest to all who are interested in the matter before us, but because this report wrestles with many of the same problems brought up in the overture of Dr. Boer and mentioned in several of the communications before synod and in the responses we as committee received. Consequently, in our concluding session we must address ourselves to many of the issues dealt with in the study report to the synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken.

Finally, we refer to the form in use in the Reformed Church in America (RCA). The original Form of Dort was used by the RCA from its founding in 1928 until 1916, when a major revision was adopted. To the two forms adopted by the Synod of Dort, one for ministers and one for professors, a third, abbreviated form for candidates for the ministry was added, and this is still required today. Elders and deacons are not required to sign any of these forms. Incidentally, this is also true of the GKN as far as a synodically approved form is concerned. (See M. Monma, *The Revised Church Order Commentary*, p. 41.)

In 1916 the form was revised in two significant respects:

1. Instead of asserting that the Confessions "do fully agree with the Word of God," the first sentence was revised to read: "declare that we believe the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus as revealed in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as truly set forth in the standards of the Reformed Church in America."

2. The promise to teach and defend in the second paragraph was augmented by adding, "we will set forth the Gospel as God may give us grace in our life and conversation without contradicting the same by word or example."

A third revision was made in 1971 by eliminating the provision for automatic suspension in case of failure to submit to ecclesiastical judgment. The resulting form currently in use in the RCA for ministers reads as follows:

"We, the undersigned, in becoming ministers of the Word of God within the bounds of the Classis of _____, sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare that we believe the gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ as revealed in the Old and New Testaments, and that we reject all errors which are contrary thereto. We accept the standards of the Reformed Church in America as historic and faithful witnesses to the Word of God. We promise that we will exert ourselves to keep the church faithful to the gospel and free from errors.

"Should we ever have any doubt as to this gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, we will neither propose nor teach the same, but will first communicate our views to the classis to which we belong, and will submit ourselves to its council and decision.

"We promise to be always ready to comply with a request from the consistory or classis for an explanation of our views concerning the gospel of our understanding concerning any article of our standards.

"We further promise that we will with all diligence and faithfulness teach the gospel without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by preaching or writing, and will set forth the gospel as God may give us grace in all of life by word and example."

The revisions of 1971 were suggested by a report of the Theological Commission to the RCA Synod. This report advised adoption of two guidelines as to the relationship of the Scriptures and the confessions. It first points out that traditionally the confessions were regarded as standards to distinguish the Reformed Church from other bodies and hence provided a basis for discipline. Secondly, the report stresses the need of subordinating the confessions to the Scriptures and not allowing them to take a place almost equal to the Word of God. These guidelines are reflected in the reference to the standards as "historic and faithful witnesses to the Word of God." Thus the Form of Subscription used by the RCA shows its historical origin in resemblance to the Form of Dort, but the revisions made have changed its character as a form of subscription to the standards rather extensively.

IV. HISTORY, NATURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION

(Section a of our Mandate)

At this place of our report we address ourselves to section a of our mandate: "To review the history, nature and functioning of the Form of Subscription, especially in the Christian Reformed Church."

A. History.

The origin of our present form goes back to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands before the Synod of Dordt. In the increasing tensions that developed in those churches because of the rise of Arminianism, coupled with critical situations in the political struggles of the times, several classes and particular synods began to require subscription to the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism by the ministers and professors. "But as early as 1608, one of the classis (Alkmaar) judged that the mere signing of one's name to the catechism and confession was insufficient. This classis drafted a form which contained a declaration of full agreement with the catechism and confession and a promise that the subscriber would maintain the doctrines therein contained, and that he openly rejected all doctrines opposed to the catechism and confession. Other classes and particular synods modelled forms of subscription after this original one of Classis Alkmaar. Finally, the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) wrote the form as it has come down to us almost unchanged. This synod, as might be expected, required agreement now not only with the catechism and confession, but also with the doctrinal interpretation and pronouncements as contained in the five articles against the Arminians, known as the Canons of Dort" (M. Monsma, *The Revised Church Order Commentary*, p. 38).

The form remained in force in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands of almost two hundred years. In 1816, following the difficult years of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars, the monarchy was restored and the king reorganized the state church. In doing so he also substituted a new form of subscription for that of Dort. Instead of subscribing to the confessions as "fully agreeing with the Word of God" (*in alles met Gods Woord overeenkomen*), the new form called for subscription to the confessions "in so far as they agreed with God's Word" (*als zij met Gods Woord overeenkomen*). The Dutch could be read either as meaning that the subscriber accepted the doctrines of the confessions *because* (Latin, *quia*), or *in so far as* (Latin, *quatenus*) they agreed with the Word of God. The ambiguity was deliberate so as to allow for greater freedom on the part of subscribers.

The history of the struggles in the Reformed Churches from 1827, when the first test case of an outspokenly liberal minister signing the form occurred, until 1880, when developments issued in the Doleantie under Dr. A. Kuyper and other leaders, is traced in a little book by Dr. D. Nauta, *De Verbindende Kracht Van De Belijdenisschriften, Een Verhandeling Over De Formulierkwestie In De Negentiende Eeuw In Nederland*. In his concluding chapter, Professor Nauta states that there is no aspect of the many questions that can be raised about the nature and function of the Form of Subscription that was not rather thoroughly de-

bated during this period. For the Christian Reformed Church the main interest in this struggle lies in the fact that both the Afscheiding of 1834 and the Doleantie of 1886 returned to the old form of Dort, understood in a strict confessional-juridical sense.

From its beginning our denomination adopted the Form of Dort. This was done in conscious continuity with the Afscheiding and with full awareness of the struggles that had been and were going on in The Netherlands. During the period of growth by migration from The Netherlands in the last two decades of the 19th and the first decade of the 20th centuries, our church received many leaders and members from the Gereformeerde Kerken who had gone through the struggle leading to the Doleantie under Kuyper. Historically, therefore, it may be said that the adoption and use of the traditional Form of Subscription has been an integral part of the Christian Reformed Church's history as an orthodox, conservative, confessional church. (See Dr. John H. Kromminga, *The Christian Reformed Church*, Chapter III, pp. 63-90.)

B. *The Functioning of the Form in the Christian Reformed Church.*

The mandate speaks of the "functioning," and not of the "function" of the form. The overtures before the Synod of 1973 and the grounds of synod's decisions, as found in the report of the advisory committee, are based on the contention that the Form of Subscription has not functioned as well as it should have. Necessarily involved in such a study and judgment, of course, is an understanding of what the nature and function of the form should be. As indicated above, a brief review of its history shows that the form was intended to be a deterrent to deviation from the confessions of the church. It originated in an effort to keep the church free from errors, specifically those of Arminianism as condemned by the Synod of Dort. It might be described as a dike to protect the territory of the church from the floods of false teaching that threaten it. It is more than that however, in that it calls upon those who subscribe to teach and preach the truth of the Scriptures as interpreted by the confessions. Thus it has a positive aspect also. But as the form itself puts it, its main concern is "to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine."

This function can be approached from two aspects, namely, from the standpoint of the individual subscribing to the creeds via the form, and from that of the church. In his review of the functioning of the form, Dr. Kromminga emphasizes the latter, mentioning only one instance of the submission of a gravamen, but going into details regarding three prominent doctrinal controversies in the history of our church. In these cases, especially the last paragraph of the form was operative in that Bulterma, Janssen, Hoeksema and Danhof were challenged by the assemblies of the church and required to give explanations of their sentiments and teachings on points of doctrine in which they were suspected of deviating from the confessions. That is an important function of the form, and we will look at it more closely later in our study of the nature of the form.

In his series of articles in *The Reformed Journal*, referred to in his overture (articles in which he laid the groundwork for his overture by

reviewing the way the form has functioned in the Christian Reformed Church) Dr. Harry Boer interested himself in another aspect of the form. His emphasis is on that part of the form which makes room for the signer to express difficulties and different sentiments by bringing them to the attention of the church assemblies. Although it need not always do so (see below), this can result in a request for revision of the confessions, the process that has come to be known as presentation of a gravamen. Because his study of the functioning of the form in this respect has had much to do with the presentation of his overture and with subsequent actions by synod, we must address ourselves to it in some detail.

In his review of the history of the so-called Boersma "gravamen" (1952-1961), Dr. Boer represents the church as taking a very negative and even hostile attitude toward anyone who has the temerity to suggest need for creedal revision. Does a more sympathetic evaluation of the facts confirm this picture? This is not the time and place for an extensive study of all relevant items, but we call attention to the following:

1. Wise by hindsight, Classis Wisconsin called the attention of the Synod of 1961 to the fact that procedurally the overture of the Calvin consistory, bringing Dr. Boersma's difficulties with the Confession of Faith to the attention of Synod in 1952, was not in good order. The *Church Order* in Article 28b provides that a major assembly shall deal only with matters that could not be finished in the minor assemblies. Had the Synod of 1952 desired to reject the Boersma "gravamen," it would have had very good technical reasons for doing so. But it appointed a study committee as requested. The Synod of 1961, however, was correct in rejecting the overture of Classis Wisconsin to declare the gravamen out of order at that time in view of the fact that the Synod of 1952 had undertaken consideration of it and synods subsequent to it had continued that consideration. After nine years of study synod owed Dr. Boersma an answer.
2. That the Synod of 1952 was not guilty of a negative and hierarchical spirit appears further from the fact that Dr. Boersma himself was appointed as one member of a study committee of three. Thus he was given every opportunity to argue his case.
3. The long delay caused by the actions of 1954 and 1956 referring the proposed changes in the confession (suggested in the report of the study committee to the Synod of 1954) to "sister churches" is regrettable, but it nevertheless shows how seriously the matter was taken by the synods. The procedural impasse arising between the synods and the study committees resulted in part from synod's taking the very submission of a gravamen proposing changes in the confession too seriously, namely, by assuming that this was sufficient reason to ask other churches holding the confession to evaluate such changes. The study committees correctly felt that they were not warranted in approaching other churches with less than at least a tentative decision of one of our synods as to the changes it wanted to make. The significance of this referral is that synod realized that the Belgic Confession is a historical and ecumenical document and as such ought to be revised only in cooperation with all the churches that share it with us.

Though the delay was unfortunate, it is surely unwarranted to ascribe it to a desire on the part of synod to dodge responsibility.

4. The seriousness with which synods took this case is shown also by the fact that twice, in 1956 and 1960, they instructed study committees to consult the consistories. Surely, on the basis of our church polity, this is anything but hierarchical. Synod was sensitive to what the churches felt about the proposed changes. As far as we know, there is no evidence of any threats of discipline, or muzzling of discussion, in the consideration by consistories and classes. As cited by Dr. Boer, a large minority of consistories and classes expressed themselves in accord with the gravamen in whole or in part. It is highly unlikely that they came to their conclusions in a vacuum as far as the interest of many members is concerned.

5. The charge is made that the items in the gravamen were not examined and adjudicated. While one may deplore that Synod 1961 did not give grounds for its decision, the fact is that this decision was the climax of long discussion. It must be seen in the context of study committee reports submitted not only to the Synod of 1961, but also those submitted to previous synods. The fact that one does not agree with the final decision does not mean that judgment was not made after due consideration! Unhappily the *form* of synod's final response to Dr. Boersma is in itself obscure. It, no doubt, would have been better had the synod made explicit its endorsement of the argumentation of the Minority Report, the recommendations of which it adopted. It would have done better still to have shown the implications of that argumentation for dealing with the matters raised by the gravamen. Even so, a sympathetic reading of the record makes tolerably clear what those implications are, as is evident from the fact that the church's assemblies have consistently been applying them in accepting without prejudice candidates for the ministry who have voiced difficulty with matters in the creeds, such as those raised by Dr. Boersma.

The considerations above lead us to conclude that the history of the Boersma gravamen does not justify the disparaging and negative judgment of the functioning of the Form of Subscription so often echoed in several of the documents before synod. We reject as too harsh the conclusion that "the essential and long range meaning of the 1961 decision with respect to the Boersma gravamen is that it constitutes a legal and moral breach of contract on the part of the church as party of the first part with all its office bearers as party of the second part" (The Reformed Journal, Dec. 1970, p. 11).

Another instance in the history of the Christian Reformed Church in which a "gravamen" was submitted is that of Professor D. H. Kromminga to the Synods of 1945, 1946 and 1947. This is also referred to in Dr. Boer's articles as a case of the malfunctioning of the form. This is not the time and place to perform a complete post-mortem of the "Kromminga case," but since it does illustrate some important aspects of the functioning of the form in actual practice, we must make a few comments.

1. It is frequently said in the documents before us that there is a contradiction between the first and third paragraphs of the form. How, it is asked, can one sign the form subscribing to the confessions as "fully agreeing" with the Word of God and still reserve the right to make possible future differing sentiments known to the church? Prof. Kromminga's example is a good illustration of how this can happen. In the letter to the Synod of 1945 he traces the development of his study of the millennium. Though he had long held a belief differing from most Reformed scholars, he had felt there was no conflict with the confessions, until he discovered such a conflict in a statement in Article 37. In his own words "It occurred to me to go back beyond the decision of the Synod of 1918 in the Maranatha case and to look into the question how my views compare with Article 37 of the Belgic Confession itself. I then discovered the difficulty which I herewith lay before your reverend body" (Acts 1945, pp. 337, 338). He then submitted his document, calling his problem to synod's attention directly since he was a professor at Calvin Seminary. This does not at all mean that up to this time he had signed the form with mental reservations; far from it, in fact, as his later communications clearly indicate.

2. Prof. Kromminga took the Form of Subscription very seriously as a safeguard against indiscriminate and free attacks on the confessions of the church. When the study committee appointed by the Synod of 1945 recommended that the professor be allowed to publish his views hypothetically, he demurred very strenuously, urging that this would open the door to all kinds of attacks on the creeds as long as they were presented in tentative proposals. Referring to the history of the revision of Article 36, and citing several authorities, the committee argued that in that case there had been freedom of discussion. It is interesting to note that Prof. Kromminga did not disapprove of such freedom *after* a gravamen had been submitted. The problem in his case was the status of his request, which he considered not a gravamen, but a request for study and evaluation of his views. The significance of this exchange is, first, that the committee gives clear testimony to the fact that free discussion was permitted of gravamina submitted in the history of the revision of Article 36, and, second, that even Prof. Kromminga implies that such discussion should be allowed once a gravamen has been officially submitted. In other words, this throws considerable light on how the "until" in the third paragraph of the form was understood, both by the committee and Prof. Kromminga.

3. A careful reading of the record of the appeals of Prof. Kromminga and the way the synods dealt with them will show that this was a very complex case. The appellant himself indicated in his letter to the Publication Committee that he did not expect a quick solution (Acts 1947, p. 231). This letter illustrates that objection to what seems a simple statement in the confession may involve far-reaching implications. The same point is made in some detail by the study committee report on *Binding Aan De Belijdenis* to the Synod of the

Gereformeerde Kerken in 1971. The history of revision of Article 36 also illustrates the fact that any change, even that of simply deleting a sentence or phrase, often raises more problems than it solves.

4. Finally, the decision of the Synod of 1947 to drop the matter in view of the demise of Prof. Kromminga has been severely criticized as a dereliction of duty. Aside from the fact that Prof. Kromminga himself said, "I am fully aware of the fact that I stand pretty well alone with my peculiar views in this field," (Acts 1946, p. 256) the Form of Subscription is a personal document. Paragraph three of the form is not primarily intended as an instrument to accomplish creedal revision (see below), but as an instrument for adjudicating personal difficulties with the confessions and for keeping the individual subscriber in right relationship with the church. In view of this, the death of the appellant was correctly considered the end of his case.

Summing up our comments on the Kromminga "gravamen" case, we conclude that although there, no doubt, were unfortunate instances of lack of clarity in some of the decisions of the synod, and perhaps even some procedural bungling, the fault lay not in the Form of Subscription, but, as several communications have pointed out, in the way the synods have implemented it. Nowhere in his communications as recorded in the Acts of Synod does Prof. Kromminga find fault with the form as being an inadequate instrument in accomplishing what he wanted done.

Concluding our view of the functioning of the form, we make a brief comment on the revision of Article 36 of the Confession of Faith. This is the one instance in the history of the Christian Reformed Church in which a gravamen asking for change in the creeds was successful. As mentioned above, this history illustrates that there was room for freedom of discussion on this very important matter. It is also an illustration of the difficulty in making really satisfying changes in the confessions. Beginning in the Netherlands with a gravamen presented in 1898, and the adoption of a revision of Article 36 by a synod in 1905, this matter came to the attention of our synod. A footnote to the article was adopted in 1910, but this was not considered satisfactory, and after lengthy study our present revision was adopted in 1958 (see footnote, *Psalter Hymnal*, p. 19). We have only one comment on this process: since no persons were involved in a disciplinary way, and since, at least in our denomination, it did not arise from the presentation of "difficulties and different sentiments" on the part of an individual office bearer, the slowness of the revision process cannot be ascribed to deficiencies in the Form of Subscription. On the other hand, the way the matter was freely debated shows that the process of confessional revision can be carried out in a context of free and open discussion. The implication of this may be that even in the case of a gravamen submitted by an individual, consideration of it need not be pursued in the tightly confining way in which some would interpret the Form of Subscription.

C. *The Nature of the Form of Subscription*

We come now to our consideration of the third element under this point of our mandate. We feel we can best discuss this by way of a

brief commentary on the form. Lest we make this report unduly long, we will try to limit ourselves, even at the risk of not being as thorough as the weight of the subject matter might demand. Our remarks are motivated not only by our study as committee, but especially by comments and suggestions made in the documents before the Synods of 1973 and 1974 and in the responses from the churches and individuals received in response to our questionnaire.

In our discussion of the form we employ the following outline, which we do not claim includes all possible subdivisions, but does indicate the four main areas of concern. The Form of Subscription is an official ecclesiastical instrument adopted by the church to safeguard the faithfulness of its office bearers to the confessions of the church in their preaching and teaching. In this instrument the church asks its office bearers to do four things:

1. To declare that their faith is in accord with the faith of the church as it confesses the truth in its confessions. This is the meaning of the first paragraph: "We do hereby sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this our subscription that we heartily believe and are persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine contained in the confession and Catechism of the Reformed Churches, together with the explanation of some points of the aforesaid doctrine made by the National Synod of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, do fully agree with the Word of God."

2. To promise a. (positively) to teach and defend this doctrine; and b. (negative), to reject, refute and contradict all errors militating against this doctrine. This is stated as follows: "We promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same by our public preaching or writing. We declare, moreover, that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine and particularly those which were condemned by the above mentioned synod, but that we are disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors."

3. To follow the prescribed procedure in submitting "difficulties and different sentiments" to the judgment of the church. This takes the form of an additional promise: "And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis, or synod, that the same may there be examined, being ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of the consistory, classis or synod, under penalty, in case of refusal, of being by that very fact suspended from our office."

4. To agree (promise) to submit to the examination of the church when suspected or accused of error, with reservation of the right of appeal: "And further, if at any time the consistory, classis or synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, may deem it proper to require of us a further

explanation of our sentiments respecting any particular article of the Confession of Faith, the Catechism, or explanation of the National Synod, we do hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under penalty above mentioned, reserving to ourselves, however, the right of appeal in case we should believe ourselves aggrieved by the sentence of the consistory, or the classis; and until a decision is made upon such an appeal, we will assuaise in the determination and judgment already passed."

D. *The Subscription*

1. "We, the undersigned, Professors of the Christian Reformed Church, Ministers of the Gospel, Elders and Deacons of the Christian Reformed congregation of _____, Classis of _____"

a. Notice the plural, although each office bearer signs the form individually. This is significant in that being an office bearer in the church involves being a member of a consistory, classis or synod. Subscribers sign as members of a community engaged, each in its own way, in a common work and dedicated to a common cause.

b. "Professors" has reference to the teachers of theology in the church's theological seminary (although it has also been our policy that members of the staff of Calvin College are asked to sign an adapted version of the form). As ordained ministers the professors are also (associate) members of a consistory and may have advisory vote at classis meetings, if they wish to attend. There may well be a question as to whether this form is the most appropriate formulary of subscription for unordained professors in a college. Of more importance is the question whether there ought not be a special form for professors of Theology. This is the case in the Netherlands (GKN) and in the Reformed Church (RCA). The main difference in the RCA form seems to be that professors are to go directly to synod and are under the direct supervision of synod in case of disciplinary action.

Some of the documents we received from the churches and individuals suggest that because of the nature of their task, which calls them to engage in a critical, scientific pursuit of new light from the Scriptures, professors should have more "room" for discussions mutually than the present form seems to allow. This is also touched upon by the report to the GKN referred to above. It has also figured in our discussion as committee.

c. Elders and deacons also sign the form. This is not the case in some of the other denominations consulted, notably the GKN and the RCA. Our Church Order calls for it in Article 5, which replaced Articles 53 and 54 of the old Church Order adopted in 1914. Article 54 dates from the Synod of Dort, although the Reformed Churches the Netherlands leave the implementation of it to the classes. As Monsma and Van Dellen suggest (*Church Order Commentary*, 1941 edition, pp. 225, 226), our present form, though adapted to this use, is not really suitable to signature by elders and deacons. The propriety and meaningfulness of such subscription is also questioned by Dr. Boer in one of his articles and mentioned in some of the communications we received.

d. The most important element in this part of the form is, of course, the subscription involving a declaration that the subscribers in good conscience believe and are persuaded that all articles and points of doctrine in the confessions of the church "do fully agree with the Word of God." How is this to be understood? What does it involve as to the relationship between Scripture and the creeds? Does this not really require an impossible commitment, since no one can *fully know* all that the Word of God teaches, and also that in actual practice many who subscribe are insufficiently informed as to the teaching of either the Bible or the confessions? These and similar questions surface again and again in the documents before us.

It has been asserted that this paragraph equates Scripture and the confessions. The advisory committee of the Synod of 1973 says: "The present form makes an implicit distinction, however, between the Word of God and agreement with the doctrinal standards. The phrase 'do fully agree with the Word of God' must be read in the light of Article VII of the Belgic Confession: 'Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, *of equal value* (italics by committee) with these divine Scriptures.'" By implication the Scriptures were regarded by the authors of the form (Synod of Dort) as the standard of faith or truth with which the confessions are to agree, and in the belief of the subscriber, do in fact agree. The advisory committee also asserted "that provision is made in the Form of Subscription for revising the creeds" (but see below), which is obviously out of order if they are judged to be as infallible as the Bible.

The debate about the relationship of Scripture and the confession is not new. As we indicated in our historical review, it ran the gamut of all possible interpretations in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands during the period from 1827 to 1880. Fully conscious of the alternatives, the founding fathers in the *Afscheiding* chose for a strict interpretation of such subscription, as was also the case in 1886 in the Doleantie. In 1861 our church decided that "The formulas are to be unconditionally subscribed by ministers, elders, deacons, and teachers" (Minutes, April 5, 1861, reported by J. L. Schaver, *Christian Reformed Church Order*, 1941 edition, p. 38).

Although the argumentation of the Minority Report to the Synod of 1961 was not officially accepted by synod as its own, it may be implied that it played a fundamental role in the decision. That report argued that "the demand for incidental corrections in the confessions suggests a too literalistic approach to the confessions. It presupposes that at present we can no longer endorse this confession whole heartedly. This presupposition . . . is contrary to fact, and this approach contrary to the real genius of the confession." It also states, "a historical-textual approach to the confession will provide satisfactory answers to the objections raised." Assuming that the Synod of 1961 was strongly influenced by this argumentation, it appears that by synodical acknowledgment an "unconditional subscription" to the confessions does not bind the subscriber to every incidental statement of

our confessions; it binds him rather to the articles and points of doctrine set forth in the confessions. In this connection we again call attention to the four points adopted by the Synod of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, quoted on page 8 above.

Then there is the question whether the phrase "do fully agree with the Word of God" in the Form of Subscription binds the theologian to work only with the basic categories of theological thought that played a dominant role in the formulation of the faith as set forth in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort. Your committee acknowledges that with respect to this question the church is confronted with problems of great moment, touching on the very heart of the faith it confesses and the Gospel it believes and proclaims. It has become increasingly recognized that the early post-Reformation confessions in their attempt to set forth the faith of the churches employed many of the philosophical categories current in their day or deeply embedded in the various theological traditions to which the Reformation itself fell heir. Careful distinctions must be made, therefore, between the faith that is confessed and the particular categories that are put under tribute to help the church formulate its faith. It is one of the major tasks of theology to continually and critically examine the basic categories employed by the church in confessing its faith and proclaiming the Gospel.

We judge, therefore, that the Form of Subscription does not intend to canonize theological categories employed in the formulation of the faith in the three Forms of Unity, nor does it restrict subscribing theologians to theologizing within the framework of *these* categories. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that any distinction between the *form* (the categories) and the *substance* of the confessions is an extremely difficult one. It calls for the most careful discrimination. However, even preaching involves a continuing effort on the part of ministers of the Word to communicate the message of the Scriptures in categories that are both faithful to the Gospel and present it in the thought forms and idioms of the day. If preaching is so occupied, how much more theology?

The above comments are not intended to be a complete elucidation of all that is involved in subscription to the confessional standards, but they may correct some of the misunderstandings that come to expression in the communications addressed to synod and especially in the responses to our questionnaire.

2. Fulfilment of the promise and declaration found in the second paragraph and in the first sentence of the third paragraph should follow naturally from the declaration made in paragraph one. The subscriber who is persuaded of the scriptural character of the church's confessions will want to teach them diligently and faithfully defend them. The doctrine confessed in the confessions he considers to be the doctrine taught in the Word of God.

Notice the emphasis in these sentences on "the doctrines" (an emphasis found consistently throughout the form: "the articles and points of doctrine," "the aforesaid doctrine," "this doctrine," "the uniformity

and purity of doctrine"). A signed commitment to "diligently teach" and "faithfully to defend" the doctrine of the confessions, "without either directly or indirectly contradicting the same," does not preclude the propriety of using other language than that of the confessions, or even criticizing the way the doctrine is formulated in some of the articles or statements of the confessions. At the same time, since the doctrines set forth in the confessions have been formulated in the manner they were, and so formulated, have been accepted by the churches, great care should be taken that criticism of the *form* does not involve or lead to rejection of the *content*. Form and content are not always easily distinguishable, as we have noted above.

The second sentence in this division of the form has been criticized in a couple of letters we received because it seems to commit the subscriber to a judgmental and negative attitude toward non-Reformed believers who differ from us in certain matters. The call for refutation and contradiction of error can easily be understood in the light of the origin of the form at the Synod of Dordt, where a life and death struggle had been waged against error, in particular Arminianism. In a more ecumenically minded time, when we often feel that cooperation with "evangelicals" against our common foes is more important than stressing the things that separate us, this commitment to refuting and contradicting errors is not very attractive. It must be noted, of course, that the form does not call for a judgmental attitude toward fellow-believers as persons. However, the very essence of the form is its concern for the Reformed understanding of the way of salvation and the teaching of the Bible. The form does not commit the subscriber to "mere" Christianity, or to Protestantism in general, or even just evangelicalism, but specifically to the Reformed confessional understanding of the Gospel.

3. In view of the fact that the decision of the Synod of 1973 called for an amendment of the form in this section, the focus of most of the related documents before the Synod of 1974, as well as that of most of the communications we have received, has been here. In this long and rather involved sentence the subscribers promise to follow a prescribed course in dealing with difficulties and different sentiments that might arise after they have signed the form in good faith. We noted in our review of the Prof. D. H. Kromminga case that his is a very good example of how such a situation may arise.

The emphasis in this part of the form falls in the first place upon a voluntary pledge of silence by the subscribers: they promise that they "will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same (i.e., "any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines," should they arise in their minds) either by preaching or writing until they have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, classis, or synod, that the same may there be examined . . ." Such a promise would seem to follow naturally from the preceding sentence in which the subscriber has promised to refute and contradict "errors that militate against this doctrine."

It is evident that this pledge is primarily motivated by a deep concern on the part of the church "to preserve the uniformity and purity of doc-

trine" in the ministry of the Word and the government of the church by the offices of the church. It is also evident that the subscriber in this pledge acknowledges that it is not his personal prerogative to judge whether his "difficulties or different sentiments" involve a challenge to "uniformity and purity of doctrine." This prerogative belongs only to the church. Moreover, the pledge specifies that the judgment of the church in such matters lies in the hands of the ecclesiastical judicatories (consistory, classis, or synod).

In the studies of Dr. Boer, the overtures to the Synod of 1973, the subsequent documents before the Synod of 1974, and in the communications received by your committee, there appears the constant presupposition that one of the main intentions of this provision of the form is to regulate an orderly procedure for creedal revision. Your committee questions this easy assumption. It is apparent neither in the language of the form nor in the concerns that gave rise to its formulation and adoption by the Synod of Dordt. To be sure, the form does not foreclose the possibility that adjudication by an ecclesiastical assembly of a submission from a subscriber to the form may prompt a re-examination of the confessions leading to confessional revision. But there is no indication in the language of the form that it was conceived to be the instrument of the church whereby provision is made for orderly revision of the creeds. On the contrary, the focus of the form lies clearly on the church's regulation of the ministry of the Word and the government of the church in accord with the confessions. The form is the instrument by which the church seeks to assure itself that those called by the church to function officially do so in accord with the faith of the church. As such an instrument it has been well conceived; it is "water-tight," assuming that both those who subscribe and the church requiring subscription take it seriously. The pledge of silence safeguards the membership of the church against confusion and error in the ministry of the Word and the government of the church, and the supervision of the offices is properly reserved for the ecclesiastical judicatories.

As an instrument whereby the church assures itself of an ongoing examination of the confessions in the light of Scripture and provides for the orderly process of creedal revision the form would be defective. Not only does it not encourage such examination (to say nothing of calling for it), but it makes no provision for participation of the membership of the church either in the examination of the confessions or in their revision. It does not provide for requests for revision arising from the general membership, or for participation by the membership in the formulation of, or decision process for, confessional revision.

As a matter of fact, *a strict reading of the form* would assure that under certain circumstances the church membership would be kept unaware of proposals to revise the confessions until such proposals appeared in the printed agenda of the synod to which it was being presented — except as word got around *via* "the grapevine." Even then, public defense of the proposal by a subscriber to the form (on a strict reading of the form) would be questionable since subscribers are pledged to silence until their difficulties or differing sentiments have been revealed to the

appropriate assembly. Strictly speaking, such "revealing" cannot be done until the assembly is *constituted*; mere publication in the printed agenda of a classis or synod can hardly be considered an act of "revealing" the matter to classis or synod. Furthermore, the form seems to contemplate adjudication by the assembly to which such matters are submitted. This hardly allows room for an open consideration by the whole church of any proposed revision in the church's confessions. *As an instrument of the church to provide for an orderly procedure for confessional revision* the Form of Subscription does indeed seem to embody a degree of hierarchicalism.

It should be noted, however, that should a consistory (or classis) endorse a gravamen submitted by one of its members, it would as one of the church's judicatories, be calling upon the whole church to consider a revision in the confessions. It would appear that in such a case every member of the church would be free to discuss the proposal until such time as it had been finally judged and decided upon in the judicatory assemblies. The proposal is then not a matter that pertains personally to the individual who first submitted it. It has been judged by a judicatory of the church to be worthy of consideration by the whole church. Nevertheless, a strict reading and application of the form would seem to foreclose free discussion within the church of any proposal for revision of the confessions, until such time as one or more of the church's judicatories has endorsed the proposal and called for its consideration. Until such time it remains exclusively a matter for the assemblies of the church.

A second, related assumption appears with almost equal frequency in the documents before the Synods of 1973 and 1974, and in the correspondence addressed to our committee. It is that all submissions of "difficulties and differing sentiments" of subscribers to the form to a consistory, classis or synod properly take the form of "gravamina" calling for revision of the confessions. For this assumption your committee finds little warrant. The form does not specify in what manner or form these matters are to be laid before the assemblies of the church. Some may judge this lack as fault in the form, but it ought to be clear that it would be impossible so to specify. The possible variations in circumstances are almost unlimited, since deacons, elders, ministers and theological professors all alike are required to sign the form.

Moreover, it is unlikely that the form is intended to apply only to those situations in which office bearers come to *settled convictions* on a matter so as to place them in conflict with the creeds. The subscriber's pledge to silence until difficulties have been submitted to the judgment of the church seems to apply even when serious doubts about a point of doctrine taught in the confessions burden an office bearer. Such a situation does not call for a gravamen; it calls rather for an open and frank disclosure of his difficulties by an office bearer to his consistory, hopefully leading to the removal of his doubts.

This section of the form applies also should an office bearer come to conviction on a matter of faith about which he is unsure as to whether or not it is consonant with the church's confessions. In such a case it is incumbent upon him to present the matter, whether orally or in writing,

to his consistory (or classis or synod) for the judgment of the church. But a *gravamen* is called for only when an office bearer (or any confessing member of the church) wishes actually to call the church, for good and adequate reasons to consider revision of the confessions.

Dr. H. Boer's objections to the Form of Subscription all relate to his view of it as *the* instrument by which the church provides for an ongoing examination of the confessions and for an orderly procedure by which the confessions may be amended. His concern over hierarchicalism in this regard was in part taken up by Classis Chicago South in its overture to Synod of 1973 and by that synod in its provisionally adopted amendments to the form. Without taking account of the distinctions that have been made above, they all wrestle in one way or another with deficiencies in the form as an instrument for confessional examination and revision.

In its provisionally adopted amendments the Synod of 1973 attempted to overcome the hierarchicalism by defining a carefully circumscribed area of freedom of discussion in which both the author of a *gravamen* and the church at large could openly discuss a proposed revision of the confessions. In this connection it introduced the term "official teaching," which it took over from the overture of Classis Chicago South.

Several overtures and communications addressed to Synod in 1974 expressed difficulty with the distinction between official and (by implication) unofficial teaching. Classis Huron in its overture to the Synod of 1974 states: "By the inclusion of the term 'official teaching' the amended form seems to distinguish between 'official' and 'unofficial' which raises a host of questions. When does an office bearer cease to be an office bearer"? After giving three illustrations applicable to professors, ministers and elders, the overture asks, "Does not this distinction pave the way to an intolerable double-mindedness?" (Acts 1974, p. 640). Although everyone has some idea of the kind of distinction here intended, we agree that the objections voiced by the classis, and endorsed by many others, have great force.

We now address ourselves to the question of the force of "until" in this critical section of the form. Is the sense of this restricting adverb that the mere submission of one's problem to a church judicatory opens the way to the right of public and private defense of one's views, even before the assembly has "examined" them? As stated in the review of the functioning of the form, the study committee in the Prof. Kromminga case proposed a rather liberal interpretation of this restrictive phrase, and quoted statements made during the consideration of revision of Article 36 by authorities in the Dutch churches. The committee proposed that Prof. Kromminga be allowed the freedom to publish his views "hypothetically." Synod rejected this advice, however, no doubt in part because Prof. Kromminga himself refused this freedom and protested strenuously that to follow such a course would set a dangerous precedent.

We note here, as we observed above, that when a call for revision of the confessions comes from one of the church assemblies, as was the case with revising Article 36 in our denomination, the restraint (on private and public discussion of the matter) specified in the form does not apply

since the matter has already been examined by a church judicatory and found worthy of the consideration of the whole church.

We note further that if the matter raised by a subscriber to the form is one that has wide sympathies in the church, the likelihood is great that a very liberal application of the restrictive force of "until" will be tolerated. But if the matter has few sympathizers and is, moreover, highly sensitive and controversial, a strict reading of the force of "until" will likely be insisted on. Hence we must concern ourselves here with a strict reading of the form.

We have commented on this above where we noted that, strictly speaking, the submission of any matter to an assembly cannot be consummated until the assembly has been *constituted*. Publication in the agenda of classis or synod is not yet submission to classis or synod. The amendments adopted by the Synod of 1973 raise new problems in this regard, for while they provide for public discussion "after revealing such sentiments to the consistory, classis or synod," they nowhere specify what constitutes an act of "revealing . . . to consistory, classis, or synod for examination."

Surely, a mere notification of the clerk of consistory, classis or synod that a difficulty or gravamen is to be submitted for examination can hardly be what is intended. Even the submission of the whole matter in writing to the clerk of consistory, classis or synod could hardly be viewed as a "revealing" of the matter to the *judicatory* as such — except in the most liberal interpretation.

In case of a consistory, the act of "revealing" could, it would seem, be nothing short of a full presentation to the body in session. Can anything less apply in the case of classis or synod, especially since these assemblies do not exist until formally constituted? Or does the amendment contemplate a period of time for public discussion and defense while the assembly is examining the matter? That in turn raises further questions. Is the subscriber free to discuss and defend his views before the whole church while his consistory is examining them? Does the amendment assume that the particular classis or synod to which the subscriber has submitted his difficulties will not adjudicate them, but postpone action until a subsequent meeting of classis or synod?

A strict reading of the unamended form yields a tolerably clear intention: the subscriber pledges himself to silence until he has submitted his views to an actual ecclesiastical judicatory in session. Some uncertainty may remain as to what "freedom" the subscriber may have should the judicatory not judge his matter immediately. Presumably, however, the original intention was to hold the subscriber to silence until the matter was adjudicated. The amendment of 1973 confronts the church with uncharted waters.

A final matter must be mentioned. The form speaks of submitting one's difficulties or differing sentiments to consistory, classis or synod. Rev. M. Monsma in his *Church Order Commentary* indicates that one can go to either consistory, classis or synod. Classis Wisconsin overtured Synod in 1961 to rule that to be acceptable gravamina should be adjudicated first by consistory, then by classis and finally by synod, with

either the subscriber or the assemblies having the right to take the matter to a broader assembly. Dr. Boer calls for a similar specification of procedure in the new kind of form, or covenant, he asks for. Rev. N. Punt overtured the Synod of 1974 to further amend the form as amended in 1973 to include steps from consistory to synod. This seems to us as committee a good and necessary regulation, but whether it should be spelled out in the form itself or by synodical regulation is a secondary consideration.

E. Examination by the Church

We come now to the fourth part of the form in which the subscriber agrees to submit his views to examination by the church courts upon request, on penalty of discipline for refusal. Prof. W. Heyns in his *Kybernetiek* states that this part of the form was criticized already at the Synod of Dordt because "misuse could be made of such a '*jus inquisitionis*' by making ministers undergo examination without good grounds" (page 207, translation by reporter). It is of this aspect of the form that Dr. John Kromminga gives examples in describing how the form functioned in keeping the Christian Reformed Church orthodox. No doubt it is this provision that Dr. Boer has in mind when he accuses the Christian Reformed Church of having a "heresy hunting" spirit and that this has been abetted by a strict reading of the Form of Subscription. This would apply also to the third division of the form regarding refusal to submit to the judgment of the church courts. The study committee of the GKN in the report referred to above calls attention to the severity of the sanctions mentioned in the form, namely, suspension from office.

