

# AGENDA

Synod  
Christian Reformed Church

*To convene June 13, 1934  
at Grand Rapids, Mich.*

**PART II:**  
RELATED  
**REPORTS**  
and OVERTURES

Office of the Stated Clerk  
737 Madison Avenue, S. E.  
Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.

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## PREFACE

**T**HE present volume is PART II, of the Agenda for the 1934 Synod, containing belated Reports, some Annual Reports, list of synodical delegates, overtures, list of protests, etc.

Tuesday evening, June 12, 1934, at 8:00 p. m., D. V., PRAYER MEETING FOR SYNOD in the First Chr. Ref. Church of Grand Rapids, corner of Henry Ave. and Bates St., led by the Rev. H. J. Kuiper, vice-president of the Synod of 1932, in the place and at the request of the Rev. I. Van Dellen, president of the former Synod.

Wednesday, June 13th, at 10:00 a. m., in the Calvin College chapel, the vice-president formally opens the synodical meeting with an opening address, prayer and roll call.

According to established custom, our local churches are requested to prayerfully remember, on the preceding Sabbath, the forthcoming meeting of our Synod.

## VOORWOORD

**D**IT boek is het tweede stuk der Agenda, voor de e. k. Synode. Het bevat nagekomen rapporten die volgens opdracht der vorige synodale vergadering werden samengesteld, enkele verslagen van Staande Commissies, een lijst der synodale deputaten, voorstellen voor de Synode, lijst van protesten, enz.

Aan den avond van Dinsdag, 12 Juni, 1934, te acht ure, wordt, D. V., in het kerkgebouw der Eerste Chr. Geref. gemeente te Grand Rapids, hoek van Henry Ave. en Bates St., het SYNODALE BIDUUR gehouden, geleid door Ds. H. J. Kuiper, vice-president der Synode van 1932, die den volgenden morgen, Woensdag, 13 Juni, te tien ure des voormiddags, op formeele wijze de Synode opent met toespraak, gebed, enz. In het Calvin College hoofdgebouw.

Onze kerken worden, ouder gewoonte, verzocht om den Zondag vóór 13 Juni, de belangen der Synode aan den Heere op te dragen in den gebede.

*Henry Beets, S. C.*

737 Madison Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich., U. S. A.

# AGENDA

## Part II :: Belated Reports

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### REPORT XIV

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#### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, 1934

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*To the Synod of 1934:*

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

WE are privileged to present to you our fourth synodical report. The Synod of 1926 appointed a committee on religious education and the first report was rendered to the Synod of 1928. This first report emphasized especially the comprehensiveness of the task of advising and coördinating all the educational agencies of the churches. But since the Chr. Ref. Church is committed to the education of its members in creed and doctrine, the size of the task should never become a deterrent. Synod of 1928 increased the committee to a membership of nine, making the committee permanent. Three members are to retire each synodical year.

#### I. Mandate (Instructions and Interpretations).

Since the work of your committee is increasing in scope we deemed it advisable to restate its chief mandate in order that it may be clearly before the minds of all and that all actions may be in harmony with it.

The synodical mandate given in 1926 (Acta 1926, p. 47) reads as follows:

“This committee will have the task of interesting itself in the instruction of our youth as it is given in and by our churches, and of searching for means by which this instruction may be furthered.”

“This committee will be expected to make a study of the needs arising in this sphere, and to serve the congregations with information and advice.”

The Synod of 1928 accepted the following interpretation (Acta 1928, p. 32):

“The instruction is taken to mean that it was the purpose of Synod to maintain a Committee on Education as a permanent organ in service of the churches as we also have permanent committees for other purposes: Missions, Theological School, Emeritus Fund, etc. However, with this difference, that the Committee on Education has no supervising, but only advisory powers.”

The Committee's own conception of its task was confirmed by Synod of 1928 and was recorded as follows (Acta 1928, p. 33):

“1. To make a study of the needs and problems in the field of education provided by and under the auspices of the churches. This study will include a survey of the educational work conducted by the various churches of our denomination. It will of necessity include also a study of the educational work carried on by other denominational groups of our country and by the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands;

“2. To promote the cause of religious instruction in our churches by encouraging constant improvement with respect to material, methods, and class-room facilities. To this end pastors and teachers are invited to correspond with the Committee. The Committee will be interested to know of any material or method that has been used with marked success, or to receive any helpful suggestions from those who are engaged in the work of religious instruction;

“It is further suggested that a department on Religious Education be opened in *De Wachter*, and be re-opened in *The Banner*, so that our people may more regularly be kept in touch with the problems and the work of religious education, and be led to take a greater personal interest in this matter;

“3. To act as an advisory committee in the matters of religious education, to which pastors and consistories are invited to come with their particular problems and needs. Situations vary, and it is impossible to outline a course of instruction that will be effective for all times. While sound

and thorough instruction is necessary under all circumstances, and sound methods of teaching remain that must be solved in the light of the peculiar situation in which the congregation finds itself. The Committee stands ready to advise pastors and consistories in these matters to the best of its ability;

"4. To function as a point of contact between the Church at large and other organizations that have the cause of religious instruction and training at heart. Here are to be mentioned our Christian Schools, especially as represented by the Union of Christian Schools, The American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies, Mission Training Schools, and similar organizations. While the Church in no way proposes to intrude upon the activities of these organizations, it is highly desirable that a closer contact among them be established. Occasional conferences of the authorized representatives of these organizations would undoubtedly do much to encourage each one in the work of its own sphere, and to bring about a larger measure of coordination and mutual helpfulness. It is suggested that delegates chosen by the Educational Committee be considered as representatives of the Church and its educational work in conferences of this kind."

## II. Conflicting Advices and Instructions.

### a. PERMANENCY OF COMMITTEE.

Synod of 1928 said (Acta 1928, p. 32): "... it is the purpose of Synod to maintain a Committee on Education as a permanent organ . . ."

Synod of 1932, without any report or discussion on the advisability or inadvisability of maintaining the position of Synod of 1928, quoted extensively in I above, adopted the following resolution, upon advice of its committee of pre-advice (Acta Synodi 1932, p. 46):

"Synod hereby continues the synodical committee on Religious Education and instructs it to draw up a cycle of studies covering six years of study to be reported at next Synod."

It is evident that this Synod recognized only partially the purpose of the Committee on Education, and had forgotten wholly about its permanency.

b. INSTRUCTIONS TO COMMITTEE.

It is perfectly right that the Synod should give the committee definite instructions from time to time, but when these are inconsistent it is extremely difficult for the Committee to know what is the mind of Synod. (cf. Acta 1932, p. 45, III, 2.)

"Synod, for the present, sustains the position of the synodical committee when it says, it 'therefore, cannot see its way clear to recommend a system of Sunday School lessons and topics of our own, built on the principles of the International Lessons System, i. e., the same topics for all ages'," and (Acta 1932, p. 45, II, 3): "Synod authorizes the Committee to complete the books. . . . Adopted."

Synod has "for the present" agreed that the principles underlying the International Lessons System should not be employed in our Sunday School Lesson Series, and that a more pedagogical plan should be followed, and then immediately reverses its position by instructing the committee to draw up a six-year outline, (" . . . and instructs it to draw up a cycle of studies covering six years of study to be reported at next Synod," cf. Acta Synodi 1932, p. 46) according to the very plan it had rejected.

The committee has felt that this matter was not clear before the consciousness of Synod and it has, therefore, followed what it considered the wiser course. The committee has concentrated upon just one plan and that is the plan suggested in its report of 1930 (Acta 1930, p. 324, Sec. VII) and re-stated in its report of 1932 (Acta 1932, p. 279 ff., Sec. II).

