

1881

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TRANSLATION:

**ACTS OF SYNOD
OF THE
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

ASSEMBLED AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

June 15, ff., 1881

Note to the reader: This translation has not been corrected and will be found to be inaccurate in some instances. The reader should consult the original Dutch editions before quoting from this volume.

ACTS OF SYNOD
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Grand Rapids, Michigan

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A discourse by the Rev. R.T. Kuiper, President of the previous Synod.

Devotions: Singing Psalms 90: 1,9, Reading of Psalms 132, 133, 134.

My beloved brethren;

Since I had the honor of presiding at the previous Session of the Synod, it is my privilege to welcome you now at this place, and the opportunity has been given to me to say a few appropriate words at this time.

It must, I trust, especially for some of the older members in our group, be a touching and heart-warming experience, to see this numerous gathering assembled in this city and in such a beautiful location. What a change has taken place in twenty-five years. At that time a few brothers here had the courage, with their leader, who later returned to the Reformed Church, to leave the fellowship of that church, seven years previous to this. (1847) and this occurring thoughtlessly, nevertheless from that time on for many the situation seemed unbearable and very inappropriate.

This step caused some dread and was then considered a foolish and untimely situation. Only four or five being like-minded, had the courage to follow their example. The future did not seem very bright. After the return of the first minister to the original Church, he who had previously left the Church, there remained for some time only one minister, the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch from Noordeloos, to serve all the seceding Churches. Opposed and attacked from without, wrestling with difficult internal problems, the seceding Congregation nevertheless advanced along the path they had chosen, firmly convinced to desire nothing better than to return to the standards set by the first settlers who had migrated to this area, and to continue a righteous sisterly communion with the mother Church in the Netherlands, of which Church most of the Holland population at that time were members. It seemed at times to be a very rash undertaking if that purpose could be accomplished here. Not always did things occur in the Congregations.....

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as they should have, with the result that there was much discouragement, and a few even turned back. In the Netherlands the move was not looked upon with favor, nor did they give it the support which they had expected. Even as matters had gone in the fatherland, in the Christian Reformed Church, so here also the Lord did not give any cause for glory to the first leaders, but he left the honor of establishing and building up his Church to himself. What we are now; what we see here, that we are by God's grace; and thus it behooves us, remembering what we were in the beginning, and what we have become by God's grace, to join in with the jubilant congregation of old in exclaiming, "Not unto us O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name we give the honor for thy goodness and truth!" The fears of the friends and the hopes of the opposition, have both been put to shame thru the Providence of God for the seceding generations.

For a few years there existed herethe highest ecclesiastical Assembly, with delegates from five or six Congregations, all from this state, Michigan, and served by only one minister. Now we have brothers here from East and West, from five or six states of the Union; our following numbers forty Congregations and smaller ones, and twenty Ministers. In addition we boast a Theological School with one Professor and eight or nine students, as well as younger brothers being instructed in Theology. From these we hope to place within the week following, four young men for laboring in the Lord's vineyard. Our hundreds have become thousands and in the last few years a gradual increase is shown. And even if not all the members are true believers, nevertheless we believe that a number of true believers in Christ are found, and our labor in spreading the Gospel has borne fruit, to the conversion of sinners and the establishment of a firm belief for his people.

It must be acknowledged that our HOLLAND CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH, the name used by our Church for the first time at a Synodical Session, has a satisfactory reason for its existence, and that it possesses an inner force as a guarantee against the future, since the foundations are laid in the Holy Bible, and that it exists under the fruitful and tender

care of her glorified King, and follows in the footsteps of the Reformed fathers. The opinion of the Church both here and in the Fatherland has certainly undergone a change. Even in associations with which we had dealings from time to time, no witnesses are lacking, either male or female, who considered our secession to be in error. Many who are still there would gladly take the same stand on which we find ourselves, while some of them who are honest enough to do homage to the truth, are already joining with us.

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There has also been a decided change in the Netherlands. I remember very well that after ten years of the Secession here, at a provincial assembly, the opinion was practically unanimous that because of the Secession, certifications were given very reluctantly to ministers who dared to accept calls to Churches in America. I, myself, even joined in warning departing members of my Church against associating with these people to whom I now bring the Gospel. And yet we dealt in these matters in good faith, but alas, we relied on too many one-sided and prejudiced witnesses.

Now, nevertheless, there is a decided change. When I received a call from one of the seceding churches two years ago, no one disputed my right of acceptance in the least. Some of our leaders in the Mother Church in the Netherlands now recommend a union with our Church to their departing members. On a previous day I received a communication from the delegates of the Provincial Assembly that was to be held, in which was mentioned that among other things the question of Free Masonry was to be brought up in connection with migration to America. The anticipated arrival of the Rev. Vos from Ommen, as a minister in this city, I think, points to a closer acknowledgement of us by the Mother Church in the Fatherland.

Thus note that the Lord caused a light to shine in the darkness, to appear as the light, and our right as noonday.

Great is the mercy of the Lord, and in proportion it is now our duty to answer to these. may it be with a true purpose in the right way and in an acceptable manner.

Certainly this must first occur thru personal godliness, in living with and believing in our crucified and now exalted Lord. Where these are lacking there can be no real religious life. Only one thing more must be added, and that is this, that in our Churches, besides the true preaching of the Word, all matters at our Classical Assemblies must be conducted with honor and in good order, and that we be on the alert and give ample support to each other (in carrying this out) bringing this to fruition and if this is true in the above mentioned Assembly, it holds to a greater extent in the highest ecclesiastical Assembly of our Church, in which Assembly we are gathered at present.

Pertinent questions, matters of doctrine and Church government, primary and secondary education,

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home and foreign Missions, correspondence and co-operation with other Churches, sending out Ministers of the Word, and accepting prospective theological students for preparation for the Ministry; these problems and matters need our careful and devoted attention.

The eye of the King of the Church and his angels, the eyes of the Consistories and the members of the Congregations who have delegated us, the eyes of friends and bystanders, are upon us, and continually reminding us of our obligations and how we are carrying them out. Soon all that has been accomplished will be made plain here, and all that has been decided, and both friend and foe will be given an opportunity to judge concerning us. But what is more to the point, all shall be revealed before the judgment of Christ, and we shall be obliged to give account to our great sender how we have accomplished our tasks at these very Sessions.

The Lord has been our help thus far; we trust that his help may continue even now. The Lord's blessing to those who walk in his ways is a sure rule in his holy Kingdom.

From the first Psalm which we read, we could note with what interest the righteous of old took up the service of the Priesthood in the Sanctuary. From this we may conclude that our Congregations will in no less measure seek the face of the Lord for us, and ask that his presence may be in our midst. Let this be a comfort to us, and strengthen us to our tasks, and aid us in our struggles, as Moses was strengthened when his arms were supported by Aaron and Hur.

From the second Psalm we can learn in what Spirit and with what conviction we are gathered together, and to what extent we may expect the sanction and blessing of the Lord in this labor of love. Let this receive our serious attention so that whoever casts an eye on us or spies us out may say, "Note the love of the Brethren, and in what peace they live together!"

From the third Psalm, lastly we note, how we must watch and pray as we stand in our place of labor in the power of him who created the Heavens and the earth, and be watchful as we labor in the interests of his Church.

Let us therefore at all times, be seated as it were, under the eye of the Almighty, and be busy in his affairs, but before we apply ourselves to the work at hand, may we turn our hearts to our faithful God, thru his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and entreat the communion and indispensable enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit for our tasks.

The prayer follows.

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The Sessions begin: Opening devotions: Ps. 90: 1,9, reading of Psalms 132, 133, 134, and the above discourse. The Rev. R.T. Kuiper, Pres. of the previous Assembly, opens with prayer.

Mandates are presented.