Although the form mentions only suspension from office, in actual practice this should follow only after pastoral consultation and attempts to persuade to a change of mind. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that, because such cases often involve personal conflicts and emotional tensions, especially when they concern major issues and popular leaders, the spirit of "love and meekness" is not always as much in evidence as it ought to be. This is to be regretted, the more so since the meekness and patience of Christ ought to be the model in the church. However, if someone persists in teaching and preaching his views that have been rejected by the church, the church has no alternative but to forbid him the exercise of his office, to be followed by whatever other disciplinary action the case may require. In the documents before synod this part of the form is not directly subjected to criticism or requests for revision.

Having made the above comments on the nature of the form, we conclude this section with a couple of comments in reaction to suggestions made in some of the documents before synod. First, many critics of the form fault it for its negative character. Correctly, they view it as a dike designed to keep deviant views out of the churches. Requests have been made by some writers that there be a positive emphasis on the need and duty of continued examination of the creeds in the light of Scripture. Desirable though such an emphasis is, it seems to us that trying to incorporate it into the form would be introducing a new element that would be hard to fit in. The form expresses the aspect of the

duty of the office bearers of the church to safeguard the confessional purity of the church very well and this is what it was designed to do. The positive aspect of need for growth and progress and readiness to follow the Spirit's guidance needs emphasis, but some other instruments, such as the forms for ordination and installation, would seem more appropriate for holding it before the office-bearers.

Finally, we reflect briefly on the insistence of Dr. Boer, both in his overture (points 2 and 7), and in his articles in *The Reformed Journal*, that "the obligation of the church to the office bearer should be made as explicit as that of the office bearer to the church." Also he and some others would incorporate into the form a pledge on the part of the church to commit itself to answering an appeal promptly. We agree with the advisory committee to the Synod of 1973 in its comments on these points: "The obligations which the church has towards its office bearers in responding to gravamina should indeed be taken seriously. However, we question whether the Form of Subscription should have to spell out these mutual obligations as the overture suggests. The Church Order as well as the call letter for pastors seem to be adequate in enunciating these obligations" (Acts 1973, p. 97). In this connection we point out that office bearers are, in the words of the Apostle Paul in II Corinthians 4:5, "your (the church's) servants for Jesus' sake." They are in office to serve the church, and the church does not exist to serve them. Although there is a measure of reciprocal obligation as spelled out in the Church Order and letter of call, the emphasis in both is on the duty of the office bearers toward the church. This is also reflected in the Form of Subscription. We do agree, however, that Dr. Boer has done the church a service in calling attention to its obligation to respect the opinions of those who seriously ask for confessional revision and to take such requests with due seriousness.

V. OUR ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(section e of our mandate)

We come now to the point of our mandate, "to advise Synod and make recommendations for whatever action its study and investigation would indicate." Before we make specific recommendations we want to review the options before us, and furnish our motivation for our recommendations in greater detail than can be done in the grounds for our recommendations. This section of the report therefore consists of two parts which will cover the same ground, the first in some depth and the second in the form of specific recommendations for synodical action.

A. Advice:

1. We advise synod *not to ratify* the amendments adopted by the Synod of 1973. As indicated in our review of the documents before synod, we feel that this action is necessary in view of the fact that the Synod of 1973 *adopted* these amendments, and the Synod of 1974 *postponed action* on them. Considerations which lead us to take this negative position on the amendments are, among others, the following:

a. We have reservations about the amendment because it is predicated on the assumption that the revealing of "difficulties and different sentiments" concerning the doctrines of the confessions must always take the form of a request for revision of the confessions. As we have indicated above, the form is not intended primarily as the instrument by which the church examines its confessions in the light of Scripture and provides for the orderly revision of the confessions. It is rather the instrument for safeguarding the administration of the Word and the government of the church in harmony with the confessions, and as such, call upon office bearers to make known their difficulties in whatever form may be appropriate. Only rarely will this involve calling for confessional revision. Since in most cases reconciliation and adjudication of difficulties will be a personal and pastoral matter it would appear unwarranted to allow the freedom of discussion and involvement of the church membership encouraged by the amendment. Hence we share the concern expressed by Classis Zeeland in its overture to Synod in 1974 (No. 17), which suggested limitation of freedom as granted by the amendment at the discretion of the adjudicating assemblies. In summary, we feel that the amendments, by stressing what is a secondary function of the form (at best), tend to neglect and obscure the primary purpose of the form.

b. We have grave reservations about the introduction of the term "official" before teaching (and/or writing). Although Classis Chicago South and the Synod of 1973 undoubtedly had an understanding of what the term means, we believe it injects a large element of uncertainty and confusion and that, if it is allowed to stand, there should be somewhere an official definition of just what is involved. As we stated earlier in this report, we share the objections raised in several communications.

c. Recognizing that the revealing of "difficulties and different sentiments" will sometimes take the form of a gravamen, we feel that the amendments do not spell out with sufficient clarity the steps to be taken in the submission of such a gravamen. The amendment reads: "After revealing such sentiments to the consistory, classis or synod for examination we shall have the freedom to discuss and defend these sentiments publicly. . . ." Dr. Boer suggested in point 6 of his overture that a new form should "provide that no synod shall accept a gravamen unless it has first been acted upon by the lower assemblies, namely, by a consistory according to its competence, of which the classis shall judge; and by the classis in terms of examination and judgment." This order was also suggested by the Rev. Neal Punt to Synod of 1974 as an amendment of the amendment adopted in 1973. The overture of Classis Wisconsin to the Synod of 1961 had already made the same point. We as committee feel that such a regulation would be very helpful, but rather than incorporate it into the form, it can be adopted as a regulation.

Closely related to this deficiency in the amendment is the fact that it also does not specify when the freedom of discussion shall

be permitted in terms of the examination by consistory, classis or synod. It would seem that such public discussion raises problems especially at the level of examination by the consistory where, as also suggested by Dr. Boer, the question of the competence of the consistory to pass judgment on the matter is also involved. Our objections center on the fact that the amendments do not really define the reference of "until" in the preceding sentence, but rather add a confusing element.

d. There is lack of clarity as to the purpose and function of the clause in the amendment which reads: "and we understand that the church as body of believers may openly reflect upon them" (the "sentiments" revealed to an assembly). It would appear that this clause applies only in those rare cases when a gravamen is submitted. But, more to the point, since the Form of Subscription is the instrument by which the church regulates the official conduct of the office bearers, it is not the instrument by which the church regulates the actions of the membership of the church in general. The language of the amendment assumes that signers of the form have authority to prevent the members of the church from openly reflecting on views submitted to church assemblies for examination. The intention of this clause as part of the form is unclear and its regulative force appears to lack warrant.

e. Our reflection on the documents before synod and the responses to our questionnaire lead us to doubt seriously whether this amendment satisfies one of the most basic problems raised concerning the Form of Subscription. We refer to the meaning of the statement that all the articles and points of doctrine of the confessions "do fully agree with the Word of God." Dr. Boer's overture and several communications we have received indicate that this is an area of serious concern for a considerable number of office bearers. Synod should go beyond the amendment and address itself in some way to this crucial point.

f. Finally, we call synod's attention to the negative responses on the part of the consistories and classes in the communications to the Synod of 1974 and in the responses to our questionnaire. While synod as a deliberative body must not be governed by mere weight of numbers, the very fact that the Synod of 1974 asked your committee to get responses from all those signing the form indicates that the intent was to take them seriously as a reflection of the mind of the church. We would also note in this connection that several of the responses we have listed as in favor of the amendment express themselves as in favor of even more extensive revision in the spirit of Dr. Boer's overture; in the other words, while they agree with the amendment, they want more.

2. Having advised synod not to ratify the amendments of the Synod of 1973, we face three possible alternatives as already mentioned by the advisory committee in 1973. After due deliberation your committee decided not to go in the direction of proposing a new revised form that will incorporate even more extensive changes than are found in the amendments. We also concluded that it is advisable not

to make any other changes in the form, but to retain its present traditional form. Of course, no formal recommendation to that effect is necessary. In addition to this, however, we concluded that synod should clarify certain matters by adopting guidelines and regulations which would be a supplement to and commentary on Article 5 of the Church Order which requires office bearers to sign the Form of Subscription. The objection that such guidelines would be lost in the Acts of Synod can be met by requiring that they be printed in future editions of the Church Order as an additional item under the second supplement, thus being available for ready reference.

It might be objected that some of these guidelines could well be incorporated into the form itself. However, the form is already rather lengthy and involved; trying to spell out procedure in some detail would make it very unwieldy. Second, many of the guidelines and regulations we are suggesting are more in the nature of rules of procedure and/or commentary on the form and what signing it involves. Such commentary and implementation presupposes the form as basic document. With such explanations and regulations there is no need for revision of the traditional and historic form which has served the church for so many years, even though its language reflects its origin long ago at the Synod of Dordt.

The two areas in which we are making recommendations are already mentioned by the advisory committee in 1973. We are addressing ourselves to such questions as: What is involved in subscription to the creeds? What is the sense of "until" in terms of public discussion of a gravamen? What rules should govern submission of a gravamen and the revelation of "difficulties and different sentiments"?

a. We are suggesting some *guidelines* as to the meaning of subscription to the confessions according to the Form of Subscription. We owe much to the four points adopted by the Synod of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand, quoted earlier in this report. These guidelines reflect some of the ideas we have expressed in some detail in our discussion of the nature of the form. We have also benefited from the suggestions found in the Minority Report to the Synod of 1961. These guidelines, we trust, will spell out somewhat more clearly what is the sense of the statement that "we believe . . . the doctrines . . . do fully agree with the Word of God." The history of the Boersma case and subsequent practice in the church indicate that this does not commit the subscriber to a legalistic and complete agreement with all details of form, language and exegesis of the confessions. Since these documents reflect their period, and are not to be equated with Scripture, but are a witness to its teachings, they must be subscribed to with allowance for new information and insights. On the other hand, this freedom cannot be license to interpret the confessions in a purely subjective way. The guidelines we suggest are intended as boundaries that will guide both the individual subscriber in signing the form and the church in its relationship to him. We believe that adoption of such guidelines will serve to remove several objections and misun-

derstandings that have been expressed in the documents before synod.

b. In our suggestions for *regulations* governing the submission of "difficulties and different sentiments" to the assemblies of the church we owe much to the study committee report on the Prof. D. H. Kromminga case and his comments on it as these are found in the Acts of Synod 1946. As we indicated in our brief comments on this example of the functioning of the form, the committee cites authorities in the Reformed Churches, Dr. A. Kuyper, Sr., Dr. H. Bouwman, and Dr. P. Biesterveld, in support of the position that there is room for discussion of proposed changes in the confessions. In a footnote on page 257 the committee says: "We are perfectly aware that this quotation deals with gravamen rather than with exploratory discussion. We insert it because of the testimony it gives to the proper attitude toward our confession. It is well known that much free discussion has been allowed on Article 36, short of actual gravamen." Prof. Kromminga agreed that the quotations cited allowed discussion *after* a gravamen had been submitted. The instructive discussions found in Supplements 16A and B (pp. 253-261), of the Acts of Synod 1946, illustrate that often the problem centers in *when a gravamen* has been submitted in revealing "difficulties and different sentiments" to an ecclesiastical assembly.

What constitutes a gravamen? At what stage of the examination of a request by a church court should such a request be judged to be a gravamen? Is every overture for clarification or revision of the creed a matter of sufficient weight to allow public discussion? The history of the revision of Article 36 of the Confession of Faith throws some light on these matters, but the confusion needs to be cleared up by more carefully defined rules. Having judged the amendments of 1973 as an unsatisfactory answer to some of these questions, we suggest some regulations that we trust will give needed clarification and direction.

From the nature of the case, regulations of the process by which a gravamen is submitted are closely related to the matter of the meaning of "until" in the form. Dr. Harry Boer suggests in point 6 of his overture that synod decided that a gravamen should not be accepted by synod until it has been considered by consistory and classis in terms of examination and judgment. This is in line with the procedure spelled out by Classis Wisconsin in its overture to the Synod of 1961. At present the form does not specify whether a gravamen should be addressed to consistory, classis or synod in order, or to any one of these as the subscriber chooses. The Rev. M. Monisma in his *Church Order Commentary* states that the appellant is free to go to any assembly as he may think circumstances warrant. The Rev. Neal Punt in his overture to the Synod of 1974 suggested regulation from consistory to classis to synod, with freedom of discussion limited to the synodical level. Classis Zeeland's overture also suggested restrictions as to the time when a gravamen might be publicly discussed. The unlimited freedom of discussion which many feared under the amendment of 1973 would be controlled by the regulations we

suggest for adoption. Not all situations can be regulated. Often, as illustrated by the "gravamen" of Prof. Kromminga, by the Calvin (Boersma) "gravamen," and by the letter of Dr. H. Boer to the Synod of 1975, the ecclesiastical assemblies will have to determine on the merits of each case when a given request constitutes a "gravamen."

In this connection we again call attention to our comments on this matter in the study of the nature of the form and call attention to the fact that there is a difference between an appeal of an individual from the decision of a minor assembly to a major assembly and an overture by a minor assembly to a major assembly. When a subscriber persuades his consistory that his position has merit and the consistory makes his gravamen its own as an overture to classis and/or synod the matter is not strictly a personal appeal under the Form of Subscription, but an official overture that may be publicly discussed, with the understanding, of course, that pending final decision by synod, the confession remains binding. But when an individual appeals a negative decision from consistory to classis and synod he must abide by the decision of the minor judicatory and the right of public discussion is necessarily curtailed.

B. *Recommendations:*

On the basis of the foregoing study and investigation in fulfillment of our mandate we present the following recommendations to synod:

1. That synod *do not ratify* the action of the Synod of 1973 in adopting the amendment to the Form of Subscription as found in the Acts of Synod 1973, Article 89, D, 1, 2, 3, and 4 (pp. 98 and 99).

Grounds:

- a. The amendments are based on the unwarranted assumption that all revealing of "difficulties and different sentiments" concerning the church's confessions will involve gravamina calling for the revision of the confessions.
 - b. The amendments introduce a distinction between "official teaching" and (by implication) unofficial teaching (and/or writing?), a distinction that is subject to many objections and could very well lead to many problems and much misunderstanding.
 - c. The amendments do not specify with sufficient clarity when the public statement of differing sentiments may take place. (For detailed discussion of this point we refer to material under the Nature of the Form of Subscription and our Advice.)
 - d. There is lack of clarity as to the purpose and function of the phrase "and we understand that the body of believers may openly reflect upon them." The regulative force of this statement as part of the Form of Subscription appears to be unwarranted.
 - e. Reactions from consistories and classes, as well as individuals, indicate that a large majority are not in favor of ratification of the amendments.
2. Synod adopt the following *guidelines* and *regulations* as a Supplement to Article 5 of the Church Order:

a. *Guidelines* as to the meaning of subscription to the confessions by means of the Form of Subscription:

- 1) The person signing the Form of Subscription subscribes without reservation to *all* the doctrines contained in the standards of the church, as being doctrines which are taught in the Word of God.
- 2) The subscriber *does not* by his subscription declare that these doctrines are all stated in the best possible manner, or that the standards of our church cover *all* that the Scriptures teach on the matters confessed. Nor does he declare that every teaching of the Scriptures is set forth in our confessions, or that every heresy is rejected and refuted by them.
- 3) A subscriber is only bound by his subscription to those doctrines which are confessed as binding and is not bound to the references, allusions and remarks that are incidental to the formulation of these doctrines nor to the theological deductions which some may draw from the doctrines set forth in the confessions. However, no one is free to decide for himself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the standards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in.

b. *Regulations* concerning procedure to be followed in the submission of "difficulties and different sentiments" to the assemblies for examination.

- 1) *The basic assumption* of the church in requiring subscription to the Form of Subscription is that "all the articles and points of doctrine" contained in the confessions of the church "do fully agree with the Word of God." *The burden of proof*, therefore, rests upon the subscriber who calls upon the church to justify or revise her confessions.
- 2) Ministers (including missionaries and all others not serving congregations as pastors), elders and deacons shall submit their "difficulties and different sentiments" to their consistories for examination and judgment.
- 3) Professors of theology may, if they desire, take their "difficulties and different sentiments" directly to synod. However, in the interest of doing justice to their relationship to their consistories, synod recommends that professors of theology first consult their consistories regarding their difficulties with the confessions of the church.
- 4) In all such cases [2) and 3) above], a matter shall be considered "revealed" to an assembly (consistory, classis, or synod) only when the *assembly* has *accepted* it for action.
- 5) Since the subscriber has the right of appeal from the judgment of a consistory to classis and from classis to synod, the mere fact that a matter is being appealed shall not be a reason for suspending or otherwise disciplining an office-bearer, provided other provisions of the Form of Subscription and the Church Order are observed.

6) In cases involving a gravamen (a call for revision of the confessions) the above regulations shall apply. Moreover:

a) Should a consistory decide that it is not able to judge a gravamen submitted to it, it shall submit the matter to classis for *examination* and *judgment*. If the classis, after examination, judges that it is unable to decide the matter, it may submit it to synod, in accordance with the principles of the Church Order, Article 28, b.

b) A gravamen *adopted* by consistory and/or classis as its own becomes an overture to the broader assemblies and therefore is open for discussion by the whole church. In such cases the personal restrictions of the Form of Subscription no longer apply.

c) Should a classis or synod judge that a gravamen presented by an individual is worthy of consideration by the whole church, all the signers of the Form of Subscription shall be free to discuss it together with the whole church, until definitely adjudicated by synod.

d) A revision of the confessions in response to either gravamen or overture shall not be adopted by synod until the whole church membership has had adequate opportunity to consider it.

Grounds for the above recommendations concerning *guidelines* and *regulations*:

a. The history of the functioning of the Form of Subscription shows that if such guidelines and regulations had been available and followed considerable delay and confusion might have been avoided.

b. These guidelines and regulations will make the signing of the Form of Subscription more meaningful and will remove some common misunderstandings that now exist on the part of many office bearers.

c. These guidelines and regulations will prove helpful to consistory, classis and synod in dealing with matters submitted to them for examination in accordance with the Form of Subscription.

d. Synod decide that the above *guidelines* and *regulations* be printed in future official editions of the *Church Order* as a supplement to Article 5.

e. Synod authorize Prof. Stek to represent the committee in the explanation and defense of the report before synod. (*Note*: Prof. Stek will not be one of the advisers to synod this year.)

Study Committee on
Revision of the Form of Subscription
Elco H. Oostendorp, reporter
Harry Arnold, convenor
Alexander De Jong
Richard Prince
Edwin Roels
William Post
John Stek

REPORT 38

REVISION OF THE FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION

B. First Minority Report

Having struggled along with the committee throughout the months of its deliberations on the matters submitted to us, I find myself in substantial agreement with the body of the report that is here submitted. And I am in accord with the recommendations that are presented. In my judgment, however, there are issues of some importance that have been left unresolved. But so as not to burden synod with a lengthy addendum to the already long report of the committee, I shall here compress into a few brief statements those considerations that move me to urge upon synod the adoption of one more recommendation—a recommendation that goes well beyond those submitted above.

1. I share the conviction of the rest of the committee that the Form of Subscription should be maintained as an instrument of the church primarily designed to safeguard the administration of the Word of God and the government of the church in accord with the church's faith, as set forth in the church's confessions. I sincerely doubt that the church can so formulate such an instrument that it can simultaneously serve as *the* instrument that provides, in a regulative manner, for the ongoing reviews of its confessions and an orderly procedure for their revision. At the very least, it must be recognized that the continuing review of the confessions belongs to the life of the church as a whole, not just to the function of the special offices.

2. I am convinced that, although the Form of Subscription is an instrument whereby the church secures from each office bearer a signed personal commitment to fulfil his office in accord with the church's confessions, the collegiality of the offices (i.e., the fact that the offices of the church properly and normally function as a body—in mutual counsel, consultation and supervision) must be maintained and should continue to be recognized in the Form of Subscription. That is to say, the church's Form of Subscription should continue to call on the office bearers of the church to make their signed commitment to the confessions in conjunction with their fellow office bearers. (I.e., the church's Form of Subscription should maintain the language of the first person plural: "We, the undersigned," etc.)

3. At the same time, it is my conviction:

- a. that the Form of Subscription should be so formulated as not to hinder or discourage participation on the part of office bearers of the church in the important activity of confessional review; it should rather encourage such review by them and, however gently, remind them all of their individual and joint responsibility in this regard.
- b. that the Form of Subscription should not only recognize the collegiality of the special offices of the church, but should provide for a more productive exercise of that collegiality by recognizing the

importance of brotherly consultation in dealing with "difficulties" an office bearer may come to have with the confessions, or in formulation and testing "differing sentiments" an office bearer may feel compelled to submit to the assemblies of the church for examination, in accord with the form.

c. that the church ought not and does not wish to require its office bearers to sign a Form of Subscription so formulated that it may seem to place the confessions of the church on a par with the inspired writings of holy Scripture; the church's Form of Subscription should be so transparently in accord with the confessions themselves that it manifestly reflects that same subordination of confessions to Scripture of which the confessions speak.

RECOMMENDATION

In accord with the above, I urge synod to adopt the following revised Form of Subscription:

We, the undersigned, professors of theology, ministers of the gospel, elders and deacons of the Christian Reformed congregation of do hereby, sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this our subscription that we heartily believe the Word of God written in the inspired writings of holy Scripture, as interpreted, summarized and defended in the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church.

We promise, therefore, diligently and faithfully to proclaim, teach and defend the whole doctrine of Scripture, as thus interpreted, without either directly or indirectly contradicting it in our preaching, teaching or writing:

And we declare that we not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, but that we are disposed to refute them and to exert ourselves in keeping the church free from such errors. We declare, moreover, that we commit ourselves, in fellowship with all those who share with us this faith, to be obedient and faithful instruments of the Holy Spirit for leading the church into all the truth.

And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the formulas of faith of the Christian Reformed Church should arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly or secretly propagate them, either by preaching, teaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to consistory, classis or synod that they may there be examined. We understand that, both before and after revealing such sentiments to consistory, classis or synod for examination, we shall have the freedom to discuss and consider these sentiments in the light of the Word of God with our fellow office bearers in the Christian Reformed Church. But we declare that we shall be ready always cheerfully to submit to the judgment of consistory, classis or synod, under the penalty, in case of refusal, of being by that very fact subject to suspension from our office.

And further, if at any time consistory, classis or synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and to preserve faithfulness to the Word of God, may deem it proper to require of us a further explanation of our sentiments respecting any article of the formulas of faith of the Christian Reformed Church, we do hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such request, under the penalty above mentioned, reserving for ourselves, however, the right of appeal in case we should believe that the assembly of the church has not given our sentiments a proper and adequate hearing, or has not dealt justly with us in its decisions concerning us. And we promise that, until a decision is made upon such an appeal, we will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already made.

John H. Stek

REPORT 38

REVISION OF THE FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION

C. Second Minority Report

There is much in the Majority Report with which I concur, and much in its advice and recommendations that I support. In particular, I support its recommendation not to ratify the amendments of 1973. I also support most of the procedural "regulations" which it recommends that synod adopt as a supplement to Article 5 of the Church Order. These regulations embody the important principle contained in the ground offered by Synod of 1973 in support of the amendments (namely, "the right and responsibility of the whole body of believers" to consider and discuss proposed revisions in the confessions); they also avoid some difficulties that were pointed out in the Amendments; and they spell out appropriate procedures in more detail.

I find it necessary to submit this Minority Report, however, for several reasons: First, I do not believe that adopting "Guidelines" as a supplement to the Church Order is the proper way for synod to meet the difficulties that have been raised about the meaning of subscription in the form. In this connection I wish, second, to call synod's attention to the First Minority Report, to explain why synod should give that report serious consideration, and to explain further why I can not, at present, support its recommendation. Third, I believe that two of the regulations recommended by the Majority Report [6) and 3)] are still inadequate. My report falls into two parts:

A. *Guidelines*

The "guidelines" proposed, though not entirely unhelpful, do not really satisfy the cluster of questions that surround the phrase "do fully agree with the Word of God." Even if they did satisfy these questions, I would want to propose that they then be used as a basis for revising the form itself, since it is the form which the church requires its office-bearers to sign, not a set of interpretive guidelines. In other words, if the guidelines proposed do indeed contain the meaning of subscription, why not incorporate them into the form itself?

Take, for example, guidelines 1) and 2). If they really do make the form "more meaningful" as the majority asserts, they could do this more directly by our revising the form as follows: Instead of declaring that the doctrines of the confessions "do fully agree with the Word of God," the form could ask subscribers to declare that these doctrines "are taught in the Word of God." It could then go on to allow these subscribers to say that they "do not declare, however, that these doctrines are all stated in the best possible manner, or that the standards of our church cover all the teaching of Scripture on the matters confessed, or that every teaching of Scripture is set forth in our confessions, or every heresy refuted by them." In short, if this is what the form *means*, then this is what it could itself *say*.

But is this what the form means, or should mean? The question is a large one indeed, for it touches on the all-important questions concerning the relationship of the confessions to the Word of God, and of the office bearers to both. That these questions are being raised in the church is evident. Consider that the advisory committee to Synod of 1974, for example, included in its list of questions confronting the churches these three:

Doesn't the Form of Subscription elevate the creeds to too lofty a height when it says they "fully agree with the Word of God"?

What about Article 7 of the Belgic Confession in this connection? (cf. communication of Akron, Ohio, Consistory.)

Could a Form of Subscription spell out more carefully and completely in what sense an office bearer accepts the creeds (cf. in this connection the history of Dr. Clarence Boersma's gravamen, Acts of Synod 1974, pp. 102f.).

Two other consistory communications in 1974 besides Akron (First Denver and LaGrave Avenue) raised objections on this matter, as did some of the later communications solicited by our committee from consistories and individuals.

The question is posed, for example, in one of these communications: Can anything fully agree with God's Word except that Word itself? We are referred to Article 7 of the *Belgic Confession* in which we confess that the Word of God is "above all." It is claimed, further, that the language of the Form, if not actually in direct conflict with this Article, allows and even encourages one to infer that, since these doctrines do fully agree with the Word of God, they are of "equal value" with it. Therefore, it is urged, the language of the present form ought to be revised to accord with the teachings of the confessions.

These are my objections too. I would even question whether the form is the proper place to elucidate the relationship between the confessions and the Word of God. The essential function of the form is to assure the church that the *faith* of its office bearers is the faith of the church they serve. But the language of the present form obscures this function by requiring us to declare, not our faith, but rather something abstract, scholastic, and, I suspect, beyond both our intellectual powers and spiritual gifts, namely, that the doctrines in the confessions fully agree with the Word of God. It is not the function of the form but the confessions to state what we confess concerning the Word of God, and this they already do. Hence it would be sufficient if the form required us to declare that our faith is in accord with the faith of the church as it is confessed in the confessions; for we would *thereby* be assuring the church that we believe what the confessions teach—also about the Word of God.

I do not believe that our committee gave due consideration to these questions and objections. In particular, as is evident from the Majority Report, we did not evaluate the revised forms of the GKN and the RCA, two Reformed Churches that judged it necessary to revise the Form of Dort after using it for 300 years. Nor did we evaluate the revision proposed by Professor Stek to us and now to the synod in his Minority Report. I myself believe that all these revised forms more properly subordinate the confessions to the Word of God. I therefore support the

thrust of the three points which Professor Stek makes in his report, and agree with him that the church needs a revised Form of Subscription. But I think it would be unwise for synod to adopt a proposed revision that has not been evaluated by a study committee or by the churches.

B. *Regulations 6) and 3).*

Regulation 6) has the central weakness of failing to *require* the ecclesiastical assemblies at *all* levels to examine *and to judge* gravamina. It does this [in section (a)] by allowing a *consistory* to refer a gravamen to *classis* whenever "it decides that it is not able to judge the matter submitted." I believe that a consistory which is able to *subscribe* to the confessions (conscientiously, by way of the language of the present form) should be able to examine *and judge* a gravamen *against* the confessions.

Regulation (6)a) also allows *classis* to refer a gravamen to synod if it finds that "it is not able to decide the matter." But again, as in the case of a consistory, doesn't this provision weaken the responsibility a *classis* should have assumed in its subscription to the confessions? The same regulation goes on to refer in this connection to the principles of Article 28 b. of the Church Order. These would allow a *classis* to refer a gravamen to synod, without judging it, on the additional ground that any proposed revision of the confessions is a matter that concerns the "churches in common." This would indeed be a pertinent ground; but why then shouldn't an *individual* also be free, as in the past, to go, for the same reason, directly to synod with his gravamen? The answer is, I believe, because both he and the entire church will profit from a regulation that requires the examination and judgment of his gravamen to proceed in an orderly way from the minor to the major assemblies. (This seems to be the intent of the Supplement to this Article, IX, "Matters Legally Before Synod," item B: "Overtures or communications of individuals or consistories which have been carried as far as possible in the minor assemblies.")

Now if all of the above applies to office bearers in general, I believe it then applies to Professors of Theology in the same way. Hence I cannot support Regulation 3), and offer that "Professors of Theology" be listed along with the other office bearers in Regulation 2).

Finally, returning to Regulation 6)a), I observe that it fails to require *synod* itself to examine and to judge gravamina. That synod is so obligated is implicit in the Form of Subscription (just as are consistory and classes, as I argued above). That synod can, upon occasion, fail to fulfil this obligation is evident from the inconclusive outcome of the objections and proposed revisions to Article 36 (see J. H. Kromminga, *The Christian Reformed Church*, pp. 66-71). It is also evident from the disposal of the Kromminga gravamen by the Synod of 1947. I believe the Majority Report's account of this case misapplies the distinction between personal difficulties and credal revision and thereby misses the point that the synod's obligation was to judge a *gravamen* before it (and hence the adequacy of the confessions), and not (or at least not exclusively) to counsel its author. It is evident, finally, from the outcome of the Boersma case. The Majority Report claims that Synod of 1961 ex-

amined and judged the Boersma gravamen, indicating only that the "form" of its response was "obscure." In disagreement with this, I submit that a careful analysis of the actions of that synod will show that Professor Boersma's "differing sentiments" and the proposed revisions of the *Belgic Confession* that were recommended by the Study Committee's Majority Report were *not* examined and judged by *synod*. I offer, therefore, that it would be entirely appropriate for synod to include in the proposed regulations an explicit statement which requires synod to examine and to judge all gravamina which it accepts as such.

C. *Conclusions:*

In view of the above, I conclude,

1. that the "guidelines" of the Majority Report should not be adopted but referred, with the revised forms of GKN and RCA and Professor Stek, to a Synodical Committee for further study, for the purpose of recommending a revised form to a future synod; and
2. that "Regulations" 6) and 2) should be amended and 3) deleted.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That synod not adopt the "guidelines" of the Majority Report, but appoint a committee to prepare a revision of the Form of Subscription that will meet the objections which have been raised to it, especially to the declaration containing the phrase "do fully agree with the Word of God."

Grounds:

- a. With respect to clarifying the meaning of subscription to the confessions, a revision of the form itself is preferable to the adoption of guidelines as a supplement to the Church Order.
 - b. Supplements to the Church Order should be limited to procedural regulations.
 - c. The present study committee on the Form of Subscription did not evaluate possible revisions of the form.
2. That synod amend the Regulations offered by the Majority Report in the following manner:

- a. Substitute for 6)a) the following: "Any consistory, classis, or synod that receives a gravamen shall examine and judge it. But no synod shall accept a gravamen unless it has been examined and judged by a classis, and no classis shall accept a gravamen unless it has been examined and judged by a consistory."

Grounds:

- 1) This procedure recognizes and declares the responsibility of the church at all levels of its assemblies to study and determine, when called upon to do so, the adequacy of its confessions.
 - 2) This procedure recognizes and declares the fruitfulness of the study of the church's confessions by its minor assemblies for the further study of the confessions by its major assemblies.
 - 3) This procedure is in keeping with the intent of Article 28, b. of the Church Order and the Supplement to it, IX, item B.
- b. Delete 3), and amend 2) by adding after "missionaries": "Professors of Theology."

Grounds:

- 1) The regulations for submission of gravamina, since they supplement a provision in the Form of Subscription, should apply to all office bearers alike.
- 2) Since gravamina all concern the church's confessions in the same way regardless of their authors, the regulations should be standard for all the authors of those gravamina.

Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr.

REPORT 39

**JOINT COMMISSION CRC/RCA
FOR STUDY OF THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM**

In continuing to carry out all parts of our mandate as received from the 1975 Synods of our respective denominations, the Joint Commission solicited and received a number of valued responses to the Evangelism Manifesto prepared by our Joint Commission and submitted to our synods in 1975. The responses point up the need for some method by which the members of our respective churches can best assess the Manifesto and come to a clearer understanding of its implications and content.

The responses made very clear that there is need to translate the Manifesto into such language and form that it can be understood by the members of the churches. If this is not done, we are convinced that it could soon become just another report buried in synodical archives to which no further attention is paid.

The Joint Commission at its February 9, 1976, meeting decided to present the following joint request to our respective synods:

that the Joint Commission CRC/RCA on the Theology of Evangelism be authorized to prepare and make available a study guide, based on the Evangelism Manifesto, for use by our churches.

We believe such a study guide will fill a real need in our churches, and we recommend that wherever feasible our churches form such study groups as will make possible the joint study of the meaning and implications of this Manifesto. A study guide will also allow for the discussion of other aspects of evangelism not made very explicit in the Manifesto itself. Use of a guide will greatly increase our understanding as churches of one another and clarify also areas where joint implementation of the principles expressed in it can realistically be realized.

In our judgment it is premature at this time to address ourselves to other parts of our mandate, specifically the implementation of the Manifesto, until our members themselves are informed as to its meaning.

Your approval of the above joint request for authorization to proceed along the above lines will be appreciated.

For the Joint Commission CRC/RCA:

RCA members:

William Brownson, Jr.
Paul R. Fries
Donald Jansma
Edward G. Mulder
Richard Rhem

CRC members:

Richard R. De Ridder, secretary
Roger S. Greenway
Carl G. Kromminga
Wesley Smedes
Richard Wierenga

REPORT 40
COMMITTEE ON LAPSED MEMBERSHIP

MANDATE

The Synod of 1974 appointed the undersigned as a study committee to consider Overture 13, Acts 1974:

“Classis Chicago South overtures synod to declare that a person’s membership may lapse by consistorial action when the person has not moved but fails to attend and support the congregation that holds his membership when the following conditions are present:

1. He claims to be still committed to the Christian faith.
2. He claims to be attending another church or churches.
3. The consistory is not aware of any public sin requiring discipline.

Ground: This is in accord with the principle contained in the decisions of synod that membership is not an inalienable right but rather a privilege that must be actively maintained.”

The advisory committee of Synod 1974, recommended that this overture be placed in the hands of a study committee because certain matters had to be explored more fully before a proper decision could be taken. It was observed that the overture produced no direct argument for this new method of discipline, though it was recognized that the number of persons described in this overture is steadily increasing as many people are taking their membership in the church more lightly. The committee further observed that there are Church Order principles involved in this matter, and that the implications of Article 28 of the Belgic Confession must also be considered. Synod adopted the committee’s recommendation and appointed the undersigned to study Overture 13.

ANALYSIS

In order to determine the extent of the problem, and to ascertain the method which various churches are now using to deal with such members a questionnaire was sent to the churches. Over three hundred consistories replied, and many offered valuable insights and suggestions to us. A large majority of those who responded to the questionnaire indicated that the type of person described in the overture was being dealt with in their congregations, and over 75% of the consistories felt that some method, apart from normal church disciplinary channels, should be established to deal with cases described in this overture.

Many of the questionnaires indicated that the consistories felt uncomfortable in applying discipline leading to excommunication to those who are guilty of neglecting the means of grace in the church where their membership is held, when these members assert they are worshiping elsewhere. In response to the question about which churches are involved, it is interesting to note that not only were those churches men-

tioned which hold little regard for membership, but in a large number of instances Christian Reformed, Reformed, and Presbyterian Churches were included in the list. The majority of cases, however, were individuals who were attending baptist and pentecostal churches, as well as a variety of unorganized fellowships.

It became apparent from the questionnaires that we are not dealing here with a single type of person. Some do not affiliate with another church because that church has no interest in formal membership rolls. Others do not wish to become members of the churches which they are attending because it would involve being rebaptized. There are those too who wish to retain a formal relationship to the organized church, giving them a feeling of security, while they desire the freedom of attending where they please without having to bear with the supervision and admonition of the elders. Still another group use the name of neighboring churches as a screen to hide behind while they persist in actually neglecting the means of grace totally.

A strong word of caution came from many consistories that this possible new regulation should not become an easy way out for consistories who are unwilling to carry out properly the difficult work of church discipline. Several consistories indicated that they felt no need for a new regulation because they were able to deal with practically all of those who fall into this category by faithfully using the present rules for discipline. These churches felt that if the persons were visited regularly and urged to publicly acknowledge that they in effect already belonged to another church, in most instances there would be no problem.

As a committee we heartily concur with these words of warning. If we use the procedure of lapsed membership to avoid the loving care which our members are entitled to receive, we are not being true to our calling to "watch in behalf of (their) souls, as they that shall give account" (Hebrews 13:17).

It must also be noted, however, that many of the same consistories who issued this warning that a new regulation might be misused, underscored the fact that they were faced with a problem with this type of member. A new regulation may be misused, but existing ones can likewise be ignored or distorted so that they also fail to accomplish their purpose within the church. It is for the sake of those consistories who are conscientious in carrying out the work of church discipline, but who in the fulfilment of their task find themselves stymied by the present situation, that this overture deserves careful consideration.

RELATED PROBLEMS

Does the recommendation of Overture 13 do violence to Article 28 of the Belgic Confession? Our committee judges that it does not.

Article 28 speaks of the responsibility of the *individual* rather than the action of the *office bearers*. By failing to continue participation in the local congregation, by not "serving to the edification of the brethren, according to the talents God has given them" (Article 28), they are already withdrawing from the congregation, and have in effect placed

themselves outside of this local body of believers. In proceeding toward the point of declaring that their membership has lapsed, the consistory would simply be acknowledging a fact which already existed as far as the local congregation is concerned. When such individuals assert that they are still committed to Christ and worship elsewhere, they are asserting that they have not withdrawn themselves from the "assembly of those who are saved," but rather from that particular manifestation of the church, namely, the one in which their membership resides.

If we declare that such withdrawal from the local congregation is a sin of such magnitude that it may well lead to excommunication, we burden ourselves with the implied assertion that outside of this particular church there is no salvation. We are hardly prepared to make that judgment, even though we rightly assert that we are a part of the true church, over against which there is the false church. We recognize other denominations as having validity within the body of Christ when we send membership papers to churches other than Christian Reformed. In Article 27 of the Belgic Confession this true church, to which everyone is bound to join himself, is defined as "one catholic or universal church, which is the holy congregation of true Christian believers." It therefore embraces the whole of the Christian church rather than a single denomination, or only those denominations which embrace the Reformed faith. It is true that Article 29 so defines this true church that the scope of that church is narrowed to those who show the marks which we generally associate with the Reformed body of churches. It is also apparent, however, that the author of the Belgic Confession did not envision the present proliferation of denominations, many of which are included among those who are also a part of "the holy congregation of true Christian believers, all expecting their salvation in Jesus Christ, being washed by his blood, sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit" (Article 27), but who are not as concerned as we are with the scriptural demand that church discipline be maintained. The significance of membership in the visible church is being lost by many Christians in our day. Surely we agree that this is wrong, and emphasis must be placed upon its importance through proper instruction and admonitions to those who succumb to this current attitude. However, it is at this point that we must judge whether this warrants our using the procedures of church discipline to the point of ultimate excommunication or erasure from the body of Christ, when such persons assert that they are still committed to the Christian faith. Ought they not to be considered as erring brothers rather than outside of the kingdom of Christ? To pursue church discipline in such instances is rather meaningless to those caught up in the current attitudes, and would only serve to alienate them from the body of believers.