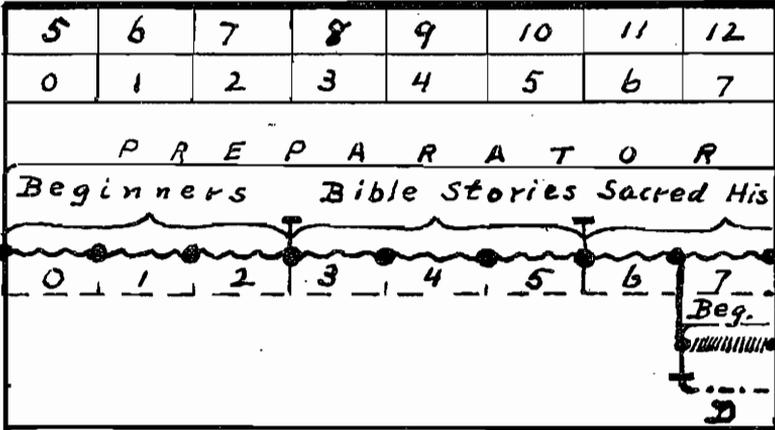
III. Unified Church School.

In 1930 your committee presented its plan for a unified Church School (combination of catechism and Sunday School) (Acta 1930, pp. 324-333) with this request,

"The committee asks that Synod express its approval of a unified Church-School, embodying a progressive course of study in Sacred History and Christian Doctrine, making use of the time and teaching talent now employed in both catechetical classes and the Sunday School."

The question of a unified course has been referred to the churches for study twice (1930 and 1932). We would

now renew our proposal of 1930, stated above, and respectfully ask Synod to give its definite approval. We herewith reproduce the diagram of the plan given in 1930. (A full explanation is given in Acta 1930, pp. 327-329.)

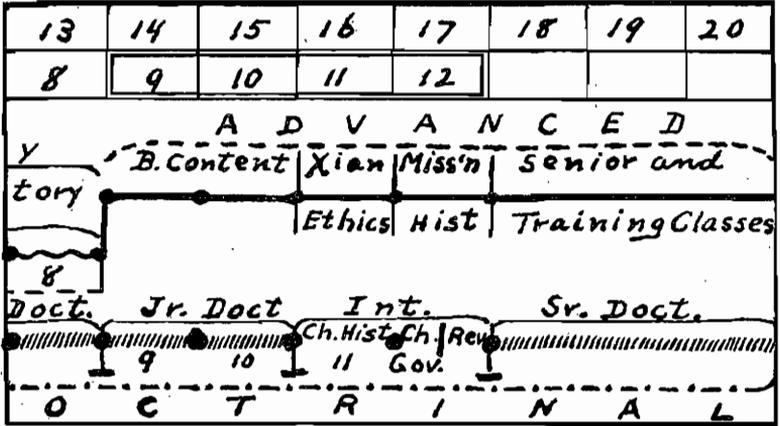


Your committee is sorry to report that nothing definite has as yet been accomplished in the direction of Sunday School readers for grades 3, 4, and 5, for which last Synod directed this committee to prepare a prospectus. It is felt that Christian School teachers who have experience in teaching these grades should have a large share in preparing the lessons for this Bible Study Course. But the financial situation has been such that it was felt that the committee should not make any large expenditure at this time. We trust, however, that before long we will be able to present something definite for the approval of the churches.

#### IV. Bible School for Lay Workers.

After a thorough study of a school which endeavors to promote the preparation of High School and College graduates for all types of evangelistic work by granting special diplomas to graduates of those Christian Colleges and Seminaries which satisfy its curricular demands, and wish to cooperate, the committee learned that our College can quite readily fulfil the demand of such a curriculum by the

addition of a few courses which will make a major in 'Bible' possible. The question of the advisability of the introduction of such a major has been suggested informally to the college faculty for consideration.



This study drew our attention to the fact that there is a dearth of trained lay workers. The Sunday schools and the congregational missions are experiencing no little difficulty in obtaining efficient teachers. There are a large number of church members who have qualities of leadership and desire to be active in Kingdom work, but are handicapped by the lack of opportunities to obtain the specific training which is necessary to make their work effective.

It is obvious that we need Bible Schools which are thoroughly Reformed. We cannot afford to compromise our glorious heritage. Our teachers and workers must be able to combat error with truth. But how are they going to answer those under the influence of the insidious evolutionary thought which so permeates modern education today, and those entranced or disturbed by the teachings of dispensationalism, and those who seek to erase all lines of distinction between the Church and the world, unless they themselves can speak with a conviction which is born of faith and rooted in knowledge?

We had planned to open a Bible School in the Grand

Rapids center as a controlled experiment, in order to be able to bring before Synod some very concrete findings, but we were delayed in carrying out our plans. The courses we had planned to offer were: The Sunday School Lesson, a systematic study of the Bible, Pedagogy of the Sunday School, and Personal Evangelism. We now request that Synod permit us to organize a Bible School in the Grand Rapids center and that the control of that school be left with this committee for a period of two years, at least. Our reasons for making this request are:

1. A controlled experiment in one center will be instrumental, if successful, in the establishment of similar schools in other centers.
2. An intimate study of one school, its organization, its needs, its activities, and its benefits, will enable us to advise other consistories and pastors in centers where similar schools may be contemplated or established at later dates.
3. Some time ago, representatives of forty-two churches in Grand Rapids, not counting any of our own churches, asked for such a school to be taught by our men. Although these schools must be organized first of all to meet our needs, the possibility of acting as a leaven in the community must also be considered very seriously.

#### V. Miscellaneous.

##### a. SURVEY.

The committee suggested in 1930 that a survey of all the educational work of our churches, similar to the one just completed then, be made every four years. The first one was made in 1929 and the second should have been made in 1933. Due, however, to the expense involved in making such an extensive survey the committee has postponed action until the time arrives when the expense can be borne more easily.

##### b. BIBLE COURSE.

Your Committee has communicated with the National Union of Christian Schools and has received assurance that:

“The Union Bible Course is drawn up along lines which are in harmony with the recommendation of the conference of Synodical Committee, Principals’ Clubs of Michigan, Iowa, Illinois, and New Jersey and the National Union of Christian Schools. (See Acts of the Synod, 1932, pages 273-285).”

c. NAME.

Our committee is known by various names, and is most commonly called the “Religious Education Committee.” We feel that this designation is misleading and would suggest that its official name be, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION.

d. REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD.

The committee respectfully asks that Synod permit Rev. W. Stuart (Mr. G. J. Van Wesep, secundus) to present our report and to act for the committee before Synod and its committee of preadvice.

e. MEMBERS.

The terms of the brethren A. Peters, A. J. Rooks, and W. Stuart expire this year.

Respectfully submitted,

L. J. LAMBERTS,  
H. H. MEETER,  
G. HEYNS,  
G. W. HYLKEMA,  
P. A. HOEKSTRA,  
A. PETERS,  
A. J. ROOKS,  
W. STUART,  
G. J. VAN WESEP.

REPORT XV.

REPORT OF THE GENERAL TREASURER,  
JEWISH MISSIONS

(Compare Report XI. and ??)

*To the Synod of 1934:*

ESTEEMED FATHERS AND BRETHREN:

**W**E hereby append a report and account of Receipts and Disbursements for the past two years of the Jewish Mission, General Fund.

These two years have been very trying ones for the Jewish Missions at Paterson and Chicago.