Art. 1. The mandates are read and they show the following delegates to be present:

Church	Ministers	Elders
Grand Rapids, Mich.	Alpine Ave.	H. Datema, B. Schrikkema.
"	"	J. Gelok, A. Pleune.
"	"	J. Bolt, J. Laman.
Jennisonville, "	East St.	M. v. Singel, M. Alberda
Zeeland, "		A. Naaije, F. Kort.
Noordeloos, Mich.		Verhey, Heyboer.
Muskegon, "	Rev. W.H. Frieling	P. Heeres
Clam Union, "	"	W. Laarman
Grand Haven, "	" E. v.d. Vries	J. Koster
Holland, "	" G. Hoeksema	P. v. Leeuwen
Graafschap, Mich.	" R.T. Kuiper	H. Broene
Collendorn, "	" H. Douwstra	E. Sprik
Niekerk, "	" C. Bode	T. Wetsink
Overiesel, "	" W. Coelingh	E.v. Dam
Lamont, "		J. Zilstra
Vriesland, "	" G. Hemkes	P. Karsten
Jamestown, "		J. Zwiers, R. Creuze.
Kalamazoo, "	" J. Noordewier	J. Nieuwland
Kelloggsville, "		M. Boersma, A. Schram
Paterson, N.J.	" L. Rietijk	
Rochester, N.Y.		H. De Jong
Cleveland, O.		M. Dekker
Lafayette, Ind.		Berkhuis
Lansing, Ill.	" B. Mollema	
South Holland, Ill.	" E. L. Meinders	A. Van Drunen
Roseland, Ill.	" G. Broene	W. Prins
Chicago, Ill.	" K. v.d. Bosch	D. Natelberg
Ridott, "		W. D. Ammerman
Ackley, Iowa	" J. Schepers	
Orange City, Iowa	" J. Stadt	
Pella, Iowa	" D. Baron (with a letter containing a stipulation yet to be discussed)	

Delegates from the True Dutch Ref. Prot. Church in the East.

Hackensack, N.J. The Rev. J.R. Cooper

Other delegates: Prof. G.E. Boer, Missionary Pastor, The Rev. M. v.d. Bosch, as well as Emeritus Minister, the Rev. W.H. Van Leeuwen

Letters and greetings are received from Oostburg, Wisc.; Steamboat Rock, Iowa; Oostfriesland, Kansas; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Passaic, N.J.

Since some Churches are represented by only one delegate, the President questions the reason for this. The delegates answer that it is due to financial reasons due to the expense of travel.

A communication is read from the Pella Church, and after a discussion the Rev. Baron is seated. The Synod will take up the expense connected with travel which are mentioned in the letter, at a later time.

Hohokus, Sayville, Rotterdam and Alto have sent no communications to the Synod.

Elder H. Flinkers from Cleveland, West Side, is present but he has no mandate, since his Congregation hesitated to send a delegate due to the expense of travelling. Later the Elder decided to go and defray his own expenses, since he had a desire to be present at these Sessions. A discussion concerning his status brings the Synod to the decision that he may be seated with advisory vote.

There are a few other brethren present at the Session who, however, are not delegates.

Art. 2. The first matter on hand is the necessity of choosing a President and a clerk.

After the voting has taken place, it shows that the Rev. Rietdijk is chosen.

The Rev. Frieling will assume the office of Vice President.

The Rev. G. Hemkes is Clerk, with the Rev. R.T. Kuipers as the Assistant Clerk.

Art. 3. The retiring President extends the right hand of fellowship to the newly chosen President, and wishes him the guidance of the Holy Spirit in conducting the Sessions of the Synod.

Art. 4. Sections 1 and 2 of the Minutes of the previous Session are read and accepted.

Art. 5. Closing Devotions: Ps. 100: 4, and prayer by the Rev. Frieling.

Art. 6. Opening Devotions: Ps. 84:3, and prayer by the Rev. Noordewier.

" 7. The reading of the Minutes is now completed and with a few minor changes are accepted by the Session.

Art. 8. Since the reading of the Minutes is very time-consuming, it is decided to appoint a Committee for the publication of the same. Prof. G. Boer, the Rev. Kuiper and the Rev. Hemkes are chosen, and this Committee shall see to it...

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that these Minutes shall be published exactly as they are taken down by the Clerk in the Sessions.

Art. 9. The Rev. K. Vanden Bosch, delegate from Chicago, addresses the Assembly, and after he is permitted to speak, he requests that the Foreign Mission accounts be audited at the earliest possible moment, because of his illness. This request is granted. The Committee for this is the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch; Elders, Gelok and Zwiers.

Art. 10. A communication is read from the Congregation of Oostburg, Wisconsin, in which the Synod is informed that the Rev. De Rooy is physically incapacitated, which causes the Cong. to suffer. The apology from the Congregation for not sending a delegate, is received as information. The question is now put to the Assembly, how best to support the Rev. De Rooy and the Congregation under the present circumstances. After listening to the remarks from delegates from Illinois, the Synod decides that at the time when the Missionary Pastor, the Rev. Vanden Bosch goes to Alto, Wisc. he shall also visit Oostburg, for the purpose of laboring there for a few weeks, for the support of both the Congregation and the Rev. De Rooy. The Synod shall also forward a communication to the Congregation at Oostburg, informing them of Synod's decision. This matter is ended.

Art. 11. Oostfriesland sends a communication to the Synod, which is read and brings a report on the conditions in the Church, extending greetings and prayers for the Sessions. This is accepted as information.

Art. 12. Cleveland, Ohio addresses a letter to the Synod in which it asks for advice in calling a minister, and how this can be done in the most suitable way. The Church has pledged totalling \$375.00 towards the Minister's salary as well as a free parsonage for his living quarters. The Synod postpones this matter for the time being and will return to it later.

Art. 13. A communication is read from the Consistory of the Congregation at Passaic, N.J. which informs the Synod that it was unable to send delegates, due to a lack of finances. It hopes that Synod may return to a previously discussed question, and assist the too-distant Congregations with travelling expenses. Concerning the Church not sending delegates to Synod...

Page 8. the Synod censures such action by the Passaic Consistory, considering that there was a misunderstanding; since the Synod had not previously decided on travelling expenses. The Consistory of this Church is to be informed of this matter, and that by letter.

Art. 14. Steamboat Rock informs the Synod that they can send no delegates, because of the distance, and also because of the infirmity of the delegates chosen. This is accepted as information. An answer shall be sent to the Congregation. Carried out.

Art. 15. Article 15 of the Synod of 1880 is brought up for discussion. The ruling of the Synod that two offerings a year be taken for the Emeritus Fund, is not being carried out. The Synod decides that this article shall be couched in stronger terms, and that each Congregation shall be obligated to take two offerings each year and no less than two. The Congregations who fail to do this will be called to account, and be given a chance to explain their neglect, and their reasons will be considered at the next Session of Synod.

Art. 16. Article 21 is next up for discussion concerning the support of the preaching services in the Congregation at Orange City. The Rev. Frieling, as treasurer of this fund temporarily, states that he still has the sum of \$78.48 for this or similar purposes, and he asks how he should use this, since Orange City is now not in need of additional funds. This matter is postponed until the matter of Pella is discussed.

Art. 17. Article 26 is up for discussion next, which deals with an offering for a church building, for the Congregation at Rochester, N.Y. The Congregation has forwarded a letter to the Synod, and after this had been read and the Synod had considered it, the decision was to grant the request, as per the historical document from there, and found in the Supplement. (which see)

Art. 18. The Committee chosen for auditing the books of the Foreign Mission Fund, of which the Rev. K. Vanden Bosch is the Treasurer, returns to the Assembly and reports. There was a balance of \$523.00 on hand, which has increased to \$871.90. This entire amount is on hand in notes and Money Orders. The Rev. Vanden Bosch now requests that he be released from his duties as Treasurer, and also as a member of the Synodical Committee because of his infirmity. The Synod is sympathetic to his request. And since the Rev. Kuiper retires this year as a member of the Synodical Committee, and the resignation of the Rev. Vanden Bosch has been accepted

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it will be necessary to elect two new members for the Synodical Committee. After the voting has taken place, the Rev. W.H. Frieling is chosen and the Rev. Kuiper is re-elected. The alternates are: the Rev. E v.d. Vries, Rev. Rietdijk. They accept their appointments.

Art. 19. The President expresses his appreciation to the Rev. Vanden Bosch for the faithful performances of his duties.

Art. 20. It would be most pleasing to the Assembly if there were to be a new publication of the Yearbook, containing the statistics of the True Dutch Reformed Protestant Church also and a Neology.