According to Article 80 of the Church Order, "All members of the congregation are subject in both doctrine and life to the admonition and discipline of the church." We believe that this has significance in the matter under consideration too. Some have suggested that it might be possible to put such members on an inactive list. This would be one way of obviating, at least for a time, the *either-or* situation in which

we find ourselves. At present either we do nothing except encourage them to affiliate with the group with whom they are worshiping, or we begin the steps of discipline which will lead to their ultimate excommunication or erasure. But such quasi-membership has no place in the fellowship of believers. Either a person is recognized as an active member of the congregation, and therefore subject to the admonition and discipline of the church, or he must be no member of the congregation at all. To relegate certain individuals who are attending other churches to inactive status is to give them a position in which they maintain a formal relationship to the local congregation, while they are no longer under the active care of the congregation. This ought not to be permitted. If the person has removed himself, for all practical purposes, from the life and fellowship of the congregation, and does not want the spiritual care of the elders because he has found a fellowship of believers elsewhere which is satisfying to him, his name ought to be removed from the rolls of the congregation after an appropriate time.

This should not be done hastily. Ample visits should be made in order to seek to correct his attitude about the significance of the visible organization of the church and the responsibilities of its office bearers to him. But eventually a break must be made, when it becomes apparent that the elders are unable to minister to him in his need. In effect, he has already severed himself from the life of the congregation, and the declaration that his membership has lapsed is simply a recognition of the existing situation.

If we do not make such a provision in our church regulations, the conscientious consistory has no choice but to proceed toward either excommunication or erasure on the basis of the neglect of the means of grace. It cannot allow this kind of relationship, which really is no relationship at all, to continue. To do so would be, in effect, to agree that membership in a local congregation is ultimately a meaningless thing. And that is exactly what many of those who are in this category are already saying to the church.

CONCLUSIONS

This overture has caused us to face a real problem with which many of our churches are struggling. The problem is increasing in scope, and must be faced if we are to maintain church discipline as a meaningful practice in our denomination. The consistories which responded in the questionnaire have indicated by a large majority that the time has come when some method apart from the normal church disciplinary procedures must be provided to deal with such persons.

It was also indicated by the consistories that the problem involves both communicant and baptized members, and since one of the stipulations in dealing with these members is that they claim to be committed to the Christian faith, we must deal with them in similar fashion, providing that in each instance the person has reached sufficient maturity to make a responsible decision in finding another fellowship rather than the one where his membership is found.

That a declaration of membership lapse must be preceded by adequate instruction and admonition is self evident. As a member of the congregation, a person is entitled to the Christian concern of his fellow members, and especially of the elders. In many instances the visits made in which the member is reminded of the significance of membership in the visible church, and the loss which he will experience by pursuing his present course, will be sufficient to bring him back into the fellowship of his own congregation or cause him to request transfer or dismissal in order to affiliate with the church which he is attending.

In order that the person may have sufficient time to give serious consideration to the consequences of his present course, we feel that synod should set a stipulation similar to that set for those who have moved away from the vicinity of the congregation, and require that a period of at least two years shall lapse before a person's membership may be terminated.

While it is true that there is a danger involved in adopting this kind of regulation, since it may become a way by which the consistory could avoid the responsibility of carrying out its task of Christian discipline, we ought not on that basis refuse to face this issue and adopt an appropriate position. It is equally true that any other regulations may be misused by the local consistory. This rule is not provided for consistories seeking an easy way out, but rather for that consistory which has struggled with this problem and wants to do that which is right both for the person involved and for the body of Christ. To do nothing except make fruitless visits, or to proceed to excommunication or erasure with one who professes to be committed to the Christian faith but worships elsewhere, are both unacceptable alternatives. This is the message which we have received from many consistories. And this request for help requires a positive reply.

We do not weaken our position as a church which maintains the practice of Christian discipline when we adopt this regulation. Actually we strengthen our position. As long as we have no provision to drop those members from the rolls who profess to be Christians but do not participate in the life of the congregation, we either have to tolerate them as inactive and ineffective members, or declare that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ. But either way we find ourselves in a difficult position. The member who has already indicated that he considers church membership unimportant makes a consistory either tolerate his indifference, thereby confirming his judgment, or forces the consistory to proceed to excommunication or erasure, putting the consistory in a position very close to saying that outside of this church there is no salvation. Can we in good conscience declare that he "is excommunicated from the church of the Lord, and that, so long as he persists obstinately and impenitently in his sins, he is excluded from the fellowship of Christ, of the holy sacraments, and of all the spiritual blessings and benefits which God promises and bestows upon his church . . ." (Form for Excommunication)? There must be a better way to deal with this person.

After appropriate admonitions, the consistory should have the right to make an announcement to the congregation to this effect: "For over two years Mr. has separated himself from the life and fellowship of the congregation. He claims to be a Christian and asserts that he is attending another church, but he will not request that his membership be sent to this church. The consistory has sought to point out the significance of membership in the visible church to him, but finds itself unable to minister effectively to him under these conditions. By his own action he has forfeited his rights of membership, and has made his relationship to this congregation meaningless. For that reason the consistory now declares that his membership has lapsed."

To say this would be to withhold judgment as to his place in the kingdom of God, while at the same time it would declare to him and to the congregation that he had forfeited the rights and privileges of belonging to the visible body of Christ as it came to expression in that local congregation. Such a declaration must ultimately be made if we are to maintain the purity of the church, and fulfil our responsibility as office bearers who will one day be called to account for the members entrusted to our care.

RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that synod declare that a baptized or confessing member who, for a period of at least two years, has not moved but fails to attend and support the congregation that holds his membership may, by consistorial action, have his membership declared to be lapsed when all the following conditions are present:

1. He claims to be still committed to the Christian faith.
2. He claims to be attending another church or churches.
3. The consistory is not aware of any public sin requiring discipline.

Grounds:

- a. Since membership involves both rights and obligations, the right of membership may be forfeited when the obligations of membership in a local congregation are refused.
- b. After an adequate period during which the elders instruct the member in his responsibilities as a member of the congregation, his membership has become meaningless, and the action of declaring the membership lapsed is simply an acknowledgment of an already existing rupture between the member and the congregation.
- c. This provision has become necessary because of the increasing trend on the part of many churches and fellowships to ignore or reject the significance of membership in the visible church.
- d. This is consistent with the decision of synod that one who has separated himself from the fellowship of the congregation by moving away and takes no action to become a member of another church may also lose his membership by consistorial action.
- e. This will assist consistories, who at present face the alternative of taking no effective action with such a member or proceeding to erase or excommunicate him from the body of Christ, by pro-

viding a way of removing his name from the membership rolls without being required to pass judgment on his relationship to the church universal.

We request that synod give the privilege of the floor to the reporter of the study committee when the report is discussed at synod.

Committee on Lapsed Membership

Jacob Hasper, chairman

Louis J. Dykstra, reporter

Fred Wind

REPORT 41

WOMEN IN ECCLESIASTICAL OFFICE

The Synod of 1974 charged "its study committee on Women in Ecclesiastical Office to give specific consideration to the distinction between licensure and ordination, and exhorting and preaching, as this distinction may bear on the place of women in the seminary's field education" (Acts 1974, pp. 28-29).

Our committee was unable to fulfill this part of its mandate in the time allotted. Consequently, Synod of 1975 continued the committee "for one year to enable it to complete the task assigned it by the Synod of 1974" (Acts 1975, p. 78).

In our judgment the decisions of 1975 regarding women in ecclesiastical office and the regulations governing student exhorters clearly settle for the present the matter proposed by the mandate. Synod of 1975 decided to maintain the practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office (Acts 1975, p. 78). Though there is a committee of biblical scholars studying the matter of women in ecclesiastical office the decisions of 1975 are currently binding on the churches. The rules governing student exhorters definitely state that such students must intend to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church.

In order to clearly define the situation we quote Article 22 of the Church Order: "Students who have received licensure according to synodical regulations shall be permitted to exhort in the public worship services." Among the regulations adopted by Synod of 1936 are the following:

1. The Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary may grant licensure to conduct religious services in our churches only to such as:
 - a. Are enrolled as regular students in our seminary.
 - b. Have successfully passed the final examinations of the Junior year in the seminary.
2. The board shall not grant licensure to such students until it has made sure of the following with respect to each applicant:
 - a. That he is a member in good standing in our churches.
 - b. That he has the spiritual qualifications necessary for the ministry, and that he considers himself called of God to prepare himself for the office of ministering the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - c. That he intends to enter the ministry of the Christian Reformed Church" (Acts 1936, pp. 46-47).

There are other regulations, but those quoted suffice to establish the fact that for the present women students are not eligible for licensure to exhort.

We realize that this does not settle the question of the distinction between licensure and ordination and between exhorting and preaching. However, under the present circumstances we deem it unnecessary and unwise for our committee to conduct this study any further. The matter of women in ecclesiastical office is still under study by a committee

of biblical scholars. Another committee is to report to Synod of 1976 on the matter of office and ordination. These studies and synod's action on them may well have a bearing on the distinction between licensure and ordination.

The study of the distinction between licensure and ordination and between exhorting and preaching was asked for in the context of "the place of women in the seminary's field education." Our committee did face this question of the status of women students in the seminary. Some women are enrolled in the M. Div. program. To receive this degree the student must engage in field work that includes exhorting in religious services. Under present rules and practice in the denomination women students cannot be licensed to exhort and so it is difficult for them to meet the requirements for the M. Div. degree. Therefore, we judge that if the situation arises in which a woman student finds it impossible to meet the requirements for the M. Div. degree because she cannot be licensed to exhort, the seminary should be permitted to waive the requirement of exhorting.

We make the following *recommendations*:

1. That synod withdraw its mandate given to the committee on Women in Ecclesiastical Office in 1974.

Grounds:

a. This study is not needed as guidance for the churches since the decisions of Synod of 1975 regarding women in ecclesiastical office and the regulations governing student exhorters are sufficiently clear.

b. Results of the studies of other synodical committees will very likely have a bearing on the questions posed by the mandate and therefore the mandated study is premature.

2. That in cases of necessity synod allow the seminary to waive the requirement of exhorting in field education for women students enrolled in the M. Div. program.

Ground: If no exceptions to present requirements are allowed, some women students may find it impossible to receive the M. Div. degree.

Women in Ecclesiastical Office Committee

John Hellinga, chairman
Henry Petersen, reporter
Dirk Aardsma
Rose Alons
James Vander Laan

REPORT 42

THE USE OF WOMEN'S GIFTS IN THE CHURCH

I. MANDATE AND HISTORY

The Synod of 1975 appointed a committee with the mandate "to help the churches implement" the recommendation "that synod urge the churches to make all possible use, within biblical guidelines and the restrictions of the Church Order, of the talents and abilities of women in the work of the church."

In consultation with the Synodical Interim Committee, we took that mandate to mean that we were intended to take action and to urge the churches toward action, rather than serving as a study committee. Further, we understood our mandate to mean that we were to avoid the issue of whether church offices should be opened to women. This we scrupulously did.

Synod, 1975, appointed a committee of four women and three men, with one man and one woman alternate. Because one original male member of the committee could not serve, nor could the male alternate, the committee was finally composed of five women and two men, with a man appointed as chairman and a woman as reporter.

We met monthly, from September through February, at which time this report was written. We planned to continue our work, meeting monthly through May.

II. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The work of the committee can be divided into two categories: attempts to *encourage* the churches to make all possible use of the gifts of women, and action taken by us to *aid* in that process.

The first category includes the following items. We communicated with all the classes of the denomination, and all boards and committees of the denomination, urging them to consider women for positions on boards and committees of the denomination and the classes. We also asked classes to urge their consistories to open more opportunities for service to women. We made contact with the planning committee of the Ministers' Institute urging them to include in their program a substantial discussion of women's role in the church. Since the 1976 program had already been set, we communicated to next year's planning committee a similar request. We also communicated with Calvin Seminary, asking the faculty to become more alert to the issues surrounding the question of women's roles in the church and in society and urged the faculty to consider ways in which seminarians could be better prepared to deal with these issues.

The second category—*aid* to the churches—includes the following items. We developed a questionnaire and surveyed all the congregations in the denomination as to their current practice regarding the functions performed by men and women. An accurate indication of current practice seemed to be the first step in discovering ways of using women's

gifts more fully. A summary of some survey findings is found in the Appendix.

We also developed a data form to be filled out by women interested in serving the church in various capacities. Copies of this form were sent to every pastor in the denomination with the request that he offer them to women in his congregation. Copies were also sent to women's groups in each congregation, to Women's Missionary Unions, to Calvin Seminary wives, to the Canadian Federation of Christian Reformed Women, to the Director of Calvinettes, and to other people who requested them.

The response was very good, with many women filing their names and areas of interest with the committee. The information is being stored in a computer data bank at Calvin College, and the committee anticipates that many more women will have indicated their interest in such service by the time synod meets in June. At their request, we supplied the Board of Foreign Missions and the Chaplain Committee with copies of the data forms completed by women interested in these areas. This data bank is now available to synod and to other groups who wish help in finding women to serve on committees and boards.

Our committee also made plans for a spring conference which would bring these issues before members of the church. At this writing, plans for the conference are still indefinite.

III. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The committee believes that if its mandate is to be fulfilled, more work must be done. In the light of our survey findings (see the Appendix), we believe that women's gifts are not being fully used in the church, and that this is unfortunate. In our judgment the following are some of the needs that remain to be met before women will be able to serve the church in ways consonant with their gifts.

1. Educational materials should be developed to stimulate discussion of women's roles in the church. Many church members focus narrowly on the issue of women's holding office and suspect that any interest in wider participation for women is an attempt to bring about the opening of offices.
2. *Educational materials* should be developed to encourage in the church a response that is both biblical and Reformed to the many issues raised by the fact that we live in a society where men's and women's roles are rapidly changing and being redefined.
3. Some *plan* or *program* should be developed for educating church members and church leaders in order to encourage that same biblical and Reformed response.
4. The data bank initiated by this committee should be maintained and enlarged to serve as a tool for finding both women and men interested in, and capable of, serving the church on its many committees, subcommittees, and boards.
5. Further work should be done in searching out ways and means for women to serve more fully in local congregations.

In reference to 1. above, our committee started to bring together a packet of materials which we had hoped to supply to church groups de-

siring to discuss the issues involved in women's roles in the church. The committee had hoped to develop a list of recommended readings and a study guide to accompany them. However, we found that it was impossible to find an adequate list of materials that did not argue either for or against opening church office to women. Believing that this question was outside our mandate, we discontinued efforts to develop such an educational packet.

However, we do have a paper briefly outlining pertinent articles of the Church Order. This paper intends to give laypeople insights into the procedures and means by which the official channels of the church could be more fully utilized. We also have a collection of all the recent articles on the topic of women's role published in the *Banner*, *Calvinist-Contact*, the *Outlook*, the *Reformed Journal*, and *De Wachter*; a paper on the history of women's rights in the Christian Reformed Church; and a statement of the many issues related to the question of women's role in the church. In addition, we have an annotated bibliography of many relevant books and articles.

IV. RELATED ISSUES

In working to fulfill the committee mandate, we were constantly confronted with unavoidable complexities. We began to realize that the question of women's roles in the church is inextricably intertwined with many other issues. For example:

Does Scripture teach that there are differences, other than anatomical/physiological ones, between men and women? If so, what are they? As a result of these differences, if any, should men and women be expected or required to fill different roles?

What does Scripture teach about the purposes of marriage? Is a deliberately childless marriage a legitimate option for Christians?

What does Scripture teach about the requirements for building a Christian family? May mothers work outside the home? May they have the same dedication to careers that fathers have? Is the commitment to family life significantly different for fathers than for mothers? If so, how? What child-care arrangements are legitimate in Christian families? Given the trend toward smaller families and longer lives, what should women be encouraged to do after their child-rearing years are ended? How can the church help to strengthen Christian families? What does Scripture teach about the value of choosing single life? How can the church more fully meet the needs of the growing numbers of single members (both never married and previously married)?

What does Scripture teach about women's role in society? May women continue to seek greater leadership roles? Should the church encourage this, discourage this, or remain silent about it?

We live in a society where changing roles for men and women are a reality. What structures or sensitivities will the church need in order to offer pastoral care to women caught in tension because of today's changes? How can the church offer pastoral care to men responding to similar tension as it becomes apparent in their families or jobs?

We live in a society where there is an ever greater movement toward equality of legal responsibilities and equality of legal rights for men

and women. Should the church encourage, discourage, or remain silent about this movement?

How can the church involve laymen and laywomen in the task of responding to these problems and issues?

V. CONCLUSION

The committee believes that the question of how women can more fully serve the church is only a small segment of much larger questions such as those posed above. We believe that a major social change is underway in our society and that its impact must not be underestimated. If the denomination does not offer leadership to its members in this matter, we will find ourselves increasingly influenced by anti-Christian, non-Christian, pseudo-Christian, and Christian-but-not-Reformed leaders, groups, and doctrines. We believe that the church has a responsibility to offer informed leadership to its members especially during periods of spiritual and social upheaval. If the church does not offer leadership, it enhances, by default, the powerful influences of secularism which too often shape our consciousness, our relationships, and our sense of values.

The challenge to the church is to clarify scriptural teaching and Christian principles with which to guide its members' response to this vast social change. When the church's members have a firm grasp of biblical guidelines on these matters, they, in turn, can offer leadership to those outside the church. The committee brings to synod's attention the urgency of this need and requests fervently that synod respond to this great challenge.

We urge synod to establish a committee with an expanded mandate. That mandate should include at least the following:

1. to consider the unfinished business listed in III above,
2. to serve the churches with resources and counsel as they deal with the issues listed in IV above and similar issues,
3. to encourage and coordinate study and writing by competent people who can offer leadership on these crucial issues.

Committee on the Use of Women's Gifts

William K. Stob, chairman
 Karen R. DeVos, reporter
 Jeanette Bult De Jong
 Glenda Wierenga Prins
 Lambert Slofstra
 Thea B. Van Halsetma
 Rose Van Reken

Progress Report to Synod 1976, from the Committee on the Use of Women's Gifts

APPENDIX

Some findings of the survey to determine services rendered by men and women in the churches.

The survey questionnaire was sent to 688 churches in December 1975.

By January 28, 1976, responses had been received from 435 churches. The following information is based on these replies.

Classis	Number of Churches	Responses Received	Classis	Number of Churches	Responses Received
Alberta North	17	10	Kalamazoo	22	15
Alberta South	16	7	Lake Erie	22	17
British Columbia	23	12	Minnesota North	24	15
Cadillac	12	6	Minnesota South	16	11
California South	23	16	Muskegon	19	13
Central California	15	6	Northcentral Iowa	16	9
Chatham	20	18	Orange City	17	8
Chicago North	16	11	Pacific Northwest	20	13
Chicago South	13	7	Pella	17	11
Columbia	16	10	Quinte	11	8
Eastern Canada	16	12	Rocky Mountain	27	18
Florida	9	7	Sioux Center	19	15
Grand Rapids East	28	17	Toronto	18	2
Grand Rapids South	15	9	Wisconsin	14	9
Grand Rapids North	22	12	Zeeland	21	13
Grandville	21	17			
Hackensack	20	11		688	432
Hamilton	19	9			
Holland	23	19	Responses from unidentified churches		3
Hudson	26	17			
Huron	14	6			
Illiana	21	16			435

One discovery of the survey is that 21.8% of the reporting churches do not allow women to vote in congregational meetings. The practice of excluding women exists in some churches in twenty-seven of the classes. In one classis, eleven of eleven reporting churches do not allow women to vote.

Somewhere in the denomination women take part in every activity listed by the committee (preaching and offices were not listed, of course). The frequency of their involvement varies widely. Their involvement is most frequent in those roles traditionally assigned to women: primary Sunday school teacher, nursery attendant, and evangelism canvassing.

Involvement of women is least frequent in teaching men's Bible groups, taking offerings, ushering, serving on finance committees, and serving on building and grounds committees. Fifteen percent of reporting churches have women on their building and grounds committees, but 65% of reporting churches use women as custodians.

A sizeable number of churches reported that women take public roles in the worship service. They serve most often as choir members, but 51% of reporting churches have women make reports to the congregation, 53% have women pray in the service, 39% have women read Scripture, and 61% have women make personal statements of faith or experience. Two roles in the worship service are nearly always assigned to men: 77% of reporting churches have only men ushers and 90% have only men taking offerings (probably because deacons usually do this).

The teaching ministry of the church appears to be fairly equally divided between men and women, though it appears that men teach more frequently in the upper grades and women more often in the lower

grades. Two churches reported only men in the primary grades while 65% listed only women; 5% of reporting churches had only women in the senior high classes while 10% reported only men. Fifty-four percent of reporting churches have only men as superintendents.

Fifty-three percent of reporting churches have men and women or women only teaching catechism; 66% have women and men teaching adult Bible study in mixed groups. Men's Bible study groups are almost always led by men while women's Bible study groups have mixed leadership in about half the reporting churches, only women in 37%, and only men in 7%.

Eighty-four percent of reporting churches have men and women visiting the sick and needy, 55% have women involved in recommending how to meet benevolent needs, 35% have men and women on their benevolence committees. It appears that women are more often involved in the work of mercy, less often involved in the decisions about that work.

Church staff members (secretary; custodian; visitor of sick, shut-in; youth worker; director of music; director of evangelism) may be either men or women for all listed positions. However, all such positions, with the exception of church secretary, are more often held by men than by women.

Men and women sometimes serve together on all listed church committees, but with widely varying frequency. In 81% of reporting churches the evangelism committee has men and women, in 60% the fellowship committee, in 54% the education committee, in 47% the library committee, in 39% the community care committee, in 35% the benevolence committee, in 29% the worship committee, in 14% the building and grounds committee, and in 10% the finance committee has men and women members. In churches where members of only one sex are on these committees, the members are nearly always male, except for library committees. It should be noted that in many churches certain committees are filled only by members of the consistory.

SUMMARY

The following tasks are assigned only to women in over 50% of reporting churches; primary Sunday school teacher; planning meals, child-care, etc. for the needy; church secretary; and nursery attendant.

The following tasks are assigned only to men in over 50% of reporting churches: superintendent of Sunday School; men's Bible study leader; director of evangelism; member of benevolence committee, worship committee, building and grounds committee, finance committee.

All other tasks listed on the questionnaire are shared by men and women in over 50% of the reporting churches.

It appears that for any activity that takes place in a local congregation, somewhere in the denomination women are serving in that capacity. Notes appended by various respondents indicate that women are serving as full members of steering committees in unorganized congregations, and that some women are serving as associate members of consistories with full rights to participation except for voting. In short, women are serving in all areas of local congregational work outside of office. How-

ever, the survey also indicates that women do not participate this widely in every congregation.

The survey indicates that in several types of service women probably do the work more frequently than they make decisions or recommendations about what work to do or how to do it. In benevolent work, 83% of the churches reported that women help with visiting the sick and needy but only 35% of churches have women on their benevolence committees. In evangelism, 89% of churches have women canvassing, but only 17% have women as directors of evangelism. While 61% of churches have women participating in public worship (other than in choir), only 29% have women serving on their worship committees. While 100% have women teaching in the church school at some level, only 43% have women as superintendents and only 54% have women on their education committees.

Finally, two notes about the statistics. The fact that, for example, 29% of reporting churches have women on their worship committees does not indicate that 29% of all people serving on worship committees are women. It indicates only that in 29% of the reporting churches at least one woman is on the committee. If we had been able to tabulate the actual *number* of women and men involved, or the number of *times* men and women were involved, in a given activity, we would have had a clearer picture of the degree of disparity between the opportunities for women and those for men. Secondly, it should be noted that the percentage of reporting churches is not the same as the percentage of reporting churches to which the question applies. In every instance it is the percentage of reporting churches which is given. In most cases the percentage differences are small. A complete list of statistics compiled from the survey is available.

REPORT 43
PSALTER HYMNAL SUPPLEMENT

I. MANDATE AND HISTORY

In our report to the 1972 Synod discussing our mandate from the Acts of Synod 1971, after assessing where things stood, after formulating principles and guidelines for liturgical, worshipful music (using the 1953 principles and four motifs of the 1968 Liturgical Committee report), and after stating certain problem areas (Church Order, Article 52, immediate song selection, a longer range program concerning improvement of the present Psalter Hymnal and the need for soliciting new texts and music from our own communion), we made two proposals which were adopted by the Synod of 1972:

"1. We propose to prepare a supplemental collection of hymns and songs to be added to the Psalter Hymnal which will fit the guidelines we have established and also reflect the song styles that are current among us now in the Psalter Hymnal. This collection will be available at the time of synod.

"2. We propose that this committee be continued in order to carry out an on-going program of education and solicitation, such as:

a. to continue the program of educating the church in the newer, yet excellent song styles that are available as well as some older unknown and untried styles;

b. to continue to screen out and submit for provisional use by means of a Banner pullout insert existing hymns and psalms not now in current use in the churches;

c. to continue to solicit and judge original compositions, which would be published periodically as a pullout in *The Banner*, used experimentally in the churches, and so finally approved or not as they deserve;

d. to engage in a revision of some existing songs in the Psalter Hymnal, altering the instrumentation, harmonic patterns, vocal range, texts and such other details as will encourage the most universal use of the existing collection of psalms and hymns."

A history of our subsequent activity and the progress of our study committee was reported to the Synods of 1973 (Report 37), 1974 (Communication 21) and 1975 (Report 44). We are happy to be able to report that the corrected edition of the Psalter Hymnal Supplement, including replacement of the two songs omitted after our committee carefully examined responses from the churches, has been printed. We have been able to include a metrical version of the creed (which appeared in the Banner) to go with the original unmetrical version which was maintained. A sheet of errata along with the replacement songs has been sent to the churches which bought the 24,000 copies of the original edition.

We thank God that the painstaking work done will now be tested in the hearts and minds and voices of our people, who gradually are warming

up to the ongoing reform and broadening range of liturgical music and song for enriching worship.

II. CURRENT STATUS

We are turning attention now and giving our time to the educational side of our renewing task of hunting down and soliciting doctrinally sound and biblically fitting melodies and encouraging their liturgical use by providing the Banner pull-outs. The areas in which we are trying to give *new* sings and modes a hearing are: psalmody, original Reformation songs, biblical text hymns, songs especially designed for use with celebration of the sacraments, and other texts and melodies appropriate for special periods of the church year. We see this as a careful way, in line with our mandate, to encourage members of our own communion to write liturgical songs that may receive a provisional hearing in the church at worship.

We have also made a start on the task of stimulating a more universal use of the present (1959) Psalter Hymnal, by drawing up a *liturgical* index of its psalms and hymns that would help the preaching ministers of the Word more easily utilize the material already in the order of worship and church year. Using the 1968 report and the ordering principle used in the Psalter Hymnal Supplement, we are simply designating suggested liturgical uses of the numbers in the Psalter Hymnal.

We would expect to finish these liturgical indexing pages and present them to the Synod of 1977 for consideration and possible inclusion in later printings of the Psalter Hymnal.

Simultaneously, our committee (in accordance with the mandate of the 1972 Synod, (Acts 1972, Article 40, II, C, 4d, p. 49) is moving toward evaluating possible musical weaknesses, anachronistic texts, and lacunae in the present (1959) Psalter Hymnal, so that we may gain a developing idea of possible enriching revisions.

III. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

We would like to report to synod the resignation from the committee by Betty De Vries, whose specialized knowledge and gifts of knowing how to produce a copyrighted text have been invaluable to us and the church at large, but who can not free herself for the present committee work from her own employment commitments. We are of the opinion that no replacement is needed at this time.

Psalter Hymnal Supplement Committee

Calvin Seerveld, chairman
Marie J. Post, secretary
Gary Warmink
John Hamersma
John Worst
Mike McGervey
John Vriend
Bert Polman

REPORT 44

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE*Background of this Report*

In 1970 synod appointed a committee to update the rules of the then-existing synodical committee. The reason for this action was that the last revision of the mandate governing the synodical committee had been made in 1936, and the mandate was no longer appropriate. A further assignment to that committee was that it formulate a job description for the office of the denominational Stated Clerk. It was to report in 1971.

Once it got into its assignment this Committee to Update the Rules came to feel that it had to do more than update rules. Its report states:

The goal which this committee set for itself was to bring together the various concerns of synod under one committee, and to provide a structure which would serve the purpose of coordination in these days when synod's work is a multi-million dollar operation (Acts 1971, p. 496).

In keeping with that goal it recommended the restructuring of the synodical committee into a "synodical agency which has the responsibility to bring representatives of all agencies of synod together for planning, programming, and the setting of priorities." Such an interim committee, it was felt, would answer the need for "a continuing analysis and evaluation of the program and resources of the denomination" (Acts 1971, p. 503). The proposed Synodical Interim Committee (SIC) would also absorb the function of the Standing Advisory Budget Committee, serve as the corporate trustees of synod, and supervise the work of the Stated Clerk and the Denominational Financial Coordinator.

When the Committee to Update the Rules reported to the Synod of 1971, several denominational agencies raised vigorous objections. Said one, "We feel that the study committee went beyond the mandate of synod." Another protested, "The creation of the proposed structure . . . is not in keeping with . . . good Reformed Church polity since this proposal tends to conflict with the principle of congregational autonomy." It was suggested that "The concept of a Synodical Committee functioning strictly as an 'interim' committee similar to that of a classical committee on the lower level of ecclesiastical life is sufficient." Yet another agency saw as the principal objection "the danger of excessive concentration of power in one rather small but very powerful committee." And synod was advised to "exercise caution so that the (Financial Coordinator) shall function as a counselor to the denominational agencies and as an advisor to synod, but not have the rights of autocratic decisions" (Acts 1971, Art. 87).

Synod's advisory committee judged that the study committee had indeed gone beyond its mandate, but averred, "There was adequate reason for doing so." It also stated that it "does not feel that the proposed

Synodical Committee is inconsistent with Reformed Church polity." On both grounds synod agreed. It decided to

"constitute a Synodical Interim Committee to embrace the functions of the present Synodical Committee, the Standing Advisory Budget Committee, and the Synodical Trustees;
to serve as a service agency to denominational agencies and committees;
to supervise the work of the Stated Clerk and the Financial Coordinator. . ."

and to

"put this arrangement into effect for a period of five years. A review of the effectiveness of this arrangement shall be presented to the Synod of 1976 by a committee to be appointed by the Synod of 1975."

It is this review which has been assigned to the undersigned committee and about which it submits this report.

The Objectives of the Synod of 1971

The review committee's task is to analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the reorganized SIC in terms of the objectives of the Synod of 1971. What were synod's objectives? The answer is not altogether clear. The objectives of the study committee seem clear enough. Envisioned was a committee that would be "responsible to synod for the coordination, follow-up, evaluation, planning in regard to the work of synod, . . . concern itself with the good order of the churches, . . . and receive monthly reports from the agencies of synod and shall serve as consultant to the agencies regarding the coordination of the total denominational effort" (Acts 1971, p. 504). No weak committee, that! Synod, however, was somewhat more cautious.

In spelling out the mandate for SIC, synod made clear that it was to be "a service committee." One of the grounds states that the restructured synodical committee would give organizational opportunity for "mutual consultation" (Acts 1971, Art. 87). Synod's caution is also expressed in its decision to review the whole matter in five years. The main reason for this decision was, "This would give the church an opportunity to experience how effective this arrangement would be without committing the church to a permanent arrangement."

Was SIC intended to be only a service committee? Was it given authority beyond that? A detailed examination of SIC's mandate shows that synod included items which might easily be interpreted as giving SIC power considerably beyond that of a service committee. For example, the mandate stipulates that SIC "shall be responsible to synod for the planning, coordination, and application in regard to the work of synod." A statement like this seems to give SIC rather sweeping powers and creates the impression that the synodical agencies are now responsible to SIC.

This apparent ambiguity is raised because it hinders the review committee in defining the precise objectives of the Synod of 1971, and keeps it from discovering an indisputable guideline by which the effectiveness of SIC can be measured.

This ambiguity at the same time explains a number of other aspects of

SIC's five year history. Many of the denominational agencies have been somewhat wary of SIC because they are not clear about its position and authority. To this day they struggle with the question, put by one of them,

Is the Interim Committee basically a supervisory agency or basically a facilitating agency? . . . is the Interim Committee empowered to define what coordination means and then to expect compliance from the agencies? Or is the Interim Committee empowered to facilitate the agencies' coordination with each other. . . ?

Another result of lack of clarity on this point has been that SIC, although it has received many forms of cordial cooperation from the agencies, has not had an altogether easy atmosphere within which to do its work. Obviously, all parties will be well served if synod clarifies the exact nature of the mandate and of the authority of SIC.

The Work of SIC

Although SIC was by its own admission slow in beginning its work, largely because of the newness of its mandate, its accomplishments on behalf of synod are considerable. While it is not necessary to go into great detail—much can be gathered from the annual reports to synod—some specific accomplishments should be mentioned.

To begin with, the members of SIC function as the *corporate trustees* of synod. On basis of extensive work SIC proposed to the Synod of 1974 Articles of Association and By-Laws of a new corporation, the Christian Reformed Church in North America. These were approved and, as reported to the Synod of 1975, SIC then completed the incorporation procedures. One of the important results is a tax exemption privilege for the denomination and its agencies, and for all the US congregations and classes which have sought inclusion.

Substantial work, furthermore, has been done by SIC in *program surveys and coordination*. All synodically recommended causes have been studied, up-to-date charts have been drafted on their purposes and programs, and coordination with programs of denominational agencies has been promoted. Proposals to synod to recommend these agencies are now based on an analysis of both their programs and financial situation. SIC has also drafted guidelines for the accreditation of causes, guidelines which were adopted by synod.

SIC has also promoted the coordination of programs of the synodical agencies. Detailed program analyses of each of these agencies are now under way. The committee assists the agencies in resolving specific problems of overlapping of programs. Administrative directors of all major agencies meet bi-monthly as the Inter-Agency Advisory Council to promote contact, understanding, and cooperation among their agencies.

On the level of *services*, SIC has been a participant in organizing Coordinated Services through which duplicating, mailing, shipping, purchasing, and the like are provided for the denominational agencies and committees. The committee is now also responsible for the management of the denominational building.

There is a third distinct area in which SIC has been active: various synods have committed to it special *problems and studies*. Thus it has

conducted salary surveys of ministers, made recommendations on the adequacy of the Unordained Employees Pension Fund, and submitted the proposals for the United States Bicentennial Celebration by the United States segment of the denomination which were adopted by the Synod of 1975.

A last area in this by no means exhaustive survey of SIC's work is that of synodical *policies and procedures*. In a number of instances the committee has recognized deficiencies and recommended improvements. These range from policies about speakers at synod from agencies seeking financial support, to policies about appointments made by synod, to rules for the admittance of ministers from other denominations. SIC is more likely to become aware of the need for such improvements than are the consistories, classes, and denominational agencies. In the above ways SIC has sought to fulfill the mandate of synod. It has served with considerable efficiency. Through it the work of the synods and of the denomination as a whole has been furthered.

Program Coordination and Planning—Which Approach?

The uneasiness about the authority of SIC referred to earlier in this report surfaces primarily in the area of program and services coordination. The review committee cannot fulfil its mandate without examining this issue more closely.

At issue is item D of SIC's mandate. It states, "The Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible to synod for the planning, coordination, and application in regard to the work of synod." SIC has thus far focused its attention mainly on the "coordination" mentioned in this grammatically poor item of the mandate. It seeks to achieve coordination between denominational agencies and causes recommended by synod for financial and/or prayer support. It also seeks to coordinate the programs and the services of the denominational agencies. The coordination of *services* met with a measure of difficulty, which the Synod of 1975 acted to resolve by instructing SIC and the other parties involved to review the Coordinated Services Manual and to prepare a mutually conceived and approved manual by June 1976 (See Acts 1975, p. 87). The *program* analysis of the synodical agencies was begun by SIC relatively recently. It is this part of coordination which the review committee wishes to focus on now.

What is the approach of SIC to the program coordination among the synodical agencies? Last year it reported to synod,

As to *Program Coordination*, research and study is being and will be made of each agency's original mandate from synod and subsequent amendments. When this is reasonably and prudently ascertained by the Synodical Interim Committee of synod through its Church Polity and Program Committee, both program coordination and financial coordination objectives and goals will be presented to the Synodical Interim Committee for review and recommendation.

This statement expresses a basic feature of the SIC approach. SIC itself, through its staff and sub-committee, will carry out the research. Thus the synodical agencies become *objects* of this study rather than the pri-

mary agents involved in doing it. At the conclusion of the study SIC will act on recommendations for objectives and goals for the agencies.

The review committee has principal as well as practical objections to this approach. Its principal objection is that the primary responsibility for coordinating and planning should lie with the agencies themselves. Its practical objection is that to the committee's mind this approach is less efficient and will inevitably cast SIC into a "watchdog" role.

The primary responsibility for coordination, the review committee suggests, should remain with the synodical agencies. The priesthood of all believers implies that everyone should do his work with dedication and efficiency. To hold someone else responsible for a part of his task undermines both the rest of his work and his dignity before God in his priesthood.

Synod has given each of its agencies a specific assignment. Theirs now is the responsibility to carry out that assignment with dedication and efficiency. They have to hold themselves responsible for cutting through time-hallowed customs, vested interests, and other obstacles so that the one work of the Lord through the denomination will be done, and so that it will be done with an *economic* use of time, talent, and personnel. For this reason they must constantly coordinate their efforts. To take this responsibility away from the agencies and assign it to SIC is principally incorrect.

An unspecified lack of coordination moved the Synod of 1971 to give SIC a mandate which includes "coordination . . . in regard to the work of synod." Did synod thereby absolve the agencies from their responsibility to coordinate their efforts? To draw that conclusion would be a serious error. One need only remember that SIC was designated as "a service committee" which would provide "organizational opportunity for mutual consultation in the interrelated matters of denominational agencies and committees" (Acts 1971, Art. 87).

At the same time, it would have been helpful to both the agencies and SIC had that synod delineated the precise responsibilities of SIC in the area of program coordination. Without such a delineation, and without precedents to go by, SIC had to find its own way. And it is now proceeding along the lines which it indicated to the Synod of 1975.

To summarize, the review committee's principal problem with the SIC approach to program coordination is that that approach does not have the primary responsibility of the agencies built into it.