The economic depression left its influence felt in the contributions for the Jewish Mission Fund.

Your Treasurer regrets that he was unable to send more to the two Missions. Less than 50% of the amount appropriated by Synod came in. Considering the economical conditions, especially in the Western States, we must, however, be thankful for what has been received. May we pray earnestly that the Lord, in Whose hands our times are, will soon give relief.

We would again remind Synod in regard to a "Form of Bequest" for Jewish Missions, as mentioned in our previous report (1932). We explained why the Jewish Mission General Fund cannot be incorporated, and, therefore we suggested that, since the Christian Reformed Board of Missions is incorporated, the following "Form of Bequest" be approved:

"I DEVISE, GIVE, AND BEQUEATH TO THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF MISSIONS, the sum of ..... Dollars, to be applied to Mission Work among the Jews, as, and wherever, carried on by the Christian Reformed Church."

The books of your Treasurer have been audited and found correct for the period from January 1, 1932, to December 31, 1933.

May God's choicest blessings rest upon this work!

Humbly submitted,

J. L. VAN TIELEN, *Treasurer.*

**FINANCIAL REPORT OF JEWISH MISSIONS — GENERAL FUND**  
of the Christian Reformed Church

**FROM JANUARY 1, 1932, TO DECEMBER 31, 1933**

Name of Classis	Number of Families	Amount Required	Amount Received	Less than Required	Received per Family	Less than Required per Family
California .....	562	\$ 1,124.00	\$ 593.51	\$ 530.49	\$ 1.05	\$ .95
Eastfriesland .....	580	1,160.00	564.30	595.70	.97	1.03
Grand Rapids, East.....	2,805	5,610.00	2,508.65	3,101.35	.89	1.11
Grand Rapids, West.....	3,447	6,894.00	2,089.86	4,804.14	.60	1.40
Hackensack .....	628	1,256.00	778.45	477.55	1.23	.77
Holland .....	1,911	3,822.00	1,408.01	2,413.99	.73	1.27
Hudson .....	1,517	3,034.00	1,754.23	1,279.77	1.15	.85
Illinois .....	2,699	5,398.00	1,350.22	4,047.78	.89	1.11
Muskegon .....	1,951	3,902.00	2,153.56	1,748.44	1.10	.90
Orange City .....	1,759	3,518.00	777.34	2,740.66	.44	1.56
Pacific .....	893	1,786.00	979.24	806.76	1.04	.96
Pella .....	1,089	2,178.00	933.90	1,244.10	.85	1.15
Sioux Center .....	1,319	2,638.00	754.23	1,883.77	.57	1.43
Wisconsin .....	675	1,350.00	398.02	951.98	.55	1.45
Zeeland .....	1,541	3,082.00	1,735.23	1,346.77	1.12	.88
*Sent direct to Chicago			1,434.54			
<b>Total.....</b>	<b>23,376</b>	<b>\$46,752.00</b>	<b>\$20,213.29</b>	<b>\$27,973.25</b>	<b>\$ .90</b>	<b>\$ 1.10</b>
Societies, Individuals, etc.....			851.25			
Interest .....			85.00			
Balance on hand January 1, 1932.....			948.15			
<b>Total Receipts.....</b>			<b>\$22,097.69</b>			

Included in above the following amounts were SPECIFIED:

For Chicago .....\$1,097.70  
For Paterson, ..... 944.23

\* All money for Jewish Missions should be sent to the Treasurer of the General Fund, and not to the treasurers of Chicago and Paterson. See Acts of Synod, 1928, Page 25, V, 4.

## DISBURSEMENTS

Chicago .....	\$13,800.00
Chicago Building Fund.....	25.00
Paterson .....	6,275.00
*Direct to Chicago.....	1,434.54
Gratuity, Bond, Tax, Postage, etc.	279.84
Balance on hand Jan. 1, 1934.....	283.31

Total Disbursements..... \$22,097.69

## CHICAGO

Chicago Received:	
Through General Fund.....	\$12,800.00
Sent Direct .....	1,434.54
Building Fund .....	25.00
Other Sources .....	1,530.42

\$16,789.96

## PATERSON

Paterson Received:	
Through General Fund.....	\$ 6,275.00
Other Sources .....	550.09

\$ 6,825.09

GRAND TOTAL RECEIPTS..... \$23,615.05

## CHICAGO

Appropriated by Synod.....	\$32,745.00
Received .....	16,789.96

Less than Appropriated.....\$15,955.04

## PATERSON

Appropriated by Synod.....	\$13,400.00
Received .....	6,825.09

Less than Appropriated.....\$ 6,574.91

## IN RESERVE:

"Michael Van den Berge Memorial" Bonds.....	\$1,000.00
"Johanna Woltman Legacy" Certificate of Deposit .....	500.00

Respectfully submitted,  
J. L. VAN TIELEN, *Treasurer.*

Hoboken, N. J., January 26, 1934.

We have audited the books of J. L. Van Tielon, Treasurer of the Jewish Mission, General Fund, for the period January 1, 1932, to December 31, 1933, and have found them to be correct.

The printed report agrees with the receipts and disbursements as recorded in the books.

(Signed) A. KES,  
Y. C. SPYKSA,  
*Auditing Committee.*

## REPORT XVI.

### REPORT ON SEAMEN'S HOME, HOBOKEN, N. J.

*To the Synod of 1934:*

ESTEEMED FATHERS AND BRETHREN:

**S**INCE our report to the Synod of 1932 the work at the Holland Seamen's Home and Immigration Bureau has continued without interruption.

The Eastern Home Mission Board has met monthly to consider and decide upon affairs pertaining to the Home. The decision of the previous Synod "to eliminate for the present the function of the Superintendent of the Seamen's Home" and "to combine the work of the Colporteur in Hoboken and the work of the Superintendent" (Acts of Synod 1932, p. 98), was carried out. The Board appointed Mr. Edward Apol, Assistant of the former Superintendent, for the work. Mr. Apol has been acting in his new capacity since the fall of 1932 to the full satisfaction of the Board. Mr. and Mrs. C. Fisher continue their services, respectively, as janitor and matron of the Home.

The salaries of the personnel have been materially reduced. No salary exceeds at present the sum of \$1,000.00 per annum. The personnel reside in the Home and pay rent amounting to \$40.00 per month.

Although the immigration tide continues more or less on the low level of 1932 and, as a result, only a fraction of the time and efforts of Mr. Apol are devoted to that phase of the work, there has been a laudable activity in the Seamen's Home among the sailors and other visitors, and upon the boats and barges in the New York harbor. Gospel meetings have been held at stated times, and mission work has been done by personal contact on ships, in hospitals, and homes. Some idea as to the extensiveness of the

work may be gained from the following statistics which summarize the efforts put forth in 1932 and 1933:

Ships Visited .....	471
Visits to Barges, Lighters, and Other Vessels .....	661
Meetings Held .....	190
Attendance at Meetings.....	3,670
Portions of Scripture and Tracts Distributed.....	18,153
New Testaments Distributed.....	628
Bibles Distributed .....	93
Free Beds Provided.....	313
Free Meals Provided.....	823

In 1932, 181 emigrants, 4 immigrants, and 11 sailors found lodging in the Home.

In 1933 lodging in the Home was provided for 316 persons, among whom were 11 sailors, 4 immigrants, and 301 emigrants.