Art. 21. In regard to the Archives of our Church: It was decided that they will be lodged with the Theological School, with the Rev. Professor Boer to function as Archivist. He is given to provide a suitable receptacle as a repository for the documents of the Church.

Art. 22. In regard to Art. 51, the question is asked what the Synodical Committee has done with the monies collected for the Foreign Mission. The Clerk replies that according to a Synodical decision of the previous year, the Missionary Committee in the Netherlands has been informed; and they have investigated the matter, to find if possible, a section for Mission Work which our Church could support. As yet there has been no answer to this request. Now the question is: to continue with the correspondence, or send the Mission funds on, and if a suitable place is found for the funds, a decision can be made by the Synod at a later date.

Art. 23. Seeing that there is a member of the Church of Cleveland present at the Assembly, with his son, with a request from the Synod, the President now asks that the request be made known. The gentleman desires to have his son begin Theological training, and that at his own expense, so that he may prepare himself for the Ministry of the Church.

The applicant submits to the necessary examination, which shall be held on the day following.

The session ends. Articles 24, 25 are closing and opening devotions.

Art. 26. Since Brother Benjamins is present, the Printer of the "Wachter" at the invitation of the Synod, a Committee is chosen to audit the finances of the advertisements in the Publication.

The Committee: The Rev. E.v.d.Vries, J. Pleune, H. De Jong.

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Art. 27. Since the Rev. H. Douwstra from Collendoorn is present for the first time, as a Reverend, the President installs him with an appropriate word and a wish for a divine blessing.

Art. 28. The Assembly notes the request of Mr. Van Versen from Cleveland. Prof. Boer directs a few questions to him, which he answers satisfactorily. He is asked to absent himself for a time, and upon his recall, the Synod informs him that it is happy to admit him to Theological study.

Art. 29. The Committee auditing the advertising report of the printer, Mr. Benjamins, announces to the Assembly that the audit is correct. The receipts for advertising amounted \$125.25, announcements of vital statistics, \$24.63. Recent receipts, \$14.93. This is accepted as information.

Art. 30. A communication from the Consistory of the Congregation of Cincinnati, Ohio, Shows the despondency of the Congregation, because of the many disappointments to them, in their efforts in calling a Minister for their Church. Because of this the Church had not sent delegates. This communication is accepted as information, however, it is decided to send an encouraging letter to the Congregation in the name of the Synod. Synod also sanctions sending the Missionary Pastor, the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch, to Cincinnati, that he may labor there for a time. The Mission Committee will see to this.

Art. 31. Supplement No. I of the previous Session is up for discussion. The Missionary Pastor is asked to report on the condition of affairs at Steamboat Rock, and also on his work in other Congregations visited by him.

The Rev. reports that there still were difficulties in Steamboat Rock, because of the amount of money still due the Rev. Mollema. The Reverend suggests that the obligation of the Church to the Rev. Mollema be cancelled, and that the amount, \$555.00 still due the Reverend at this time, be credited to his account with the Student Fund.

This is discussed by the Assembly and agreed to, and the above mentioned amount is credited to the Rev. Mollema including an additional \$45.00 for interest on the sum. In this way \$600.00 of the debt of the Rev. Mollema to the fund is cancelled.

from the \$1100.00 which the Rev. owed the Student Fund.

Art. 32. Art. 43 of the previous Session (1) concerning the Congregation at Oostfriesland, Nebr. This has been carried out. The Reverend labored there for a period of five weeks. The Congregation is at peace. (2) Rotterdam, Kansas. A Congregation has been organized, a Consistory has been installed, all the difficulties have been overcome, and now there is unity. (3) Alto, Wisconsin, has been visited, and a Congregation has been organized. (4) A period of four weeks was spent in the Chicago area. The annual receipts for Home Missions was \$312.64. Travelling expenses amounted to \$90.18. These matters are accepted as information.

The question is asked to which Classis the Church at Rotterdam belongs. The answer: the Iowa Classis. The Congregation at Rotterdam is to be informed of this. This is carried out.

Art. 33. At the previous session a Committee for Home Missions was chosen for a period of one year, and since the term of service of this Committee has expired; the Synod now proceeds to name a new Committee, and after the voting, the Rev. Meinders and Rev. Broene, and Elder W. Prins were chosen to act in this capacity.

Articles 34, 35 Closing and Opening Devotions.

Art. 36. Article 44, of the former Session is discussed, concerning the delegation of the Revs. Rietdijk and Greve to the T.D.R. Church at Hackensack. The matter mentioned in the Article has been carried out. The announcement of the change of name of the Church was received with unanimity and sympathy, and accepted by them as information. Candidate Westervelt has been ordained and is serving a New York City Church.

Art. 37. The Rev. J. Cooper addresses the Synod as follows:

My dear Brothers: The Classis has sent me to your Synod as its official representative, and altho I have received no official instructions of what to report to you, I shall say that we extend our greetings to your Synod. I must also state that I feel a heartfelt affection for those ministers of your Church, whom I know, as well as for the other brothers, both laymen and Ministers who are now present at your Assembly. The same strong feeling toward your Church

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which we experienced when we first learned to know you, still exists. In regard to the change in the name of your Church, certain persons were rather dubious about this bringing a change of attitude toward your denomination and in our relations; but by far, this change has caused no difference in our feeling toward you. Our people are firmly convinced that both Churches are one, and that they thus continue in unity. We are convinced that as far as the practical and the Church Order are concerned, the West excels the East in no small measure. It is also desirable that Correspondence and Congregational unity be enhanced to a greater degree. As regards expansion and Church activity among us, there is much room for improvement. In some members there is no real co-operation in Church activity, and as a result this tends toward a laxity in Church rule. Nor can all the blame be placed on the shoulders of the Minister. Some of the members heave a sigh because of this along with their Minister, and others comfort themselves in a stocial manner by thinking, "The Lord will bring it to pass!" The Church, however remains on the foundations of the fathers of Dordt, and luckily the members wish to continue thus. We can also state that children of baptized members continue to remain in the Church, in spite of various means which are put into practice to get them to leave the Church, and if this is brot about, they are given important offices in other Churches. The American population in general, with the exception of a few care nothing about Reformed principles. (with the exception of a few) Beecher states that "The Reformed Orthodoxy is an enemy to the well being of mankind." Arminianism is emphatically stressed and it permeates the atmosphere. If one dare mention the total depravity of man, and his moral impotence; that doctrine is entirely out of place. Unbelief declares that when one does not mentally conform, to the existing opinions, the church will die out. If our Church had to be built on the youth, it would be most lamentable. May the Lord bless his Zion.

The President thanks the Rev. Cooper for his remarks.

Art. 38. In connection with a proposal of a previous year, it is now suggested that this Synod issue an invitation to the brethren in New Jersey, first to preach in the Churches here on their own, and then in union with the Congregations, since their Church is also a Mission Church. After a short deliberation this is accepted. It is also decided that the Missionary Pastor, the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch shall go to Classis Hackensack, to the T.D.R.P. Church. The Revs. Rietdijk and Greve shall act as alternates.

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The parties involved will be informed by letter.

Art. 39. The Rev. K. Vanden Bosch requests permission to absent himself at the earliest possible moment, due to physical disability; moreover the Congregation in Chicago, which the Rev serves suffers because of his illness. And since there is no hope for improvement in his condition, he asks that he might be relieved of his duties in connection with his Church, and he then requests Emeritation. After the Reverend has left, the Synod considers his case. The delegates from Chicago are questioned how they feel about this matter, and how the Congregation feels about it. Because of the physical incapacity of the Reverend, they agree to his release. Therefore it is decided to release the Rev. Vanden Bosch from his charge and to grant him emeritation. Classis Illinois is to carry out this matter. The Classis shall also see to the emolument of the retired Reverend and rectify all financial matters.

Art. 40. The Rev. Frieling who was chosen to ascertain the financial status of the Rev. Vanden Bosch, reports that the Reverend has no surplus funds on which to subsist. The Rev. Vanden Bosch is informed of the decision of the Synod. He will receive a certificate of release from the Classis Illinois. The Rev. Vanden Bosch expresses his appreciation to the Synod for their decision in his case, and also for the fraternal regard for him in his physical infirmity.