Objection can be made to SIC's approach on a practical level as well. The agencies themselves, which work with their mandates and are acquainted with the details of their own programs, can more efficiently engage in program analysis than can SIC. Furthermore, since SIC envisions most of this mammoth task being done by its own staff and subcommittee, much time and/or additional staff will be needed. One must also consider the diversity of expertise required to analyze programs as different from one another as those of the Board of Foreign Missions and Calvin College and Seminary. To raise one more concern, the review committee anticipates an atmosphere of strain if program coordination is carried out with SIC as primary agent. SIC will inevitably be looked

upon as the supervisor of other agencies. In such a situation a power struggle is never far below the surface.

These objections become all the more pressing when one remembers that SIC's mandate refers not only to program coordination but also to long-range planning and the setting of priorities.

Because of these principal and practical objections, the review committee has decided to recommend an approach to program coordination which stresses the primary responsibility of the agencies and delineates an essential role of "midwife" for SIC.

The Functioning of SIC

About the functioning of SIC as a committee, a few matters will suffice. The impression one receives from SIC through its minutes and reports and from personal contact is that the committee functions smoothly. It meets three times a year. In addition, its two sub-committees—Church Polity and Program, and Finance—meet frequently. The agenda at the main meetings consists of matters processed through the subcommittees. The flow of materials is efficient.

SIC as well as the review committee feel that the present area representation should be retained. However, there are difficulties. Those more distant from Grand Rapids are at a disadvantage because they cannot participate in the sub-committee meetings and have little opportunity to help shape the proposals from these committees. Furthermore, they have no personal contact with the representatives of agencies with whom SIC is involved. Often the area representatives travel a great distance to attend a meeting of SIC which normally lasts for less than one day. Altogether, this must make it difficult for them to get the *feel* of the issues on which decisions must be made, and SIC does not get the full benefit from their membership in it.

Are there ways in which these members can become more fully involved in the work of SIC? The review committee thinks that some restructuring of the thrice-yearly meetings may be beneficial. What it envisions are meetings of more than a day's length, which include sub-committee meetings at which the area representatives have direct contact with the agencies' representatives. This would allow all the members to have a hand in shaping proposals for the general meeting, to have direct contact with other agencies, and to immerse themselves in SIC's concerns long enough to get the feel of them. The review committee proposes that synod pass this suggestion on to SIC for its consideration and response.

As to its own membership, SIC annually presents to synod nominations to fill the vacancies which occur. Any suggestion that thereby SIC becomes a self-perpetuating body does not take into account that its members serve according to synodical regulations and that synod itself has the prerogative of adding to the nominations. A given area, however, may have several persons with excellent qualifications for SIC service of whom SIC may not be aware. The review committee suggests that SIC, before submitting a nomination to synod, solicit suggestions from the classes in the respective areas.

The review committee wants to alert SIC to two matters involving the Stated Clerk and the Financial Coordinator with which it should deal soon. First, until now SIC has not developed a formal method or procedure for the supervision of these two positions as required in its mandate. Second, there is need formally to clarify the status of the Stated Clerk and the Financial Coordinator as part of SIC. Are they voting members or are they resource persons with an advisory vote? Since the relationship between SIC and these two men is one of mutual appreciation, a favorable setting is present for resolving these matters.

With respect to office staff, since Coordinated Services began to function, routine services such as duplicating and mailing are handled by its staff for each of the agencies in the denominational building. According to the review committee's information, however, the agencies have not reduced their staff at all. What is the reason? Is the work done by Coordinated Services for the agencies quite limited? Has the staff of the agencies been assigned duties not done before? Whatever the reason, the fact itself is surprising. While coordination should result in greater economy, more staff is presently employed in the denominational building than before Coordinated Services came into existence. This state of affairs raises the question of cost-justification.

Coordinated Services was begun, it appears, on the *assumption* that savings and/or improved services would result. The review committee has been unable to find a detailed rationale for this assumption, a reasoned presentation of the conditions under which savings would be achieved. Consequently, the review committee recommends that the supporting staff of the agencies in the denominational building and of SIC be appraised and that each position on the staffs be cost-justified.

At present, who has the final responsibility for the staff of Coordinated Services is unclear. Early last year a person was engaged to work half time at internal auditing and half time at program coordination. It would seem to be the responsibility of SIC to approve the opening of such a position. However, the review committee has been unable to find minutes indicating such approval. SIC is merely informed that the action has been taken. The review committee recommends that SIC clearly delineate the lines of authority about the staff of Coordinated Services.

Conclusion

The review committee's analysis of SIC's mandate, of the work accomplished by SIC, and of its uncompleted work, has convinced the committee that SIC should be continued. At the same time, it has concluded that synod should remove certain ambiguities in SIC's mandate about the respective responsibilities of the synodical agencies and of SIC in the area of program planning, coordinating, and the setting of priorities. Furthermore, the review committee is of the opinion that such planning, coordinating, and setting of priorities is so significant and sensitive an undertaking that synod itself should give some basic guidelines as to how its agencies and the SIC should interact to achieve synod's objectives. Therefore it has included in its recommendations such guidelines for synod's consideration.

Finally, should synod at this time commit itself to the present SIC as a *permanent* part of the denomination's ecclesiastical structure? The review committee's conclusion is that synod should give SIC an adequate period of time to demonstrate its effectiveness in each area of its mandate before answering that question in the affirmative.

Appreciation

The assignment given to the review committee could not have been carried out without the active cooperation of the representatives of the various synodical agencies, of SIC, and of the Stated Clerk and the Financial Coordinator. Such cooperation the committee has received. This assistance has helped make the committee's carrying out its review an encouraging experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That synod continue the Synodical Interim Committee with the following mandate:

1. The Synodical Interim Committee shall execute all matters committed to it by the definite instruction of synod.
2. The Synodical Interim Committee shall execute all synodical matters which cannot be postponed until the next synod.
3. The Synodical Interim Committee shall supervise the work of the Stated Clerk and the Denominational Financial Coordinator, and advise them in respect to the discharge of their work.
4. The Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible for expediting the work which synod does directly.
5. The Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible for promoting the planning, coordinating, and the setting of priorities of programs by each of the synodical agencies and by all of them together, in keeping with synodical guidelines.
6. The Synodical Interim Committee shall receive regular financial and program reports from the agencies of synod and approved by synod so that it can evaluate budget requests in the light of current projects and future goals and make appropriate recommendations to synod.
7. The Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of the Synodical Agenda, the Acts of Synod, the Yearbook, and such other official publications as synod shall authorize.
8. The Synodical Interim Committee shall prepare for synod an annually updated survey of ministers' compensation to be distributed to all consistories for their guidance as a supplement to the Guidelines for Ministers' Salaries adopted by the Synod of 1970.
9. The Synodical Interim Committee shall be responsible for administering the denominational master address list in keeping with the instructions of synod.

Notes:

- a. From the 1971 mandate the review committee is suggesting the deletion of two items. The first called for SIC's receiving "progress re-

ports from all study committees and ad hoc committees appointed by synod" (E). The second gave SIC the task through the Stated Clerk to "serve the classes, consistories, and individuals with advice and information regarding the Church Order and the decisions of synod" (H). They can be omitted from the SIC mandate for two reasons. They properly belong to and are already included in the job description of the Stated Clerk. Furthermore, SIC and its subcommittees are available to the Stated Clerk whenever he desires their response to any matter submitted to him.

b. Item D of the 1971 mandate has been broken up into two distinct segments and has been reformulated. The grounds for this reformulation are:

- 1) It removes the ambiguity as to where lies the primary responsibility for program planning, coordination, and the setting of priorities for each agency.
- 2) It provides for a structurally proper and fruitful relationship between SIC and the other synodical committees and agencies.
- 3) It appears to be the intent of the Synod of 1971.

B. That with respect to program planning, coordination, and the setting of priorities by the synodical agencies, synod decide:

1. To instruct SIC to formulate, in consultation with each of the agencies, a set of guidelines to be used by each agency for analyzing its own mandate and programs.

Grounds:

- a. A common set of guidelines is necessary for pinpointing areas of overlapping and inefficiency.
 - b. The guidelines have to reflect the individuality and specific function of each agency.
 - c. SIC is the logical instrument to formulate such guidelines.
2. To instruct each of the synodical agencies
 - a. to engage in a thorough analysis of its mandate, programs, finances, and office operations, in keeping with the formulated guidelines and according to a mutually agreed upon schedule;
 - b. to keep SIC regularly and fully informed on the progress of this analysis;
 - c. to engage, upon the completion of the analysis, in a joint evaluation of it with SIC;
 - d. to keep SIC regularly and fully informed on both the need for and progress in program coordination with other agencies, and to seek SIC's services whenever needed.

Grounds (for proposal 2 above):

- 1) There is a continuing need for coordinating the work of the synodical agencies.
- 2) The primary responsibility for such coordination lies with the agencies themselves.
- 3) The required analysis can be carried out most efficiently by each of the agencies, since each is best acquainted with its own mandate and detailed programs.
- 4) SIC can promote coordination only when it is kept fully informed and is regularly consulted.

3. To instruct its agencies and SIC to address themselves to long-range planning and the setting of priorities by each of the agencies and by all of them together, following the general pattern adopted for program coordination.

Grounds:

- a. The denomination through synod should from time to time reflect on its priorities and examine its existing programs.
 - b. Planning enables the denomination to develop programs for carrying out its many-sided task in a responsible and opportune way.
- C. That synod refer to SIC the following suggestions for its consideration and for response to the Synod of 1977:

1. That SIC restructure its meetings in such a way that all its members will be able to share more fully than at present in its contacts, deliberations, and decisions.

Ground: SIC and synod do not get the full benefit from the membership in SIC of half its members because of their inability to participate in its sub-committee meetings, their lack of contact with the agencies with whom SIC is involved and the brevity of most general meetings.

2. That SIC, prior to submitting to synod nominations for filling vacancies on it, solicit suggestions from the classes in the respective areas.

3. That SIC clearly delineate the lines of authority concerning the staff of Coordinated Services.

D. That synod instruct SIC to provide the Synod of 1977 with an appraisal and cost-justification of the supporting staff of the agencies in the denominational building and of SIC, including Coordinated Services.

Grounds:

1. No staff reductions are evident in the agencies since Coordinated Services has come into being.

2. The review committee has received no evidence of reduction in procurement costs.

E. That the *effectiveness* of the present structure be reviewed after five years by a committee to be appointed by the synod of 1980 and to report in 1981.

Ground: An important part of SIC's mandate, that of promoting the program planning, coordination, and the setting of priorities, is just now being undertaken. Therefore the fruitfulness of SIC's work in this area cannot now be determined.

F. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the chairman and the reporter of the review committee for the purpose of explaining this report.

Committee to Review the Effectiveness
of the Synodical Interim Committee

G. Gritter, chairman

J. B. Vos, reporter

B. Boersma

J. H. Fles

G. J. Rozenboom

R. Seven

H. Soper

REPORT 45

COMMITTEE RE COMMUNICATION OF DR. HARRY BOER

In response to the mandate assigned the undersigned committee by the Synod of 1975 (Article 104, II, p. 105), we present this report with our recommendations.

I. THE MANDATE

The Synod of 1975 received a communication (No. 4) from Dr. Harry Boer which according to synod's own reading purported to be neither an appeal nor a gravamen (II, B, 2, a). Synod nonetheless declared "that Dr. Boer has raised a legitimate concern to which the church should address herself" when he "asked synod to inform him what 'the express testimony of Scripture' is for the teachings of Article I, 6 and I, 15 of the Canons of Dordt as contained in his letter to synod, Communication 4, paragraph VI, as follows:

"That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree (Canons of Dordt, I, 6). . . . not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure, has decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion. . . (Ibid. I, 15)."

Synod, however, after considerable debate and rejection of various recommendations decided "to appoint a committee to advise the Synod of 1976 on:

"a. The status of communications like that of Dr. Harry Boer which purport to be neither appeals nor gravamina.

"b. The proper method for synod to deal with them."

Synod, therefore, decided to "postpone its further answer to Dr. Boer until it has received the report of this committee."

Our mandate requires thus that we consider the status before synod of communications like that of Dr. Boer and secondly, recommend a proper method for dealing with them. It is clear that synod is not asking merely for advice with regard to Dr. Boer's communication but for directions or a policy to follow when confronting communications of the type of Dr. Boer's that according to their authors cannot be classified as appeals from classes and consistories, nor as gravamina.

For us to fulfill our mandate it is first of all necessary to look carefully at Dr. Boer's communication, not to deal with its content or answer its request, but to ascertain its character and to seek to determine its status.

II. ANALYSIS OF DR. BOER'S COMMUNICATION

The request of Dr. Boer is for information. He asks synod to provide "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" that Article I, 15 of the Canons asserts is available to establish the doctrine of reprobation.

Why does Dr. Boer seek this information? He is well aware that synod cannot answer constantly, requests to verify the church's confessions from Scripture. Classis Chicago South has so informed him (Communication 14). Dr. Boer is nonetheless of the opinion that his request is urgent and proper in view of the context out of which he asks for the scriptural testimony. He believes he is voicing what is implicit in the current life of the denomination regarding the teaching of reprobation. This context, as presented by Dr. Boer, is in summary that:

1. The doctrine of election, which Dr. Boer heartily endorses, is, he alleges, rapidly going into eclipse in the Christian Reformed Church, because of the existence alongside of it, and inextricably bound up with it, of the companion doctrine of reprobation.

He holds that the latter doctrine is not denied by anyone, but a general disbelief prevails regarding it, resulting in an ominous silence which is an unhealthy and serious condition in the church.

2. Further evidence of this ambiguity, regarding the teaching of reprobation in the church, is the complete neglect of it in the so-called "Love of God" controversy in 1963-67 in which, Dr. Boer maintains, the doctrine of reprobation should have had significant and determinative involvement in the dispute.

3. As a missionary teacher of theology engaged in writing textbooks for English speaking African theological students, Dr. Boer needs the scriptural verification for reprobation and has not been able to discover the express testimony of Scripture of which the Canons speak. Nor is he satisfied with the scriptural support adduced by Reformed theologians.

4. Dr. Boer has appealed to both his consistory and classis for such scriptural support but they have declined to provide such testimony from the Bible.

In the light of these considerations Dr. Boer has addressed synod, believing that his concern for the whole denomination and his own needs as a missionary-commissioned teacher of theology give legitimacy to his request.

The problem confronting the Synod of 1975 with Dr. Boer's letter was its status in view of the fact that he did not bring it as an appeal from previous consistorial and classical decisions, nor did he wish it to be construed as a gravamen concerning the doctrine of reprobation.

Dr. Boer does not state in his communication why he does not bring it to synod as an appeal from the actions of his consistory and Classis Chicago South. He had addressed the same request to both bodies and they in turn declined to supply the express biblical testimony on the following grounds as formulated by Classis Chicago South (Communications 14 and 30 to the Synod of 1975 from Classis Chicago South and Lynwood CRC consistory, respectively):

- "1. Such action would be contrary to the requirements of the Form of Subscription. The form clearly requires that those who have differing sentiments concerning the confession must present the case to the churches by way of official address, commonly called a gravamen.

- "2. Such action would require the church to verify constantly her confession to those who as office bearers have signed and fully assent

to the confession, whereas those with differing sentiment must bear the burden of proof.

"3. Your request, if granted, would change the inherent confessional (creedal) character of the Christian Reformed Church.

"4. Such action would nullify the significance of the signing of the Form of Subscription."

Dr. Boer did not choose, however, to appeal this decision of Classis Chicago South not to provide the requested biblical evidence, nor did he choose to accept their advice to present his case by way of an "official address, commonly called a gravamen."

In a personal interview with Dr. Boer your committee learned that Dr. Boer chose not to appeal the decisions of classis because it would have required that he present the matter in the same form as he had addressed it to classis, which he recognized could not be publicly expressed in keeping with the Form of Subscription. In the light of the context of his request for the scriptural testimony as outlined above, he believed the question is deserving of public exposure and involvement and so took the way of addressing a request for information by means of a letter, which he also published in the April issue of the *Reformed Journal*.

Dr. Boer does not wish his request to be construed as a gravamen. It is not his purpose in his letter to deny or object to the doctrine of reprobation as taught in the Canons, but to seek only the express testimony of Scripture which the Canons assert is available. His justification for this request is the current destructive situation in the church, as he views it, which is created by the present status of the doctrine in the life of the church. It is his position that because of the current situation it is not incumbent upon him as an individual to file a gravamen in order to direct synod's attention to the unhealthy condition he believes exists and which he holds must be generally acknowledged to exist. In his judgment by requesting synod to provide the scriptural testimony the church will be properly pressed to evaluate the doctrine of reprobation as taught in the Canons and generally understood in the church as well as considering its role in the life of the denomination today.

III. EVALUATION OF DR. BOER'S COMMUNICATION

It must be observed that Classis Chicago South in Communication 14 informed synod that it did seriously consider Dr. Boer's request for scriptural verification, but declined on grounds as given above, and insisted that Dr. Boer should present a gravamen. A letter from the Lynwood Church of Lansing, Illinois (Communication 30) urged synod to uphold the consistory and classis in their judgment that Dr. Boer's request should not be honored, and reiterated that he be instructed to file a gravamen if he wishes to pursue his request.

We must, therefore, ask now whether the request of Dr. Boer should be presented as a gravamen as the consistory and classis assert, or whether it need not be construed as a gravamen as Dr. Boer insists. In order to answer this question we must consider what constitutes a gravamen.

The word "gravamen" has had long usage as an ecclesiastical term in Reformed churches, but has nowhere been defined officially in our de-

nomination. It has been generally assumed that if anyone wishes to reveal any difficulties or different sentiments regarding the confessions of the church and follows the procedure required by the Form of Subscription, such a person is presenting a gravamen. *The Christelijke Encyclopaedia* contains the following (translated from Vol. 3, p. 297, 1958 edition):

“GRAVAMEN, objection, or difficulty, has become an ecclesiastical term. At present this word really is used only when referring to an objection raised against an article or an expression in the Confessions or Creeds, or to some other ecclesiastical pronouncements relating to the Confessions, when someone has developed an objection or doubt with respect to such an article or expression. Such a gravamen must be based directly upon the Bible”

A gravamen is always an expression of objection or difficulty with some aspect of the creeds of the church and is distinguishable from other overtures or communications by the fact that, in one form or another, it calls into question the creedal standards of the church. We believe it is advisable to apply the term “gravamen” for communications of this type because the creeds of the church occupy a unique position as the standard by which all matters of doctrine are adjudicated.

Dr. Boer’s request that synod supply the biblical evidence for the doctrine of reprobation which the Canons assert is the “express testimony of sacred Scripture” arises from the fact that he “has not been able through (his) own study to discover this ‘express testimony’” and he is not impressed by “the scriptural support adduced for it by Reformed theologians.” As such Dr. Boer expresses his difficulty with the assertion of the Canons that the doctrine of reprobation is based upon “the express testimony of sacred Scripture.” By his request he calls into question the assertion of the Canons that the doctrine of reprobation is expressly taught in the Scripture. In the judgment of our committee this is essentially a gravamen.

It would appear to us that any communication, though it may purport not to be a gravamen, which does in fact express a doubt about any expression or teaching of the creed should be dealt with as a gravamen. This is our advice to synod in answer to the first part of our mandate, namely, the status of communications like that of Dr. Harry Boer.

In the light of the above, we judge it neither necessary nor possible to advise synod further on “the status of communications like that of Dr. Harry Boer which purport to be neither appeals or gravamina.”

IV. PROCEDURE IN DEALING WITH THE COMMUNICATION OF DR. BOER

The Study Committee on Revision of the Form of Subscription in its report to synod (No. 38) is dealing with proper procedures for handling gravamina and therefore it is not necessary for us to enter further into such matters of procedure. We believe it implicit in our mandate, however, to advise synod regarding Dr. Boer’s communication.

1. In our judgment the communication of Dr. Boer as presented to the Synod of 1975 should be dealt with as a gravamen, and not delayed by returning it to him for further definition. The request of Dr. Boer is clear.

Ordinarily when a gravamen or a communication that is essentially a gravamen is presented, it is proper for synod to require of its author his scriptural grounds for taking issue with the confessions or expressing his difficulty with them before synod decide to consider the objections or difficulties. In the case of Dr. Boer's request, however, he cannot be asked to provide scriptural grounds to demonstrate that the scriptural evidence which the Canons assert exists does not in fact establish the doctrine of reprobation for the obvious reason that the Canons do not cite the biblical support for Dr. Boer to question or refute.

Furthermore, we would remind synod that the Synod of 1975 declared "that Dr. Boer has raised a legitimate concern to which the church should address herself." It is not clear whether synod judged the concern to be legitimate because all teaching of the creeds should be verifiable from Scripture, or because synod recognized a validity in Dr. Boer's assessment of the current status of the doctrine of reprobation in the church. But on the basis of either interpretation it would appear synod should proceed to consider the material content of Dr. Boer's request.

2. Since synod affirmed that Dr. Boer's concern was "a legitimate concern to which the church should address herself," in our judgment the issue of scriptural support for the doctrine of reprobation raised by Dr. Boer should be open for public discussion and study. Further defense of this judgment is not necessary, we believe, in view of the extensive study of such procedure in Report 38 of the committee referred to above.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

We respectfully recommend:

1. That synod declare that any communication, though it may purport to be neither an appeal nor a gravamen, which does in fact express doubt about any expression or teaching of the confessions of the church should be dealt with as a gravamen.
2. That synod declare that the communication of Dr. Harry Boer to the Synod of 1975 (No. 4) is essentially a gravamen and must be received by synod as such.
3. That synod declare that the request of Dr. Boer be open for public discussion and study in the churches.
4. That the Rev. C. Boomsma be given the privilege of the floor when this report is under consideration by synod.

Committee re
Communication of Dr. Harry Boer

Clarence Boomsma
Wm. P. Brink
John Kromminga

OVERTURES

Overture 1 — Curb Synodical Decisions by Mandatory Two-third Majority Rule

The consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Escalon overtures synod to adopt a rule and append it to the Church Order, requiring a two-third majority vote for all future decisions that deal with matters concerning our Confessional standards and the Church Order.

Grounds:

1. Our confessions and the Church Order make up the actual constitution of our denomination. To add to or change our constitution, which we believe to be based on the Word of God and which we as officebearers are bound to uphold by the Form of Subscription, on the basis of a fifty percent plus one vote majority is against all common sense. One would be hard pressed to find another association or body where the constitution could be changed in this fashion. It is simply ordinary procedure to require a two-third majority vote for any such alteration.
2. Our confessions and Church Order deal with the issues so vital to our organizational and confessional structure as a denomination, that a half plus one majority decision could very well become the cause of a division in our church.
3. Lobbying and persuasive tactics are common factors today. Delegates to synod as human beings are not immune to this type of influence. It is possible under our present voting system to change the confessional standards of our church without the support of the majority of the denomination. To make a sixty-six percent majority vote mandatory in such a case would at least reduce the risk of making irresponsible decisions.

Consistory of Escalon
Christian Reformed Church,
John De Pater, president
Henry Van Der Wall, clerk

The proposal to submit this overture to synod was rejected by Classis Central California at its meeting in January, 1976.

Overture 2 — Reject Proposed Translation of Baptismal Form

The consistory of the Escalon Christian Reformed Church overtures synod not to adopt the proposed translation of the form for the baptism of children, accepted by the Synod of 1973 for trial use.

Grounds:

1. Careful scrutiny shows that it is a paraphrase rather than an accurate translation.
2. Several concepts throughout the form have been significantly altered making it appear to be a restatement of the old form in weaker and less precise terms.

Consistory of Escalon
Christian Reformed Church
John De Pater, president
Henry Van Der Wall, clerk

The proposal to submit this overture to synod was rejected by Classis Central California at its meeting in January, 1976.

Overture 3 — Reject New Form for Baptism

The consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Escalon overtures synod not to adopt the new form for baptism, in trial use in our churches since 1971, for permanent use in our denomination.

Grounds:

1. The proposed form does not state clearly that we and our children are born as children of wrath and in need of new birth from above.
2. This form does not make it plain that baptism has an objective teaching function rather than a subjective operative or working function.
3. This form, although not openly stating it, at least implies the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which is a departure from Reformed doctrine, and appears to give credence to the view of sacramental grace. A careful and critical reading of the instruction, the paragraphs beginning with "The Word of God teaches us," and "The Word of God also tells us" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 41), when compared with the texts cited and the teaching concerning baptism in the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confessions, show that there is a strong element of confusion here. The form as it now reads can indeed be used to defend the view of sacramental salvation.

Consistory of Escalon
Christian Reformed Church
John De Pater, president
Henry Van Der Wall, clerk

The proposal to submit this overture to synod was rejected by Classis Central California at its meeting in January, 1976.

Overture 4—Revise New Form for Profession of Faith

The consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Escalon overtures synod 1976:

1. To change the first question of the proposed form for public profession of faith and make it read, "Do you love the Lord and believe . . ."
- Ground:* To love the Lord is a basic requirement for any committed life and ought therefore to be mentioned first in order of importance.
2. To add the following as a fifth question or vow regarding the submission to Christian discipline: "Do you ask for pastoral admonition and Christian discipline which is to be exercised in a spirit of brotherly love in case you should forsake your confession either in doctrine or life?"

Grounds:

- a. As a denomination we are obligated to the exercise of Christian discipline by our confessions and Church Order (B.C., Art. 32; H.C., L.D. 31; and C.O. Art. 65). A simple reference to the authority of the church at the time of initial commitment seems to be inadequate.
- b. To omit Christian discipline at the time of admission into membership by profession of faith is introducing a double standard of membership, since office-bearers are required to commit themselves in this respect upon the beginning of their office while in addition they also are obligated to sign the Form of Subscription.

Consistory of Escalon
Christian Reformed Church
John De Pater, president
Henry Van Der Wall, clerk

The proposal to submit this overture to synod was rejected by Classis Central California at its meeting in January, 1976.

Overture 5—Involve More Persons on Synodical Committees

The consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Escalon overtures Synod 1976 to adopt a regulation whereby persons appointed to synodical study or standing committees should ordinarily not be allowed to serve on more than one committee at one time, nor be immediately eligible to serve on another committee when their term is up. Such a regulation would be in accordance with good Reformed practice.

Grounds:

1. A careful study of the make-up of synodical committees over the last fifteen years will reveal that certain persons have been serving continuously either on

one committee or another, or have been and still are serving on more than one committee at the same time.

2. The present practice tends to create a hierarchy of committees made up of experts who may begin to spell out directives for the denomination. Such a development could well lead to a reversal of Reformed church polity.

Consistory of Escalon

Christian Reformed Church

John De Pater, president

Henry Van Der Wall, clerk

The proposal to submit this overture to synod was rejected by Classis Central California at its meeting in January, 1976.

Overture 6—Delegation of Deacons to Major Assemblies

Classis Muskegon, in response to the decision of synod replying to the overture of classis regarding delegation of deacons to major assemblies (Acts of Synod, 1975, Art. 102, pp. 103, 104), has decided to inform synod that it is the judgment of classis that the advisory committee and, following its advice, synod itself completely missed the point of our overture. Synod asks classis to address itself to a study of decisions of synods prior to 1973, but classis was not just re-opening the matter of delegation of deacons to major assemblies. Classis was well aware of the long history of this matter. The thrust of our overture was and is, however, that with the adoption of the guidelines on ecclesiastical office by Synod 1973, especially those cited in our overture, synod has created an entirely new situation. In view of this fact classis did not feel it necessary to refer to history before 1973, but asked synod to look at the delegation of deacons in the light of the implications of our new situation. There is no reference in the decision of synod to the statements adduced under grounds 1 and 2 of our overture, indicating, as was stated above, that synod's response by-passed the main point of our overture completely. In view of this fact Classis Muskegon:

1. Resubmits its original overture as it appeared in Acts of Synod 1975 as Overture 4.

2. Further overtures synod to appoint a study committee which shall specifically address itself to the implications of the guidelines quoted in the overture and other decisions of Synod 1973 on ecclesiastical office for the delegation of deacons to classis and synods.

Ground: Classis reiterates that our overture does not ask for a renewed consideration of delegation of deacons to classes and synods in the way this has been done in the past, but specifically requests an evaluation of this matter in the light of the guidelines adopted in 1973 as quoted in our overture. Since it was synod that adopted these principles, and the status of deacons in our church structure concerns all the churches in common, classis does not consider it its responsibility to make such a study. Classis grounds this response to synod's action in referring this matter back to us for further study on Church Order Article 28, b, which reads, "A major assembly shall deal only with matters which concern its churches in common or which could not be finished in the minor assemblies."

Classis Muskegon,

John L. Meppelink, stated clerk.

Overture 7—Change Rule re Membership of Separated Mates

Classis Quinte overtures the Synod of 1976 to replace the decision of the Synod of 1908 concerning a separate wife (Acts of Synod 1908, Art. 58, p. 42: "It is ruled that the papers of a wife who lives apart from her husband should remain in the church where he is a member"), with the following rule: When separation takes place between a married couple, the decision concerning the membership papers of either party and of the children that may be part of the family shall rest with the consistories of the churches of which the parties are members or desire to become members. As long as divorce is not finalized both consistories shall do their utmost separately and jointly to seek the true spiritual welfare of the family and the parties involved.

Grounds:

1. The old rule prejudices against the separated wife.
2. The old rule often removes the wife —and the children— from effective pastoral care and excludes her for quite some time from a real belonging to a local church fellowship.
3. The new rule overcomes both problems mentioned in grounds 1 and 2 and points the churches involved clearly to their pastoral responsibilities.

Classis Quinte,

John Klumpenhower, stated clerk

Overture 8—Add Amendment to Church Order Article 13

Classis Quinte overtures synod to add the following clause to Church Order Article 13:

... the presence of the synodical deputies will not be required however, in cases where synod has already established the spiritual and ministerial character of the work.

Grounds:

On January 12, 1975, the Cephias Christian Reformed Church of Peterborough, the calling church, extended a call to the Rev. Peter Mantel for the position of prison chaplain at the Millbrook Correctional Center.

The Cephias CRC acted upon information provided by the Christian Reformed Chaplain Committee, communicated to the Cephias CRC in a letter dated November 26, 1974, signed by the Rev. Harold Bode. The letter stated that the Chaplain Committee had interviewed the Rev. P. Mantel and granted "Ecclesiastical Endorsement" for the Rev. Mr. Mantel to serve as prison chaplain at the Millbrook Correctional Center.

Upon receiving the Rev. Mr. Mantel's acceptance of the extended call, the Cephias CRC proceeded to set a date for the installation, April 6, 1975.

At some time between January 12, 1975, and April 6, 1975, it was brought to the attention of the Cephias CRC consistory that, according to Church Order Article 13:

... a minister may be engaged in such a task (i.e. "an extraordinary ministerial task") only after the classis of the calling church, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, has judged it to be spiritual in character and directly related to the ministerial calling.

Cephias consistory contacted the Stated Clerk of the denomination, and was informed that the correct procedure was indeed to follow Church Order Article 13 in this matter. The installation date was postponed.

At the request of the Cephias CRC (see Art. 9, 10 of the May 1975 minutes), Classis Quinte called upon its synodical deputies to be present at the May 1975 meeting of classis to assist in this matter. The synodical deputies came and assisted.

The outcome of this matter at classis, with the concurring advice of the synodical deputies, (see Art. 14 of the May 1975 minutes), was the same conclusion to which the Chaplain Committee had come earlier. The Rev. P. Mantel was installed on June 8, 1975, in the Cephias CRC of Peterborough.

Classis Quinte felt, however, that in cases such as this one, Church Order Article 13 binds us to unnecessary procedures (i.e. calling in the synodical deputies) and instructed its Classical Interim Committee to study this matter.

The Classical Interim Committee reported to classis at the September 1975 meeting, and advised classis to present an overture to the Synod of 1976, involving an additional statement to Church Order Article 13 that would offer a further necessary guideline in cases such as that of the Rev. Peter Mantel. Classis adopted the advice of its interim committee.

Classis Quinte,

John Klumpenhower, stated clerk

Overture 9—Revise Church Order Articles on Discipline

At the September meeting of Classis Quinte in 1972 a committee was appointed to review the ecclesiastical discipline structure and how it presently functions in our churches. The appointment of this committee was in answer to questions

raised and the problems which some churches faced in applying discipline to certain members. The question was raised, for example, as to what to do with members who by their witness and confession are still Christian brothers and sisters, but who never attend the church of which they are members. They do not in any meaningful way participate in the life of the church, nor attend the worship services of the church of which they are members, but rather attend some other church, or come together in a group for prayer and Bible study, which according to them gives more satisfaction and spiritual nourishment.

Another question raised was what meaningfully could be done with members who for some time have neglected to attend any church and who, as far as they are concerned, couldn't care less about their church membership, nor what was done with their membership papers. These indifferent people, it was felt, could hardly be considered the objects of the present process of church discipline, since to belong or not to belong meant nothing to them. (See in this connection also the Acts of Synod 1974, pp. 81-83, and overtures 11 and 13 pp. 637-638.)

The report which this committee presented to our May classis in 1973 was considered to be a valuable base from which to proceed to a more indepth historical and biblical study on church discipline, on the basis of which an overture could be presented to synod.

A rather extensive study report was presented to our January classis in 1975 which, after some revision and re-editing, is herewith presented in the hope that it may serve as a basis for the overture we submit to the Synod of 1976. (All footnotes are documented in the Appendix to this overture.)

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. ITS HISTORY

A. *Biblical, Extra-Biblical, and Post-Biblical Up To The Reformation*

Under this heading we present only a brief sketch of the development of discipline during the history of Israel, the New Testament Church, and what the Post-Apostolic Church did with this.

1. *The Old Testament Period*

a. *Divine Discipline From Adam to Moses*

The starting point or basis of all discipline lies in the original promise in Genesis 3:15, "God himself steps in with the rod of discipline."¹ In this text lies the principle or basis of all grace and the root of the whole gospel, but also the beginning of all discipline and the basis of ecclesiastical excommunication. "Because discipline is after all in the deepest sense of the word a driving apart of that which does not belong together,"² it is God who administers discipline: on the one hand, by declaring and positing enmity between the two seeds, and on the other hand, by driving Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. Later we see God administer severe disciplinary measures upon the world of mankind with the flood and the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel.

b. *The Development of the Practice of Discipline from Moses to the Captivity.*

With the formation of Israel into a distinct nation, God places them under the discipline of his law at Mt. Sinai. "For God's chosen people, with whom he has made his covenant, the law is the revealed standard of growth in discipline and order, in faith and confidence."³ It is also during this period that we see discipline administered, upon divine precept, by the people of Israel, and further also that certain standard words come into use to denote being disciplined or excommunicated from among the people.

1) *Musar* is the word used most often for what we understand by discipline, and basically and generally this word stands for hearing instruction. It is a discipline and chastisement in word and deed "of the child by the parents and of the people by God, (Prov. 22:15; 23:23; Job 5:17, etc.)."⁴ If the disciplinary instruction *in word* is not heeded, then it is often enforced in deed, i.e., "enforced by severe chastisements"⁵ and, therefore, one might also refer to disciplinary measures as a legal punishment of the transgressor.

2) *Cherem* is the word which generally stands for cutting off the impenitent transgressor, although, according to Jansen, it does have a wider range of meanings, for example:

The word 'cherem' (ban) denotes first of all a ban vow, i.e., such a vow by which persons and possessions are so irrevocably dedicated to the Lord, that there was

no possibility of loosening (ransoming). In the second place 'cherem' (ban) denotes a 'Theocratic punishment' explicitly commanded by Jehovah in his Law, as well toward the *outside* with respect to the Gentile people, as toward the *inside* with respect to Israel herself.⁸ For further study of discipline during this period one has but to read the Book of Proverbs which is thoroughly permeated with references and instructions in discipline.

c. Discipline in the Synagogue of the Jews During the Period after the Captivity to the New Testament Times.

According to Jansen, the captivity was God's means of dealing with Israel for failing to exercise discipline and administer the ban: "As Israel's history proceeds, it becomes clear that because of her neglect of the ban she herself comes under the ban of the Lord."

With the institution or establishment of the synagogues, the precise origin and date of which are still quite unknown, discipline and excommunication was administered by a College of Elders,⁸ or Rabbi,⁹ associated with the synagogue. The beginning of this discipline we find immediately upon Israel's return from the captivity. They had hardly set foot on the "holy soil" again when Ezra had to set the wheels of discipline in motion. The ban, which earlier in Israel's history often meant putting someone to death, or capital punishment, in Ezra's time came to mean excommunication out of the Jewish community (see Ezra 10:8). Banning since Ezra's time no longer meant putting to death (as in Ex. 22:20; Lev. 27:28-29; Dt. 7:2 etc.), "but excommunication i.e. exclusion from the community of the Jews."¹⁰ "Because Israel was a theocratic community, the curse was primarily a religious ban and not merely capital punishment. Someone who in a fundamental sense violated the covenant, forfeited membership in the community and was removed in order to preserve the holiness of the people."¹¹

Jeschke says further: "In the centuries following the time of Ezra, discipline was developed and refined in the Jewish Community. The system of discipline described in the Talmud, though it may never have operated rigidly and uniformly, ran thus: First and least severe was a rebuke or censure called *nezifah* The person standing under this form of discipline was required to go to his home, refrain from business or entertainment, and not appear in the sight of the rabbi who had pronounced the rebuke over him. Next there was an excommunication called a *nuddui*, often compared to what in the Middle Ages was termed minor excommunication, it was preceded by three warnings, and its pronouncement was always accompanied by the words, 'May that man live in separation'. Its duration according to the Babylonian Talmud was seven days, according to the Palestinian, thirty The subject of this ban was required to don a mourning habit and to refrain from bathing or from cutting his hair or from wearing shoes or sandals. No one was to eat with him, and others were forbidden contact with him, except for his wife and children."¹²

It is possible that the "three steps" in our present disciplinary process go all the way back to this Talmudic discipline, i.e., to the three pronouncements or *nudduis*, although the connection between our three steps and the three *nudduis* cannot be proven from historical writings. Says Rudolph Bohren, "An individual who remained incorrigible after the expiration of three *nudduis* fell under the *cherem*, the curse. According to one authority this curse could be imposed only in the presence of ten members of the community—that is, the minimum complement needed to comprise a synagogue."¹³

It is interesting to note how according to Bohren, the implications of this ban were communicated to the people. It was at this ban that sometimes lights were extinguished and a symbolic bier carried out of the house as in a funeral rite, indicating that the subject of the ban was considered dead, cut off from Israel and from Israel's spiritual life. Serious as this ban was, it was not irrevocable. When the individual reformed, the ban could be revoked by the proper authorities.¹⁴

2. The New Testament Period

Here again we should recognize that we are dealing with the *history* of discipline and, therefore, will not go at length into all the New Testament givens regarding discipline. We merely want to present a brief sketch of discipline, as to how it operated in the churches, and what connections, if any, there were between the Old Testament practice of discipline and that of the New Testament.