The proposed Annual Budget for the Seamen's Home for 1934 and 1935 is as follows:

Salaries .....	\$2,000.00
Gas and Electricity.....	400.00
Coal .....	203.00
Water .....	60.00
Interest .....	150.00
Repairs and Incidentals.....	500.00
	<hr/>
	\$3,313.00
Less Estimated Income.....	800.00

\$2,513.00 for one year, or

\$5,026.00 for two years

Respectfully submitted,

Eastern Home Mission Board,

E. VAN HALSEMA, *Secretary.*

**REPORT XVII.**

**REPORT OF THE DELEGATE OF THE  
AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY**

*To the Synod of 1934:*

ESTEEMED BRETHERN:

**D**URING the past two years the American Bible Society (organized in 1816) has continued its blessed work of distributing the Holy Scriptures without note or comment in all parts of the world. The program of the Society is world-wide and includes the translation of the Scriptures into the languages and common dialects of the people; the publication of the Scriptures in styles suitable and convenient at the lowest possible cost; the distribution of the Bible throughout the world at cost or free, as a missionary program.

The Christian Reformed Church contributed \$944.49 for the work of the Society in the year 1932, and the sum of \$398.75 in the year 1933, which amounts are considerably less than in previous years. However, the Society with its material decrease of funds from churches and interested friends, has been able to carry on the work of Bible distribution, and this due in a large measure to the foresight and skill which has been shown in financing the organization.

As your delegate, we have attended both annual meetings of the Advisory Council.

Again we heartily endorse the Society to the moral and financial support of our people, and recommend that Synod place it on the list of approved causes. Let us nobly stand by and help support this very worthy cause.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN BEEBE.

Paterson, N. J.

## REPORT XVIII.

### REPORT OF THE PATERSON HEBREW MISSION

*To the Synod of 1934.*

DEAR BRETHREN:

**T**HIS report covers the work done from January 1, 1932, to December 31, 1933.

The work of bringing the Gospel to the Jews has been carried on in the usual and orderly way.

Our gospel meetings, held on Saturday evenings, were well attended. The number of those who come to listen to the Gospel has increased. The messages given from the O. T. and N. T. were well received. We have seven cases where husband and wife together attend these meetings. During the past year we had as many as 34 Jews in one gospel meeting. The average attendance was 15, and the total attendance was 1,397 Jews.

Our Dispensary is open once a week on Thursday afternoon. Dr. W. L. Dunning is our noble and faithful physician. We have a regular gospel meeting before our Dispensary is open to the sick. Personal work is done after the preaching. Many strangers were added to our Dispensary list. (By strangers we mean Jews who attended our meeting for the first time.) Those who attend our Dispensary also come to our gospel meeting on Saturday evening. A good interest is manifested throughout the meetings. The average attendance was 16, and the total attendance was 1,628 Jews.

The Women's Class was also well attended. There are at present 24 Jewish women enrolled. A Bible lesson is given at each meeting, and this is well received. Some of the women are interested in the spiritual phase of this work. Part of the time is devoted to sewing. The average

attendance was 12, and the total attendance was 962 Jewish women.

The Esther Club is composed of Jewish children. It is not so well attended as the adult meetings. The average attendance is 10. A Bible lesson is taught in the form of a story, and Scripture texts are memorized. Part of the time is devoted to sewing.

On Monday and Tuesday evenings we conduct classes in English. Those who attend these classes are Jews who are interested in learning the English language. Help is also given them in securing their naturalization papers. Part of the time is devoted to the study of the O. T. and the N. T. The average attendance is 7.

On Sunday evening we have a Bible class for men. Elderly Jews attend this meeting. The time is devoted to reading and discussing Scripture. These men are interested, but they fear their relatives and friends. The average attendance is 5.

Part of our time is devoted to visiting Jews in their homes and stores. This offers good opportunities for personal work. We meet Jews who are interested in our literature, and we invite them to come to our meetings. New openings are made from time to time. We made 1,348 calls, distributed 1,315 tracts, 69 gospels, 26 New Testaments, and 19 Bibles.

Once a month we have a social meeting. This meeting is for Jews and Christians. The purpose of this meeting is to have Christian friends become better acquainted with our work, and thus create more interest for Jewish Missions. The Men's and Ladies' Societies of the local congregations, together with their pastors, have been very faithful in helping us in this phase of the work. On this evening we have an appropriate program. The visiting pastor and the missionary in charge give a sermonette, and several messages in song are rendered by members of the societies present. After this we have light refreshments, paid from the collection given by the visiting society. The Jews like these meetings, and the Christians enjoy them, too. The average attendance of Jews is 20.

As to results, we are glad to report that our Mission has been instrumental in the conversion of two Jewish men, and there are others who believe, but who dare not acknowledge it, for fear of their relatives and friends.

There is reason for encouragement. Jews come to listen to the preaching of the gospel. Let us therefore be faithful in our work, obeying the command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Humbly submitted,

(Signed) HERMAN H. SCHULTZ, *Supt.*

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#### REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

SINCE the last Synod the work of the Paterson Hebrew Mission has been faithfully performed by the workers, and that not without results. The stress of the times, to the regret of the Board, made it necessary to reduce the salaries and the personnel, so that at the present time we have three workers in the employ of the Mission — the Rev. H. H. Schultz, Miss Martha Rozendale, and Dr. W. Dunning. However, as soon as funds warrant it, an assistant will be appointed to help the lady worker in home visitation, and other activities of the Mission.

The Dispensary is still on full time, thanks to the willingness and devotion of the Christian physician, whose compensation has been reduced one-half. The Board highly appreciates the work of the doctor, and realizes the value of it in attracting Jews to the Mission. Many of them later on become regular attendants.

The Board, constituted of four members from each Classis, meets monthly to regulate the affairs of the Mission.

In accordance with Acts of Synod, 1932, Art. 59, 1, Candidate H. H. Schultz was duly examined by Classis Hudson and ordained on May 22, 1933, as a minister of the gospel. May the Lord richly bless his labors as Superintendent of the Paterson Hebrew Mission, and may he be instrumental in bringing many souls to the foot of the cross.

In conclusion, the Board urgently requests the moral and

financial support of God's people to meet the needs of this and the sister institution at Chicago, so that the many Jews still hard of heart and stiff of neck, may be won for Jesus Christ. Let us not forget the command, "to the Jew first."

Respectfully submitted,

The Paterson Hebrew Mission,  
(Signed) H. VAN OSTENBRIDGE, *Secy.*

**FINANCIAL REPORT OF THE PATERSON HEBREW MISSION**  
from January 1, 1932, to December 31, 1933

RECEIPTS

Cash on hand January 1, 1932.....	\$ 89.63	
From Rev. J. L. Van Tielén.....	6,275.00	
From Classical Treasurers.....	282.50	
From Churches, Societies, and Individuals.....	279.59	
From Collections at Mission.....	71.34	
From Rent of Second Floor of Building.....	992.50	
From Loan at Bank.....	500.00	
		<hr/>
		\$8,490.56

DISBURSEMENT:

Salary of Missionary (two years).....	\$3,371.92	
Salary (Part-time Workers entire 2-year period) ..	2,025.00	
Salary of Janitress.....	475.00	
Gas, Electricity, Fuel, Water, and Telephone.....	838.45	
Medical Department (Salary of Physician and Supplies for Dispensary).....	987.67	
Interest on Notes.....	127.83	
Repairs to Building.....	180.81	
Insurance.....	154.50	
Literature, Printing, Postage, Sundry Supplies and Expenses.....	248.76	
Balance on hand January 1, 1934.....	80.62	
		<hr/>
		\$8,490.56

**Summary of Contributions received from the Churches**

From General Treasurer, Rev. J. L. Van Tielén....	\$6,275.00
Direct from Classical Treasurers.....	282.50
From Churches and Individuals.....	279.59
	<hr/>
	\$6,837.09

(Annual Contribution \$3,418.55)

Appropriated by Synod.....	\$13,400.00
Received.....	6,837.09
	<hr/>
Short on Appropriation.....	\$ 6,562.91

**PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR PATERSON HEBREW  
MISSION 1934 AND 1935**

Salaries of Missionary and Workers.....	\$3,628.00
Gas, Electricity, Fuel, Water, and Telephone.....	470.00
Medical Department (Salary of Physician and Supplies for Dispensary) .....	500.00
Insurance .....	317.81
Building Repairs and Replacements.....	150.00
Literature, Printing and Misc. Supplies and Expenses.....	120.00
	<hr/>
	\$5,185.81

(Total Budget for two years, \$10,371.62)

P. S. In addition to the above, we have notes to meet, aggregating \$1,400.00. As these notes are of long standing, this extra amount should be received in order that this indebtedness may be liquidated.