Art. 41. The Synodical Committee reports on the work it has accomplished in the interim of the Synodical Sessions. (See the Supplements) This is accepted as information. A few points will be reconsidered.

Art. 42. In regard to the request of the Old Ref. Church in Oostfriesland and Bentheim, (See note 3 in the report of the Synodical Committee) it is decided to send 100.00 guilders to the brothers for the support of their work. In addition 2000.00 guilders will be sent to the Comm. of Foreign Missions of the Chr. Ref. Church in the Netherlands.

Art. 43. Point 4 of the Committee report is next up for discussion, concerning the Rev. Baron. He states that the Classical Committee of Classis Iowa had been to Pella and that it had made a thoro investigation there. Then the Classical Committee wrote to the Synodical Committee, and their decision is included in the report of the Synodical Committee. Communications from the Rev. Baron, from the

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Consistory of Pella Church and from Classis Iowa are read. After consideration of these reports it is decided to release the Rev. Baron from his charge in Pella, because of physical disability, and he is given a leave of absence for the period of one year. The amount of his emeritation is also set for one year, and it is not to exceed the minimum. Matters can again be discussed in the following Synod. The Rev. will remain on call. Classis Iowa will take care of these matters. The President reports the decision of the Synod to the Rev. after he is recalled. The Rev. T. Vanden Bosch, the Missionary pastor, is informed of the Rev. Baron's release.

Art. 44. Art. 28. of the previous session is brought up for discussion. This concerns the program of the Theological School. The report is surrendered to the Synod, and read by the President, the Rev. Noordewier having formulated the report which was sanctioned by the Trustees, for presentation at this gathering. All accept this report, with the exception of Clam Union.

Art. 45, 46 Devotional Sessions.

Art. 47. A matter concerning Feast Days is brot up for discussion, but since this does not come thru the proper channels, it cannot be discussed.

Art. 48. Articles 17, 18 of the previous Session are brot up for discussion, in connection with the program for the two delegates to the Synod of the Netherlands in 1882. The question before the Synod is how to proceed in this matter. Some wish to change the program and suggest that only one delegate be sent. Nevertheless it is decided to abide by the former decision and to send the two delegates and both of them to be Ministers. After the voting has taken place, the Rev. Rietdijk from Paterson, and the Rev. Prof. Boer are chosen. They are asked if this meets with their approval. They discuss the importance of the trip, and also express their feelings concerning it. If it is the Lord's will they dare not refuse, and with the Lord's watchcare over them they will go.

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The Revs. Hemkes and Kuipers are to act as alternates.

Art. 49. The schedule of the delegates to the Netherlands is discussed. The cost to the Church will be \$.12 $\frac{1}{2}$ per family, which will bring the total to \$405.75. These funds shall either be sent to J. Gelok, or be handed over at the Synod of April 1882. The Consistories shall decide how the funds are to be raised.

Art. 50. In connection with the delegates it is decided to have the Synod convene on the last Wednesday in April, 1882. The Synod will meet at Grand Rapids, Michigan. At that time the Mandates will have been prepared and handed to the delegates.

Art. 51. The letter "A" in the Agenda is in order for a discussion, in connection with the Congregation at Ackley, viz. what must be done in other Congregations in connection with the incorporation in the State. The same procedure holds in other states as that which is in force in Michigan. The President asks Mr. Garveling and Van Leeuwen to explain the matter more fully. After a period of explanation and deliberation, the following motion is accepted. Each Classis will make it a point to acquire a copy of the general or particular law relating to this matter of their incorporation, and to forward these with their Articles of Incorporation to the Trustees (especially the Articles dealing with ecclesiastical matters) so that they may have additional information on the proper procedure in these matters, in order to fulfill State requirements.

Mr. Garveling also informs the Synod that the School is not organized, since the reorganization of the Church must occur first. The Michigan Congregations can proceed in this as far as they wish and as far as is feasible. These last two statements are accepted as information. A communication from Wella is read asking if under the new laws, each Congregation remains the possessor of the Church property. The Synod replies that under the new laws, (of incorporation) each Church remains owner of the Church properties.

Art. 52. Letter "C" of the Agenda. (Classis Michigan) The Synod shall consider the rules our Church should follow as a general rule, in regard to persons who, to escape their guilt

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Flee to America from foreign lands, and make an attempt to join the Church here. After Classis Michigan brings more information on this to the Synod, and after a discussion on this, the Synod decides: The certifications of membership, on the whole, shall be accepted, and after that proceed according to previous Church rules; however in exceptional cases the Consistory will proceed according to their best knowledge.

Art. 53. The request of Classis Illinois is now up for discussion: The Synod will consider the matter about the feasibility of dividing Classis Michigan into two Classes. In connection with this, the proposition of the Ackley Congregation is discussed. (see "b" under separate Congregations) viz. that Synod make an equitable division of the Classes, since one Classis seems to have as many Congregations alone as the other three together. The delegates explain their propositions as they had appeared in the Agenda, with the idea that weaker Classes might be strengthened. Considering that one would create a greater disadvantage, by trying to remedy a small disadvantage; which would occur if a growing Classis were weakened. The other Classes would not be benefitted by such a move.

As an answer to Classis Illinois: the Synod judges that it cannot attempt to reclassify the Congregations into other Classes; and to Ackley, after a suitable deliberation, this decision that if Classis Iowa feels the need of any advice in any weighty matters, it certainly has the right to request a deputation from the Classis which it chooses, and that at the expense of the General Treasury.

Art. 54. The delegates from Lafayette ask: (See the Agenda) How long may members of a Congregation be recognized as members, who, at present, live 30 miles from the Congregation in other localities, have their own worship services in their homes, do not support the Congregation, and do not put in appearance except at election time.

After hearing Lafayette out on this question, it comes to light that this had not been discussed in Classis Illinois previously. Therefore this question is out of order, and thus the matter is referred back to Classis Illinois, and for this Classis to clear this up as much as possible.

Art. 55. Lafayette also asks (See "b" of the Agenda) if it is permissible

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to hold an election and thus to call a Minister on the Sabbath. The Synod replies: Since an agreement made on a Sunday is not recognized by the State, and since there is also some labor connected with an election (Six days shalt thou labor) it is the opinion of the Synod that such an election does not hold. The brothers from Lafayette are urged to draw the far distant members back to them, and not to reject them, and moreover, to settle all matters peaceably so that goodwill be increased as the Lord desires.

Art. 56. The final matter of the Agenda is discussed: The Synod return to the previous ruling of the Synod of 1880, in the matter of education, and the best methods of fostering Holland Christian Education. After an earnest consideration of this matter: Since the parents, on the whole, do not see the need of Holland Christian Education, (to the best of their ability) the delegates promise to insert Articles in the Church publication the "Wachter" periodically under the caption "Holland Christian Education", to prepare families for same, and to return to a discussion of this question at a later date. Where it is possible to obtain such instruction for the Children at this time, every effort should be made to support and foster such.

Art. 57. Instructions to the Congregation at Paterson: pertaining to the request for the time of the printing of the Agenda; to set the time limit to the middle of May, so that the Classes will have ample time to submit their articles for print in the Agenda.

b) that weighty matters to be discussed be stated more clearly, so that the Consistories by a previous knowledge of the matters to be presented to the Synod, can consider them thoroly, and as a result can inform and instruct their delegates what decisions to make on these matters.

c) The Synod pass its judgment on the recent translation of the New Testament into English, if there are any inconsistencies present, or that the translation does not agree with the translation of Dordt. Then our Holland people may be informed thru the medium of the "Wachter" and in other ways. After the explanation of the Paterson delegates, and a discussion of the points, "a and b" are accepted. As to point "c" should experts discover important conflicts in translations, these should be promptly be brot to light.

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Art. 58, 59. Periods of devotion for closing and opening Sessions.

Art. 60. A communication from Cleveland (W.S.) is up for discussion, asking if the Church cannot support the Congregation there to some extent, so that they may be able to call their own minister. The Congregation can provide a home for the Pastor and \$375.00 has been pledged toward the minister's salary. The Synod, taking into account what the Church has done, feels, after a deliberation, that a letter be sent to the Congregation, stating that,, at this time, it cannot sanction the proposal. The Congregation then requests "Hand Opening" which is granted.