And when one studies the Old Testament's biblical and extra-biblical givens one discovers rather quickly that there is considerable similarity between the Old Testament and the New Testament practice of discipline, if not in essence then certainly in form. Jansen says for example: "The New Testament discipline has undoubtedly been instituted by Christ according to the outline and example of the discipline of the synagogue."¹⁵

Jansen is not the only one who maintains this, for he is in a large company of authorities, such as R. H. Charles who says: "The conception of church discipline in the New Testament clearly comes out of Judaism. The teaching attributed to Jesus in Matthew 18 bears marked similarities to the passage in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Gad 6:3, 7: 'Love ye one another from the heart; and if a man sin against thee, speak peaceably to him, and in thy soul hold not guile, and if he repent and confess forgive him And if he persist in his wrongdoing, even so forgive him from the heart, and leave to God the avenging.'¹⁶

Jansen says also, "Christ links himself to those forms, subjected them to a thorough regeneration, filled them with a new content, and instituted in his church a self-administering government and discipline, loose from all civil control, and called it the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven."¹⁷

The most common word used in the New Testament for discipline and/or chastisement is *paideia*, or *paideuo*, which is the equivalent of the Old Testament word *musar*. "*Paideia* is mostly used" says Friedrich "for *musar* and *yasar* and takes on the meaning of discipline and chastisement."¹⁸ This is also the position, among others, of Dr. H. Bavinck: "To the work of the overseers belongs especially also discipline, *potestas disciplinae*. The Hebrew has for discipline the word *Musar* which really means *adstricto*, *constricto*, and which is translated in Greek by *nouheteama*, *didaskalia*, *nomos sophia* and which is in the New Testament rendered especially by *paideia*. Both words, just the same as the Dutch word *tucht* (discipline), from *tien trekken* (pulling) generally denote that something which is young, tender, weak, must be nourished with care. However, while in general and especially with people this nourishing must at the same time always curb abnormal development, the word discipline receives the meaning of correction, chastising and disciplining. Hardly ever do the words denote only education, or instruction, (cf. however, Acts 7:32; 22:3), but always such an upbringing and education which includes correction and chastisement. This is how God brings up his children (Hebrews 12:5-11) and Christ treats his church (Rev. 3:19), . . ."¹⁹

As God deals with his children, and Christ treats his church, his body, so ought the church, in imitation of Christ, and more so upon the command of Christ (cf. Mt. 16:18-20; 18:15-18; John 20:23) to follow the divine example in the exercise and administration of discipline.

One could continue by giving more examples from the New Testament for the basis of the exercise of church discipline, but the reader of this report is referred to the third heading of this report: Its Biblical and Creedal Foundations.

3. *Post Biblical Givens and Practices of Church Discipline*

What we are concerned with under this heading is how the Post-Apostolic Church, up to the fourth century, abode by the principles and practices of the discipline of the New Testament church. We will treat this period from the New Testament to the Reformation under two headings, the first period from the New Testament church to the fourth century, and the second from the fourth century to the Reformation.

a. The New Testament Church to the Fourth Century

During this period we find that the church held largely to the discipline practices of the New Testament, due, no doubt, to the fact that there was as yet no sharp cleavage between clergy and laity. As the clergy becomes more powerful, the administration and exercise of discipline is transferred from the whole body of the church, or the congregation, to the clergy. Coleman writes: "The discipline of the primitive church was administered by each body of believers collectively; and continued to be under their control until the third or fourth century. About this period the simple and efficient discipline of the primitive church was exchanged for a complicated and oppressive system of penance administered by the clergy. But the church itself possesses the only legitimate

authority for the administration of discipline. Its members have the right to enact their own laws, and to prescribe such conditions of membership with themselves as they may judge expedient and agreeable to the Word of God. The right to administer ecclesiastical discipline was guaranteed to the churches from their first organization under the apostles; but was finally lost by the usurpation of the priesthood under the episcopal hierarchy.¹²⁰

There are very few passages in the writings of the early Church Fathers which address themselves to the question of who should exercise and administer discipline, but enough can be derived from these passages to show that the church continued for at least three centuries "to regulate her own discipline by the will of the majority, as expressed either by popular vote, or through a representative delegation chosen by the people."²¹ The following passages cited from Coleman speak for themselves:

"(1) Clemens Romanus, the only apostolic father belonging strictly to the first century, and contemporary with several of the apostles, throughout his epistle treats the church of Corinth as the only court of censure. He addresses his epistle, A.D. 68 or 98, not to the bishop, but to the entire body of believers. This circumstance is worthy of particular notice, inasmuch as the epistle is written in relation to a case of discipline, and not to enforce the practical duties of religion. The church at Corinth was recognized as having authority in the case under consideration."²²

"(2) The epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, A.D. 117-120, affords us, indirectly, a similar example of the department of the church toward a fallen brother The address and exhortation, proceed on the assumption that the duty of mutual watchfulness belongs to the brethren of the church collectively. It is not, however, a clear case of church discipline, though this may be implied."²³

"(3) Tertullian wrote his Apology for the Christians a hundred years after these persecutions in Bithynia, at the beginning of the third century. From him we learn that the discipline of the church remained unchanged at this period, the members of the church sustaining the same covenant relations, exercising the same mutual watchfulness and maintaining the same discipline in the exclusion of the unworthy from their fellowship and communion."²⁴

Much more could, of course, be cited to prove that, in the centuries immediately following that of the apostles, discipline was exercised and administered by the congregation and definitely in accordance with the *expressed will* (through popular vote) of the people. It is very plain from the writings of the apostolic fathers, "that both in Rome and Carthage, no one could be expelled from the church, or restored again, except with the consent of the people."²⁵ During this early post-apostolic period the "bishop and clergy, instead of holding in their own grasp the keys of the kingdom of heaven, cooperated with the church in its deliberations; and acted as the official organ of the assembly in executing its decisions."²⁶ This is also confirmed by Calvin: "Although the bishop with his clergy possessed a power of reconciliation, it required at the same time the consent of the people, as Cyprian elsewhere shows."²⁷

Enough has been said here or quoted from authorities on the post-apostolic period, to see that church discipline was largely in the hands of and exercised by the people of the church as a whole, in conformity with the practices of the New Testament church.

The following will serve as a transition from the first to the second period under this third heading. Planck writes: "There is the fullest evidence that the action of the laity was requisite, as late as the middle of the third century, in all disciplinary proceedings of the church. By the beginning of the fourth, however, cardinal right was greatly abridged; and soon after wholly lost From about the middle of the fourth century the bishops assumed control of the whole penal jurisdiction of the laity, opening and shutting at pleasure the doors of the church, inflicting sentences of excommunication, and prescribing, at their discretion the austerities of penance; and again absolving the penitents, and restoring them to the church by their own arbitrary power."²⁸

b. The Fourth Century To The Reformation

It is during this period that we find a gradual but definite deviation from the New Testament church in her practice of discipline. As will become evident,

not only did the administration of discipline change hands from the church membership to the clergy, but also the nature of discipline was changed, from loving, correcting chastisement, to harsh infliction of punishment, which was quite often inflicted secretly, i.e., without the slightest knowledge of the people. "After the Council of Ancyra (314)," says Bouwman, "and of Nicea (325), there developed a complete penance system After Augustine, the acts of the priests became more and more, in the exercise of the power of the keys, associated with the grace of God."²⁹ The clergy then already became the dispensers of the grace of God and functioned as his servants to mete out punishments in relation to sins committed. "The ecclesiastical discipline, if such indeed it can be called, now appears in total contrast with that of the church under the apostles. Then the supreme authority was vested in the people; now in the clergy."³⁰

As the church "spread her wings out" over the pagan people, it also became more difficult to exercise discipline. The church took in whole nations at once which had never come under the power of the Word of God.

Bouwman writes: "Since the people were wild, rough and sensual, the clergy had to do a lot of work to keep the people under control. That's why they looked for means to bring the whole of life under the discipline of the church. But with that the character of discipline was changed somewhat. If originally the purpose of discipline was to improve the sinner, and to keep the church holy, now in most cases discipline becomes nothing else but a means to force people to obedience to the laws of the church and to submission to the hierarchy."³¹ In addition to this it came about, that, with the rise of the penance system, the priest forgave the sin of someone in secret after confession and allowed him back into the communion without the concurrence of the people; and also that the priest charged a fine instead of the, up to this time, usual public penalty. With this another step was made by which church discipline was robbed of its biblical character. Herewith the idea was created in the mind of the congregation, that one could through offerings of money, by almsgiving and such like, buy forgiveness of sin."³²

As time progresses and as one follows the development of the disciplinary practice of the church of the Middle Ages, it becomes very clear that at last there is absolutely no participation on the part of the people in the exercise of discipline. The exercise of discipline becomes the exclusive right and domain of the priest and becomes closely associated with confession (later at the Fourth Lateran Council decreed as a sacrament) and also with penance.

The practice of confession was begun in the monasteries, where the monks for a long time already had been required to confess their sins to each other. This may have been a good and healthy practice in the monasteries, but as the church took in more people from uncivilized nations, and sometimes whole tribes at once, who lived a wild, rough and sensuous life, the desire arose within the church to require a confession at certain set times of every member of the church.

As confessions were heard by the priests, they were also the ones to determine whether a person was truly sorry for his sins, on the ground of which he could be forgiven, or whether he, in the case of the absence of true repentance (determined by the priest alone) should go through a period of probation and/or be inflicted with a certain kind of punishment. This developed into what is known as doing penance, which could take the form of making a certain payment of money.

Bouwman writes: "Three kinds of penitents can be distinguished in the Middle Ages, a. those who confess their sins to the priest and who received forgiveness from him, b. those, who because of a public sin had been excluded from the fellowship of the church, but who afterwards returned in sorrow and submitted themselves to the penalty of the church, and c., those who refused to submit themselves to the penalty of the church. These last ones were excommunicated. The bishop pronounced the anathema over them and declared them to be Gentile and Taxcollector."³³

Already during the time of Charlemagne, the confession had become a general practice and requirement even though most people rebelled against it. In 1215 Pope Innocent III decreed that every Christian was to go at regular intervals to confessions, and at the Fourth Lateran Council it was elevated to a sacrament through which the church held an almost absolute sway over her members by inflicting punishments and imposing fines. Hence it becomes obviously clear that as we approach the time of the Reformation, the membership had no more say or

voice in the exercise of discipline, but that it was exclusively in the hands of the clergy, and thereby the church in her exercise of discipline had removed herself from the principles and practices of the discipline of the New Testament church, as well as from the church of the first four centuries. The people were in bondage, and the clergy were "heavy taskmasters."

B. *The Reformation and the Reformers On Discipline*

1. *Church Discipline According To Luther*

With the Reformation there came a liberation of life for the people who had long been under the tyranny of the Roman hierarchy. Luther confessed that the church was a communion of believers, who were not dependent upon the clergy or any human authority, but lived only by the grace of God as revealed in the Scriptures.

Bouwman writes: "Initially Luther desired the cooperation of the congregation in the administration of discipline according to the rule of Matthew 18. According to these principles his Formula Missae was instituted in 1523, and the Leisniger Kastenordnung. Luther approved of the plans of his friend Brenz von Hall in Zwaben, to introduce a congregational exercise of discipline, in which a synod, called together by the state, consisting of preachers and a few persons of society, were given the right to bar sinners, having admonished them, from the Lord's Supper, with the result to exclude the stiffnecked from daily communication. But Luther did not think that the time had come to realize such a plan. The congregation, which could exercise such discipline, did not exist, and still had to be formed."³⁴

It was Luther's desire for a long time already to have the congregation actively involved in the exercise of church discipline, but the people, having for so long been as children under the tutelage of the clergy, were in fact too uninformed and literally "babes in Christ" to exercise their God-given right and calling in the administration of church discipline. However, it must also be pointed out that, even though Luther wanted more participation on the part of the congregation in the exercise of discipline, he himself was hampered in reinstituting congregational discipline again because of his idea that church and state are one, and are engaged in the same work. "There were not two great independent bodies, only interacting upon each other in a multiplicity of ways, namely civil society and the state on the one, and the church on the other side, but one community, which must reveal itself on two sides With the Reformation the papal power was broken in Germany, and the civil authority stepped of herself into its place."³⁵

It is understandable that this practice of discipline did not bear much fruit, and was in essence not much of an improvement over that of the church of Rome. The Lutheran form of discipline fell too much in the hands of the state and had the character of punishment rather than that of a corrective chastisement for the improvement of the sinner, the preservation of the holiness of the church, and the glory of God.

2. *Church Discipline According to Zwingli*

Zwingli remained all his life a political man, and we must in that light also view his ideas concerning church discipline. "Since the public authorities were so active in the moral education of the people and took measure in order and discipline Zwingli left the right of discipline in the hands of the civil authorities . . . It is true, however, that originally the church herself watched over the discipline in the congregation, because the government was then still pagan, but this original form must fall away immediately when the government has become Christian . . . The church is a spiritual body and leaves the maintenance of order and discipline up to the government."³⁶ It is quite understandable that no biblical form of discipline could come to fruition or development in Zurich under the leadership of Zwingli, in whose opinion both the church and the state were working toward the same goal, and therefore should work together in bringing about a society and world order which is according to God's plan for the entire world, without recognizing that each one, the church and the state, have their own area of work and authority.

3. *Church Discipline According To Calvin*

It was Calvin who developed a church organization and order which was based on the principles of Christ's rule in and authority over the church. For Calvin

the whole organization of the church was to be based on the revealed will of God as contained in the Scriptures. According to Calvin, says Karl Ricker "only that organization of the church is the correct and the true one, which is drawn from God's Word, and which is in accordance with the apostolic and in general with that of the old Christian church."³⁷ For Calvin, discipline in the church was absolutely necessary, not only for the order but also for the wellbeing and continued existence of the church.

Calvin has also clearly set forth his position on the necessity and purpose of discipline, but we shall refrain from presenting his position on that here. Our main concern is to determine whether Calvin made a break with Rome by letting the membership have a voice, or active participation, in the administration of discipline. And we soon discover that the answer to that question is in the affirmative.

Calvin writes: "... Paul's course of action for excommunicating a man is the lawful one, provided the elders do not do it by themselves alone, but with the knowledge and approval of the church: in this way the multitude of people does not decide action but observes as witness and guardian so that nothing may be done according to the whim of a few. Indeed the whole sequence of action, besides calling on God's name, ought to have that gravity which bespeaks the presence of Christ in order that there may be no doubt that he himself presides at his own tribunal."³⁸

It should be observed that Calvin has outlined also the procedure or course of action that is to be taken in the initial stages. From the above quotation it might be inferred that the people still only participate in discipline as spectators, or as "witnesses and guardians", but this is not entirely correct. They are only that after the preliminary steps have been taken by the people as outlined in Matthew 18. Only after that has failed, the case is brought before the elders, and then the people function as "witnesses and guardians" of the elders' course of action.

Furthermore, for Calvin the purpose of discipline is threefold: the honor of God, the sanctity of the body of Christ and the correction and restoration of the erring brother.³⁹

Calvin also insisted, contrary to the wishes of the city council of Geneva, that discipline remain in the hands of the church and not, as with Luther and Zwingli, in the hands of the state officials.

Says Bouwman: "Difficulties arose in the area of the consistory's rightful authority concerning discipline. The city council originally only wanted to permit the consistory to have the right to admonish and correct, and keep for itself the right to decide excommunication. On this point Calvin did not want to give in anything. Discipline, including excommunication, belonged with the consistory."⁴⁰

C. *Discipline From The Reformation To Modern Times*

Calvin's teaching on discipline found acceptance in many Reformed circles after the Reformation. In Ost-Friesland the principle teaching of Calvin was accepted and applied in the churches of A Lasco. The same can be said of the Reformed churches in France, who applied discipline very strictly, to the point sometimes of touching the ridiculous. "Duplessis-Mornay was with his whole family excommunicated in Montauben, because the head ornaments of his high-society wife did not answer up to the instruction of the church. Because of this not always biblical, sometimes even exaggerated and ridiculous strictness in church discipline, Calvinism was hated by a great number of people, and was internally weakened through the rejection of good elements."⁴¹

It was particularly in Scotland that Calvin's principle teachings on discipline were implemented in the churches, more so than what he himself had been able to accomplish in Geneva, where he constantly met with opposition from the side of the city council. It is also interesting to note that in the churches of Scotland we first meet up with the three steps of discipline, or excommunication, as we have them today in our churches, at least to a certain extent. Having followed the initial procedure in discipline as outlined in Matthew 18, and having been admonished by the consistory, and having been told that unless he (the sinner) repents, he will be excommunicated after a set period of time.

The procedure was as follows: "If he remains adamant in his evil, then it is made known to the congregation which sins are reigning in her midst, and the sinner, after having been admonished, does not want to break with his evil, and

the congregation is requested to pray for him. In case the person does not repent, then in the next following public services of the congregation the sin and the name of the person are made known to the congregation, and his closest friend is asked to try to bring him to a knowledge of himself. The third Sunday the minister inquires whether the impenitent has shown signs of sorrow. If his repentance shows, then this is made known to the congregation. If, however, he hardens himself, then he must be cut off, must be declared 'excommunicated of God, and of all fellowship with the church . . .'⁴²

On the third of February 1645, the original church order in which the above procedure was taught, was replaced by a new order called: *Directory for the Public Worship of God Throughout The Three Kingdoms Of England, Scotland and Ireland*, and it is from this directory that the Reformed churches in the Netherlands later on borrowed language and procedure in discipline.⁴³

In the Reformed churches in the Netherlands, discipline was administered as taught by Calvin, and also in the church of Scotland. The basic teachings on discipline at the Synod of Wetzel (1568) and Emden (1517) were revised, incorporated in the Church Order articles 71-81, and adopted at the Synod of Dordt in 1619, and have remained almost the same until the present time. This revised Church Order of the Synod of Dordt has functioned as the basis for our Church Order and procedure in discipline, and it is also in this Church Order of Dordt that we first meet with the practice of applying "silent censure" before the actual excommunication takes place. "Church discipline is to be distinguished in admonition and ban. All those who reject the admonition of the consistory, shall be barred from the Lord's Supper, and if after repeated admonition there does not come any sign of penitence, the sinner shall finally be cut off from the congregation. This ban proceeds through three steps."⁴⁴

Although the churches in the Netherlands had adopted a church order with a well-worked out outline on procedure in discipline, difficulties and differences arose with regard to the *application* of discipline by the various churches. While still under the influence and domination of the State, discipline fell to a large extent into disuse. It was not until 1834, when the church became independent from the State, that discipline was restored and faithfully exercised by the churches of the Secession up to the present day.⁴⁵ This can also be said of Reformed and Christian Reformed Churches of North America, and the Reformed Church of South Africa.⁴⁶ It is interesting to note what Bouwman says, but does not explain, of the Christian Reformed Church. "The Christian Reformed Church holds faithfully on to the confessions and the Church Order of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. Next to the articles of the Church Order she, however, issued, too many stipulations which cannot all stand the test of a principle."⁴⁷

Under this heading of the *history* of discipline we should also make reference to our Church Order in which the nature, purpose, procedure etc. of discipline is quite extensively dealt with in articles 78-94. It is not the place here to enter upon a long discussion on all the material on discipline in the Church Order, but it might serve us to quote Article 78b which has specific reference to the congregation's involvement in discipline. "The exercise of admonition and discipline by the consistory does not preclude the responsibility of the believers to watch over and admonish one another in love" (Art. 78b, C.O.). However, this is not an improvement over the old articles 72-74 as far as reference to the congregation's involvement is concerned, and it is still far from a positive direction as to how the congregation can be and should be involved. It merely says "does not preclude the responsibility of the believers" without saying what that responsibility of believers is and should be. It is in this connection that we later propose a revision of IV A of the Church Order outlining what the congregation's participation ought to be.

Monsma's commentary on Article 78b is at least more positive than the Church Order article itself when it states: "It is well to note why the Church Order demands, also in this article, that discipline should begin with the believers as individuals and not with the consistory. In the first place this is the rule because Christ so ordained in unmistakable words in Matt. 18, as we have seen. Secondly, many passages in the Bible prescribe mutual discipline. I Thess. 5:11: 'Where-

fore, exhort one another, and build each other up, even as also ye do.' Heb. 3:12, 13: Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called today . . .' Rom. 15:14 'And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.' This mutual exhortation, urged upon us by holy writ, becomes mutual discipline when there is a specific transgression. Gal. 6:1, 'Brethren, even if any man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.' James 5:19,20, 'My brethren, if any among you err from the truth and convert him, let him know, that he who converted a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.'

'Furthermore, it may be remarked that Scripture enjoins mutual discipline since all believers are anointed with the Holy Spirit, sharing the anointing of Christ. to be prophets, priests and kings under him. (Cf. I Peter 2:9 and also Heidelberg Catechism Q. 32.) We rightly speak of all believers as officebearers, as our father spoke of 'het ambt aller geloovigen,' (The office of all believers).

'New Testament believers particularly should not be treated as minors which have no voice in matters (Roman Catholicism), but as having come to years of majority, having definite rights and duties. Official ecclesiastical admonition and discipline is but the continuation of mutual believer's discipline. When the latter fails the former begins to function. And again, when believer's discipline cannot act with a view to the best interests of the individual involved and the church concerned (as in the case of public sins) the special offices begin to act forthwith and initiate disciplinary action. And when church members refuse to do their Christian duty toward each other and no longer admonish each other, but desire to leave it all to the consistory, then the backbone of church discipline is severely injured. Much to the detriment of the churches concerned, of course. Says Dr. F. L. Rutgers: 'The decay of discipline, which began already at the beginning of the 17th century, should certainly be attributed to a large extent to the fact that in the convictions of the church members this principle of our Church Order had been weakened.' (*College-Voordrachten*, etc., 1918, p. 37.)

"Through the preaching of the Word and through personal admonition the believers should be urged to maintain this biblical principle. It may seem much easier merely to report a matter to the consistory, but personal admonition according to the rule of Matt. 18 should precede. Anyone who refuses to do his duty on this score, anyone who would refuse persistently to act according to the rule of Matt. 18, would make himself worthy of discipline.

"The Church Order is altogether correct when it stresses this point in the present article. May the day never come when we as children of God in Christ dare not or do not admonish one another. A faultfinding spirit we should all shun, but brotherly concern for one another, moved and controlled by Christian love, we should all foster."⁴⁸

II. ITS BIBLICAL AND CREEDAL FOUNDATION

A. Biblical

1. The Old Testament

a. Introduction

One of the traditional reasons for church discipline is that the purity of church demands it, for offense must be removed (*Church Order* Article 79). Calvin's reason, that God's name may not be dishonored comes down to an honoring of the body of Christ: "Therefore, that there may be no such thing in the church to brand its most sacred name with disgrace, they from whose wickedness infamy redounds to the Christian name must be banished from its family" (*Institutes* IV, 12, v). In reading the Old Testament one comes to the conclusion that Jahweh's zeal for the holiness of his people is a driving force in the redemptive-education of his people.

b. Holiness and Discipline

The requirement of holiness is a constitutive factor in Israel's being God's people. Without asking for permission Jahweh, in gathering a people for himself,

demands holiness because he is holy. This demand is repeated before the giving of the covenant law (Ex. 19:5,6) showing that the introduction to the law, the liberation theme, has some connection with the call to holiness. This demand for holiness is mentioned time and again recalling to Israel that Jahweh separated her "from the peoples" (Lev. 20:26; 19:2) in order that she might be a blessing to all nations. So holy, in fact, that all those who cursed her, Jahweh would curse (Gen. 12:1-3), for only Israel did Jahweh love among all the nations (Amos 3:2). But such love demands response so that Jeremiah can poignantly say: 'I remember the devotion of your youth, your love as a bride, who followed me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holy to the Lord, the first fruits of his harvest. All who ate of it became guilty; evil came upon them, says the Lord' (Jeremiah 2:2,3).

Israel's holiness, like virginity, was only for her husband, Jahweh. It is this holiness that Jahweh jealously guarded by his Word of the covenant, calling his bride of the wilderness to be a separate people, also and especially when she settles in Jahweh's gift of land. It is in the new land that Israel is to work out her uniqueness: destroy the inhabitants totally so that there may be no intermarriage nor the taking over of idol worship (Dt. 7.1-11).

It is with respect to this holiness that we can come to understand the Old Testament manner of discipline.¹ For it is this call to holiness that is Jahweh's disciplining of an unruly and stubborn people (Dt. 9:6f) according to his gracious word to fathers. This element of training or discipline is the continual calling to the new life on the basis of Jahweh's liberating his people. Indeed Jahweh reminds them that his discipline/instruction² was already present at the Exodus (Dt. 4:32-40; 11:1ff) and throughout the wilderness journey. In both passages this is mentioned as an historical prologue to the phrase: "therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments . . ." This places the call to holiness, the covenant law, and discipline/instruction closely together. This law, which is discipline/instruction of Jahweh, is the law which the people promised to obey (Ex. 24:3,7).

c. *The Nature of the Covenant*

The new obedience which comes to Israel by way of covenant law is based on Jahweh's liberation from Egypt according to his gracious word to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex. 2:23-25). Israel's response is now placed within this covenant law framework. The law is given that his people may know thereby the way of life. The words of the covenant are the life of the people; they are to be repeated to them every seven years so that they may hear and learn to fear God. These words are so intimate to the life of Israel that they are to be signs upon the forehead and even more: "The word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it" (Dt. 30:14). They are to be administered according to Jahweh's will if it is to go well with Israel (Dt. 6:1-3). Accordingly, before Israel's entry into Canaan, Moses recalls the words of the covenant that she may remember to do them.

The covenant which calls Israel to be a holy people in all respects also has a blessing and curse provision. Deuteronomy 28 amply illustrates this: verses 1-14 describe the consequences of obedience: blessing; verses 15-68 describe the consequences of disobedience: curse. This chapter ends with a summary statement: "These are the words of the covenant . . ."⁴ The blessings and the curse provisions of the covenant are an integral part of Jahweh's discipline/instruction of his people. Hereby he simply places before them the consequences of obedience or disobedience (Dt. 30:19,20). The blessing and curse provisions of the law reinforce Jahweh's purpose: to make his name known among the nations as THE saving name. Israel was to serve as the channel through whom this purpose was to be accomplished. Therefore, Israel's uniqueness is a must for Jahweh's name's sake. Her disobedience brings the curse because she dishonors the name of the Holy One of Israel in the sight of the nations. But Jahweh is jealous and will not give his glory to another (Isaiah 40:11). The great curse, exile, is exercised, but even here, Jahweh's zeal and love for Israel is plain in that the exile is not total, for he brings Israel back. For his name's sake he defers his anger (Isaiah 48:9).

d. *Two Relationships Within the Covenant*

Within the covenant life of Israel we may distinguish two relationships with respect to discipline: Jahweh and his people, and the people among themselves. The covenant with all its provisions holds for both so that whatever the relationship, the purpose of the covenant is maintained: that Israel be a holy nation for Jahweh's own possession.

1) *Jahweh and His People*

The relationship between Jahweh and his people is set forth strictly in the law. When the people break the relationship Jahweh comes to them on the basis of the covenant law and demands satisfaction. Jeremiah 2 presents us with a good illustration. In Jeremiah 2:2,3 Israel's covenant status is recalled. But in verse 4 the tone changes and Jahweh becomes a questioner of Israel: what is wrong with me that you disobeyed my law? (esp. v. 8). Because of Israel's disobedience Jahweh contends with her (vs. 9) for she has changed her glory (*kabod*) for that of another; clearly a reference to dishonoring Jahweh's name. Such contention can be called a covenant law-suit.⁵ Jahweh, as it were, sues Israel because she refused correction (vs. 30: *musar lo laqah*). Jahweh also contends with Israel because she would return (Jer. 3:1), but without recognizing the correction he placed on her (3:3). Other examples of such divine contention can be found in Hosea 4:1ff; Isaiah 1:2,3; and Micah 6:1-8. In all three cases Jahweh has something against Israel. He reminds her of her guilt and gives a sentence of judgment:

a) "Therefore the Lord says, the Lord of hosts, the Mighty One of Israel: 'Ah, I will vent my wrath on my enemies, and avenge myself on my foes. I will turn my hand against you and will smelt away your dross as with lye and remove all your alloy'" (Isaiah 1:24, 25).

b) "Therefore I have begun to smite you, making you desolate because of your sins. You shall eat, but not be satisfied . . ." (Micah 6:13).

c) "Therefore the land mourns and all who dwell in it languish and also the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air; and even the fish of the sea are taken away" (Hosea 4:3).

These prophetic lawsuits are not only directed at the leadership of the people (Micah 3:1; Hosea 4:4) but also at the people themselves. Because Israel has forgotten her God, has prostituted her love for Jahweh, he disciplines the people. In Amos 4:1ff, Amos speaks against injustice.

The basis for such action is the covenant and its curse provisions. Because of Israel's disobedience the reversal of history, curse, is finally called into effect (Dt. 28:68) through the Babylonian exile.⁶

However, in spite of the stringent discipline action Jahweh took with his people, the full effect of these curse provisions were held in abeyance. That is, while Jahweh used extreme corrective *measures*, at no time did he cut Israel off forever (Isaiah 48:9: "that I may not cut you off" (*karath*). This was Israel's comfort, even in far away Babylon. The reason for this is clear: Jahweh's choice of Israel was not for *her* glory but for *his*. That glory he would reveal until all flesh would see it (Is. 40:1-5). It was for Jahweh's namesake that Israel was disciplined so that in the blessings bestowed upon Israel the nations may hear and see the way and saving power of Jahweh (Ps. 67:1,2). This, after all, is the force of Genesis 12:2 and 3b, "you shall be a blessing to all nations." The full effect of the curse was taken by the afflicted and despised of Israel: the Messiah (Is. 53). He was totally *cut off*; he would endure the discipline (*musar*) that would lead to final and total peace. This is the purpose of the covenant.⁷

2) *The People Among Themselves*

In this relationship where life was also regulated by the provisions of the covenant, the situation is somewhat different. While Jahweh did not fully abandon Israel as a nation, individual members did meet such discipline.⁸ Provision was made in the covenant for dealing with various kinds of disobedience. The health of the nation, its holiness, depended upon the holiness of the people themselves under penalty of disciplinary action: various applications of the *lex talionis* (Lev. 24:20), death by stoning, or excommunication, "For whoever shall do any of these abominations the persons that do them shall be cut off from among their people" (Lev. 18:29).

It is to be noted that this discipline/instruction included a means of administering justice: the cities of refuge for voluntary manslaughter, no evidence was to be accepted on the witness of one person. (Dt. 17:2-13; 25:1-2; Numbers 35); welfare: the farmer was to leave enough for the poor and the widows (Lev. 19:9-10; Dt. 24:19-22); and also a great number of corrective and punitive directives. While all these laws required that Israel live as a separate and thus a holy people, the requirement of holiness goes beyond the discipline/instruction of the law, the heart was to be cut (*karath*) by Jahweh (Dt. 10:12-22). A clean heart was required. And that Israel might be clean before Jahweh she was provided with the ritual cleansing acts which find their climax in the day of Atonement (Lev. 16). This day was a great day, for then a scape-goat was sent into the wilderness, *cut off* for Israel's sake. Thus Israel was to be holy. Those whose hearts were not clean were to be cleansed through correction or excommunication (Achan was completely cut off). The individual could be completely cut off from the people (see for example Lev. 17:9-10).

This cleanliness of the people was deeply connected to the sanctuary. Ritual cleansing through a burnt offering was to be done before the tabernacle. If this was not done the violator was to be cut off (*karath*) according to Leviticus 17:8-9. Those who were not clean were barred from the sanctuary (Lev. 15:31)! With this as background Jeremiah's complaint is even more to the point: "Israel was a sanctuary⁹ to the Lord" (2:3). But she defiled her holiness, a defilement which Jahweh sets straight by means of discipline/correction (Jer. 35:13). Her refusal to take correction brings upon her all the evil which Jahweh spoke against her, ending in the discipline/excommunication through exile.

Israel's faithless worship of idols, as a nation and on the individual level, was a defilement of her holiness. No longer was she Jahweh's people, she became, "Not my people." The destruction of the temple was for the Old Testament church a destruction of the unity of holiness, it was discipline to the extreme. But even this discipline/excommunication was corrective, for Jahweh brought his people back and restored discipline/instruction through covenant law at the time of the covenant renewal as recorded in Nehemiah 8 and 9. (See also Ezra 9 and 10.)

e. *Some Words and their Use*

1) *Musar*—This word admits of many translations. From the above we have already noted that in Psalm 50:16, 17 *musar* is to be understood as discipline/instruction and not discipline/correction. The correction note comes in Psalm 50:21b. Also in Deuteronomy 4:36 (*yasar*) and 11:2 (*musar*) the word expresses discipline/instruction. Such discipline/instruction is a covenant instruction in holiness, separation. However, *musar* also expresses discipline/correction when covenant law is transgressed. Jeremiah 2:30 shows this well. We see that the transgression of holiness (as recorded in Jer. 2:3, 9) brings about discipline/correction. Similar uses in Jeremiah can be found in 5:3 and 7:28, both texts use *musar*. The messianic prophesy of Isaiah 53 gives depth to this discipline/correction in that the Messiah would receive this on behalf of the people (see note 7).

In this prophesy we also discern a connection with discipline/excommunication. The one undergoing *musar* is to be totally cut off (v. 8). This expression points to excommunication in that this is the reality described: he is cut off (*gazar*) out of the land of the living. The *musar* discipline/correction here must finally lead to a being cut off; the unholy has no place in the sanctuary (Lev. 15:31) nor among Jahweh's people (Numbers 15:31). The Messiah undergoes discipline/excommunication for the people (Col. 2:11). His excommunication takes up the full force of the curse provisions of the covenant so that a people might be healed. The nation of Israel is to remain Jahweh's light to the world.

2) *Karath*—Recognizing that discipline/excommunication takes place on a national scale, we also see that it is corrective for Jahweh's redemptive purposes, a purpose upheld by the actual and total excommunication of Jahweh's servant. Nevertheless, within the nation there are those who are cut off for their uncleanness. In most cases we find the word *karath* used to refer to this discipline for the transgression of holiness: anyone who eats leavened bread at the Passover is to be cut off (Ex. 12:15); whoever makes anointing oil or pours it on an outsider is cut off (Ex. 30:33); he who profanes the sabbath is to be cut off (Ex. 31:14); unwillingness to celebrate the passover at the appointed time results in being cut off (Numbers 9:13); he who eats blood suffers such conse-

quences (Lev. 17:10); those who sacrifice to Molech are cut off, as those who use mediums and wizards (Lev. 20:3, 5, 6). Such an act of discipline constitutes excommunication; Jahweh "sets his face against that person." Such individual punishment was dealt out by the judgment of Moses and the leaders he appointed for this purpose (Ex. 18:13-26). This was done according to specific rules: judgment (in the land after entry into Canaan) took place at the gate (Dt. 25:1-6) and on the evidence of more than one witness (Dt. 19:15). The elders of the city were judges (Dt. 22:15) and in the case of the cities of refuge both elders and the congregation were engaged in the judicial process (Numbers 35:24-28; Joshua 20:1-6). Not all transgressions were worthy of excommunication (*karath*), although it may be said that death by stoning constituted a form of excommunication, expiation by means of burnt offerings was provided (Lev. 4 and 5). While other words are used to express being cut off, for example, *gazar* in the messianic prophesy of Isaiah 53, the word *karath* is most often used and appears to describe the consequences of transgression of the covenant cleanliness and holiness requirements.

3) *Herem*—In the punishment of Achan this word is used. From other passages we know that whatever is placed under the ban (*herem*) is totally out of reach to man, except for the offerings the priest may use. That which is *herem* is mostly holy to the Lord and may not be touched (Lev. 27:28) or transgressed upon pain of destruction. This happened to Achen. *Herem* often is used in war situations or in cases where a thing or people are to be set aside exclusively (Achan as a person, first-fruits and war-booty as things). Achen transgressed the war-booty ban (Joshua 6) and consequently came under the ban himself. One other case where the people of Israel were subject to the *herem* was with respect to the offering to idols (Ex. 22:20). The ban appears to be irrevocable, but its use seems not to have been in use as a general means of discipline.

f. Relationship to the New Testament

As in the Old Testament the New Testament believer is called to live a life of holiness. He is to "be zealous to be found by him (God) without spot or blemish, and at peace" (II Peter 3:14). This life of holiness and the call to repentance as found in Romans 12:1-2, find their focal point in the believer being God's temple in whom dwells his Holy Spirit. The discipline/instruction of the law still stands through the fulfillment of the love command, but as directed by the Spirit, doing his desires (Gal. 5). Discipline/correction is also called for, but in the "spirit of gentleness" and bearing one another's burdens. The extreme of discipline/excommunication can also be found within the new community. In I Corinthians 5:2 Paul speaks of removing the sinner from among the church. The *herem* may have an analogy in the unforgivable sin: the sin against the Holy Spirit, which is unforgivable (Mt. 12:31-32).

More so, however, Jesus himself ties into the Old Testament structure of discipline when he speaks about brothers sinning against one another as recorded in Matthew 18. No evidence may be accepted except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Here Jesus ties into the law (as expressed in Lev. 19:17 and Dt. 19:15). The loosing and binding, as mentioned in Matthew 16 has a background in Isaiah 22:22: "he shall open and none shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open." The whole structure of New Testament discipline does not depend upon Deuteronomy, but is a working out, under the guidance of the Spirit, of similar principles.

In the execution of various means of discipline it appears that the individual gets greater attention in the New Testament. The nature of the New Testament covenant demands this; God has updated his covenant through Jesus Christ. No longer is the church a child, under the custody of the law, but it has been given a measure of maturity having received the Holy Spirit. The responsibility of the individual, vis a vis the law, is not entirely absent from the Old Testament. Each man was responsible for his own obedience, Deuteronomy 24:16, as well as Ezekiel 18, emphasizes that each man shall be put to death for his own sins. Admittedly, it is a negative approach. Ezekiel 33 also brings out this responsibility: "Though I say to the righteous that he shall surely live, yet if he trusts in his righteousness and commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds shall be remembered; but in the iniquity that he has committed he shall die" (v. 13). Yet the Old Testament believer has the hope of greater things. Joel 2:28ff prophesies a day when young and old shall be prophets, and Jeremiah 31:31ff points to a

time when the laws will be written on human hearts. The new age is truly richer in hope and grace. It, too, however, is called to live in community, to suffer and rejoice together (I Cor. 12:26).

g. *Some Conclusions*

1) There appear to be three basic forms of disciplines in the Old Testament: instruction (word), correction (word and deed) and excommunication (deed).

2) In a relative order of importance instruction was primary. By the law and his mighty deeds (*musar* pointed to these deeds in Dt. 4:36): Jahweh formed his people. Correction was applied on the basis of this covenant law (and a reminder of the great acts) calling the people to their identity and origin. Excommunication, an extreme form of discipline, had a corrective intent. It was plainly so in the national exile. This cannot be so plainly asserted on behalf of individuals who were cut off.

3) The purpose of discipline was and remains the salvation of the people in order that Jahweh's name may be honored. In the context of this salvation holiness is very important.