The salary of our Missionary was reduced 20%; the two lady workers were on half time during the entire two-year period ending December 31, 1933. Furthermore, our physician was also placed on the "half-time" basis.

Respectfully submitted,

(Signed) JOHN H. VAN HASSEL, *Treasurer.*

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**COPY OF AUDITORS' REPORT**

The Board of Directors,  
of the Paterson Hebrew Mission,  
Paterson, N. J.

March 13, 1934.

DEAR SIRs: We have audited the books and records of your Treasurer, John H. Van Hassel, and find same correct and in order.

Respectfully submitted,

HENRY WIEGERS,

(Signed) IRA STRUCK,  
*Auditing Committee.*

Adopted by Classis Hackensack at its meeting held on April 3rd, 1934, in the Third Christian Reformed Church, Paterson, N. J., and recommended to Synod for approval.

JOHN BEEBE, S. C.

REPORT XIX.

TWEEDE RAPPORT ZUID-AMERIKA AAN DE SYNODE

HOOGGEACHTE BROEDERS;

DEPUTATEN voor Zuid-Amerika kunnen bij het Rapport in het eerste deel der Agenda nog melden dat het kasboek overeenstemt met de jaarboekjes van 1932 en 1933, en dat de Penningmeester bovendien ontving van Second Englewood, \$27.21; Van Liew, \$5.00; K. S., \$1; Donor, \$7; en A Friend, \$4.00; samen met 't batig saldo van het jaar 1931 .....\$2,811.18  
De uitgaven in deze twee jaren waren..... 2,662.18

Dit liet in kas op 1 Januari, 1934.....\$ 149.00

Ook ontvingen deputaten het verslag der vergadering van Classis Buenos Aires, dat drie zaken bevat voor de Synode:

(1) Groote erkentelijkheid voor den liefdevollen steun ontvangen.

(2) "Overname van de Classis door de zusterkerken in Noord-Amerika. Hoewel er over deze zaak nog geen officieele berichten zijn, is het uit de kerkelijke bladen en ook uit de Acta der Generale Synode toch bekend, dat er in Nederland en Noord-Amerika over gehandeld is. Classis is niet tegen deze eventueele overname, maar zal gaarne eerst nader bericht van Deputaten ontvangen, en ook zullen in deze zaak de gemeenten erkend en gehoord worden."

(3) Dankbare vreugde in het blij vooruitzicht dat het denkjaar 1934 onze strijdende kerk een groote schrede vooruit zal brengen, ook in Zuid-Amerika. De Classis rekent alvast op de komst van broeder en zuster Muller in Brazilië; en bovendien tracht zij ook in Argentina een stap voorwaarts te doen. Daar is een talentvol ouderling-oefenaar, Don Diego Zijlstra, dien men gaarne wil licentieeren als hulpprediker, vooral voor Buenos Aires en omstreken. De-

putaten in Nederland en hier hebben al jarenlang gewenscht dat deze ouderling meer ging optreden als oefenaar, en het is oorzaak van blijdschap dat de Heere hem allengs meer verlost van zijne overbescheidenheid. Zeer gaarne willen we de Classis aanmoedigen om zooveel mogelijk gebruik te maken van deze singuliere gaven; maar zoolang de kas niet meer inkomen heeft dan de laatste jaren is er geen subsidie te geven, zelfs niet voor een reizend prediker. De Classis wijst op de groote behoefte aan evangelie-prediking, en de schoone gelegenheden aldaar, en vraagt daarna in allen ernst, of er hier dan niet ergens nog eene gemeente of Classis te vinden is, die zou kunnen helpen om een prediker in Zuid-Amerika te ondersteunen.

Deputaten leggen dus ook deze zaak voor de Synode, hopende dat de Synode van 1934 weer Deputaten zal benoemen, en hen zal gebieden dat zij voorttrekken in Brazilië, en, zoover het God belieft den weg te banen, ook in Argentina.

Met eerbied onderworpen,

Deputaten voor Zuid-Amerika,

HENRY BEETS, *praeses*.

J. WYNGAARDEN, *penningmeester*.

M. J. WYNGAARDEN, *secretaris*.

H. BLYSTRA.

**REPORT XX.**

**REPORT, CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE**

*To the Synod of 1934.*

ESTEEMED FATHERS AND BRETHREN:

**T**HE Church Help Committee has again functioned as in previous years except that in our opinion the loans made in 1932 and 1933 were more carefully scrutinized than in previous years because our income has been reduced about \$7,000 and it was impossible to grant all the loans asked for.

We believe this fund serves a very useful purpose. Some of our churches have been very hard pressed for repayments of mortgages and debts made in previous years. Some were in danger of losing their properties unless payments were made. The general depression and crop failures made it impossible for some of these churches to make the payments required. In all these cases we could help them out of their difficulty.

Loans made the last two years were as follows:

Atwood, Mich. ....	\$ 900.00	for parsonage (lost by fire)
Colton, S. D. ....	1,000.00	for payment on mortgage
Desplaines, Ill. ....	1,000.00	to build new church
De Motte, Ind. ....	1,000.00	to build new church
Estelline, S. D. ....	500.00	to pay off mortgage
Hancock, Minn. ....	500.00	to pay off notes
Holland, Minn. ....	300.00	to pay creditors
Hawarden, Iowa ....	500.00	to pay creditors
Holland Center, Iowa .....	600.00	for new building
Orange City II, Iowa .....	1,500.00	to pay notes due
Ontario, Calif. ....	1,000.00	for new church
Purewater, S. D. ....	400.00	to pay off debts
Sioux City, Iowa .....	800.00	to buy church building

We have urged all churches which have made loans in the past to make repayments to this fund of 5% each year.

calling their attention to the large discounts if all the money was paid back in 10 years, 15 years, etc., as decided by the Synod of 1930.

This fund could be of much greater benefit to the churches if all the congregations which have borrowed money would repay 5% each year. The assessment to the churches for this fund could also be greatly reduced if the borrowing churches would promptly repay their loans. We recommend that the assessment be 50c per family for the next two years.

Every congregation which has borrowed money from this fund should repay something each year. No interest is charged, and if the congregation cannot repay 5%, we urge it to pay what it can.

Permit us to call your attention to a loan of \$850 made to the congregation of Bradley, Mich., in 1924. This congregation was later disbanded and Classis Grand Rapids East sold the church building for \$667. The Classis repaid \$300 to the Church Help Fund and decided to use the balance (\$367) for home mission work. It seems to us that this is not right. The \$850 loan made to Bradley was for a church building, and when the building was sold the loan should be repaid first before using part of the money for other things. Kindly advise if you wish the balance which Bradley owes to be cancelled and stricken off our books.