Art. 61 Cleveland (East Side) asks and also receives "Hand Opening" for calling a Minister.

Art. 62. Since the Trustee, A. Riddering, retires this year, a new election takes place, and he is unanimously re-elected.

Art. 63. The question is put: What is to be done with the funds collected for Orange City. The answer: The expenses of the delegates from Pella are to be deducted, and then the balance is then to be transferred to the Emeritus Fund. Thus various matters are settled.

Art. 64. In regard to the collection of the General regulations, which task had been assigned to a Committee a year previous; another Committee has now been appointed to inspect and to present the report named. The Committee now leaves the room to inspect and examine the report named, and to return it to the Synod after the inspection.

Art. 65. Classis Illinois asks if Church members who do not send their children to Catechism for instruction, must be dealt with. The answer is in the positive, with a previous decision on the matter.

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Art. 66.a) The "Wachter" The books are audited. The receipts are \$1954.72, disbursements, \$1665.30. Balance \$289.42 Balance of 1880, \$285.06, plus receipts up to June 15, 1881, \$137.01.

b) The Home Mission Fund: Receipts, \$1241.01, Disbursements: \$743.98
Balance, \$497.03

c) The Dollar Fund: Receipts, \$172.00, plus a balance from the previous year with interest and Notes, \$415.19. Disbursements, \$286.00. A balance, \$629.19

d) The Student Fund: the balance on hand plus receipts amounts to the sum of \$2728.48, Disbursements: \$1081.75. The balance, \$1664.73

e) The School Fund: the balance on hand plus receipts amounts to \$2693.08, Disbursements, \$1595.24. The Balance, \$1097.84.

f) The Congregational Treasurer: The book of June 1880-1881; disbursements, \$16.76 Receipts, \$39.37, Balance, \$22.61

e) Emeritus Fund: Receipts: \$193.87, Disbursements, \$200.50 Deficit, \$6.63.

All the Books of the accounts have been audited and they are in agreement with the accounts of the Comptroller.

Art. 67. The term of the Rev. Meinders as general treasurer expires. A new election places him in office again.

Art. 68. The Rev. G. Broene announces that he is too busy as the Business Manager of the "Wachter" and resigns. Altho the Assembly would very much desire to have the Rev. Broene continue in this capacity, it can understand his reasons for the resignation, and after voting, Elder Pleune is chosen, an elder in the Grand Rapids Church. He accepts the task and his duties will begin with issue No. 26, next.

Art. 69. The Rev. Broene now makes a motion that the Bus. Manager receive the sum of \$100.00 annually for his services. This is passed.

Art. 70. The Rev. Broene also informs the Synod that with a weekly publication of the "Wachter" the work of the Editor has increased, and that his remuneration thus be increased. An increase of \$50.00 is voted for him.

Art. 71. The Committee on the general ecclesiastical regulations returns and reports that they have read and approved the regulations. The Synod sanctions the above report and stipulates that a prompt printing of them be made for public distribution. These will contain the general regulations and the decisions of the Synod, along with the Church Order of Dordt, and the Post-Acts of 1618-1619. The finances for the expense connected with this

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are to be taken from the School funds. Various matters are presented to the Committee for carrying out this matter. (For summary, see Appendix to Acts, 1881)

Art. 72. The Missionary Pastor, the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch suggests that a fund be set up for the distribution of Bibles among the Heathen. After a discussion, it is decided to set up such a fund under the supervision of the Synodical Committee. The Rev. Frieling is chosen as the Treasurer of this fund. The Rev. T. Vanden Bosch contributed \$100.00 to the fund.

Art. 73. A question from the Spring St. Church of Grand Rapids: How can a Reformed Minister be called into our Church. After discussing this, a Congregation with the permission of the Classis may call a Reformed minister, if said minister has expressed a desire to come over to our Church. Have they served our Church formerly, they will then give satisfaction for their previous departure. With others who have had no previous connections with our Church, they will submit to an examination as to their orthodoxy.

Art. 74. The question: How can we best co-operate with the outlying Congregations in the sharing of travelling expenses to the Synod? The question is asked what the combined expenses for travelling are. This amounts to \$279.67 Now the motion is made and passed that each Congregation contribute \$10.00 to this and the five larger Congregations \$11.00 each. This is done and all the Congregations receive the balance except the amount stipulated. All the Congregations are to be informed of this, and even if they send no delegates without a reasonable excuse, they shall still be responsible for the travelling expenses of the delegates.

Art. 75. The Rev. Rietdijk is renamed as Comptroller.

Art. 76. The Synod decides that there shall be no smoking during the Sessions since it is annoying to some of the delegates, and those who do smoke can certainly refrain during the Sessions. This is passed by acclamation.

Art. 77. The Rev. J. Cooper addresses the Synod stating the pleasure it has given to be present at the Sessions.

Art. 78. The task of thanking the Spring St. Congregation in the name of the Synod for acting as hosts to the delegates, and the liberality shown to them, while they were delegates; is assigned to the Rev. Rietdijk, who will be in charge of the services at that church on the coming Sunday.

21.

Art. 79. Since there are no further matters to discuss, in closing the President directs a word of appreciation to our Rev. Professor Boer, for the timely advice and the willing support given by him, in his service to the Synod, to the Vice President for his fraternal assistance and his co-operation, given with all goodwill as to a younger brother; to the Clerk of the Synod in his faithful task assigned to him by the Synod; and to the Reverend Brother Cooper for the friendly intercourse experienced by his presence at the Sessions. The Reverend is commissioned to convey an affectionate and fraternal greeting to his Congregation, and to his Synod from this Assembly. He furthermore receives thanks for the brotherly love, liberality and co-operation in the discussion of important problems.

The Session ends by singing Ps. 134:3, and a prayer to God that he may continue his loving kindness to us and that his presence be constantly in the midst of his Church, and that his blessing may extend to this gathering; and with a continued solicitation for his love, trust, mercy, and protection, for the sake of his son the Christ from this time on and forever.

Rev. L. Rietdijk, Pres.

Rev. G. Hemkes, Clerk.

Supplement I.

The Report of the Synodical Committee

To the Honorable Synod of the Holland Christian Reformed Church in Assembly
at Grand Rapids, June 15, and following days, the Year 1881.

Honorable Brothers in the Lord:

In this report the Synodical Committee wishes to bring the following to your attention.

1/ That the written correspondence with foreign Churches has been maintained. They are as follows:

- a) The Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands.
- b) The Reformed Church in Africa
- c) The Old Reformed Church in Oostfriesland and Graafschap, Bentheim.
- d) The Free Evangelical Church in Germany

2/ Among other things, the information was given to the Churches, concerning the change in the name of our Church, which announcement was well received and accepted by them as information. And this not only occurred in the Foreign Countries but also by the True

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Dutch Reformed Protestant Church in the East.

3/ An ecclesiastical communication was received from the Old Reformed Church in Oostfriesland and Bentheim, which is as follows: (The letter is read to the Assembly)

4/ Communications were also received from the Rev. Baron, from the Consistory of the Holl. Christian Reformed Church at Pella, and from Classis Iowa; all these with requests to relieve the Rev. Baron of his charge at Pella, and a request to grant the Reverend his emeritation due to his physical infirmity.

The Synodical Committee judged it best that the first request be granted, after the circumstances were known; as to the second request, the opinion was that since our Church had so few workers; and since the Rev. Baron was, as yet, not incapable of further service, and since granting Emeritation was outside of the jurisdiction of the Committee; the decision was that it could do no more than report the matter to your respected gathering.

5/ A communication from the Congregation at Pella was also received, requesting both information and a reply on how the Congregation was to proceed in the sending of delegates to the Synod at Grand Rapids, to be held on June 15, 1881., since the Congregation could in no way bear the expense. Also in connection with the Church at Pella, there was much more to be discussed; the Committee decided to send a letter in either case, with a more detailed explanation of the condition of the Congregation.

6/ In regard to the decision of Art. 51 (June 1880) in the matter of Foreign Missions, the Missionary Committee of the Chr. Ref. Church in the Netherlands was informed of same and the information was the cause of much rejoicing there. A request was made for a small area, suitable for our Mission endeavor. There has been no reply concerning this, up to this time, as we were unable to forward a definite amount of money as yet.