4) Excommunication was not necessarily total since the full force of the curse was to be placed on the Lamb. Excommunication, too, was an instrument to reinforce Jahweh's purpose.

5) Discipline was exercised by Jahweh as THE covenant administrator, but also by appointed administrators: Moses, Judges, the elders of the city, as well as the kings and prophets. The congregation also had a place in this administration of discipline.

6) That the entire enterprise of holiness rested in proper observation of the cult as an expression of unity and holiness points to the communal nature of Jahweh's discipline. The holiness of the people was to be expressed in the presence of Jahweh, through worship at the sanctuary. Discipline, whether administered by Jahweh nationally, or through appointees locally, was to reinforce this holiness of the people. Jesus himself tied into this structure when he told the leper to go and show himself to the priest (Mt. 8:4).

7) This provides a connection with the New Testament perspective in that the temple has a different structure. It is built of living stones, people. This new temple is also the focal point of discipline; it is not to be defiled, but must be without spot or blemish. Each person who is member of the body of Christ is to be worthy of his calling, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1-2).

8) Although the traditional purpose for church discipline: the repentance of the sinner, has not been dealt with, this emphasis is not absent from the Old Testament. The individual always stood with his brothers and sisters before the covenant demands, but had a responsibility for himself (Dt. 24:16) as well as for the entire community (for example Achan's sin). The New Testament believer has a similar relationship to the Lord as Paul emphasizes many times when he speaks about the body. However, there is a hope factor in the Old Testament which points to the better: the eunuch who was not allowed to be in the sanctuary (Dt. 23:1) hears the prophesy of comfort from Isaiah 56:4 and following. But also here, obedience to the covenant is stressed.

2. The New Testament

a. *The New Testament Words for Discipline*

1) The word *paideia*, which is closely related to the Old Testament word *musar*, is used six times in the New Testament. Five times this word is translated in the RSV¹ as *discipline* and once as *training*.

—Hebrews 12:5, “. . . My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage when you are punished by him.”

—Hebrews 12:7, “It is not for discipline that you have to endure. . . .”

—Hebrews 12:8, “If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children.”

Hebrews 12:11, “For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant; later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”

Ephesians 6:4, “Fathers do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

II Timothy 3:16, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness."

In the first five quotations the word is consistently translated as discipline, and in all instances it refers to the discipline of the Lord which he exercises upon the people he loves. The only exception is Ephesians 6:4 where fathers are instructed to bring up their children in the discipline of the Lord. "As in Hebrews and Revelation God's loving will as Father stands behind this use of *paideia* along the lines of Old Testament proverbial wisdom, so the subject of the saying in Titus 2:12 points in the same direction. This is the grace of God, which has shown itself to be to men's salvation and which subject the Christian community to its education and discipline."²

The verb *paideuō*, is used thirteen times in the New Testament and is translated in a variety of ways. Two times it is translated as chastise (Lk. 23:16, 22), once as chastened (I Cor. 11:13), once as chasten (Rev. 3:19), once as punished (II Cor. 6:9), once as correcting (II Tim. 2:25), once as training (Tit. 2:12), once as instructed (Acts 7:22), once as educated (Acts 22:3), once as learn (I Tim. 1:20), and three times as discipline (Heb. 12:6, 7, 10).

As one checks these references he soon discovers that the subject of this disciplinary activity is not restricted to God, but is both God and believer, as well as the Word of God. The object of both *paideia* and *paideuō* is to kindle zeal for repentance, "renunciation of ungodliness and confident hope of the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. . . ."³

2) The next words of some importance for our subject of discipline are *noutheteō*, the verb form which is used eight times, and *nouthesia*, the noun form, used three times.

The verb form, which literally means *to put in mind*, is translated five times as admonish.

—Acts 20:31, "Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears."

—I Corinthians 4:14, "I do not write this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children."

—Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. . . ."

—I Thessalonians 5:12, "But we beseech you, brethren, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you."

—I Thessalonians 5:14, "And we exhort you brethren, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

Two times it is translated as *warn*.

—Colossians 1:28, "Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ."

II Thessalonians 3:15, "Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."

Once it is translated as *instruct*.

—Romans 15:14, "I myself am satisfied about you, my brethren, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able to instruct one another."

The noun *nouthesia* is used three times and translated as follows: I Corinthians 10:11, "Now these things happened to them as a warning, but they were written down for our *instruction*, upon whom the end of the ages has come;" Ephesians 6:4, "Fathers do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and *instruction* of the Lord; Titus 3:10, "As for a man who is factious after admonishing him once or twice, have nothing more to do with him."

It will be readily observed from the above that the object of both the noun and verb form, is the correction of the one who is not walking in "the way" and that the admonishing is done by both apostles and members of the believing community alike. The apostle Paul at times admonishes the membership of the church to do their admonishing, which is their duty toward their fellow believer who is departing from "the way". "In the case of *didaskēin* the primary effect is on the intellect, and someone qualified exercises the influence. *Nouthetein*, however, describes an effect on the will and disposition, and it presupposes an opposition that has to be overcome. It seeks to correct the mind, to put right what is

wrong, to improve the spiritual attitude."⁴ In a footnote the same author says: *didaskein* means to show how, *nouthetein* to show what is wrong."⁵

3) Another word which is quite often used for the process of discipline and particularly to expose one's wrong is *elegchō*, which is translated as rebuke, convince, reprove, expose. Let it suffice just to quote one representative passage of each of the eighteen times this word is used.

—I Timothy 5:20, "As for those who persist in sin, *rebuke* them in the presence of all" (cf. Tt. 1:13; II Tim. 4:2).

—Titus 2:15, "Declare these things; exhort and *reprove* with all authority, let no one disregard you" (cf also Lk. 3:19; Rev. 3:19).

—John 3:20, "For everyone who does evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds *be exposed*" (cf. also Eph. 5:11, 13).

—John 16:8, "And when he comes he will *convince* the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment."

—I Corinthians 14:24, "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters he is *convicted* by all, he is called to account by all" (cf. also John 8:46; James 2:9).

This word, as is clear from the above, means to show or expose a person's wrong and urge him to a change of life. "It means 'to show someone his sin and to summon him to repentance' . . . The word does not only mean 'to blame,' or 'to reprove' nor 'to convince,' in the sense of proof, nor 'to reveal' or 'to expose' but 'to set right,' namely 'to point away from sin to repentance.' It implies educative discipline."⁶ The subjects of this educative discipline may be individual believers who attempt to fulfil their responsibility toward their fellow believers as in Luke 18:15; Ephesians 5:11, but "It may also be a congregational affair under the leader, as in the pastorals: I Timothy 4:2. . ."⁷

4) Finally, there is one more word used in the New Testament which denotes the correction of a brother and that is *epitimaō*. It must be carefully observed that *epitimaō* becomes a technical term for the powerful word of rebuke and threat⁸ and is mostly exercised by God whose rebuke shakes the heavens (Job 26:11), and by our Lord Jesus Christ who rebukes the winds and the sea (Mt. 8:26), the devil and demons (Mt. 17:18; Mk. 9:25; Lk. 4:39) etc.

When human beings use *epitimaō* with the intent of threatening, they are almost always corrected, or told to refrain from doing so. In Matthew 19:13-14 the disciples rebuked the people who brought children to Jesus, but Jesus told them not to hinder the little ones. When Peter rebuked the Lord (Mk. 8:32) the Lord in turn rebuked Peter (v. 33).

It is only when the objective is the correction of the brother, that *epitimaō* may be used of human beings. "Take heed to yourselves; if your brother sins, *rebuke* him, and if he repents, forgive him" (Lk. 17:4). "Preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, *rebuke* and exhort. . ." (II Tim. 4:2). Kittel says: "The New Testament maintains the same tradition by forbidding rebuke *except as brotherly correction* and treating effective threatening and reproof as the prerogative of God and his Christ alone."⁹

We shall terminate the word-study here and for now only observe that discipline, as expressed by the above words is not only to be exercised by a select group of appointed people, but that all believers have the right and the duty to exercise discipline because they are all responsible brother-keepers.

b. We shall now turn to the study of specific and particular texts which speak to the subject of discipline.

1. *Matthew 18:15-18*. There is no passage in the Bible which speaks more clearly about discipline, and how that is to function in the church of Christ, than this one. Our Lord is speaking here to his disciples when as yet there is no church in existence, but he nevertheless lays down the basic principles and rules for the practice of discipline as he wants it to function in the church he is going to institute later through his apostles.

According to the instruction of our Lord given in this passage, discipline begins with personal admonition. "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother" (vs. 15). We should be aware of the fact that there is a textual question here as to whether *against you* belongs in the text. There are some manuscripts which do not have the words *against you* included, and therefore may have

been added by a copyist to make it more understandable to the reader. Grosheide writes: "The words *against you* do not appear in the oldest and best manuscripts. One finds them only in later texts (tekstgetuigen) and church fathers. . ."10 He writes further: "One understands, that this matter is of great importance. If *against you* belongs in the text, then we have here a word of Jesus, which concerns itself with strictly personal things; the one brother has something against another. If *against you* does not belong in the text, as we take it, then the point is this, the one brother sees another brother sin. He may as a member of the *ecclesia*, of the kingdom of heaven, not allow that; brotherly love must work and goes to work and leads to brotherly admonition."¹¹

We shall not enter into all the pros and cons as to whether or not *against you* does or does not belong in the text, because that will take us too far afield. There are a host of commentators in support of Grosheide's position that *against you* does not belong in the text. And if they are all correct, then we have a strong case here already for the believer's common responsibility to exercise mutual discipline upon one another. But that principle is not based merely on this text. There are a host of others in the New Testament and we shall therefore not use this text to make that point here. It is merely brought to the reader's attention that there is a variant reading and that a case *could be made* to make that point here. Already in the Gospels the Lord gives the basic principles and guidelines for the life and operation of his church.

The main point that we have to observe is that if some brother sins against another brother, the brother who has been hurt has the responsibility to go to the offender and make him aware of the wrong he has done, or what damage he has caused. The general practice is often that the one who has been hurt never talks anymore to the person who has done the hurting and simply waits for him to come and make his apologies. But the Lord says here that it is the responsibility of the one who was hurt to "tell him his fault", i.e. to the one who has done the hurting. One of the reasons for this may be that the person involved may not even be aware of the fact that he has hurt someone, either by his words or actions. The Lord places the responsibility upon the shoulders of the one who was hurt to initiate the action. And furthermore he also teaches all believers here that they may not immediately go to the consistory with their problem. Nothing may come in the hands of the consistory or the church assembly unless the brother concerned has first himself gone to the one who has hurt him, and told him his fault. In Luke 17:3 the Lord uses a stronger word: ". . . If your brother sins, rebuke him" (*epitimoosen*). In both cases, however, he who is hurt is to initiate the action.

If this action proves to be fruitless then the next step is: "But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses" (vs. 16). "These last words come from Deuteronomy 19:15 and have the meaning there, that before a judge only then a complaint against a person is accepted, if it is brought by more than one person. Here the intent is that when a person does not want to listen (*zich niet laat gezeggen*) and the issue must later be brought to the congregation (vs. 17), there may not be any doubt concerning that which transpired in the inner chamber."¹²

The circle of involvement in the process of discipline becomes wider, but it still does not reach the consistory or the officially appointed leaders of the church. It is still in the hands of the believers, members of the body of Christ, who are anointed with the Spirit of Christ to admonish, in the name of Christ, the erring brother. The object of this "meeting" is to straighten out the erring brother and bring about reconciliation between the two brothers at odds with each other. If there is no change in the brother then there are at least witnesses, on the basis of whose testimony the church may and can pronounce a verdict, or make a judgment in the case brought before it.

This is the procedure, the manner and basis upon which accusations were heard by the elders in the Old Testament (Dt. 19:15), and this is the way Christ wants it in his church. In other words, people may not even expect to be heard by the consistory unless they have followed this step. And all too often consistories do look into a case on the basis of the testimony of one person, but

which is contrary to the rule of the Old Testament as well the instruction of our Lord in Matthew 18.

Grosheide writes: "It happens many times among brothers, that one is offended by another. The offended then goes to the consistory and requests them to admonish the offender and bring him to the point of repentance and apology. But this Scripture portion may not be used in this way . . . We have here the issue of James 5:19-20; I John 5:16. When the brother sees a brother sin, he must admonish him. A remarkable verb form is used here (*elenchō*) which in the first place means to refute, and further also: convince, rebuke, correct, and even reprimand. The brother who sees another one sinning, may not let this go, he must personally go to him and convince him of his wrong, and if it has to be, reprimand him."¹³

Bouwman says too that personal admonition is beneficial. Therein the congregation demonstrates it is a living congregation. Therein the bond of the congregation to Christ and to one another is revealed. Through that the congregation is built spiritually, and kept from slipping away with the world."¹⁴ Only when personal admonition, and the admonition in the presence of witnesses does not help, only then may the issue be taken to the church. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and tax collector" (vs. 17).

It is at this point that Jesus touches upon what we may call *official* church discipline. We cannot say with any kind of certainty what Jesus means exactly with church here, because there was no organized church at this point. Jesus lays down the general principles for the exercise of discipline in his church. The particulars will be worked out later by his apostles, who, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, will set up the organizational structure of the church with elders, deacons, pastors, evangelists etc., through whose ministries the church will be edified (Eph. 4). Whether, therefore, Jesus means by "tell it to the church" the whole assembled body of believers, say, in a worship service, or the appointed "ruling body" of the church cannot be determined here, nor is it extremely important. "There is still an absence of a worked out *ecclesia* . . . but the use of the word *ecclesia*, as it appears here, implies though that this *ecclesia* had an address, to which one could go."¹⁵

However, that Jesus is not merely thinking of an ecclesiastical court which alone makes final decisions in a case, is indicated by what follows in the verses 19-20. There he does not speak of the apostles, or of appointed officials, but also of believers, members of the body of Christ, and who by virtue of the office of all believers are qualified to deal with matters pertaining to the life of the church, including discipline, and thus reckoning one as belonging or not belonging to the kingdom of God, i.e. considering him either as a brother or as a "Gentile and tax collector" (vs. 17).

There is some difference of opinion on the exact meaning of "let him be to you as a Gentile and tax collector." Some interpreters take this virtually as excommunication in the sense in which we speak today of a person who has been officially excommunicated from the church. It will take a special study, in the light of both the Old and the New Testament to determine precisely what Jesus implies with this. Let it suffice us, however, simply to accept the fact that Jesus does not mean "an excommunicated person from the church," but to reckon or consider such a one as having no part in the kingdom of God, or in the body of Christ. He is a person who is to be "marked," avoided, and shunned, and thus feel the pressure of being excluded from the fellowship of his fellow believers. But then when this person persists in his ways and does not change, he may end up in being officially cut off, excommunicated from the church, or declared "unbound" or "loosed."

That brings us then, in connection with verse 18, to the power of the keys of the kingdom. Jesus said: "Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (vs. 18). Here the Lord clearly refers to the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven as they are mentioned in connection with "binding" and "loosing" in Matthew 16:19: "I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Later this binding power is given by our

resurrected Lord to his disciples, John 20:23: "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

What Jesus gives us in these three passages (Mt. 16:19; 18:18; John 20:23) is instruction and authority to exercise discipline, and even to excommunicate. First, this authority is given to Peter (Mt. 16:19) after his confession that Jesus is the Christ. Secondly, this authority is given to the other disciples (John 20:23), and also to the church (Mt. 18:18).

The idea of the keys of the kingdom comes from and is related to Isaiah 22:22 where Shebna is rejected as the man clothed with authority to bar or admit access to the king and his house. Shebna is replaced by Eliakim, the son of Hilkiyah. To him was given the authority to let a person into the house of David and have an audience with the king, or to bar him from appearing before the king.

In the New Testament Jesus gives this right and authority to Peter, to all the disciples, and finally also to the church as to who has access into the kingdom of God.

From Revelation 3:7 we learn that Jesus has that power in an absolute sense: "... the words of the holy one, the true one, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens." Jansen says of this passage in relation to Matthew 16:19: "Christ is the key-keeper, the heavenly gatewatcher, the one who has authority over the kingdom of heaven, the one who determines, who shall enter and who shall remain outside. . . . When he later ascends he shall not use them immediately but mediately through the service of people. It is for that reason that he speaks here in the form of a promise and says in the future tense to Peter: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. . ." ¹⁶

We can't come to any other conclusion than that our Lord clothes Peter with an authority, which, in submission to all the directives and ordinances of Christ, means that he is to determine who enters the kingdom of God and who doesn't. In Matthew 18:18 this authority is given to all the disciples as well as to the church. "He speaks here only of binding and loosing, but that is, nevertheless, even as in Matthew 16:19b, an authority which follows from the power of the keys, and points out its exercise in the church on earth." ¹⁷

That this right and authority to use the keys of the kingdom is not only given to the disciples but also to the church is clear from Matthew 18 and as this principle was later applied in the New Testament church through the instruction of the apostles. Jansen says too: "However, this does not mean to say that the church is excluded from the administration of the power of the keys, because, even if there is a difference between the authority of the congregation, there is also again an original relationship; and in this sense, that the authority and right of the congregation to admonish and exclude (vss. 15-17) flows out of the apostles' power of the keys (vs. 18)." ¹⁸

In John 20:23 Jesus speaks about the same authority which was given by him to Peter, the other disciples, and also to the church, but there is a new element here.

Grosheide says: "This word clearly reminds us of what Jesus said to Peter after his confession in Matthew 16. Also in this respect does the Saviour remain what he was before. He continues to give instruction and authority to his apostles, he continues to entrust them with the exercise of discipline, the line goes on. That is in the first place the importance of this Scripture passage. But then in what immediately follows there is also something different from what was revealed earlier. Something is added which Jesus can now proclaim, because he has now accomplished the work and has come to his exaltation. In none of the commands of the Lord to exercise discipline is his majesty revealed as in this one, wherein, after all, the administration of discipline is brought in direct relationship with his being sent by the Father. . . . So we should find it . . . not too strange, when Christ speaks to his disciples, that he sends them, even as the Father has sent him. And thus the apostles come, in the exercise of discipline, with the authority of the glorified Christ, yet with the authority of God. The important thing for us here is this, that we hear how the Saviour, as he calls his apostles to the exercise of discipline, points specifically to his and their being sent, and to the relationship of these two. Therewith is the authority clearly pointed out which lies behind Christ's commanded exercise of discipline." ¹⁹

Another added feature of John 20:23 is that the authority to exercise discipline, or to bind and loose, is given in the form of forgiving sins and retaining sins. We may understand this in the sense of declaring that, on the basis of the promises of God in his Word, and particularly here in relationship to the accomplished work of Christ, the sins of the penitent sinners are forgiven; and also on the basis of the Word of God that the sins are not forgiven of those who remain obstinate and impenitent and do not submit to the good exercise of discipline of either the apostles or the church.

Grosheide writes: "Jesus speaks here in John of sin. This means that it is concerning a serious matter. Especially in John we find the preaching of Jesus which brings out the seriousness of sin. Sin stands on the side of darkness, on the side of the ruler of this world. That shows the importance of the exercise of discipline. It may, as other texts teach us, serve the deliverance of the sinner, it is also a means in the battle against the power of darkness. Here we come upon the exercise of discipline as care for the holiness of the congregation. The seriousness of the exercise of discipline, its place in the struggle for the extension of the kingdom of God, is brought to the fore."²⁰

We shall consider this to be a sufficient discussion of the implications and meaning of Matthew 18:15-18 and the related passages of Matthew 16:19 and John 20:23. We have a sufficient ground and basis for concluding from this, Jesus' instruction concerning the importance of the exercise of discipline in his church. We may also conclude from this passage(s) in the Gospels that both the apostles and the church (in whatever organizational state) have the authority and the duty to exercise discipline for the holiness of the church, and as a means to fight the power of darkness. Most importantly, for our consideration of discipline, we may conclude from our Lord's instruction on church discipline here that church discipline begins with mutual discipline, and then proceeds to common discipline where two or more witnesses are present.

In the light of, or against the background of Deuteronomy 19, the official body of the church may not even hear, or accept, the accusation of an individual, except it be confirmed by two or more witnesses. This is an important conclusion which should not only be brought to the attention of the membership of the church so that they refrain from coming directly to the consistory with a particular accusation against a brother who has wronged him or her, but this is also an important conclusion for the consistories to remember, so that they never accept, or deal with, an accusation of a brother against another brother unless this be corroborated by witnesses, or that he has taken witnesses with him and tried to bring the brother to a change of life, or at least "told him his fault."

We shall now proceed to a discussion of scriptural givens which reveal how the principles of church discipline and the authority to exercise discipline, and the power of the keys, are worked out in the New Testament church upon the instruction of the apostles, upon whose witness the church is built and upon whose instruction the church is organized. We shall also have to pay close attention to the instruction given by the apostles as to whether only the appointed officers in the church are clothed with the authority to exercise discipline, or whether also the membership is instructed, either themselves to exercise church discipline, or be actively involved in the process of discipline. In other words, we should carefully observe how the apostles instructed the churches to exercise discipline on the basis of the principles and rules given by our Lord in the Gospels.

2) There are three passages which should be mentioned here that could be taken in the sense of extraordinary use of the power of the keys of the kingdom, exercised by the apostles Peter and Paul.

a) In Acts 5:1-11 the apostle Peter under the mighty influence of the Holy Spirit exposes the sin of lying to Ananias, who upon hearing from Peter that he had not sinned against man but against God, was struck by the hand of God and died. A little later his wife Sapphira was told that the men who had buried her husband would carry out her as well. She too was struck by the judgment of God. This undoubtedly must be called an extraordinary use of the keys of the kingdom.

b) In Acts 8:18-24 a certain Simon was told in no uncertain terms that he had no part or lot in what the apostles offered the Samaritans through prayer,

namely, the gift of the Holy Spirit. Simon is not struck with death, as were Ananias and Sapphira, but rather is called to repentance.

c) In Acts 13 the apostle Paul, being "filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said, 'you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? And now behold the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind and unable to see the sun for a time'" (vs. 9b-11a).

What conclusions may we draw from this use of the keys of the kingdom? What is the relationship between the keys of the kingdom and discipline? Janson says: The *real agreement* must first of all be pointed out. Christ is the only minister of the power of the keys It is then also the same power of the keys of Christ, which he has first directly given to his apostles and thereafter has through the intermediacy (medium) of the apostles given it over to the churches when these churches exercise discipline then it is the application of the keys, given her through the intermediacy of the apostles, and given them of Christ Here is also agreement in *essence* because through both, Christ administers his power of the keys. There is also agreement in *purpose*, because through both he wants to establish and prepare his church as his perfect bride But to this essential oneness we may, however, not lose sight of the *gradual difference*. If the apostles received it directly from Christ, the church indirectly. The apostles had power to pronounce God's judgments upon certain people, . . . the church has only ordinary spiritual power and may never administer a bodily punishment The apostles could infallibly forgive the sins of someone. The church . . . can only forgive and punish sin fallibly.²¹

3) Now we turn to some texts in which the apostles instruct either the office-bearers of a church, or the apostles' helpers, to exercise discipline in the churches, or they do so themselves.

a) There is one instance in which the apostle Paul is said to exercise discipline himself in the form of admonishing. In Colossians 1:28 Paul writes: "Him we proclaim, warning (*nouthetountes*) every man" Discipline in the form of warning is exercise by Paul through the preaching of the Word (cf. also Acts 20:31).

b) I Timothy 5:20: "As for those who persist in sin, *rebuke* them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear." Here it is clearly indicated that Timothy ought to exercise discipline in the churches publicly. It is understood, of course, that this applies only in the case where a person *persists in sin*. Before it comes this far, Timothy, or any other person, could take the brother aside and admonish him privately, but when this is of no avail, it is to be done publicly by Timothy.

c) Titus 2:15: "Declare these things; exhort and reprove with all authority. Let no one disregard you." Here it is Titus who is instructed by Paul to exercise discipline in the churches in the form of exhorting and reproving (cf. also Tt. 3:10).

d) I Corinthians 5:2, 9-13: Here we have the case of the incestuous brother. By *implication* we may assume that the actual excommunication was done by the office-bearers of the church of Corinth, since it was Paul's custom to appoint office-bearers in the churches, or have them elected by the membership.

Grosheide thinks that at least the office-bearers were the ones to do the actual excommunication. "In I Corinthians 5:2, 13, the next question is, from whom must the required exercise of discipline proceed? If Paul caused officers to be elected in the churches where he worked (Acts 14:23) then he would not have neglected to do that in Corinth. And if there were office bearers, then they will have made the excommunication from the church."²²

Grosheide has a good point here and he may very well be entirely correct, but since nothing is *definite* about it, and since it appears that in Paul's instruction (in I Cor. 5) the whole church is addressed, we shall treat this passage under the next heading.

4) We further study passages in which the whole church is instructed, or admonished, to exercise discipline, whether this be in the initial stages of encouraging, admonishing, warning, or in excommunication.

a) I Corinthians 5. Again this is the case of the incestuous brother, "a man living with his father's wife," which apparently was known by the membership, but nothing was done about it. Paul advises them (vs. 2) to remove this man from among them. He specifically instructs them: "When you are assembled, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh." (vs. 4b-5). "We must understand this well," says Grosheide, "God never gives up anything to Satan, his creature, the fallen angel, in order that he could arbitrarily deal with it. Also, Satan is in subjection to God and must ultimately work along toward the goal which God himself has determined. We see that in the history of Job, and also in Genesis 50:20. The object, for which Paul in the name of the Lord hands the sinner over to Satan, is the destruction of *the flesh*. With *flesh* we think here of sinful flesh. Satan must assist in bringing the sin of this man to subjection. Satan does not do this willingly, but as an instrument in the hand of God. And the object of all this is that ultimately *the spirit* of the sinner *may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*. Also next to Paul's exercise of the discipline he has, next to the purging of the congregation, the eternal well-being of the sinner in view. Should the rebuke hit the mark, then the man may now be lost for the congregation. But then he shall, when by and by Christ comes and holds a perfect judgment, appear to be saved. Paul requires, that, in any event, the congregation shall fulfil her calling, as Paul fulfils his, but that does not mean, that the man shall perish. On the contrary, if the congregation is faithful over against him, then that can be a means in the hand of God to deliver him from eternal death."²³

However one understands this instruction to excommunicate, or expel this person from the church, as either an instruction specifically to the office bearers or to the entire membership, it is clear that Paul admonishes the church to exercise church discipline, and not to allow such a person to remain a member of the church as they thus had done. It is our opinion that the whole church, the entire membership, is held responsible and instructed to exercise their rightful authority to administer discipline.

Jansen says too: "The apostle even rebukes the church, that they had not, touched with holy dismay, removed this member immediately from their midst with the ban."²⁴ Jansen is also of the opinion that the church herself, i.e. the assembled body of believers, had the right and the duty to excommunicate. "Two things in these texts (vs. 9-13), are clearly taught us: 1) how the congregation over against adulterers had to exercise discipline; and 2) that the congregation has the right of excommunication."²⁵

The apostle Paul is willing, and so instructs the church of Corinth, after he and they have done their God-given duty, to let God be the judge of the person who has by him and them been "put outside." "God judges those outside. Drive out the wicked person from among you" (vs. 13).

Grosheide says in conclusion about Paul's statement in verse 13: "With those words is also the purpose of this whole passage in its entirety circumscribed. On the one hand, Paul deals with a particular sin of the congregation, to wit, her neglect to exercise discipline in the case of the public sinner. On the other hand, it gives the apostle the opportunity to speak about discipline in general and to clarify that it must serve the sanctity of the congregation and the conversion of the sinner."²⁶

b) We consider the following two passages together since they concern the same church and the same people who need to be admonished for not observing the apostolic injunction, even though they are excommunicated on two different occasions.

I Thessalonians 5:14: "And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all."

II Thessalonians 3:14-15. "If anyone refuses to obey what we say in this letter, note that man, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. Do not look on him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother."

"... he admonishes them in the first place," says Grosheide, "that they themselves, the *ataktoi*, the people who do not bother to observe any order, who live loose lives, shall admonish them. That is perfectly clear. In the congregation

there may not be any irregular walk of life, and if it is there and observed by others, then they must warningly oppose that. That is the Christian's calling on the basis of divine command."²⁷

Jansen says: "In what manner this admonishing must take place (in I Thess. 5:14 - reporter) the apostle doesn't say But this is clear, 1) that the congregation was called to exercise discipline; we are of the opinion that they had to do this under the direction of the leaders; and 2) that the idle, the ones who strayed in doctrine and life both, had to be corrected It should be observed that Paul tightens the cord of discipline, according to the intensification of the error Here he issues a *command*, to withdraw themselves from the idle."²⁸

About II Thessalonians 3:14-15 Jansen says: "Here the apostle gives the following direction for discipline, 1) That someone who does not obey our word through this letter, i.e. our written command, must be placed under more intensified discipline 2) That the congregation *must note* such a member . . . point him out openly to the congregation, for example, by announcing his name in the public gathering, so that he himself feels that he is placed under discipline, and further that every member of the congregation must watch out for him. 3) That the congregation *may not mingle herself* with him, i.e. must break the brotherly relationship with him, do not go around with him, must avoid him 4) Paul points out the objective, namely, that he may be ashamed about his sin and be brought back again to the congregation."²⁹

In verse 15 the apostle points out in what manner, or in what spirit, they must exercise discipline. They must not treat him as an enemy, "but admonish him as a brother." This tells us "how discipline must be exercised. It may not be done from a pedestal, not so, that one places himself above the other, but so, that equality is exercised and love is maintained. We may see a characteristic here which may not be absent from any exercise of discipline."³⁰

c) Hebrews 3:13. Here the apostle instructs the believers to exercise mutual church discipline by daily exhorting one another. "They may not wait until the office-bearers who are there (Heb. 13:7), become involved. There is here, therefore, a clear indication of admonishing each other, wherein we may see the first stage of the exercise of discipline, since the context does not only speak of unbelief and falling away, but also of the passing of the time of grace and a speaking of hardening."³¹

d) Hebrews 10:25. Here again the apostle encourages the believers to admonish one another with respect to faithfully attending the gatherings of the congregation for worship.

e) Finally, in Romans 15:14 the apostle Paul makes it perfectly clear that he considers the membership of the church of Rome to be qualified and knowledgeable enough to exercise mutual church discipline.

With this we believe to have given a sufficient basis on which we may build a structure and method of discipline, and from which we may draw some conclusions with respect to more active involvement of the membership in the exercise of discipline. There are, of course, *many more New Testament givens* stressing the active participation of the church membership in the exercise of church discipline, but treating more of these would involve us in a great deal of repetition. We believe that the above represents a broad enough spectrum of the instruction and practice of discipline in the New Testament church.

B. Creedal — Our Confessions And Church Discipline

In this report we do not intend to give a detailed explanation of the confessional doctrine of church discipline. We merely like to underscore one or two principles of church discipline which are firmly laid down in our confessions and which tend to be neglected today.

First of all we may not forget that the confessions, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, were drawn up in a time of violent conflict with Rome. The foreword to the Belgic Confession as found in our Psalter Hymnal still witnesses to this confrontation. "During the sixteenth century the churches in this country were exposed to the most terrible persecution by the Roman Catholic government . . . they would 'offer their backs to stripes, their tongues to knives, their mouths to gags, and their whole bodies to the fire,' rather than deny the

truth expressed in this confession." Our reformed forefathers strongly opposed the priesthood as taught by Rome and stressed the priesthood of all believers.

A statement of Answer 85 of the Heidelberg Catechism has to be seen in this light. The kingdom of heaven is shut and opened: "By forbidding, according to the command of Christ, the use of the sacraments by those who under the christian name maintain unchristian practices, who will not, *after repeated brotherly admonitions*, renounce their errors and wicked course of life, and who having been complained of to the church, or to those who are thereto appointed by the church, despise their admonitions"

These repeated brotherly admonitions cannot be erased from our catechism, we have to do justice to them. Dr. B. Wielenga assures us that "our fathers by and large have paid more respect to the office of all believers than we do."³² Moreover, Wielenga gives us some valuable insights into these "repeated brotherly admonitions" by drawing our attention to similar statements in the catechism of London and the catechism of Emden: "What is the Christian punishment?" Answer, "It is an institution of Christ whereby *every individual member* is bound to give Christian admonition to his brother and in turn to receive this admonition willingly. Otherwise he will be expelled from the congregation according to God's word and he will be delivered to the devil" (Catechism of London).³³ "What is the external discipline?" answer, "It is an institution of Christ whereby *every individual member of the whole congregation* is obliged to admonish and punish his fallen brother in the proper way. He is also obliged to accept willingly everyone who is fallen after that he has received the admonition and punishment with a contrite heart" (Catechism of Emden).³³

The Heidelberg Catechism therefore intends to say that only after the repeated brotherly admonitions the church takes official action (through those who are appointed). Moreover, the very mentioning of the officially appointed implies that the brotherly admonitions belong to the domain of the "ordinary members." So we cannot suffice with saying that the elders act because these brothers have failed. In such cases church discipline has to be applied because the regular fellowship has come to the end of its resources.

It is also significant that our catechism discusses church discipline in the context of the brotherly communion of the Lord's Supper. It is the task not merely of the office-bearers but of the celebrating church. "The Christian Church is in duty bound to exclude such persons by the keys of the kingdom of heaven, until they show amendment of life" (Answer 82).

In our individualistic society it is not seen clearly anymore that every member of the congregation has a task here. The body of Christ so often acts as the three infamous monkeys: it does not see, it does not hear, it does not speak. Only the task of the appointed office bearers is seen and that brotherly admonitions have to precede, as stated in the catechism, is completely neglected. Indeed, at times the consistory acts for the congregation, but the consistory may never act instead of the congregation. Brotherly concern is essential for Christ's church and the catechism of London, a contemporary of the Heidelberg Catechism, is quite adamant at this point that nobody ought to be excluded from exercising this brotherly concern.

That brotherly concern is foremost in the mind of our catechism is clear also from the consideration that the subject of church discipline is not even touched upon in the twelfth Lord's Day. Indeed the individual Christian is anointed the office of prophet, priest, and king, yet no conclusions are drawn as far as the exercise of discipline is concerned. That the Christian "with a free and good conscience fight against sin and the devil in this life" (answer 32), refers according to the quoted prooftexts to the personal struggle of the Christian, rather than to the task of leading a brother in the right path. It is not until communion is discussed that this brotherly task is explicitly mentioned. Therefore, in the sight of the table of the Lord and considering the sacrifice of our Saviour, being a Christian implies expressing concern for our brother and to our brother.

However, there is a second important strand of thought embodied in the Belgic Confession that deserves mentioning. By breaking away from Rome and stressing the priesthood of all believers, our fathers did not want to endanger the authority of the office-bearers in the church in matters of church discipline. The Belgic Confession states in Article 30: "We believe that this true church must

be governed by that *spiritual polity* which our Lord has taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the Council of the church; that by these means the true religion may be preserved, and the true doctrine everywhere propagated, likewise transgressors *punished and restrained by spiritual means . . .*"

Polity means form of government (Dutch: *politie*). It is true that this polity is qualified by "Spiritual," and in Article 32 this polity is further restricted by stating that the conscience cannot be bound or compelled in any manner whatever by human inventions and human laws. Nonetheless Article 30 mentions the punishing and restraining power of office-bearers and the corresponding attitude of the congregation ought to be that we be "at peace with them without murmuring, strife or contention, as much as possible" (Art. 31).

The statements of the Belgic Confession become clear as they are seen in their historical background. Prof. Polman quotes here the Church Order of Geneva: "The task of the elders is to watch over the life of everyone, to admonish in a friendly manner those who run the risk of going wrong or of leading an irregular life."³⁴ Polman also informs us that "in the French Church Order of 1559 their task is seen in gathering of the people and reporting of annoyances to the consistory."³⁴

The above mentioned statements still sound rather tame and friendly. Yet in the days of the Reformation church discipline could take rather terrifying forms. In Calvin's Geneva someone who had committed adultery was led through the whole city together with the woman with whom he had sinned and afterwards they were expelled from the city.³⁵ Someone who had slept in one of the church services of this Geneva and on waking up had caused some rather humorous commotion was publicly censured.³⁶ Now this may sound rather barbaric, but apparently church discipline worked effectively in those days.

Of course, measures like the above also worked because society was not yet secularized. The office-bearer was not seen as someone merely doing a job, but as someone deriving authority from God and therefore deserving respect. Life was more one whole in the days of the Reformation. It had not yet been divided and segmented into so many independent pieces. Even though Calvin will safeguard the church's right to exercise excommunication, state and church are still very close as in the Roman Catholic past. In Geneva offences were reported to the city council by consistory. A reflection of this attitude of close cooperation is still evident in Article 36 of the Belgic Confession, even in its present revised edition: "The office (of the magistracy) is not only to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also to protect the sacred ministry, that the kingdom of Christ may thus be promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word of the gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by everyone, as he commands in his Word."

The word countenance means more than: create an opportunity for, or make possible, it means to favor. So that the state is still seen as an active partner in the promotion of the Word.

We do not want to enter into the problem of the relationship between church and state too deeply, we only like to stress that in the days of the Reformation church discipline still had teeth. The Christian government cooperated with the Christian church, in many cases there was but one church. The exclusion from this church was indeed a terrible threat and meant in fact an exclusion from this life and that is why excommunication could function as a symbol of the exclusion from the life to come.

We like to have a fully effective system of church discipline, but it is also obvious that we cannot return to the days when an adulterer and an adulteress were expelled from the city, and the days that but one church existed. It is our conviction that church discipline should be exercised as a meaningful endeavor in the age in which we live, and not as a futile attempt to apply principles of the society of the Reformation to our twentieth century society.

The same basic principles of church discipline will have to stand. Both the priesthood of all believers and the authority of office-bearers will have to be stressed for the good application of any church disciplinary form, as these principles are clearly laid down in God's Word.

III. OFFICIAL PRACTICE IN OUR DENOMINATION

In the minutes of classical meetings since 1869 there is little that can shed light on the problem of church discipline.

In one of the minutes of 1869 a question was asked: "What to do with a man and woman who do not take part in the worship services." The answer given was: "Inform them by mail that they do not belong to the congregation any more." A similar question came up in another classis, with the same answer given: "After admonition announce to the congregation that they do not belong to the church."

In a meeting of Classis Michigan in 1875 the matter was brought up: "How to deal with baptized members who after admonitions are negligent in making use of catechism instruction and of public worship services." Advice was given that the congregation should pray for them and if without results, these members should be placed outside the congregation.

In the General Rules that were made up in 1881, it was stated that members who move to another place without giving notice should be considered not to be members anymore after one year and six weeks. It was also stated that according to the Church Order, membership papers should be given to the persons that are moving with the understanding that they themselves contact the consistory in the new place. When they fail to do so their membership shall be terminated.

The Synod of 1926 declared, that baptized members who become delinquent, are to be cut off from membership, that the congregation should be informed, and be called to pray for them without their names being mentioned.