Your Committee has appointed as its treasurer, Mr. J. J. Buiten. He has kept the books, conducted most of the correspondence, sent statements to delinquent churches, etc. His remuneration is \$75 per year. Mr. Buiten had the books audited by a public accountant at his own expense. We attach herewith a copy of his report.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Help Committee,

D. DE BEER.

H. J. VERMEER.

D. HOLLEBEEK.

**SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS**

**Church Help Committee of the Christian Reformed Church  
of America, January 1, 1932, to December 31, 1933**

Balance on hand January 1, 1932.....			\$ 2,421.12
RECEIPTS			
	1932	1933	COMBINED
Classical Collections .....	\$ 2,561.14	\$ 2,691.48	\$ 5,252.62
(see Schedule A)			
Repayments by Churches.....	1,306.75	2,589.20	3,895.95
(see Schedule B)			
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS.....</b>	<b>\$ 3,867.89</b>	<b>\$ 5,280.68</b>	<b>\$ 9,148.57</b>
<b>TOTAL BALANCE AND RECEIPTS</b>			<b>\$11,569.69</b>
<b>LESS:</b>			
New Loans Granted.....	\$ 5,700.00	\$ 4,300.00	\$10,000.00
(see Schedule B)			
			<u>\$ 1,569.69</u>
<b>LESS:</b>			
Administrative Expense .....			211.25
<b>Balance on hand December 31, 1933..</b>			<u>\$ 1,358.44</u>

SCHEDULE A

**CLASSICAL COLLECTIONS RECEIPTS**

**Church-Help Committee—Christian Reformed Church of America**

CLASSIS	1932	1933	TOTAL
California .....	\$ 47.63	\$ 63.56	\$ 111.19
Grand Rapids East.....	336.20	116.89	453.09
Grand Rapids West.....	239.96	198.51	438.47
Hackensack .....	160.54	275.79	436.33
Hudson .....	112.54	245.88	358.42
Holland .....	133.07	63.83	196.90
Illinois .....	349.05	439.30	788.35
Muskegon .....	469.11	443.22	912.33
Orange City .....	63.65	90.26	153.91
Ostfriesland .....	.00	7.00	7.00
Pacific .....	232.77	228.63	461.40
Pella .....	122.88	144.23	267.11
Sioux Center .....	105.28	132.20	237.48
Wisconsin .....	99.91	82.07	181.98
Zeeland .....	88.55	160.11	248.66
<b>TOTALS.....</b>	<b>\$ 2,561.14</b>	<b>\$ 2,691.48</b>	<b>\$ 5,252.62</b>

**SCHEDULE B  
LOANS STATEMENT**

**Church-Help Committee—Christian Reformed Church of America**

Church at	Amt. Owing 1/1/1932	Additional Loans	Paid in 1932	Paid in 1933	Amt. Owing 12/31/1933
Ada, Mich. -----	125.00	-----	-----	25.00	100.00
Aetna, Mich. -----	700.00	-----	25.00	12.86	662.14
Alameda, Calif. -----	2,750.00	-----	50.00	300.00	2,400.00
Alamosa, Colo. -----	550.00	-----	100.00	50.00	400.00
Arlene, Mich. -----	152.00	-----	15.00	10.00	127.00
Atwood, Mich. -----	541.50	900.00	31.50	30.00	1,380.00
Austinville, Ia. -----	525.00	-----	-----	35.00	490.00
Bauer, Mich. -----	650.00	-----	-----	25.00	625.00
Bellflower, Calif. -----	2,900.00	-----	55.00	155.00	2,690.00
Bigelow, Minn. -----	1,900.00	-----	-----	-----	1,900.00
Birnamwood, Wisc. -----	2,110.00	-----	-----	-----	2,110.00
Bradley, Mich. -----	850.00	-----	-----	300.00	550.00
Broton, Minn. -----	1,235.00	-----	-----	-----	1,235.00
Colton, S. Dak. -----	.00	1,000.00	-----	25.00	975.00
Chandler, Minn. -----	1,147.32	-----	6.40	-----	1,140.92
Chatham, Ont. -----	3,000.00	-----	-----	-----	3,000.00
Columbus, Mont. -----	575.00	-----	25.00	25.00	525.00
Conrad, Mont. -----	1,930.00	-----	85.00	25.00	1,820.00
Coopersville, Mich. -----	1,425.00	-----	-----	-----	1,425.00
Crookston Minn. -----	850.00	-----	45.00	55.00	750.00
Desplaines, Ill. -----	.00	1,000.00	-----	-----	1,000.00
DeMotte, Ind. -----	.00	1,000.00	-----	-----	1,000.00
Decatur, Mich. -----	3,500.00	-----	-----	-----	3,500.00
Detroit, Mich. -----	575.00	-----	50.00	50.00	475.00
Dutton, Mich. -----	425.00	-----	25.00	-----	400.00
East Martin, Mich. -----	1,273.00	-----	13.00	-----	1,260.00
East Muskegon, Mich. -----	3,800.00	-----	-----	-----	3,800.00
East Palmyra, N. Y. -----	102.64	-----	-----	-----	102.64
Ellsworth, Mich. -----	1,500.00	-----	100.00	100.00	1,300.00
Estelline, S. Dak. -----	1,897.75	525.00	-----	10.00	2,412.75
Fremont, Mich. II -----	170.00	-----	15.00	25.00	130.00
Goshen, Ind. -----	650.00	-----	50.00	50.00	550.00
G. R. East Leonard -----	6,025.00	-----	-----	-----	6,025.00
G. R. Godwin Hts -----	2,900.00	-----	-----	-----	2,900.00
G. R. Lee Street -----	1,700.00	-----	-----	-----	1,700.00
Hamilton, Ont. -----	3,000.00	-----	-----	-----	3,000.00
Hamshire, Texas -----	2,375.00	-----	-----	125.00	2,250.00
Hancock, Minn. -----	573.00	500.00	-----	-----	1,073.00
Hanford, Calif. -----	102.99	-----	-----	-----	102.99
Hawarden, Iowa -----	350.00	500.00	-----	-----	850.00
Hills, Minn. -----	165.00	-----	30.00	60.00	75.00
Holland, Iowa -----	1,515.00	-----	100.00	-----	1,415.00
Holland, Minn. -----	1,155.00	300.00	-----	15.00	1,440.00
Holland Center, S. D. -----	680.00	600.00	-----	40.00	1,240.00
Lansing, Ill. -----	900.00	-----	-----	25.00	875.00
Lark, N. Dak. -----	500.00	-----	-----	-----	500.00
Los Angeles, Calif. -----	2,040.00	-----	-----	-----	2,040.00
Lynden, Wash. II -----	2,500.00	-----	50.00	100.00	2,350.00
McBain, Mich. -----	1,267.00	-----	30.34	34.55	1,202.11