Rev. K. Vanden Bosch, Pres.

" R.T. Kuipers

" G. Hemkes, Clerk

Grand Rapids, Mich., June 16, 1881

A communication, received later from the Synodical Board of the Mission Committee in the Netherlands reads as follows:

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Supplement II

To the honorable Synodical Committee of the Holland Christian Reformed Church of America:

My dear Brothers: The Synodical Board of the Mission Committee of our Church took note with much interest, of your Communication dated the fifth of May. The decision of your Church and the offer of help, for the support of our work in the Mission Field was most pleasing to the Brothers. The Synodical Board does not consider 600 to 1000 guilders a trifling sum, and the Church would gladly give you a section of its Mission field for your support. But since the Synodical Board cannot do this, it must be left to the

board of Missions, and no definite answer can be given you at this time. You may, however at your next Synod on June 15, inform the brethren, that the Mission Board which meets at Appeldoorn on June 28, will be fully prepared to release to you a portion of our Mission work. We pray for the enlightenment and grace of the Lord, in your Synodical Sessions, in the name of the Synodical Board of the Mission Committee.

Your brother in Christ,
J.H. Donner, Dir. of Missions

Leiden, June 3, 1881.

(A second letter)

Dear Brothers in Christ:

A word to you to state that I have received the bill of exchange to the amount of 2346 guilders, in good condition and the bill of exchange of the Mission has also been received. How your Church has surprised and gladdened us. It is a notable help to us, with the steady increase of our Mission expense.

Our third Missionary, David Huising, has completed his final examinations, and D.V. he will be ordained in November, and in January, 1882, he will go to Batavia to assist Mission-
Naan. You will be informed of the decisions that will be made at the Mission meeting at Appeldoorn. An official reply will be forwarded to you within a few days.

Greetings in the Lord,
Your affectionate Brother in Christ,
J.H. Donner

Leiden, June 16, 1881.

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Supplement III

To the Synod of the Holland Christian Reformed Church in America

Our dear Brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ

May mercy and peace be increased to both you and us. To us, the undersigned, the President and the Clerk of the Classical Committee, was given the task of composing a "sisterly" letter to you, which task we are now carrying out.

The Classis has received the communication of your Synodical Committee with both joy and gratitude. It has taken note of the change in name of your Church, for which we wish you well and a marked blessing. It appears that the Church in your country is both expanding and growing in number; this was a cause of joy to us. The Lord is good. He does not forget those who are despised on earth. We have also been mindful of this, even now with the organization of our Theological School. Even in this, the Lord has been our help up to this time. Hearts were moved even in Germany, but especially in the Netherlands, so that we were able to begin with sufficient means. We have certainly been helped by the Lord and his people. And yet our needs are not satisfied. Germany lies before us, full of unbelief and confusion, especially in matters religious. Sin and ungodliness reign. Mindful of our strength, we are wont to cry out, "In us, there is no power to stay the hordes coming at us." Our eyes must therefore be turned to him who has said, "Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good will to give you the Kingdom. If our Church is to accomplish anything in Germany, and if she is to have a future, she must establish Mission stations in that country. This, you know, needs financing, and without outside assistance, this is absolutely impossible. We are also beginning to receive support in this phase of the work. In the German Reformed Church in America, there is an interest in the work, and offerings are being taken for that purpose. May God move the hearts even to a greater degree. Brothers, are we not neighbors? Do our Churches not resemble each other as much as sisters who are twins? In all matters there is agreement. Support us with your prayers. Have we not a right to ask this from you? Support us with your gifts. May we not humbly add this request to the previous one? We know that you have the same problems that we have. We know, too, that you need funds to carry on your work at home, even as well as we. You, however, are blessed with more material means there than we are. You acknowledge it and show it with your deeds

for the good of the Kingdom of God. My dear brothers, if at all possible, help us. Even the smallest gift will be welcome. The God of grace continue to bless both you and us. May he establish your Church to an even greater extent, even as a city, set on a hill, and may he also expand our Church so that many may find a refuge under the shadow of her wings.

Your affectionate brothers,
L. Stroven, Pres.
W.P. Smidt, Clerk.

Supplement IV.

A report of the Congregation at Rochester, N.Y.
Residing under Classis Hudson of the Holland Chr. Ref. Church of America.

To the Honorable Assembly of the Church of Christ, held on June 15, 1881, and at Grand Rapids.

Our dear Brothers in our Exalted Lord: Greetings

It is nearly four years ago that the Rev. Noordewier was a guest preacher of ours, and as such brought the Gospel of God's grace to us, thru Jesus Christ. Other leaders, the Rev. W.H. Van Leeuwen, the Rev. D.J.v.d. Werp, (now deceased) the Rev. L. Rietdijk, have labored here previous to that, so that it was the wish of the Lord that we assemble as a small group at the Lenten season, and rent a small Church, with its many inconveniences. With a request of a desire of becoming a Congregation, your body sent the Rev. Rietdijk to us in 1877, who labored here in the favor of the Lord, so that with seventeen members of both sexes, we were organized as a Congregation on September 16, and founded on pure Reformed principles. The Reverend ended his weighty task with a sermon from Jude, 21a. "Keep yourselves in the love of the Lord." We enjoyed preaching services continually both from ministers in our Classis and from churches in the West, who celebrated the Sacraments with us.

Our small Congregation met regularly, and became more firmly established, by means which the Lord provided, and as is constantly stated, not without blessing to the Lord's people but also with a struggle, both from without and within, both winning and losing as is ever the case.

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But this "Pillar of Smoke" having taken a hold in this barren land, pouring forth Myrrh and aloes and every sweet-smelling odor of the Alchemist, the Lord has kept in a visible existence.

Opinions differed greatly; many thought a Minister should be called first, and then our Church building. God's thoughts were otherwise, however, and this matter was pending until the Rev. T. Vanden Bosch came to serve us. And after two calls had been declined the question arose, "Should there be a Church first?" But how-- we were small in number and lacking in earthly possessions--but when the Lord works, who shall raise any opposition? On the same evening, pledges came in amounting to \$500.00, a cloud arising as a man's hand, and to all appearances the Lord had prepared a place. It was conveniently located, and it was acquired for less than its full value. The lot measured 40x170 feet, with a house and a barn on the property, just what was needed for our suburban members. There were two entrances, front and rear. And now the Lord was visibly at work; not only the previously mentioned fund from friends and interested parties, but these same persons were willing to provide much more than the pledged amount, with offers of labor and additional gifts to the honor and the mercy of God; not one word of dispute was heard but many hearts both near and far were moved, so that the blessings in fraternal love from several Congregations was apparent and the following amounts were sent on to us: The Rev. Broene from Roseland, Chi. \$14.25; a friend from Boston, \$17.00; The Rev. Meinders, So Holland, \$9.35; The Rev. Rietdijk, Pater son \$45.50; The Rev. v.d. Vries, Grand Haven, \$13.80; The Rev. Kuipers, Graafschap, \$31.80; Bro. H. Veldman, East St. Grand Rapids, \$14.00; Mr J. Gelok, Spring St. Grand Rapids, \$41.06; Kelloggsville, \$8.20; The Rev. Vanden Bosch, Chicago, \$12.70; The Rev. Hemkes, Vriesland, \$25.00; from the Revs. De Baum and Greve, the sum of \$5.00 each, with a total of 4242.66. Additional gifts from interested parties outside of the Church in this area amounted to \$340.04; this with a grand total of \$1082.70.