The matter of resignation to escape further censure and excommunication was dealt with at the Synod of 1936. It was declared that resignation is a grievous sin, that expressions such as "accepting their resignation" not be used, that from an ecclesiastical point of view those who insist on their resignation are no longer subject to church discipline.

In the year 1950 and following, several synods worked on a new form for excommunication of baptized members. They wanted something like the form of excommunication for confessing members. It never came to anything, opinions were divided, the term excommunication was felt by some to be too heavy, and no clear distinction was made between excommunication and erasure. The matter was tabled in 1955. Interesting for our study is the reason why the churches wanted such a form for baptized members, instead of "quiet erasure": this would open the door for congregational involvement in prayers being offered for such members.

It was not until 1974 that the matter came back on the floor of synod through an overture from Classis Muskegon regarding lapsed membership (Acts of Synod 1974, Overture 11, p. 637; Art. 73 IV, p. 81), an overture from Classis British Columbia (Overture 1, p. 626) and an overture from Classis Grandville (Overture 8, Art. 87, p. 635). The Synod of 1974 declared, concerning lapsed membership: ". . . baptized members who move away from the area of their church, so that a meaningful church relationship is no longer possible, may retain their membership in their home church at their request and with the consent of the consistory. If they fail to make such a request, and do not transfer to a church near them, the consistory, having made serious attempts to rectify the situation, may declare their membership lapsed after a period of two years from the date of their departure. The member concerned shall be notified by the consistory of its action if at all possible. This rule shall not apply to those whose absence from their home church is temporary" (Art. 73 IV, p. 81).

In this connection attention should also be given to the overture of Classis Chicago South (Acts of Synod, 1974, Overture 13, Article 73 V) regarding lapsed membership of those who still claim to be committed to the Christian faith, who are attending another church, and of whom the consistory is not aware of any public sin requiring discipline. Synod 1974 appointed a committee of three to study this overture of Classis Chicago South. Synod 1974 declared concerning *Discipline of Baptized Members*: ". . . that before a consistory proceeds to exclude unfaithful covenant members,

a. - an announcement, ordinarily without mentioning names, shall be made to the congregation with request for prayers on behalf of them.

b. - thereupon the advice of classis shall be asked.

c. - after the advice of classis has been received and before the final announcement of exclusion from the church is made, another request for the prayers of the congregation be made, this time mentioning their names (Acts of Synod 1974, article 87, II).

It should be noticed that the term exclusion is used instead of erasure, which is an improvement.

By comparing the old Church Order of 1914 with the new Church Order of 1965 it is striking that the old one is more positive as far as congregational involvement is concerned than the new one: "In case anyone errs in doctrine or offends in conduct as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense, the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matthew 18 shall be followed" (Art. 72 of the old C.O.). And article 73 reads: "Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the consistory." Both these articles appeared in the Church Order of 1618-1619. In our present Church Order we read in Art. 78b: "The exercise of admonition and discipline by the consistory does not preclude the responsibility of the believers to watch over and to admonish one another in love."

We were not able to trace back why the new Church Order has made the element of congregational involvement weaker than it was in the old Church Order. At this point we feel that an improvement in the Church Order could help make the congregation more strongly aware of its responsibility in mutual discipline and admonition. This awareness, however, will mainly have to come from the preaching of the Word and through pastoral care.

Dr. John Kromminga of Calvin Seminary having been asked for his opinion on this matter gave as his impression that the congregation is not very much involved in discipline at all, but that through preaching and congregational discussion groups something be done about it. According to him the following areas should be emphasized:

1. The sense of Christian community and responsibility for each other.
2. The fact that discipline does not begin with formal steps, but that the preaching of the Word and the interaction of Christians with each other are deeply involved in the broader scope of admonition and discipline.
3. The beneficent purpose of discipline: namely, to restore the sinners to the soundness of the doctrine and life and to the fellowship with God and the church.

Being asked about the present developments in De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland, the Rev. K. J. Schaafsma, Stated Clerk, stated that discipline matters are not too much in the center of the church attention at the moment. He drew our attention to the fact that in the new Church Order (revised) the following article has been included, Article 109 which reads (by way of translation): "If it becomes apparent that a baptized member or a confessing member is so indifferent that an absolute denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ is revealed, in such a way that there is no room for the regular procedure of church discipline according to Article 110 of the Church Order, the consistory shall declare that such a person can not be considered a member of the church of Jesus Christ, . . . after having received approval from classis, . . . after the person has received the opportunity to express himself."

In conclusion, it can be stated that the official practice in our denomination never has been clear on the manner of congregational involvement in the discipline procedure, except for the practice of mentioning the name in the final stages before excommunication. However, it is most peculiar that in the form for excommunication it is clearly stated that excommunication is administered "after frequent admonitions given as well in private as before witnesses and in presence of many." To our knowledge the church has not sufficiently lived up to these clearly defined stages of congregational involvement in discipline as defined in this form.

IV. THE RECOMMENDED BIBLICAL PRACTICE OF DISCIPLINE

A. *The Subjects of Discipline.* By the subjects of discipline we mean those who are called upon to practice discipline. Under this heading we speak of:

1. *Personal Discipline.* Every believer, every follower of the Lord Jesus Christ, is called to deny himself and follow Christ (Mt. 16:24), mortify, or put to death, the deeds of the body (Rom. 8:13) or as Paul puts it (Col. 3:5-8), "Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you; immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you lived in them. But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth." And so we could go on. As long as we are in this state of imperfection, we are called upon to exercise self, or personal discipline because we are always faced with: "I do not understand my own action. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Rom. 7:15).

2. *Mutual Church Discipline.* By this we mean that believers, members of the body of Christ, citizens of the kingdom of heaven, are responsible for each other, are their brothers' keepers. This implies on the one hand, that we care for the brother, encourage him, exhort and admonish him (II Thess. 3:15), and if necessary, rebuke him (Lk. 17:3), the object being to keep the brother in "the way," or to bring him back if he has departed from "the way." On the other hand, it implies also that as believers we are concerned with the sanctity of the whole body of Christ, which may mean at times that an individual brother with whom we have worked, admonished, etc., will have to be removed from the congregation to maintain the sanctity of the body, or the church, of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 5).

Most people do not have too much difficulty with accepting the teaching of mutual discipline in the sense of admonishing and "exhorting one another." However, we discover all too often that this is generally not practiced. One has but to consider the accusations that are brought to consistories by individuals who have ever so much as talked to the party against whom the grievance or accusation is brought, or taken witnesses along to him to try and persuade him to change his ways (Mt. 18). Besides that, it is not very often that the membership of a church is actively involved in discipline, other than by the announcement from the pulpit that a member has been placed under discipline. In most cases the membership does not get any more involved than by giving their silent approval to the decisions and actions of the consistory. Where we listen to the instructions and admonitions of the apostles to the churches (cf. scriptural givens above) we find that the entire membership of a church is addressed and called upon not only to exhort, admonish, and rebuke a straying brother, but also, if need be, to excommunicate him in their public assembly (I Cor. 5).

It is precisely in this area of membership involvement in church discipline, that we have to a large extent failed; and if that is too strongly stated, then at least this is an area in which a lot of improvement in our present structure and practice of discipline is necessary and mandatory. In fact, if this part of mutual church discipline fails, or is not operative, then official consistorial discipline is out of place, and then it is no wonder either that criticism arises from some of the membership of the congregation. This is largely because they do not know anything about the "case," have not been sufficiently informed, nor have they themselves been involved in, nor have they been taught to be involved in, the process of church discipline. The membership should be *taught*, both through the proclamation of the Word from the pulpit, and by means of district membership and congregational meetings, that discipline *begins with the membership*. All too often complaints are heard from the membership that "the consistory should do something about this," or "I can't understand why the consistory lets this go on," or, "everything seems to be allowed nowadays by the church, because the church doesn't do anything about it." All of these objections or complaints arise not only from a complete misunderstanding of the *process* of discipline, but also because the membership has not sufficiently been aware of its duty, its calling, and its necessary involvement in the process of church discipline. Much of our church discipline concerns people who neglect the means of grace, i.e., failing to attend the divine worship services and to partake of the Lord's Supper. But how many times has anyone of the members of the congregation made it a

point to go and visit, have a "talk" with these people? And how often has the consistory, by way of private "talks" requested the membership to go to erring members, to talk with them, *pray* for them and *plead* with them to amend their lives and join them again in worship and fellowship, or encourage the membership by way of pulpit exhortation and bulletin announcement to show their Christian concern for such members? When the membership, either the whole membership, or the "district" membership in which the parties concerned live, has visited them often, pleaded with them, prayed with and for them, when that appears to be of no avail, then that membership will come, and *has a right and duty to come*, to the consistory and say: "We have done all that was humanly possible with and for these people, but they remain adamant in their sinful ways. We cannot recommend anything else but that you exercise and administer official church or consistorial discipline. Perhaps, that will bring them back, and if not, so be it, we are innocent of their blood," but they *may not* and *can not* any longer remain members in good standing of this church, lest the whole church be defiled."

When this happens, when mutual and common church discipline has taken place in brotherly love, the official consistorial discipline becomes not only meaningful to the congregation, but then it is also in *its place* and *mandatory*, and will be accepted by the membership as a *must*, for the glory of God, the sanctity of the church and the possible conversion of the straying member. Only when this procedure has been followed, can the congregation say, when an announcement is read from the pulpit that a member has been placed under the first or second step of discipline, "Amen! So be it!"

What is necessary in order to bring about this procedure in church discipline, which must always begin with mutual church discipline among the membership, is that the membership is taught from the pulpit. The membership must be taught through the preaching of the Word what its responsibility is with respect to church discipline. The members must be taught to see that they are all responsible for one another and that they have a duty to admonish a straying member. They must become aware of the fact that the primary responsibility for visiting a straying member lies with them, and once they become aware of that responsibility, they will never be able to drive by the home of that straying member on the way to church on Sunday with a clear conscience. Then they can't remain at ease in church either, and will, therefore, resolve to visit that member at the earliest possible convenience.

One other way of bringing about a common concern for one another and especially for a straying member, is to have district meetings. Every elder in church should have a certain district of people for which he is especially responsible. Besides visiting these families on an individual basis by way of family visiting, there should be periodic district meetings called together and led by the district elder. This is also a good opportunity for the minister to be present and become better acquainted with his people in that district. At such district meetings the people should all know who belongs to that district and they should be made aware of their responsibility for each other, that it is their responsibility to have mutual watch over each other and make sure that the absent straying member will be at the next meeting, and also in church next Sunday if he doesn't come to church. When such a district membership has dealt with a straying member over a period of time, has visited him, prayed with him and for him, pleaded with him then that district membership will, if there is no change, come, and have a right to come, to the consistory and request that formal, official church discipline be applied. For the member concerned it will be a wholesome experience to discover that there are so many people concerned about a change in him and are praying for him. But if even this does not bring about a change in him, then he must be informed by the district membership that it will take this matter to the consistory and request formal discipline.

3. *Formal, or Consistorial Discipline.* By this we mean, as will have been gathered from the above, that part of church discipline bars the member concerned from the privileges of full membership in the church, i.e. bars him from the sacraments. When that is to no avail, then he shall formally be placed under the first step of discipline. The whole church membership shall be asked to pray for the one who is placed under discipline. Whether or not the name shall be

mentioned, shall be determined very carefully by the consistory, depending on the nature of the sin, and or whether the sin is secret or public. But if mutual and common discipline has functioned properly, most people will already know, at least the district membership, and then it may in some cases be advisable, for the benefit of the member (who may then receive more visits) and for the benefit of the whole church, to mention the name. The nature of sin, or the reason for discipline, shall also be made known to the congregation. When this brings about no change, the member concerned shall be informed that the matter will be taken to the next meeting of classis where he may appear in person to plead his case on the floor of classis. An individual who is placed under discipline should always be given that privilege, both at the meeting of the consistory and the classis, especially in cases of a dispute between the member and the consistory, or between the member and some other party. He may, for example, stay away from church on Sunday, for which he is placed under discipline, because he feels that he has not been fairly treated by the consistory in a dispute he had with another party. That is why it is always important that he be informed well in time before the next meeting of classis, that he has the right to appear there in person, or with someone in his behalf, to plead his cause.

Upon the concurring advice of classis to proceed with discipline, and having informed the member of classis' advise, the consistory shall then inform him that on a certain Sunday he shall be placed under the second step of discipline by way of two announcements to the congregation, and that the congregation shall be informed of the reason for discipline, the nature of the sin, and that also his name shall be mentioned; and that after a definitely stated period of time, if there is no change, he shall be excommunicated from the church. The remaining action of the church, of reading the Form for Excommunication on a set date, speaks for itself.

In conclusion, then, it may be said that the subjects of discipline, those who exercise church discipline, are all the members of the church. All the members are involved in church discipline; it should never be seen as only belonging to the domain of the consistory.

B. The Objects of Church Discipline. All the members of the congregation are the objects of discipline, i.e. they are all subject in doctrine and life to the admonition and discipline of the church, both the regular members and office bearers. This speaks for itself and needs no further elaboration.

However, there comes a time when questions are raised as to whether a person *always remains* an object of church discipline. For example, does a person who resigns from the church remain an object of discipline? Must the church continue with the steps of discipline and excommunicate a person who, after repeated admonitions remains adamant in his decision to resign? Hardly! Jansen says, "If someone *resigns* and after admonition of the consistory persists in this, then he is no longer a member of the church, and consequently also no longer object of discipline."¹ Also, "If someone *resigns while under church censure* and after admonition of the consistory remains adamant, he ceases to be a member of the church and object of censure."² Jansen goes as far as to say that "Someone ceases to be a member of the church and object of discipline if he has *apparently joined himself to another church*, even though he has not separated himself from the church by a clear resignation of his membership."³

Bouwman says about these things too, "Has someone formally separated himself from the church and notified the consistory, then with that lapses all rights of the consistory to continue with discipline But it can also be, that someone has officially not given up his membership, but shows by his actions that he has joined himself to another church, or also expresses that he does not acknowledge the office bearers anymore. In such a case he can be notified, after admonition, that by his actions he has demonstrated that he has separated himself from the church. If he acknowledges that, or does not come back on it, the congregation can be notified that such and such has withdrawn himself from the supervision of the consistory."⁴

Here we get into an area where many churches run into difficulties and are at a loss as to how to proceed. What must be done with indifferent people, people who care less about their membership in the church, and least of all their mem-

bership papers? Must a consistory go through the steps of discipline with a person who says that he wants nothing to do with the church anymore, and is absolutely indifferent as to what is done with his membership? Such members, who for whatever reasons stay away from the church, are indifferent about what is done with their membership in the church, and who after repeated admonitions of the consistory *remain* indifferent, may, with the concurring advice of classis be declared to have their *continued* indifference and non attendance of the divine worship services, severed themselves from the fellowship of the church, and broken all ties with the church, and be regarded as having resigned from the church. This is the only sensible procedure with such indifferent people. They can hardly remain the objects of formal discipline through the three steps when every time the consistory members are told that they don't care what is done with their membership. This goes without saying that the consistory may never act rashly, or hastily in such cases of indifference, but there comes a time when the consistory cannot and may not wait any longer, but must act and take the matter to classis for concurring advice to declare such a person to have resigned from the church.

C. *The Manner of Church Discipline.* Here we distinguish a threefold purpose.

1. *The Honor and Glory of God.* Whatever we do in life, our whole life, all our actions and activities, including the exercise of discipline, must be to the honor and glory of God. Bouwman writes: "The deepest motive of discipline must be the honor of God, otherwise, if we let the sinner continue, God's Word is made of no effect."⁵ And Jansen says: "The main motive of discipline must be, that which is also the main principle of our whole confession, the honor of God. . . Therefore, through discipline everything must be removed which conflicts with the honor of God, his Word, and the holiness of the congregation."⁶

2. *The Sanctity of the Church.* The essential or basic meaning of holiness is separation from defilement, or that which defiles. The purpose of discipline, the sanctity of the church, means then to be kept separate, or undefiled from that which defiles. From this it follows that if a member does not heed the admonitions of the congregation or the consistory, he will have to be removed from her midst lest he defiles the church. Jansen speaks of the preservation of the church in this manner: "In this manner discipline must be a deterrent example for the other members of the church; a warning to the entire congregation."⁶

3. *The Well-Being of the Sinner.* This speaks for itself. The purpose of discipline with respect to the straying member must always be to correct him, bring him back from his evil ways. Discipline is often looked upon as a punishment, with the objective to cut him off. But that may never be the primary motive in the mind of the church. Discipline in reality is exercise with the purpose of bringing the sinner back to the right way; of keeping him in the fold and of correcting him. Jansen says: "But further, she tries to deliver the sinner. . . And the church desires now, through discipline to bring the sinner to repentance, and then to forgive him. . . If it comes to that, the church has reached her objective with discipline and she rejoices in gladness, because she knows she has saved a soul from death and covered a multitude of sins" (James 5:19-20).⁶

V. RECOMMENDATIONS OF OVERTURE

Hoping that the above report may help synod in its deliberation, Classis Quinte overtures synod:

A. To revise and reorder Church Order IV A (Articles 78-82) as follows:

1. Change 78 a. to 78.
2. Delete 78 b.
3. Retain 79 unchanged.
4. Retain 80 unchanged.
5. Replace 81 with a new 81 a, b, c, (which is a revision of the old article 78 b) to read as follows:
 - a. The primary exercise of admonition and discipline is the *mutual* responsibility of the believer as each is called to watch over and admonish his brethren in love (Mt. 18:15).
 - b. The secondary exercise of admonition and discipline is the *common* responsibility of the believers as they are called upon to watch over and admonish one another in love (Mt. 18:16-17a, and I Cor. 5:4-5).

c. The exercise of admonition and discipline of the consistory is of a more *formal and final* character as it is called upon to complete the exercise of discipline in the church (Mt. 16:19; 18:17b-18; John 20:23).

6. Replace 82 with old Article 81.

7. Replace 83 with old Article 82.

B. To insert the following question between questions 3 and 4 of the old form for Profession of Faith: Do you promise, as members of the body of Christ, to accept and exercise your personal responsibility toward your fellow members for their Christian profession and conduct?

C. To add the following sentence to the third part of self examination in the Form for the Lord's Supper I, after *neighbor* "; finally whether he resolves in all sincerity to be faithful in exercising his responsibility toward his fellow members for their Christian profession and conduct."

D. To add to the fourth paragraph of the Form for the Celebration of the Lord's Supper III, after *neighbor*, "caring in particular for the Christian profession and conduct of his fellow member."

E. To replace question 2 of Article 41 of the Church Order with the following questions:

2. a. Is mutual and common discipline faithfully promoted and exercised in your congregation?

b. Does the consistory faithfully exercise church discipline?

F. That synod, if it deems it necessary to appoint a study committee to review the structure and practice of church discipline in the light of this overture and report, include the Rev. Guy Corvers, reporter of the classical committee, as one of the members of this study committee.

Classis Quinte,

John Klumpenhower, stated clerk

General Note: Citations from foreign sources have been freely translated and Hebrew and Greek words in citations have been transliterated. And the footnotes below are given by chapters of the report.

Chapter I

¹ Joh. Jansen, *De Kerkelijke Tucht*, E. J. Bosch J.B.Z.N.—Nijverdal, p. 2.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Vol. 5, p. 604.

⁴ Ds. J. Kik, *Bijbelshe Tucht in Huis, School en Kerk*, Kampen, J. H. Kok, 1913, p. 19.

⁵ Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 604.

⁶ Jansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁹ Marlin Jeschke, *Disciplining the Brother*, Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, Harold Press, p. 16.

¹⁰ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹¹ Jeschke, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

¹³ Rudolph Bohren, *Das Problem der Kirchrucht im Neuen Testament* (Zeliken—Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1975) p. 25, through Jeschke p. 17.

¹⁴ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁵ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁶ R. H. Charles, (ed) *The Apographa and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. II, Pseudepigrapha (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press., 1913), pp. 341-342, through Jeschke *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁷ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

¹⁸ Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 608.

¹⁹ Dr. H. Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, Kampen, J. H. Kok, 1918, vol. iv, p. 462.

- ²⁰ Lyman Coleman D.D., *The Apostolic And Primitive Church*, Philadelphia: J. B. Lippencott and company, 1871, p. 87.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ²² *Loc. cit.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 96-97.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- ²⁵ Du Pin., *De Antiqua Disciplina, Diss.*, 3 pp. 248-249, through Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
- ²⁶ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 104.
- ²⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*: Library of Christian Classics vol. XXI, p. 1235.
- ²⁸ Planck, *Geschichte der Christlich. Kirchlichen Gesellschafts*—Verfassun I, p. 509, through Coleman, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-118.
- ²⁹ Dr. H. Bouwman, *De Kerkelijke Tucht*, J. H. Kok, 1912, p. 45-46.
- ³⁰ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
- ³¹ A. Hauck, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*, Leipzig 1904, I. S., 168, through Bouwman, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- ³² Bouwman, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 71-72.
- ³⁷ Karl Rieker, *Grundsätze Reformierter Kirchenverfassung*, 1899, S. 95, through Bouwman, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- ³⁸ Calvin, *op. cit.*, p. 1235.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 1232-1233.
- ⁴⁰ Bouwman, *op. cit.*, p. 84.
- ⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 101-102.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 110.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 137.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- ⁴⁷ *Loc. cit.*
- ⁴⁸ Martin Monsma, *The New Revised Church Order Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan Publishing House, pp. 290-291.

Chapter II, A, 1.

- ¹ We realize that we are dealing with only one of the traditional three reasons for church discipline. Although the honor of God also enters into this discussion, the repentance of the sinner is not stressed here in this study.
- ² In Dt. 4:36 and 11:2 *musar* is used to describe what Jahweh did at the liberation and throughout the wilderness journey.
- ³ That the words of the covenant constitute discipline/instruction can also be seen from Psalm 50:16-17 whereby the principles of parallelism and association *musar* and *berith* are in close association. For the principle of parallelism see J. Stek "The Stylistics of Hebrew Poetry," *Calvin Theological Journal* 9, (1974) pp. 22ff. See also Psalm 119:153, 171; 25:8.
- ⁴ It is the last verse in the Massoretic text. In the RSV it is 29:1.
- ⁵ A similar theme of reversal of history, the punishment of death to the first-born of Egypt, is referred to in Amos 5:17. The vineyard is a most proper reference to Israel (Is, 5) and the wailing is to be associated with the cries in Egypt. (Ex. 12:30).
- ⁶ The covenant law-suit is clarified by the so called *rib* controversies which legal structure obtained also among the people (Roland De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, p. 155). In Jer. 2, as in others, the structure is recognizable by the use of the participle *laken* and the verb *rib*. *Rib* points to the controversy and *laken* to the consequences. See in Hosea 4:1 *rib* and in 4:3 *laken*. See also H. Huffmon, "The Covenant Lawsuit in the Prophets," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 78 (1959), pp. 286-295.
- ⁷ We see that *musar* is corrective here by virtue of parallel statement with a

form of *haburah* which means wound or stripe. Here again we are given insight as to the nature of discipline. In Isaiah 53:5 the purpose of *musar* is *shelomenu*, wholeness. Since Israel was the carriage of shalom Jahweh did not destroy her completely.

⁸ Jahweh's dealing with the individual could be extreme, but even the excommunication by cutting off cannot be said to be final in view of Achan's confession of sin. While a murderer could not be ransomed (Num. 35:31), nor could anything devoted (*herem*, which Achan became by his sin) be ransomed, the full effect of the total excommunication finally rested on the Lamb outside the gates.

⁹ *Qodesh* is capable of being translated "sanctuary." (See also Zeph. 3:4). The principle of association is very important in Hebrew poetry. For example, the new Exodus theme in Isaiah. Although in Is. 9:1 the way of the sea does not refer to the way of the Philistines, which is mentioned at the first exodus, yet by association this is present and adds greatly to the comfort of the prophesy. The same principle is at work in Amos 5:17. The point to be noted is the close association of the sanctuary and Israel's holiness. For Jahweh rests amidst a holy people. Thus the destruction of the temple was more than the removal of an historical artifact, but said something explicit about the relationship between Jahweh and His people.

Chapter II, A, 2 and B.

¹ All Bible references and quotes are from the RSV.

² Friedrich, *op. cit.*, p. 623 (see for *op. cit.*'s the footnotes under I)

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ Gerhard Kittel, Vol. IV *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, p. 1019.

⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁶ Kittel, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 474.

⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁸ Kittel, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, p. 624.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 625. (Underlining ours).

¹⁰ Dr. F. W. Grosheide, *Exegetica: What Leert Het Nieuwe Testament Inzake De Tucht?* Uitgeverij van Keulen—Delft, 1952, p. 43.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹² Dr. H.N. Ridderbos, *Korte Verklaring Der Heilige Schrift, Het Evangelie Naar Mattheus, Tweede Deel*, J. H. Kok, N.V. Kampen, 1954, p. 45. (This commentary henceforth referred to as K.V.).

¹³ Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁴ Bouwman, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

¹⁵ Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁶ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹⁹ Grosheide, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

²¹ Jansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 65-66.

²² Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

²³ Grosheide, K.V., I Korinth, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-65.

²⁴ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

²⁶ Grosheide, K.V., *op. cit.*, p. 68.

²⁷ Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

²⁸ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-53.

³⁰ Grosheide, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³² Dr. B. Wielenga: *Onze Catechismus*, Vol. 2. p. 692 (emphasis added in notes 32-36).

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 692-693.

³⁴ Dr. A. D. R. Polman: *Onze Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis*, Vol. 4, p. 19.

³⁵ Dr. L. Praamsma: *Calvijn*, p. 84.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

Chapter III no footnotes

Chapter IV

¹ Jansen, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

² *Loc. cit.*

³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴ Bouwman, *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁶ Jansen, *op. cit.*, pp. 188-192.

Overture 10 — Appoint Study Committee re Divergent Views on Historicity of Genesis 1-11

The Peoria Consistory overtures synod to appoint a committee to study whether it is in harmony with the basic essence of the Christian faith, and the Reformed understanding of the same, to deny the actual historical factuality of events recorded in Genesis, chapters 1-11.

Grounds:

1. It is a well-known and undeniable fact that within the family of Reformed denominations there are brothers who no longer hold that an acceptance of the actual historical factuality of the events recorded in Genesis 1-11 is an intrinsic component of the Christian faith. Thus we as brothers within a denomination, in a brotherly way, must address ourselves to this problem and a denominational study committee is a necessity to clarify this matter in order to keep our unity.

2. It can be readily demonstrated that we have ordained men within our denomination who hold these views mentioned in ground 1 above. As a denomination we are no longer united on these matters. For the sake of peace and unity these men maintain a low profile, which must be appreciated. But this does not do away with our differences, nor does it move us any closer to a solution. Thus we need a committee where the new evaluation of Genesis 1-11 can be discussed, the differences be ironed out, so meaningful leadership by capable scholars will be provided, lest our denomination lose its Reformed character by fragmentizing into fundamentalistic and Neo-orthodox groups. This would be a serious setback for the development of the Reformed faith on the North American continent, and would hinder us in making a rich contribution to the church of Christ in our region of the world.

3. Though it may be technically more correct according to our Church Order to identify persons who hold these new views, and to charge them with heretical teachings, we at this time prefer not to follow that path. We fear that the normal path of procedure cannot produce the desired results: Christian unity and a better understanding of the Scriptures. We fear that such a path would lead us to a split within our denomination with all the un-Christian by-products of bitterness, hatred, slander, fighting over property, and fighting within congregations, our Christian schools, and families. May the Lord keep us from that evil. Let our differences be worked on in a large committee made up of scholars representing both the old and new views, where these differences can be resolved without jeopardizing the church or one's place within it.

4. Not to discuss and work on these differences in an official way as a denomination may well result in a gradual drifting apart, and an atmosphere filled with suspicion and slander, and eventually into an unbiblical secession within the church, since there was insufficient official brotherly confrontation attempting to resolve the differences.

Peoria CRC Consistory,
Peter Van Drunen, president
Herman Bokhoven, clerk

The overture above was presented to Classis Pella on January 23, 1976. Classis Pella decided 1) "that classis not accede to the overture of the Peoria

Consistory," and 2) "since, according to Grounds 1 and 2 . . . , it is stated that it can be demonstrated that we have ordained men within our denomination who deny the actual historical factuality of events recorded in Genesis 1-11, classis advises the Peoria Consistory to follow the ecclesiastical procedure in resolving their concern" (Minutes of Classis Pella, Art. 3118).

Overture 11 — Action to Preserve Life

A. SITUATION:

In the last few years the preserving and/or ending of life has grown to be an issue of enormous significance. Secular views of the value of human life have made it permissible to extinguish life for small and arbitrary reasons. Many people define man more in terms of a biological organism than as a unique creature of God. Alarm concerning overpopulation has given stimulus to action to curb existing human life. The desire to enjoy a high standard of living and increasing materialism, coupled with self-gratification, have led to measures to snuff out life for the sake of convenience or personal freedom. Alternatives to abortion, such as adoption, seem seldom considered. More than most people realize, there are in the United States and Canada, and throughout the world, brilliant advocates for "death." Millions follow undiscerningly. The church that knows and loves God's will ought to be clear on the issue of life. God's people must give leadership in an ethic which promotes human life as the Lord intends.

Since the United States Supreme Court decision on January 22, 1973, the lives of unborn children have been aborted at a rapidly accelerating rate, reaching well over a million of reported abortions last year. In New York City throughout this past year it is reported that more babies were aborted than born. The Supreme Court decision made in January 1973 was based on a "quality of life" criterion. The unborn child is not a person in any "meaningful" or "whole" sense, the justices said. The Court did not conclude that "meaningful" or "whole" personhood begins at birth; it said only that it does not begin *before* that time. This distinction is profoundly important, because the court's vague and open-ended definition supplies the constitutional precedent for dehumanizing other segments of humanity by defining their lives also as "meaningless" or "incomplete."

It is clear that consistent and relentless logic cements together the twin evils of abortion and euthanasia, as well as covering the whole range of life which lies between. Abortion is only the tip of the euthanasian iceberg. Actually, abortion is prenatal euthanasia. It is known that proponents for abortion are frequently also members of euthanasian societies. Their arguments, slogans, methods and tactics correspond. In a few of our states legislative bills permitting euthanasia and "dying with dignity" have already been introduced.

At issue is life, particularly in those cases where, according to the definition of some in our society, life is less than meaningful. As alerted, responsible, and Christian citizens it is necessary that we pay special attention, legislatively and otherwise, to the needy in general; to the handicapped, the sick, the poor, many among the minorities, and all those concerning whom a growing number in our society in their franker moments are already dismissing as incomplete, purposeless, burdens on society, useless eaters, etc. Let all who "choose life" love and resolutely defend those made in God's image, including the poor and sick, the weak and deprived, the unborn and aged. Life is God's to give and take. It is ours to defend and use.

B. OVERTURE:

In view of expanding, aggressive, secularistic thought, attitude, and actions regarding life and death which prevail in North America today; in view of the distressing January 22, 1973 decision of the Supreme Court; in view of the positive stance which synod took concerning life in June of 1972; and in order **TO IMPLEMENT MORE CONCRETELY** what synod then affirmed, namely:

"That synod call believers to a ringing testimony against the evils of abortion as practiced in our society, and encourage them to promote action and

legislation that reflects the teaching of Scripture" (Acts of Synod 1972, p. 64),

Classis Hackensack overtures the Synod of 1976 asking:

1. That synod endorse the Human Life Amendment (as worded by the legal committee of the National Right to Life Organization).

HUMAN LIFE AMENDMENT

Section 1. With respect to the right to life the word person as used in this article and in the Fifth and Fourteenth Articles of Amendment to the Constitution of the United States applies to all human beings irrespective of age, health, function or condition of dependency, including their unborn offspring at every stage of the biological development.

Section 2. No unborn person shall be deprived of life by any person; provided, however, that nothing in this article shall prohibit a law permitting only those medical procedures required to prevent the death of the mother.

Section 3. The Congress and the several states shall have the power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

2. That synod inform federal and state legislative bodies of its action.

3. That synod urge classes, consistories, and members of our churches to do the same.

4. That synod call classes, consistories, and members of our congregations to do all in their power to protect and promote the sanctity of human life, at any age; publicizing the issues, educating people, organizing committees, and doing whatever is considered necessary to confront people with the crucial physical and moral issues which are at stake.

Grounds:

1. The will of God regarding the sanctity of human life. (Gen. 1:26, 27; 9:6; Ex. 20:13; etc.)

2. The threat which the abortion and euthanasian mentality poses for all of us, commencing with those who are weak, judged unproductive, or considered undesirable.

Classis Hackensack,
Calvin Niewenhuis, stated clerk

Overture 12 — Reestablishment of Capital Punishment in The United States

Classis Orange City overtures synod of the Christian Reformed Church meeting in June 1976 to address our national government as to the need of the reestablishment of capital punishment in a manner that respects the sovereignty of the state but expresses the imperatives of God's Word which the church confesses; that synod enlist the classes and consistories (congregations) to cooperate in addressing state governments accordingly.

I. BACKGROUND TO THE DISCUSSION OF CAPITAL PUNISHMENT:

The *Furman vs. Georgia* (408 U.S. 2, 38, 1972) decision of the Supreme Court of the United States had the effect of removing from the log of possible punishments, capital punishment. The 5-4 decision resulted in 117 pages containing nine separate opinions. Although a majority of the justices were willing to reverse the *Furman* death sentence, only two, Marshall and Brennan, concluded directly that capital punishment was inherently unconstitutional as being violative of the Eighth Amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment. The three remaining members of the majority, Stewart, Douglas, and White, found that capital punishment was being applied in a discriminatory fashion and was therefore an Eighth Amendment violation (leaving open the possibility that proper use is constitutional.)

For the dissent, Chief Justice Burger found no invidious discrimination in application of the penalty and Blackmun, Powell and Rehnquist indicated that the issue of capital punishment was matter for legislative resolution.

In view of the nine separate opinions, each citing various standards, tests, and arguments, the only certain result of the case was that *Furman* was not executed. A collateral result was the release of some 831 death row defendants across the country. The decision touched *Furman* only, but since other state

laws and procedures were similar to Georgia's the logical result was nationwide prosecutorial discretion not to execute.

The question being asked today is whether capital punishment is cruel and unusual punishment and whether or not standards can be found such that capital punishment can be justly administered. The constitutional question is complex and will only be answered by legislative efforts to formulate new laws governing capital punishment which can stand the test of the Supreme Court.

But right alongside of the constitutional question are the religious, ethical, and judicial questions that pervade the issue. Basic questions concerning man, justice and the state are involved. We have been entrusted with the Word of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, to be witnessing to the truth of God's revelation concerning his world. It is to that end that we speak, hoping to shed some of God's light on our path.

II. BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE AND IMPERATIVES:

The following series of questions will serve as the outline for biblical perspective and imperatives:

- A. What is the biblical view of justice?
- B. Is retributive justice a biblical idea?
- C. Who has the authority and responsibility to exercise punishment?
- D. Has capital punishment been a just form of punishment?
- E. In the light of the fulness of New Testament revelation and redemption should we assume that capital punishment is a just form of penalty for crimes (murder in particular) which the state must implement in the New Testament era?
- F. What is the responsibility of the church to the state in the light of the above?

A. *What is the Biblical View of Justice?*

Justice is nowhere defined in the Bible so that we could point to a passage which says "justice is . . ." It, at the same time, pervades the Bible from beginning to the end, from the creation in which God determined what was good and right to the last judgment at which time he will judge all those who have sinned against him and establish a new order in which justice will be forever. For our purposes we note that the foundation for a biblical view of justice is to be found in an understanding of creation, law and man.

"And God said . . . and it was so." That sentence states in the most concise way what we mean when we say creation. Creation is God's activity by which he brings into being the world and all that is in it. Creation also is that which has been brought into being by that activity of God. God's creating and his creation is the initial ordaining of what is good and right. And everything that is right or just today is in accord with what God has said and done in the beginning.

God upholds the created order of things by laws or norms. Examples of these laws can be found in the realm of nature, such as the geometric laws for space, the physical laws for motion, and the laws for chemical interaction. These laws explain the orderliness of what God did in the beginning.

Scientists speak of the laws of nature as descriptions of the ways in which natural phenomena do in fact occur; and so it must always be from the human point of view. Our knowledge of these laws is always subject to revision. From God's point of view, however, these laws are not descriptive, but prescriptive. But God's prescriptive laws for nature are known, at best, imperfectly by man; and this is why our understanding of the laws of nature changes frequently, although God does not alter the created order of things.

Similarly, there are laws, commands, or norms which God gives to man for the ordering of his life in relation to God, nature, to himself and his neighbor, and human society. These laws are, from God, prescriptive and tell man what is good and right in this world. Law, as we know it and experience it today, is the positive, historically formed response of man to God's law, that response being either obedient or disobedient to what God has ordained. As far as man's response has been disobedient, disorder pervades his experience. Man must, therefore, be continually forming his law to make it accord with the law of God.

This orderly, lawful creation was given to man to exercise dominion over. Man was unique in the creating work of God since God purposed to make him in his image. That image was to be expressed most clearly in the task given to man, to have dominion over all that God had made. Man was God's vicegerent, his servant king in his creation. Thus man was to rule over all, and to do so in such a way that he would unfold the riches of that which God had made. As man exercised authority over what God had made in the name of the Lord, he would also be responsible to God and accountable to God for the work which he did.

Those things being said, we can now attempt a description of justice. Justice is originally and decisively the righteousness of God by which he creates and preserves the world; gives laws and commands to man, showers blessings upon all men, both good and evil, punishes sin and evil doers both temporally and eternally, and shows mercy and redeems those whom he will.

Derivatively, justice is the state of man's right living in perfect harmony with and in perfect obedience to God before the fall. Post-fall man, by the grace of God, continues to be able to respond in an imperfect harmony with God and his neighbor. Likewise, we look forward to and strive for that time when complete justice is restored, when the kingdom of God fully comes and when the redeemed shall live together with God.

A corporate expression of that human state of righteousness is the quality demanded of communities, states and nations in regulating the affairs of men; this includes treating people fairly and equally, (not to be respecter of persons; not to be biased in favor of the poor, etc.); to avoid exploitation of those who are defenseless (poor, widows, and fatherless); and to punish evildoers.

This is the justice which we mean when we speak of the responsibility of the state to do what is just (Ps. 72:12-14; 82:1-4; Amos 2:6-8; 5:10-15; Deut. 16:20).

Various kinds of various levels of the expression of justice can be recognized. Justice, at the broadest level, is God's right ordering of his world, including man in that world. The harmony of that righteous law of God can be everywhere witnessed, despite the effects of sin, as, for example, in the ordering of the seasons, and in the wonderful love that can be experienced in the relation of husband and wife.

Justice, at a narrower level, is the demand of God that man be righteous in his exercising dominion over what he has made and living harmoniously with his neighbor, a fellow servant of God. Justice, at this level, is expressed both individually, as the individual obligation of men to fulfil this righteous demand of God in all of their life, and corporately, in any number of the societal relations which characterize human society today. The church, for example, will work for the purity of the expression of praise of the church to the Lord, seeking that harmony in the body of believers as, with one heart and one mind, they seek to serve their one Lord. The state, likewise, will attempt to regulate the life of men together and of men with the creation in such a way that all men and all that which God has made is treated with due respect, that nothing unfairly be exploited, or abused, and to punish those who do evil.