Church at	Amt. Owing 1/1/1932	Additional Loans	Paid in 1932	Paid in 1933	Amt. Owing 12/31/1933
Mountain Lake, Minn.	450.00	-----	-----	30.00	420.00
Muskegon Hts., Mich.	390.00	-----	-----	35.00	355.00
Neerlandia, Canada	5,095.00	-----	-----	-----	5,095.00
Noordeloos, Mich.	119.72	-----	52.56	5.75	61.41
North Blendon, Mich.	185.00	-----	-----	-----	185.00
Orange City, Ia. II	.00	1,500.00	-----	-----	1,500.00
Ocheyedan, Ia.	1,029.74	-----	-----	6.95	1,022.79
Ogilvie, Minn.	651.60	-----	36.60	30.00	585.00
Ontario, Calif.	.00	1,000.00	-----	-----	1,000.00
Oskaloosa, Iowa	202.81	-----	23.10	21.97	157.74
Portland, Mich.	875.00	-----	25.00	25.00	825.00
Purewater, S. Dak.	360.00	400.00	-----	20.00	740.00
Riverbend, Mich.	1,175.00	-----	-----	-----	1,175.00
Rock Rapids, Ia.	2,625.00	-----	-----	-----	2,625.00
Roseland, Ill. IV	3,135.00	-----	-----	25.00	3,110.00
Rudyard, Mich.	448.00	-----	-----	4.39	443.61
Sanborn, Iowa	205.00	-----	-----	14.57	190.43
Shepherd, Mont.	3,056.80	-----	-----	-----	3,056.80
Sibley, Iowa	1,545.50	-----	-----	50.00	1,495.50
Sioux Center, Ia. I	1,743.13	-----	-----	87.16	1,655.97
Sioux City, Ia.	.00	800.00	-----	40.00	760.00
Sioux Falls, S. Dak.	1,654.70	-----	45.00	-----	1,609.70
Sullivan, Mich.	250.00	-----	-----	100.00	150.00
Sultan, Wash.	1,050.00	-----	-----	-----	1,050.00
Tracy, Iowa	78.65	-----	-----	6.00	72.65
Vancouver, Can.	1,800.00	-----	50.00	25.00	1,725.00
Vona, Colo.	107.25	-----	25.00	-----	82.25
Waupun, Wisc.	900.00	-----	-----	300.00	600.00
West Branch, Mich.	1,004.13	-----	15.00	5.00	984.13
Winnepeg, Can.	365.00	-----	-----	-----	365.00
Worthington, Minn.	1,665.00	-----	83.25	-----	1,581.75
Wyoming Park, Mich.	1,129.51	-----	50.00	50.00	1,029.51
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$98,858.74</b>	<b>\$10,025.00</b>	<b>\$1,306.75</b>	<b>\$2,589.20</b>	<b>\$104,987.79</b>

## REPORT XXI.

### REPORT OF THE EMERITUS BOARD

*To the Synod of 1934:*

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

Your Board for the Emeritus Fund is now constituted as follows:

President: Rev. J. O. Vos; alternate, Rev. H. E. Oostendorp;

Vice-President: Mr. George D. Vander Werp;

Secretary-Treasurer: Mr. William K. Bareman; alternate, Mr. Edward Wieringa.

Mr. Henry Hekman, and Rev. J. O. Bouwsma; the last named was alternate for Rev. H. M. Vander Ploeg. Mr. Henry Hekman is the representative for the Van Agthoven Estate. As far as we know, we have no alternates for Mr. George Vander Werp and Mr. Henry Hekman.

The retiring members this year are William K. Bareman, Rev. J. O. Vos, while the Rev. H. M. Vander Ploeg, whose term would also have expired, passed on to his eternal reward. Therefore Synod will have to appoint three Board members with their alternates.

The following of the beneficiaries passed on to their eternal home: Rev. H. J. Heynen, Rev. A. W. Meyer, Rev. E. J. Tuuk, Rev. B. Zwaagman, Rev. D. Weidenaar, and Mrs. Helen Beld.

The following sent notice that they were no longer in need of support: Rev. P. Kosten, Rev. B. Vanden Brink, Mrs. Kett, Mrs. Lina Drukker, Mrs. E. J. Tuuk, Mrs. Dená Heyns (now Mrs. L. Berkhof), which we gratefully acknowledge.

Requests for aid came from: Classis Hudson for Rev. Timmerman and Mrs. W. Kuipers, \$800.00 each; Classis Pacific for Rev. M. Borduin and Rev. D. H. Muyskens, \$1,000 each; Classis Orange City for Rev. J. Gulker, \$900; Mrs. Schultz, \$200; Mrs. H. J. Heynen, \$600; Mrs. P. Van Vliet,

\$500; Mrs. A. W. Meyer, \$150. From Classis Pellà for Rev. J. J. Dyk, \$1,100. A number of Classes have asked for the same amount as last year, and others undoubtedly will do so.

We were not able to pay the full amount as was planned. In 1932 we could only pay 64%, and in 1933 only 56%. What does our God say to our Church with such conditions?

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

<b>For 1932</b>		<b>For 1933</b>	
Balance of 1931.....	\$ 151.34	Balance of 1932.....	\$ 808.35
Receipts .....	29,786.54	Amount Impounded.....	565.11
	<u>\$29,937.88</u>	Available Balance.....	\$ 243.24
Disbursements .....	29,129.53	Receipts .....	26,580.47
Balance .....	\$ 808.35		<u>\$26,823.71</u>
		Van Agthoven Legacy	5,000.00
			<u>\$31,823.71</u>
		Disbursements .....	30,406.58
		Balance .....	\$ 1,417.13

The books of the Treasurer were audited and found correct.

The following Classes were in arrears January 1, 1934, as follows:

California .....	\$ 1,215.84
Grand Rapids East.....	7,014.58
Grand Rapids West.....	11,796.72
Hackensack .....	201.86
Holland .....	3,433.90
Hudson .....	1,670.89
Illinois .....	4,422.85
Muskegon .....	4,566.44
Orange City .....	7,395.92
Ostfriesland .....	3,211.33
Pacific .....	1,527.00
Pella .....	1,668.00
Sioux Center .....	7,461.70
Wisconsin .....	2,023.32
Zeeland .....	5,257.43

Total Arrears.....\$62,867.78

Respectfully submitted,

W. K. BAREMAN, *Treas.*

Zeeland, Michigan.

## REPORT XXII.

### REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

*To the Synod of 1934.*

ESTEEMED BRETHREN :

The Committee on Divorce herewith submits its report to your honorable body.

#### A. BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW

At the Synod of 1914 two divorce matters asked the attention of that body. First, an overture from Classis Muskegon, reading as follows:

“De Classis vraagt het oordeel der Synode aangaande eene vrouw die gescheiden werd van haren man, wegens ‘Extreme Cruelty,’ en later, nadat haar eerste man gehuwd was, weer trouwde, of zij toegelaten kan worden als lid der kerk.”<sup>1)</sup>

The Synod decided:

“Dat wij ons nu over dit concreet geval niet uitspreken, doch eene Commissie benoemen die de volgende Synode inzake deze materie met rapport diene.”

At the same Synod the consistory of Alpine Ave., after Classis G. R. West had refused to lend classical support to its viewpoint, requested Synod to revise or modify the stand of the Church

“Op zulk eene wijze dat zulke echtbrekers (parties illegitimately divorced and then remarried) na verkregen genade, ook zelfs met behoud van een tweede huwelijk door den Staat, toch wederom in de kerk eervol hersteld kunnen worden.”<sup>2)</sup>

The Synod decided:

“Aangezien reeds eene Commissie benoemd is om deze materie verder te onderzoeken, om op de volgende Synode te rapporteeren, gaat de Synode thans niet verder op deze zaak in. Intuschen stelt de Commissie van Praeadvies haar voorstel in handen der pasgenoemde Commissie.”

At the Synod of 1916 two reports were rendered by the committee appointed by the Synod of 1914. All the mem-

<sup>1)</sup> Acta 1914, p. 38, Art. 51.