The overall expenses; replacing, and remodeling, and enlarging the house and barn, installing a new furnace, paying the interest on the unpaid balance of \$1500.00; amounted to \$1779.23. The balance of the usual Church offerings was also used. The financial value of the property was set at \$4000.00. Thus this has been accomplished, and it is marvelous in our eyes and in the eyes of others. God's hand has certainly worked wonders. Our membership remained at

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thirty for some time. Now there are thirty two communicants, (one member having passed away) Three have been accepted by confession, two children have also passed away. Six children were born into the Congregation, of which four were baptized and two are still to be. Both the Church services and the Catechism Classes are well attended. It compells us to erect memorials, and to acknowledge with humble gratitude the forfeited benefits of the Lord. which he has bestowed upon us, most unworthy souls. The need for a generous outpouring of the Holy Spirit is great, and with the goodness of the Lord, an ordained minister is now needed in this vineyard, to which we now look forward, and with a prayer to the Lord, so that the man of our choice be also the man he purposes for us, in the hope that the King of the Church which he dearly bought, the Lord of the vineyard may say, "Go, and what is right, I shall pay you, as a blessing from above, and a reward upon your labors, and as a servant of the Gospel, being also edified by the same.

The Lord's blessing on your Synod, and on all the possessions of the Lord, is the prayer of this so blessed a Congregation.

Elders: J. De Witte,
H. Pike
H. De Jongh, Clerk
Deacons, J.H. Zonneville
A. Jansen

Appendix

GENERAL RULES (ALGEMEENE BEPALINGEN) 1881 (A SUMMARY)

Contains collection of synodical decisions of the denomination as decided in Article 30 of the Synod of 1880 (Should not be confused with the Acts of the Synod of 1881).

1. Declared to be binding for all the churches, page 2.
2. Rules only to be changed by order of synod, page 3.
3. Synod of 1881 approved these rules and ordered their printing plus the Church Order of Dort, and Post-Acta of General Synod of Dort of 1618-19.

GENERAL RULES ADOPTED IN 1881

Article 1 - Time and Constituency of the Synod (4)

- a. Every year in June exact time to be determined by the synodical committee.
- b. Every congregation sends 2 delegates.
- c. Theological professors advisory capacity.

Article 2 - Public Declaration of Delegates to synod (4-6)

Requests complete agreement with Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort.

Article 3 - Synodical Expenses (6)

Costs to be shared equally.

Article 4 - Church Order (6)

Church Order of Dort in so far as applicable to situations in America.

Article 5 - Relation to Other Churches (6)

Maintain correspondence and close fellowship with all churches sharing same confessions and synodical committee assigned to carry on this correspondence.

Article 6 - Staten - Bijbel (7)

Officially adopted to be used in ecclesiastical meetings.

Article 7 - Ordinary Bibles (7)

Bibles published by British and Buitenlandsch Bijbel genootschap deemed best for general usage.

Article 8 - Relation to True Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in the Eastern Part of the U.S. (7&8)

- a. Decided that there is really no barrier to complete merger and also decided to send fraternal delegates to each other's synod and other ecclesiastical assemblies. Membership papers exchanges and accepted and pulpit and Lord's Supper open to both parties.
- b. Later on both sections merged. Classis Hackensack later became part of the Christian Reformed Church.

Article 9 - Archives

Belong to Theological School and professors to provide for proper keeping of church documents.

Article 10- Classis (8)

Every congregation within limits decreed by a synod must be members of an assigned Classis to which each church must send two delegates, either minister and an elder, and if vacant, two elders.

Article 11- Formation of a Classis (8)

Without approval of synod no new classes may be constituted.

Article 12- Theological Schools (8ff)

Future ministers to be trained in our own Theological School. Professors to be appointed by the synod, and school to be in Grand Rapids as long as the synod does not deem another place more convenient.

Article 13- Students (9)

No students admitted to training for ministry unless approved by the Curatorium, regardless of the fact whether a student pays his own way or receives aid from the Student Fund.

Article 14- Student Requirements (9)

Student applying for admittance to Theological School must furnish attestation of his consistory as to doctrine and conduct.

Article 15- Student Tuition (9)

Student tuition at \$25 to be paid in quarterly payments.

Article 16 - Student Attendance (9)

Must attend all lectures unless professor makes other arrangements.

Article 17- Student Discipline (9)

Professor and curatorium shall exercise final authority in suspending student from school.

Article 18- Student Exhorting (9)

Theological students must have at least preached once before professors and student body before exhorting in churches, and only with consent of professors. Students in literary department not permitted to exhort.

Article 19- Examination of Students (10)

Fee of \$5 or \$10 to be paid upon satisfactory examination.

Article 20- Diplomas (10)

Upon completion either in Literary or Theological department a diploma is issued by Curatorium with seal of the Church.

Article 21- Tenure of Study (10)

Preparatory studies for 4 years and Theological study for 2 years.

Article 22- Vacation Periods (10)

July and August, last week of the year and first week of new year.

Article 23- Curriculum of Studies (10&11)

Article 24- Time for Examinations (11)

In June, in first week after synod meets.

Article 25- Professor or Professors (11)

Shall do a minimum of pastoral work. Curatorium to arrange for number of preaching services. One evening per week faculty and students to meet.

Article 26- Financing of Theological School (11&12)

Roster of payments according to financial ability of the churches for the school are prescribed.

Article 27- Salary of Professor (12)

\$1,300.00

Article 28 - Curators and Trustees of Theological Schools (12)

Four in number are elected by synod as Curators. One retires per year but is eligible for reelection.

Five Trustees appointed by synod and in agreement with law of United States for period of 5 years, of which one retires per year but is eligible for reelection.

Article 29 - Task of Curatorium (12&13)

Supervise teaching, study and conduct of students, control student fund applicants, examinations of students, etc.

Article 30 - Synodical Committee (13)

Comprises three members elected for three years. One member retires every year, but is eligible for reelection.

Article 31 - Task of Synodical Committee (13)

Discharges such matters as are conducive to the welfare of the church between meetings of synod, and maintains fellowship with other churches or denominations thru correspondence.

Article 32 - Task of Trustees of Theological School (13)

Task is determined by the state, and in keeping with this the synod gives to them control of funds, supervision of library, and such tasks as prescribed by the state. Secretary of Trustees gives annual report of assignments to state at Lansing office and to the synod.

Article 33 - Congregational Trustees (13)

State law determines power of congregational trustees, and to prevent difficulties synod advises all congregations that all books and documents of the consistory must be sealed with a state seal, and must see to it that trustees are members of the consistory.

Article 34 - Rules Governing Student Fund (14)

Name given to fund for students who need financial aid to be prepared for gospel ministry as prescribed in Article 19 of Dort Church Order.

Article 35 - Supervision of the Fund (14)

Assigned to Trustees of Theological School.

Article 36 - Administering Fund (14)

Assigned to Treasurer of Theological School.

Article 37 - Maintaining the Student Fund (14)

- a. Particular gifts, legacies, special donations.
- b. Restitution by those who have received aid.
- c. Collections every 3 months in churches.

Article 38 -

- & 39 - Funds are loaned without interest to men in need of financial aid and who desire to become ministers and allowance is \$200 per year. (14)

Article 40 - Examination required for Those Receiving Aid (15)

Married men and those with family not eligible for aid unless there are extremely sufficient reasons.

Article 41 - Obligations Of Those Receiving Aid (15)

- a. To repay to fund what has been received as soon as in a position to do so.
- b. As long as a student or when a candidate not to go elsewhere and become candidate for call to another denomination. Only upon complete repayment of funds received permits such a possibility.
- c. Not to become engaged until at least final year of study, and then not without permission of the board administering the fund.
- d. To complete study and training in Theological School in Grand Rapids or where the school may be.
- e. Subject to all regulations of the school.

Article 42 - Cessation of Financial Aid (16)

If in judgment of professors or Board of Trustees such aid is discontinued this does not end obligation of repayment.

Article 43 - Obligation to aid does not impose upon trustees to pay more than promised in cases of illness, death, or otherwise. (16)

Article 44 - Expenses of Members of Trustees (16)

To be defrayed from fund. Must keep accurate account of all activities and expenditures.

Article 45 - Fund for Home Mission Work (16)

Fund maintained by annual offering from all congregations. Three members appointed by synod, and these regulate task of home missionary. Committee reports to synod annually.

Article 46 - Home Missionary Pastor (16)

Has annual salary of \$600. Moneys collected by him in churches must go to the fund. Receives his assignments where the committee deems his efforts most fruitful and necessary.

Article 47 - Requirements for Home Missionary (17)

Must possess membership, attestation of good health, consent of parents in case of minors, and also some ability in using English language.