At all levels of justice, which are related but not identical, there is a demand for retribution when the harmony is broken and the law is violated. The demand for retribution confronts man with the right demands of the law, maintains the order and restores the harmony of the order, and, by the grace of God, works for the transformation of society and the redemption of man, as it anticipates the time when God's justice shall again reign unhindered by human evil.

At this point, we begin to see the outline for the purposes of justice. First of all, we see that God is just and demands justice of men. That order which God made is alone good and right, for he is the Lord over heaven and earth. Secondly, in a sinful, fallen world, God provides for and demands justice so as to preserve order in society, to mitigate the effects of sin in society, and to remind man of his continuing accountability before God and to his fellow servants. Finally, it is God's purpose to redeem for himself a people from this world and his demands of justice must be met. To that end he purposed to punish evil both in time and eternity, and sent his Son to make atonement for sin,

whereby some will be saved by his righteousness, while others, outside of God's redeeming grace, will be left in their disobedience unto external punishment.

B. Is Retributive Justice a Biblical Idea?

The foundation for the examination of this question is the normativity of the law which God made when he created. In particular this foundation is those laws, commands, and norms which God gives to man for the ordering of his life in relation to God, nature, himself and his neighbor, and human society.

Included in the discussion of retributive justice is punishment. Punishment is that penalty exacted for disobedience of the law.

The question that is before us, then, is whether or not the Bible speaks in terms of the law-punishment framework.

As we turn to the Scriptures, we find that God said to man in the garden "you may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2:16). Because of the violation of that ordinance, man was subject to death (Gen. 3:14ff; Rom. 3:12ff; I Cor. 15:21).

God punished the sin of man at the time of the flood (Gen. 6:5ff), at the tower of Babel (Gen. 11), at Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:20ff), and in the land of Egypt, when Pharaoh had hardened his heart (Ex. 7:13, 22; 8:15, 19, 32; 9:7, 12, 35; 10:20, 27; 12:29ff), and others.

God also ordered life such that man would punish the sin of his fellowman. Joshua and all the congregation of Israel, for example, punished Achan, and all his family and all that he had, because Achan sinned against the Lord and all the congregation of Israel (Joshua 7; cf., Deut 17:5; Eph. 5:5). Likewise we note that the cities of refuge were set aside by God to protect the man who accidentally killed another and to make a judgment such that the man guilty of murder would be turned over to the avenger of blood (Deut. 19:1-13). Many punishments were laid down for man and varied sins (Ex. 21ff; Num. 5:5ff; various places, Deut. 19ff).

Another example of the demand for retribution for sin is the necessity for sacrifice for sin (see various places in Leviticus). These laws of sacrifice laid open also the necessity of the sacrifice of Christ for sin, he being the lamb on whom our sins were laid (Isaiah 53). The death of Christ is spoken of in the context of payment or satisfaction for sin.

Thus throughout the Old Testament and in Jesus Christ we find clearly revealed the necessity of retribution which arises out of a violation of what God ordained to be just and right in his world.

C. Who has the Authority and Responsibility to exercise Punishment?

The foundation of all authority and responsibility is God, who created the heavens and the earth. He reveals himself as Lord over nature and all the forces of nature, over men and the affairs of men, over time and the end of time, eternity.

God also delegated authority and responsibility to men. All men were given the responsibility to be exercising authority in the unfolding and developing of God's creation (Gen. 1:28ff; 9:1ff; Ps. 8). God also ordained among men special offices within which men were to be exercising that authority and responsibility in a special way; for example, parents, elders and deacons, and magistrates.

Man is responsible in his use of authority, first of all, to God, for he is God's servant with a God-given task. He may never exercise arbitrary authority. All work must be done in the name of the Lord (Ps. 99; Isaiah 66:5-6; Mt. 28:18ff).

Secondly man is always responsible to his fellowman in his exercise of authority since that fellowman is a fellow servant of God. All men must recognize each others responsibility to serve God and his neighbor (Lev. 19:18; Matt. 22:39; Eccl. 8:3-9; Mt. 23:10-11).

As this specifically applies to punishment, we note, first of all that God punished and will punish violations of his law, both in time and eternity (Gen. 3; 4:1-15; 6:1-8; 11:1-9; Deut. 11; 32:35; I Sam. 24:12; II Kings 9:7; Ps. 94; Isaiah 35:4; 61:1-3 (2); Rom. 12:19; I Thess. 4:6; II Thess. 1:6; Rev. 6:10; 19:1b-2; et al).

Secondly we note also that God uses the instrumentality of men to exercise punishment. He does this without in any way limiting his own authority to

exercise further punishment. While he uses men in their general admonishing of one another, he also uses the instrumentality of those special office bearers, which we noted above.

The Lord, for example, has ordained that parents should discipline their children so that they might grow in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4), learning to fear the Lord so that they might continue to prosper, receiving the blessing of the Lord (Deut. 6:1-3).

Likewise, the church, through the divine appointment of elders, is to be exercising the discipline of the church, holding forth the keys of the kingdom, desiring that men come to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

The state has also been given the authority to exercise punishment. The state is to exercise that authority in such a way that it functions in preventing or discouraging evil, and punishing the same when it does occur. The state uniquely has the power of the sword. It is here that we note that the primary purpose of the state in punishing is retributive, maintaining and restoring the order in society (Rom. 13; I Peter 2:13-17). A secondary result of the retributive activity may be corrective: so that the person turns away from the doing of evil. Also, by the grace of God, the retribution may be the opportunity by which the Spirit of the Lord works to bring about repentance and faith. But we note that these are not the primary tasks of the state.

D. *Has Capital Punishment Been a Just Form of Punishment?*

1. *Locus Classicus* — Genesis 9:6

Genesis 9:6 has been traditionally acknowledged as the classic passage to teach that capital punishment is required for crimes of murder. The biblical reason given at this point for "life for life" is that man is an image bearer of God. That reason continues. Man continues as image bearer. Therefore murder is a very serious crime punishable by death. This passage is sufficiently clear in its reading and intended meaning to say that pre-meditated, violent assault on another person's life would ordinarily be punishable by death since it is an assault on God's image.

2. Specific Old Testament passages calling for capital punishment.

Intentional homicide: (Ex. 21:12; Lev. 24:17; Num. 35:16-21) for which monetary compensation is never accepted (Num. 35:31; Deut. 19:11, 12); the abduction of a man in order to make him a slave (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7).

Grave sins against God: idolatry (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:1-5; Deut. 13:2-19; 17:1-7; cf. Num. 25:1-5); blasphemy (Lev. 24:15-16); profanation of the sabbath (Ex. 31:14-15; cf. Num. 15:32-36); sorcery (Ex. 22:17; Lev. 20:27; cf. I Sam. 28:3, 9); prostitution by a priest's daughter (Lev. 21:9).

Grave sins against parents (Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:8; Deut. 21:18-21); abuses of sexual relations: adultery (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22); different forms of incest (Lev. 20:11, 12, 14, 17); sodomy (Lev. 20:13); bestiality (Lev. 20:15, 16). (De Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, Vol. I, p. 158, New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1965.)

E. *In the light of the fulness of the New Testament revelation and redemption should we assume that capital punishment is a just form of penalty of crimes (murder in particular) which the state must implement in the New Testament era?*

1. The fulness of revelation and redemption that came in Jesus Christ and disclosed in the New Testament does not abrogate the responsibility and assignment of the state to exercise justice. In the Old Testament the church and state were caught up in the theocracy. In the New Testament the church and state became distinct entities with separate assignments; but the state continues to exercise the same responsibility. Implementing justice is a specific assignment. The church with the fulness of revelation in Jesus Christ, in her understanding of faith, sees the value of human life, sees the atrocity of hate (Matt. 5), and consequently must impress the state with the value of human life and with the need for seeing the exercise of capital punishment.

2. Romans 13:4 assumes the above. Paul in writing to the church in Rome, assumes the continued responsibility of the state. Paul is particularly addressing the church, like the New Testament in general is particularly to and about the church and kingdom. But in doing to, he in no way suggests the state should not exercise capital punishment as the extreme penalty. His manner of writing

is to submit that the state bears the sword to inflict death when necessary; it is not in vain that the state has the sword. Thus the state and/or government in the office of the "ruler" has the punishment of death in its jurisdiction as symbolized by the sword.

3. The Scripture in the latest/fullest revelation of the New Testament does not specify for our age any particular case in which capital punishment must be administered. It does provide an enumeration of crimes for twentieth century society because it was not written to be a penology handbook for all ages. Nevertheless, Scripture as a whole, implies that death would ordinarily be appropriate as a form of punishment for an intentional, pre-meditated and violent taking of human life. The overwhelming number of biblical commentators from the church fathers through the Reformation, and down to the present day, have confirmed this interpretation, in their writings. It must be recognized that the scriptural lack of specification of crimes punishable by death requires that society approach any application of the death penalty with utmost care and caution. The actual imposition of the death penalty must always be pursuant to the procedure and precedents provided for by jurisprudence.

4. The state has the right and obligation, as a servant of God and administrator of justice within the civil arena to make laws pertaining to the proper administration of capital punishment and to be exercising capital punishment as a form of punishment in those cases delineated by the state as those in which justice demands death.

F. What is the Responsibility of the Church to the State in the light of the above?
The church has a threefold responsibility.

First, the church, from the perspective of the Word, which alone reveals the truth for life, must urge and encourage the legislators to establish laws governing the administration of retributive justice, including the conditions surrounding the administration of capital punishment.

Secondly, the church must assure the government of our prayer and continuing support as they do a most difficult task. We live in a day when the sanctity of life, the majesty of divine law, and the benevolent character of retributive justice are questioned. "But the punitive justice of God is a fundamental article of the Christian faith and forms the basis of the gospel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope for the renewal of society" (Letter to the Prime Minister: A Statement on behalf of Classes Eastern Ontario, Hamilton, and Toronto: Rev. John Van Harmelen, stated clerk, quoted from *Church And Nation*, Vol. 5, No. 49, May 9, 1961).

Finally, the church must resolve, for the Lord's sake and for the sake of our neighbors, to renew and advance her ministry of the Word and deed, living and witnessing the good news of redemption through Jesus Christ. By her leaven and the reformation that she brings in the world, she will confront men with the demands of the Lord of life, with the prayer that, by the working of the Spirit, men will recognize him as Lord and Savior through Jesus Christ.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That this report be adopted by synod as an adequate expression of the Biblical givens concerning capital punishment.

2. That synod appoint a committee on which the Denominational Stated Clerk shall be a member,

a. To prepare an appropriate communication that declares clearly the position taken by synod for forwarding to the three departments of our national government: to our President, to the members of Congress, and to the members of the Supreme Court.

This communication in its formulation must duly respect the sovereignty of the state whose province it is to establish and execute laws for justice, retributive and normative, according to the enduring imperatives of God's law.

b. To forward this communication to the consistories and classes of the Christian Reformed Church for forwarding to the individual state governments of which they are a part.

c. To place the prepared communication for our national government in

The Banner for the benefit of our constituency, urging them to correspond with their legislators concerning this position.

Classis Orange City,
Harol Hiemstra, stated clerk

Overture 13 — Appeal to RES re 1967 Terrorism Act in South Africa

It has come to our attention that in the Republic of South Africa, under the Terrorism Act of 1967, the police are entitled to arrest without warrant anyone whom they suspect of having performed any of a broad range of acts defined as terrorist acts, and to detain that person indefinitely for purposes of interrogation without filing any public charge, without notifying anyone where he is being held, and without allowing anyone to see him other than an officer of the state. Further, no court of law can pronounce upon the validity of the police actions.

We are alarmed at the extremely broad and loosely described range of actions described as *terrorist*. (See Section 2 of Terrorism Act of 1967.) But even more, we are alarmed at the powers given to the police. It is our conviction that justice requires that if a person is suspected of acting against the legitimate interests of the state, he should be arrested on warrant, a public charge should be filed, and the courts should be allowed to make a judgment both on the merits of the case and, if necessary, on the police handling of the case. Indeed, we are convinced that this law is so serious a breach of justice that we believe Christians in South Africa should be protesting it in whatever way possible and appropriate, and that we Christians in North America should be lending our support to their protest.

Our Christian Reformed Church belongs to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod along with several non-white Reformed churches from South Africa, and along with three white churches (The Reformed Church [GK], the Dutch Reformed Church [NGK], and the Church of England in South Africa). Accordingly, the Council of the Church of the Servant overtures Classis Grand Rapids East to overture the next synod of the Christian Reformed Church to do the following:

To instruct the executive of the RES to place on the agenda of the conference of the RES which is to be held in Capetown, South Africa in August 1976 the following matter, addressed to the delegates from the member churches in South Africa:

It is the understanding of the CRC that under the 1967 Terrorism Act of the Republic of South Africa, any commissioned police officer of at least the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel is authorized to arrest without warrant anyone whom he suspects of performing any of a broad range of acts defined as terrorist acts, to detain such a person indefinitely for purposes of interrogation without filing any public charge, without informing any member of the public where he is being detained, and without allowing anyone other than an officer of the state to see him; and further, that no court of law may pronounce upon the validity of the police actions (Section 6 of Terrorist Act of 1967).

We wish to ask our South African brothers first whether our information is substantially correct. If it is, we wish to express our deep concern over the existence of such a law. We are alarmed at the extremely broad and loosely described range of actions defined as terrorist in the Terrorism Act (Section 2). But even more, we are persuaded that to give such powers to the police is profoundly unjust, and thus contrary to the law of God. It is our conviction that justice requires that if the police believe that some person has acted against the legitimate interests of the state, they should be required to take out a warrant for his arrest; and then shortly upon his arrest they should be required to file a public charge. An impartial court should then render a judgment. Further, the actions of the police should themselves be subject to judicial review.

Not only do we view such a law as profoundly unjust. We are also genuinely concerned over the fact that it contains the obvious and definite potential of being used to intimidate the witness of Christians when that happens to go against the policies of the state. Perhaps indeed it has been used to do that already.

We regard this act as so profoundly unjust, and so fraught with potential for muffling the witness of Christians, that we view it as incumbent on our fellow Christians in South Africa to protest the existence of this law, in every way possible and appropriate.

We in our country are not aware of any significant protest against this law by the RES churches or their members. Neither the public generally is aware of such protest, nor are we as members of the RES churches aware of it. We all in our country are aware of the fact, however, that white members of the Calvinist churches have great political power in South Africa. The result is that our Reformed Christian witness to God's call for social justice is seriously weakened in our country. It is widely assumed by the public that to be a Calvinist Christian is fully compatible with supporting such a law; and Calvinist Christianity is on that ground often rejected. In fact we believe it is profoundly incompatible.

Accordingly we ask the RES member churches in South Africa to inform us whether they have been protesting this law. If they have been doing so, we ask them to describe what forms this protest has taken, so that we can inform our members and the public in our country. On the other hand, if they have not in significant ways been protesting this law, we in Christian love urge them strongly to do so, and we pledge our support to them in doing so. In some countries the body of Reformed Christians constitutes a beleaguered and powerless minority, whose protest against state policies would be dangerous for the church and politically ineffective. Even so, obedience may require protest. But most emphatically the situation of Reformed Christianity in South Africa is not that of a beleaguered and powerless minority.

It is our firm belief that the churches of the RES must work toward providing a united, vigorous, courageous, and biblically faithful witness to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all life. Our inability in the United States to hear any protest by our South African brothers against their country's Terrorism Act produces instead tension within the body of the RES, and seriously compromises our witness to our surrounding society.

Classis Grand Rapids East,
Morris H. Faber, stated clerk

Note: A copy of the Terrorism Act of 1967 and an item of personal correspondence appended to support the overture above will be forwarded to the advisory committee of synod.

Wm. P. Brink, stated clerk

Overture 14 — Provide Financial Support for Wycliffe Bible Translators

Classis Grand Rapids East alerts synod to the service which the Wycliffe Bible Translators render to the cause of evangelical missions in general and to the Christian Reformed Church in particular and classis requests synod to include Wycliffe on the list of non-denominational causes recommended for financial support.

Grounds:

1. Wycliffe is a mission congenial to the Christian Reformed Church:
 - a. It is an evangelical mission committed to the historic Christian faith and intent upon obedience to Christ's command to preach the gospel to all creatures.
 - b. It is a specialized mission which has developed expertise and techniques to accomplish one part of the total mission task.
 - c. It is a service organization which desires to cooperate with other evangelical groups, contributing its specialized efforts so that the whole task will be carried out.
2. Wycliffe and the Christian Reformed Church do in fact serve each other:
 - a. It has provided training for several Christian Reformed people in linguistics as background to translation work, some of whom now work under the auspices of Wycliffe in the field and some of whom work under the CRC Foreign Board.

b. It hosts a group of missionary students each summer in cooperation with the Reformed Bible College.

c. Various Christian Reformed individuals work with Wycliffe and/or support Wycliffe with prayer and funds, and various Christian Reformed congregations support missionaries working under Wycliffe.

Classis Grand Rapids East,
Morris H. Faber, stated clerk

Overture 15 — Provide Financial Support for New International Version of the Bible

Classis Sioux Center respectfully overtures the Synod of 1976 to place on the list of nondenominational causes for financial support the work of preparing the "New International Version" of the Holy Bible.

Grounds:

1. Already before this work was initiated and for some time thereafter our synods have expressed their interest in such a translation and have encouraged it.
2. From the beginning some of our eminent biblical scholars have been engaged in this work. The present executive secretary also is a minister of the Christian Reformed Church. Both of these facts demonstrate the influence which we as church, be it indirectly, are having.
3. The New Testament has already been published and is receiving wide acclaim as a faithful, readable, and highly competent translation.
4. The New York Bible Society, which holds all rights to the translation, is in desperate financial need in order to prepare and publish the translation of the Old Testament. Much work has already been done: the work is scheduled for completion in late 1977 or 1978. Meanwhile loans for payment on demand up to \$200,000 are held against that society, making help at this time imperative.
5. Some of our people have given, even generously, to support this project. However, unless synod places this cause on the approved list, our consistories for the most part will be very hesitant to lend help in the way of offerings. And even if this cause is placed on that list, no individual or consistory need feel compelled to give support, should the desire or conviction to do this be lacking.

Classis Sioux Center,
Paul E. Bakker, stated clerk

Overture 16 — Do Not Approve New Forms for Baptism and Profession of Faith

Classis Grandville respectfully overtures synod not to approve the new Forms for Baptism and Public Profession of Faith *as they read now* because these forms offer little improvement over the existing forms and bear in fact a less distinctive character.

Grounds:

1. With reference to Proposed Baptism Form No. 1:
 - a. On page 3 under the heading, The Instruction, line 3, "identifies" for "adopts" in the old form; line 3 of paragraph four, "sinful by nature" for "conceived and born in sin" of the old form.
 - b. Although the covenant is referred to by the use of a number of texts, no effort has been made to connect the covenant of grace with the sacrament of baptism as does the old form by quoting Colossians 2:11, 12. See material under the heading, The Promises, page 2.
 - c. Question 3 (in vows) page 4, weakens the emphasis on Christian education by failing to add something similar to what we read in the old form, "and cause them to be instructed therein."
 - d. The congregational response, on page 4, extracts a promise from the

- congregation which it is impossible to carry out with respect to any one particular child.
2. With reference to the Proposed Baptism Form No. 2:
 - a. First page under "First," "by nature sinful" instead of "conceived and born in sin"; "under the judgment of God" for "children of wrath"; "badly soiled" for "impurity of our souls"; "disgusted with ourselves" for "loathe ourselves."
 - b. Under the Address to the Parents, question 3, "the Christian doctrine of salvation" is to say the least very vague compared with "the aforesaid doctrine" of the old form.
 3. With reference to the Form For Public Profession of Faith:
 - a. The questions do not require a definite affirmation of love for the Lord as does the old form.
 - b. It lacks a promise to "forsake the world" which certainly is more relevant today than ever before.
 - c. If "honoring its authority" is supposed to refer to submission to church discipline, it is, to say the least, a very oblique reference. The language of the old form leaves no question about what is meant. Christian discipline is one of the keys of the kingdom and one's submission to it should be clearly confessed.

Classis Grandville,

Peter Vander Weide, stated clerk

Overture 17—Realignment of Classes Hudson and Hackensack

Classis Hudson overtures synod, in accord with Article 39 of the Church Order, to approve the following division of Classis Hudson:

SOUTHERN HUDSON*

(*Name designations are for convenience of identification only and may not necessarily be the names chosen by the newly-formed classes.)

Manhattan, New York, NY
 Midland Park, NJ
 Ocean View, Norfolk, VA
 Irving Park, Midland Park, NJ
 Northern Virginia, Annandale, VA
 North Haledon, NJ
 Paramus, NJ
 First Paterson, NJ
 Second Paterson, NJ
 Fourth Paterson, NJ
 Prospect Park, NJ
 Ridgewood, NJ
 Silver Spring, MD
 Washington, DC
 Calvin, Wyckoff, NJ
 Not organized:
 Hoboken, NJ
 Spanish, Paterson, NJ

NORTHERN HUDSON*

Valley, Binghamton, NY
 East Palmyra, NY
 Ferrisburg, VT
 Framingham, MA
 Goshen, NY
 Trinity, Richfield Springs, NY
 Rochester, NY
 Avery St., South Windsor, CT
 Immanuel, Wappingers Falls, NY
 Webster, NY
 Fairlawn, Whitinsville, MA
 Pleasant St., Whitinsville, MA
 Not organized:
 Cold Springs, Baldwinsville, NY
 Owego, NY

Grounds:

1. Classis Hudson is of sufficient size to be divided, with twenty seven organized congregations and four groups not yet organized; the resulting division would produce two classes of relatively equal size.
2. The proposed division would promote better working relations by grouping together churches in geographical proximity and with common character.
3. The proposed division is financially feasible.
4. Most consistories responding to a study committee questionnaire indicated that they desired division.
5. The proposed division would not produce unfair representation in denominational responsibilities.
6. The proposed division would distribute classical responsibilities more equitably.

7. The proposed division would allow each new classis to provide more concentrated attention on their areas in evangelism and church extension.
 8. The proposed division would facilitate consideration of the realignment of Classes Hudson and Hackensack.

Classis Hudson,
 Ralph Wildschut, stated clerk

Overture 18—Realignment of Classes Hudson and Hackensack

Classis Hudson overtures synod, in accord with Article 39 of the Church Order, to approve the following realignment of the congregations in Classis "Southern Hudson" and Classis Hackensack, the realignment to become effective on January 1, 1977:

NORTHERN NEW JERSEY*

(*Name designations are for convenience of identification only and may not necessarily be the names chosen by the newly-formed classes or continuing bodies.)

East Islip, NY (L.I.)
 Flanders Valley, NJ
 Franklin Lakes, NJ
 Manhattan, New York, NY
 Midland Park, NJ
 Irving Park, Midland Park, NJ
 Monsey, NY
 Newton, NJ
 Paramus, NJ
 Fourth Paterson, NJ
 Pompton Plains, NJ
 Queens, Jamaica, NY
 Ridgewood, NJ
 Sussex, NJ
 Preakness, Wayne, NJ
 West Sayville, NY (L.I.)
 Calvin, Wyckoff, NJ

SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY*

Northside, Clifton, NJ
 Richfield Park, Clifton, NJ
 Ocean View, Norfolk, VA
 North Haledon, NJ
 Trinity, North Haledon, NJ
 Northern Virginia, Annandale, VA
 Bethel, Paterson, NJ
 First Paterson, NJ
 Madison Ave., Paterson, NJ
 Northside, Paterson, NJ
 Second Paterson, NJ
 Trinity, Philadelphia, PA
 Prospect Park, NJ
 Silver Spring, NJ
 Washington, DC
 Terra Ceia, NC
 Not organized:
 Hoboken, NJ
 Spanish, Paterson, NJ

Grounds:

1. The Church Order defines a classis as "a group of neighboring churches" (Art. 39). This division or realignment brings the classes into conformity with this article of the Church Order.
2. The proposed realignment would promote greater cooperation and more effective witness.
3. The proposed realignment would not essentially affect classical financial responsibility, distribution of classical functions, or denominational representation.

Classis Hudson,
 Ralph Wildschut, stated clerk

Overture 19—Realignment of Classes Hudson and Hackensack

Classis Hackensack and Hudson overture the Synod of 1976 to approve the division of our two classes into three according to the following arrangement of congregations:

Classis A

Binghamton, NY
 East Palmyra, NY
 Ferrisburg, VT
 Framingham, MA
 Goshen, NY
 Richfield Springs, NY
 Rochester, NY

Statistics:

12 congregations
 2 unorganized groups
 774 families

South Windsor, CT
 Wappingers Falls, NY
 Webster, NY
 Whitinsville, MA, Fairlawn
 Whitinsville, MA, Pleasant St.
 (Baldwinsville, NY)
 (Owego, NY)

Classis B

East Islip, NY
 Flanders Valley, NJ
 Franklin Lakes, NJ
 Manhattan, NY
 Midland Park, NJ
 Midland Park, NJ, Irving Park
 Monsey, NY
 Newton, NJ
 Paramus, NJ
 Paterson Fourth, NJ
 Pompton Plains, NJ
 Queens, NY
 Ridgewood, NJ
 Sussex, NJ
 Wayne, NJ, Preakness
 West Sayville, NY
 Wyckoff, NJ, Calvin

Statistics:

17 congregations
 1125 families

Classis C

Clifton, NJ, Northside
 Clifton, NJ, Richfield
 Norfolk, VA
 North Haledon, NJ
 North Haledon, NJ, Trinity
 Northern Virginia
 Paterson, NJ, Bethel
 Paterson, NJ, First
 Paterson, NJ, Northside
 Paterson, NJ, Madison Ave.
 Paterson, NJ, Second
 Philadelphia, PA
 Prospect Park, NJ
 Silver Spring, MD
 Terra Ceia, NC
 Washington, DC
 (Hoboken, NJ)
 (Paterson, NJ, Spanish)

Statistics:

16 congregations
 2 unorganized groups
 1082 families

Grounds:

1. The Church Order defines a classis as "a group of neighboring churches" (Article 39). The proposed division brings the classes into conformity with this article.
2. The proposed realignment would not essentially affect classical financial responsibility.
3. The proposed realignment provides for greater cooperation and more effective evangelism.

Classis Hackensack,
 Calvin Niewenhuis, stated clerk

Classis Hudson,
 Ralph Wildschut, stated clerk

Note: Names are expected to be chosen by the respective classes.

Overture 20 — Chaplain-Program Director of Calvary Rehabilitation Center

Classis Rocky Mountain overtures synod to instruct the Board of Home Missions to call the Chaplain-Program Director of Calvary Rehabilitation Center as Home Missionary.

Grounds:

1. We deem the work of the Chaplain-Program Director is essentially a ministry of God's Word to alcoholics. That this work is spiritual in character is demonstrated by the chaplain's weekly involvement in preaching in chapel, Bible study, and the spiritual dimension to the work of counseling. We see the work of the Chaplain-Program Director as essentially similar to that of campus pastors on loan to Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship.
2. There is clear financial need at this time at Calvary Rehabilitation Center, due for the most part to the cost of the expanding ministry of the center. Such action by the CR Board of Home Missions would relieve funds for a much needed additional counseling staff. At present there are only two counselors, each with a weekly case load of about thirty alcoholics.

Classis Rocky Mountain,
C. Oliver Buus, stated clerk

Overture 21 — Actions to Alleviate World Hunger

Classis Rocky Mountain overtures synod to take the following actions re world hunger:

1. To urge all churches of the denomination to make every possible effort to be informed about and keep current on the world hunger crisis.
2. To urge all churches to encourage and challenge their members to use their dual citizenship in the kingdom of God and their country by being a citizen advocate on behalf of the hungry and starving world, i.e., by contacting their representatives in government on key issues surrounding this problem and urging Christian responses.
3. To urge all churches to encourage and challenge their members seriously to examine and evaluate their life style in the light of the Word of God and the world hunger crisis. This examination and evaluation is to be as constant as the crisis.
4. To demonstrate the need to be serious about this matter and set an example by seeking ways of a changed life style denominationally, for example, instructing the following boards to consider the possibility of canceling their annual meetings in 1977 (operating during that year with the existing executive committee structure) and to give the estimated dollar amount saved (approximately \$24,000 to \$25,000 for 1975) to the CRWRC for the purpose stated in 6 below:
 - a. Christian Reformed Board of Foreign Missions,
 - b. Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions,
 - c. Christian Reformed Board of Publications, and
 - d. Christian Reformed World Relief Committee; and to instruct the following synodical boards to hold only one meeting in 1977 (operating during that year with the existing executive committee structure in the case of Calvin College and Seminary, and to give the estimated dollar amount saved (approximately \$10,000 to \$11,000 in 1975) to the CRWRC for the purposes stated in 6 below:
 - e. The Back to God Hour, and
 - f. Calvin College and Seminary, Board of Trustees.
5. To consider the following as other examples for meeting this crisis:
 - a. Establish a quota of at least 50¢ per family for a multi-faceted ministry aimed at solutions to the world hunger crisis. This ministry to be administered by the CRWRC.
 - b. Encourage and promote the idea of fasting one meal per week and give the savings to CRWRC for the above program.
 - c. Establish a denominational day of fasting and give the savings to CRWRC for the above program.

- d. Request all classes to review their meeting schedules to see if savings can be effectuated.
- e. Consider meeting as synod on a schedule of less than once a year over the next five years, i.e. meet three times over the next five years.
- 6. To instruct the CRWRC to establish a specific ministry aimed at this crisis, to include at least:
 - a. Establish and vigorously promote the use throughout the denomination of a resource library (books, films, etc.) on world hunger and Christian responses to it.
 - b. Increase or add to the existing ministry aimed at agricultural training of native personnel, which is absolutely necessary if we are to touch a vital part of the problem.

Classis Rocky Mountain,
C. Oliver Buus, stated clerk

Overture 22 — Study Secrecy Element of Church Order, Article 86

Classis Eastern Canada overtures Synod of June 1976 of the Christian Reformed Church to study whether the secrecy now required by Article 86 of the Church Order is scripturally sound.

Grounds:

- a. Discipline according to Scripture is a process which involves the congregation (Matthew 18, I Corinthians 5).
- b. The present requirement of secrecy (Article 86b) limits such communal involvement.

Classis Eastern Canada,
Fred Heslinga, stated clerk

PRINTED APPEALS

1. — Classis Lake Erie Appeals Decision of Synod of 1975 re Women in Office

Classis Lake Erie appeals to the Synod of 1976 to reconsider Report 46 of 1975 and protests the adoption of Recommendations 1 and 2 which state:

"1. That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice.

"2. That synod declare that sufficient biblical grounds have not been advanced to warrant a departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order" (Acts of Synod 1975, page 78).

A. We protest synod's hasty adoption of the position of the advisory committee, as stated in the above recommendations, before the churches or the members of synod had adequate time to study these recommendations.

Grounds:

1. The recommendations above were suggested by an advisory committee which met only a few times before stating its position.

2. This hasty adoption of an advisory committee's recommendations seem especially questionable when these recommendations differ so markedly from the conclusions of the study committee.

3. This matter is of such vital concern that the churches should have a longer time to consider the advice of an advisory committee before it becomes the official stance of the church, especially when that advice is the opposite or nullifies the recommendation of a study committee made over a period of two years—and, in this instance, the work of two such study committees.

B. We protest that synod adopted the recommendations listed above as the church's official position concerning Report 46 before the churches had sufficient time to reflect on and respond to this report.

Grounds:

1. Report 46 is a thoughtful and lengthy study and requires more than two months to consider and respond to its advice.

2. This matter is of great concern to many church members and should be dealt with in a careful and thoughtful way.

In response to the above protest we appeal to synod to allow the churches to consider Report 46 for a period of two years and respond to it before an official position is adopted by the church.

Classis Lake Erie,

George Vander Weit, stated clerk

2. — Dutton Consistory Appeals Decision of Classis Grand Rapids East re Ordination of Candidate

The Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church protested to Classis Grand Rapids East its September 18, 1975, decision (Article 18) to approve the ordination of a candidate to the ministry after he plainly stated in his examination that he did not believe that the serpent spoke to Eve as reported in Genesis 3 and that he believed that the earthquake reported in Matthew 28:2 should be understood as an eschatological symbol and not necessarily as a fact.

Grounds:

1. This view plainly contradicts what the Bible states as simple facts. (See Genesis 3:1-5, 13, 14; II Cor. 11:3; Matt. 28:2, "And, behold, there was a great earthquake.")

2. It is in conflict with Article V of the Confession of Faith in which we confess that we "receive all these books" (of the Holy Scripture) "believing without any doubt all things contained in them. . ."

3. It does exactly what the Synod of 1972 warned must not be done. It uses a "method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question . . . the event-character . . . of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God" (Acts 1972, p. 69, Art. 52, 3e, decision of Report 44).

4. If we admit to the ministry of our churches men who, however well qualified they may be in other respects, yet at some points hold and teach what contradicts the Scripture, we in principle give up the biblical authority for our faith, and no longer have any valid ground on which to deny to others the right to hold and teach further departures from it.

5. The history of our mother churches in the Netherlands shows how the permission to question or deny the events of Genesis 3, explicitly rejected by them at the Synod of Assen in 1926 and conceded at the Synod of Lunteren in 1967, has opened the way to tolerating denials of all kinds of biblical doctrines, including those of the creation, fall and atonement.

The Dutton consistory, convinced that the matter is too serious to be dropped, appeals to the synod against the decision of the classis to approve this ordination.

Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church,

Peter De Jong, president

Robert Ellens, clerk

Classis Grand Rapids East on January 15, 1976, received the protest for information and recognized the consistory's right to appeal the matter to the synod (Art. 13).

3. — Hessel Park, Champaign, Illinois, Consistory Appeals the Decision of Classis Chicago South re Shared Ministry with the Reformed Church in America

History:

In response to indications of interest by the Reformed Church in America, the Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church of Champaign, Illinois, entered discussions in April 1975, with Illinois Classis of the Reformed Church in America regarding the possibility of their sharing in the ministry in the twin cities of Champaign-Urbana and on the campus of the University of Illinois. Sharing in these discussions were the Field Secretary of the Particular Synod of Chicago of the RCA, representatives of the Church Planning and Development Committee of Illinois Classis of the RCA, the Consistory of Hessel Park CRC, representatives of the Classical Home Missions Committee of Classis Chicago South of the CRC, and the Regional Home Missionary for the Mid-East of the CRC. This task-force concluded that cooperation would most effectively further our ministry with its unique combination of community and campus, including both CRC and RCA students.

These discussions led to the formulation of a proposal to establish a shared ministry in Champaign-Urbana, providing for Illinois Classis of the RCA to call an ordained minister of the RCA to serve on the staff of the Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church, working under the immediate supervision of its consistory as co-minister with the CRC pastor there. The task-force envisioned future development of such a shared ministry toward a more equal bilateral organization which would not only accept the RCA investment of financial resources and man-power in this field, but would also provide the RCA some responsibility to and ownership in the developing church. One form such future relationship could take is "union church," that is, a congregation which is a member of both denominations at the same time. Provision for such a "union church" is made in the Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America, Chapter 1, Part I, Article 7.

Having agreed at the outset that no shared ministry would be established without approval of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, Classis Chicago South of the CRC, and Illinois Classis of the RCA, the proposal for shared ministry, without specifying direction for future developments, was presented to all three judicatories. In September 1975 the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions endorsed the concept of shared ministry without approving a specific

proposal. Classis Chicago South referred the proposal back to its Home Missions Committee for study to report to the January 1976 session. Since Classis Chicago South had not approved the proposal, it was presented to Illinois Classis of the RCA in October for information and discussion only, with no recommendation for action.

In November 1975, the Church Planning and Development Committee of Illinois Classis of the RCA communicated to all parties in the discussions, its decision that further discussions of shared ministry would be impossible until it received assurance from the CRC that "a union church is an option."

In its report to Classis Chicago South in session on January 21, 1976, the Classical Home Missions Committee recommended: "That classis not at this time endorse the proposal of Hessel Park.

Ground: Correspondence from the Church Planning and Development Committee of the RCA indicates that they require of us agreement that a union church is an option, which agreement we are not able to give since the CRC Church Order makes no provision for same."

This recommendation was adopted by classis (Minutes of the Meeting of Classis Chicago South, January 21, 1976, Art. 26d) after brief discussion in which the only speaker from the floor of classis was a delegate from Hessel Park CRC who presented the arguments which are contained in the first two grounds of this appeal. The delegates from Hessel Park CRC advised classis of their intent to appeal this decision to our 1976 Synod, and a copy of this appeal was sent to the classical clerk prior to March 15, 1976.

The Appeal by the Consistory:

The consistory of the Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church appeals the decision of Classis Chicago South (that it "not at this time endorse the proposal of Hessel Park"), in order that the Hessel Park Christian Reformed Church can establish a two-year shared ministry with Classis Illinois of the Reformed Church in America, under the assumption that a union church is a future option. Such cooperation would serve the best interests of the community of Christians in Champaign-Urbana and the cause of the kingdom of Christ.

Grounds:

1. The Christian Reformed Church Order does not explicitly exclude such union churches, nor implicitly deny their possibility.
2. Disapproving the proposal on the ground that a union church is impossible effectively halts our discussion with the RCA. Such action is contrary to the recommendations of synod and its Interchurch Relations Committee that the CRC and the RCA cooperate in ministries where feasible (Acts of Synod 1974, Art. 49, II, B, 4; Acts of Synod 1973, Report 14, Appendix: 1, b. p. 314, and "Call to Action," p. 315; Acts of Synod 1966, Report 21, III entire but especially para. 4, p. 227).
3. The conclusion of our Interchurch Relations Committee in consultation with that of the RCA is that discussion of "church union" is possible (Acts of Synod 1976, Report 44, para. 7). Then certainly discussion of "union church" is also possible.
4. The Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions has established precedent by approving the establishment of a union church in Detroit, Michigan (Annual Board Meeting Minutes, February 24-26, 1976, 1320, II, G).
5. Communicating to the RCA that "a union church is not an option" because we have no provisions for such, and then saying nothing more nor taking any action to develop provisions for a union church, will dampen the enthusiasm for increased contact and cooperation at local and synodical levels in both denominations.
6. The implementation of the proposed shared ministry in Champaign-Urbana would enable an expanded ministry there, which the congregation urgently desires, and would provide a productive environment for the concrete discussion and testing of the specific provisions required for a union church before such a union is actually proposed.

Hessel Park, Champaign Consistory,
Clifford Christians, clerk

Note: Supplementary Materials sent with this overture will be forwarded to the Advisory Committee of synod dealing with this appeal. Wm P. Brink, Stated Clerk

LIST OF PERSONAL APPEALS

1. Mr. Bert Kolkman appeals Decision of Ottewell Consistory and Classis Alberta North re CRC Ministers' Pension Fund.
2. Cascade Consistory appeals alleged Omissions in Reports of Synodical Deputies to Classis Grand Rapids East.