Article 48 - Foreign Missions (17)

Prayer service once per month to be prescribed by consistory. Offering on such occasions as well as annual Pentecost services to be used for foreign missions and thru synodical committee to be sent to committee of foreign missions of Christian Reformed Church in Netherlands.

Article 49 - Bible Fund (17)

Governed by synodical committee and to be used for spread of Bible among the heathen.

Article 50 - Emeritation Ruling (17)

Every classis can declare emeritation but the final approval must be given by the synod.

Article 51 - Calling Same Minister Repeatedly (17, 18)

Christian freedom must not be abused and counselor must examine carefully if sufficient reasons exist to repeat call to same minister. If consistory and counselor cannot agree the matter must be settled by classis and consistory cannot proceed without its consent.

Article 52 - Calling of Students (18)

No call may be given to a student unless he has been properly examined and declared eligible for call.

Article 53 - Short Pastorates (18)

Decision of Christian Reformed Churches in Netherlands in 1849 and 1854 approved, and ministers exhorted not to leave too soon, but if they decide to leave within a year the calling church must reimburse the other church for expenses incurred.

Article 54 - Time to Consider a Call (18)

Six weeks given to either decline or accept a call.

Article 55 - Membership of Church (Secret Organizations) (18)

Members of secret organizations may not be members of the church, and if a member is discovered belonging to such a secret organization he must be disciplined.

Article 56 - Admitting Members (19)

Soundness in doctrine and upright in conduct. Members to be admitted must be announced at least one Sunday before confession to give congregation opportunity to voice objections.

Article 57 - Use of Compendium in Admitting Members (19)

Kort Begrip (Compendium) to be used chiefly in spirit of the fathers of old.

Article 58 - Members From Other Churches (19)

When members from other denominations wish to become members of our church, the method of their confession of faith is left to discretion of the consistory, but public confession in midst of congregation must be continued.

Article 59 - Questions Asked at Public Profession of Faith (19, 20)

(Four questions asked)

Article 60 - Questions Re Baptism (20)

Parents must answer questions of the form in preference to sponsors of baptism. Parents who are only members by baptism may present children for baptism and answer questions of form. (followed decision of Netherlands, 1872)

Article 61 - Acceptance of Members by Baptism (20)

Members by baptism coming in from outside can be received and have their children baptized if parents are willing to be taught the Christian way of life which leads to confession of faith.

Article 62 - Catechism Instruction (20)

Parents who neglect to send their children for catechism training must be ecclesiastically admonished, and if they persist in refusing must be disciplined. Adult members by baptism who refuse to be catechetically instructed must upon refusal be disciplined.

Article 63 - Attestation Certificates of Membership (20)

Members leaving and residing in a place where there is no church of our own can remain members of the church where they were members if due information is given to the consistory. Leaving without providing consistory as to their whereabouts will cause their membership to cease after one year and six weeks. Leaving for a place where one of our own churches is located the consistory can provide a certificate of transfer either by mail or in person.

Article 64 - Membership Transfers With Remarks (21)

Such transfers must be accepted and consistories must proceed to follow the usual course of discipline.

Article 65 - Resignation of Membership (21)

Members resigning membership and being object of censure are outside of the scope of the further disciplinary action of a consistory.

Article 66 - Confession of Sins in Consistory Meeting and/or also Before Congregation (21)

Member guilty of public sin must such a sin be confessed and member reconciled by confession before congregation or only do so at Consistory? Consistories advised to do as shall be to the best profit of the congregation.

Article 67 - Marital Matters (21½)

A negative answer is given to the question whether a man who married another woman after his first wife left him can be a member or a member of the church by baptism.

A negative answer is also given to the question whether a man married to a woman, who for more than 20 years was deserted by her first husband, though no evidence can be produced that this first husband is deceased, can be a member of the church.

Article 68 - Ecclesiastical Marriages (21½)

Agreement with practises of Christian Reformed Church in Netherlands. At least one of the parties must be a member by baptism, whether it should take place on Sunday or a weekday left to consistory.

Article 69 - Merger With Other Churches (21½)

In each classis a committee serve with advice where a congregation wishes to affiliate with us.

A. Congregations Without a Minister (22)

Procedure stipulated how a committee of a classis is to act before accepting such a congregation into the fellowship of denomination.

B. Receiving Only Minister or Minister Plus his Congregation (22½)

When only a minister is involved Article 82 to be used. If both minister and congregation then Article 69-A and 69-B to be used.

B. Public Confession of Faith (22½)

Articles 58, and 59 to be used unless a consistory has weighty reasons does not deem it necessary to once again demand a public confession of faith.

C. Catechism Textbooks (22½)

List of acceptable catechism books are mentioned, Borstius, van Kessel, History of Church by L.J. Hulst, Compendium, Hellenbroek, Heidelberg Catechism.

Article 70 - Instruction Letters for Classis and Synod (23)
(Proper Credentials)

Recommended to use the printed copies.

Article 71 - Membership Transfers (23)

Printed copies both for membership in full and for membership by baptism to be used.

Article 72 - Young Men's Societies (23)

Consistories exhorted to promote proper order and proper programming.

Article 73 - Sunday Schools (23)

Since no Christian dayschools exist in some localities all effort should be made to instruct the youth in the Scripture in the Sunday schools.

Article 74 - Organizing of New Congregations (24)

Not without advise and approval of neighboring classis.

Article 75 - Christian Day Schools (24)

Deemed necessary where both Dutch and English are taught. Such schools are premitted by the state. Consistories must encourage those who desire to be trained for Christian school teaching.

Article 76 - Sabbath Observance - Works of Necessity (24)

Adopted the six points of the 164th session of Synod of Dort, 1618-19 as to the moral and ceremonial character of the 4th commandment.

Only works of necessity, and even Sunday labor in such cases not to be condoned in officers of the church to avoid giving wrong example.

Article 77 - Agenda for Synod (25)

Before May 1 to synodical committee. Matters for synod must be clearly defined and stated.

Article 78 - Holiday and Public Worship (26)

When Christmas occurs on a Friday or a Monday the observance of the second Christmas Day worship is left to discretion of the consistory.

Article 79 - Reading Sermons in Vacant Churches (26)

Only such sermons on free texts and Heidelberg Catechism as ecclesiastically approved.

Article 80 - Baptism by Ministers Outside the Church (26)

Must be in the name of the triune God. Baptism administered by Mr. Bakker approved if persons baptized by him are satisfied that it met above requirement. Baptisms by Mr. C. Vorst not to be repeated.

Article 81 - Ministers Coming From Abroad and from Other Churches (26)

Synod must investigate whether the church from which they came is sound in doctrine and provided a proper training. Person must have attestation of being sound in doctrine and life. Then examined and if successful can be declared eligible to call after subscribing to Three Forms of Unity.

Article 82 - Calling of Ministers of Reformed Church.

Congregations can upon advice of their classis call such if a minister of said denomination has expressed a desire to come. If these have served a church of our own previously they will have to give satisfaction why they left us, and also those who have not been with us must submit to an examination in doctrine and life.

Article 83 - Emeritation (28)

Adopted Article 13 of Church Order of Dort. Collections prescribed for this purpose.

Article 84 - Emeritation Fund (28)

Administered by committee appointed by synod and each classis assigns a correspondent.

Article 85 - Eligible to Receive Emeritus Fund Payments (29)

Professors have same rights as ministers, as well as widows and orphans of ministers.

Article 86 - Amount of Allowances (29)

According to need. Amount to be determined by synod.

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Article 87 - Need Before Synod Approves Fixed Amount (29)

Committee to arrange provisional aid until synod.

Article 88 - Allowances to Orphans (29)

Usually until age of discretion and when in judgment of committee person can help himself.

Article 89 - Remarriage of Pensionaries (29)

Upon remarriage widow pension ceases. Committee determines whether children will still receive aid.

Article 90 - Rules to Terminate Emeritation Aid (29)

Upon return to active service, severing membership with church, or when membership is for sufficient reasons terminated.

Article 91 - Children of Those Mentioned in Article 90 (29)

Shall receive aid if committee deems such aid necessary and such beneficiaries remain members of our church.

Article 92 - Death of Beneficiary (30)

Full quarter payment to be paid to heirs of quarter in which beneficiary died.