<sup>2)</sup> Acta 1914, p. 73, Art. 68, I.

bers of the committee were agreed that their task was not to critically examine the standpoint of the Church that there is only one Biblical ground for divorce, but to answer the question:

“Of het kerkelijk standpunt, dat alleen de grond in Matth. 5:32 genoemd een wettige grond voor echtscheiding is alle mogelijkheid van toelating tot de kerkelijke gemeenschap uitsluit voor hen die op andere gronden echtscheiding verkregen en daarna een nieuw huwelijk aangegaan hebben; dan wel of zij toch op zekere voorwaarden, en dan welke voorwaarden, in het kerkelijk lidmaatschap kunnen deelen?”

Three members of the committee answered this question without hesitation in the affirmative. If such parties sincerely repent of their sins of un-Biblical divorce and illegitimate second marriage, they can again be received into the Church. The other three members of the committee took the position that the marital relations of the second marriage must be held to be a constant living in adultery, and that parties to such a marriage can be given the rights of membership only on condition that they abstain from all marital relations, until the tie of the first marriage is severed by death.

The Synod accepted neither report, but:

“Na breede discussie over deze zaak der Echtscheiding, en nadat de conclusie der in het Agendum gedrukte rapporten beide zijn afgestemd, wordt het volgende door de Synode aanvaard:

“De Synode, lettende op de zoo uiteenlopende conclusies der rapporten over de echtscheiding en het blijkbaar niet rijp zijn der vergadering om thans tot beslissing te komen, besluit om voor het tegenwoordige de zaak in *status quo* te laten, maar om middelerwijl door de Synodale Commissie het advies in te winnen der Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland en Zuid-Afrika.”<sup>1)</sup>

The Synod of the Netherlands appointed a large committee of very able men to consider this question. At the Synod of Utrecht, 1923, this committee reported. And at our Synod of 1924, it was decided not to decide on the question at once, but to appoint a committee that should thoroughly study the report from the Netherlands and South Africa, as also the material already given by our own men, and to report at the next Synod. This Committee was also charged with the duty to give advice with reference to the question

<sup>1)</sup> Acta 1916, p. 51, Art. 44, V.

put by the South African brethren.<sup>1)</sup> The committee appointed consisted of the brethren Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor, Prof. S. Volbeda, and Rev. H. J. Kuiper.

At the Synod of 1926 this Committee reported that, in its opinion, our Church would do well to postpone final and complete consideration of this matter, until the Netherlands Synod had taken a definite stand also on the question of one or more Biblical grounds for divorce. The Committee also asked that two more members be added to the Committee, especially in view of criticism that the Committee as then constituted, was not unbiased.<sup>2)</sup>

The Synod decided that it was not necessary to wait as the Committee proposed, since we had received a very complete answer to the particular question we had put to the Netherlands Synod. Two more members, Dr. H. Meeter and Rev. G. Hoeksema, were added to the Committee. And it was decided officially to thank the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands for the thorough and scholarly advice given us.<sup>3)</sup>

At the Synod of 1928, the Committee reported that it had not yet completed its task, largely for the reason that considerable time was devoted to the question whether divorce in the absolute sense could be justified on any ground.<sup>4)</sup>

The Synod expressed its regret that the Committee was not yet ready to report; urged the Committee to limit itself to the "practische kwestie naar aanleiding waarvan zij benoemd werd," and to do everything in its power that the Synod of 1930 might be able to decide definitely in this matter.<sup>5)</sup>

This Synod also excused three members of the Committee, Dr. S. Volbeda, Dr. H. Meeter, and Rev. H. J. Kuiper, and added three new members, Prof. D. H. Kromminga, Rev. H. Keegstra, and Rev. W. P. Van Wyk.

This Committee submitted a definite report to the Synod

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1) Acta 1924, p. 90, (a) and (b).

2) Agendum, 1926, p. 183.

3) Acta 1926, p. 54, a, b, c.

4) Agendum, Part I, p. 127.

5) Acta 1928, p. 134, (b).

of 1930. However, the Synod once more referred the question to the Committee for further study, chiefly with a view to a fuller exegetical consideration of the Scriptural passages that touch upon this problem.

Prof. L. Berkhof and Prof. H. Schultze were added to the committee. This enlarged committee reported to the Synod of 1932. It concluded its lengthy report with the following advice: "Persons divorced on non-biblical grounds and remarried can enjoy the full rights and privileges of membership in the Church of Christ if they sincerely repent of and confess their sins. The sin of unbiblical divorce must be confessed by the guilty party or parties. The first party that remarries must confess his (her) adulterous act of contracting a second marriage."

Synod of 1932 was not ready, however, to take definite and final action in this matter. It neither accepted nor rejected the above advice but decided to reappoint the synodical committee of 1930 with the charge, (1) to present Synod of 1934 with a fuller exegetical study of the passages already considered and any other passages which in the estimation of said committee may have bearing on the divorce problem still before us; (2) furthermore, that the synodical committee on divorce also include in its proposed report to Synod of 1934 a study on the question: to what extent should the Church of Christ attribute validity to unbiblical divorces granted by the state?"

We have endeavored faithfully to carry out the first part of our task. A much fuller exegetical study constitutes the body of our report. In regard to point (2) we remark that we do not include in our report a separate study on the question there referred to. Such a study might lead us far afield. It would perhaps lead to more controversy, and such a thorough study of this question is not necessary for the solution of our present divorce problem. However, certain implications regarding the question to what extent the Church should attribute validity to unbiblical divorces granted by the State are necessarily found throughout our report.

Synod also suggested to our committee "that it embody in its report to Synod of 1934 those parts of the report of

the committee of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands which have bearing on the question as we submitted it to these churches in 1916." There would seem to be some misunderstanding here. To our mind we have already done the very thing we are here asked to do (see Agenda 1932, pp. 109-110). There can be no ground for the statement of the pre-advisory committee of 1932: "this valuable report has never been made available for our people", unless the meaning is that this whole report should be printed in our Agenda. Your committee feels that this would be unjustifiable expense. However, we shall endeavor to have available at the Synod a number of copies of this lengthy report, so that none can possibly feel that all necessary information is not at hand.

Synod also added Dr. C. Bouma to our committee. In this connection we also regret to acquaint Synod with the decision of Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor not to participate actively in our work because of ill-health. The Committee appointed Prof. L. Berkhof to serve as chairman in Prof. Ten Hoor's stead. Your Committee also informs Synod that it has given due consideration to the various overtures placed in our hands (Acts 1932, pp. 154-156). Synod of 1932 also decided to refer back to our Committee the South African question, "requesting it to offer a fuller exegetical and historical study of the question to the Synod of 1934."

Our report, therefore, consists of two parts, the first dealing with the question of admission or readmission to church membership of illegitimately divorced and remarried parties; the second dealing with the South African Question.

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## I.

### A. THE COMMITTEE'S CONCEPTION OF ITS TASK

Before stating in positive terms what our task is, as we conceive it, it may be well to state what we do not conceive our task to be. First, we do not consider it our charge to give advice merely with respect to two concrete cases (see above) that led to the appointment of the original Committee by the Synod of 1914. The language used by the Synod in the appointment of the Committee plainly implies that it

desired advice, not so much regarding to the two concrete cases as such, but with respect to the *general question* involved in both cases. This general question is the ecclesiastical status of parties divorced on non-Biblical grounds and then remarried, also in case they repent of their sins and desire the rights and fellowship of church-membership.

The original Committee, in its report to the Synod of 1916, also conceived of its task in these general terms, as we have shown in our historical review. The Committee appointed by the Netherlands Churches also clearly understood the question put by us as being a *general question*, as is evident from the following quotation:

“Op de Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland die in 1917 te Rotterdam gehouden is, was een verzoek ingekomen van de Synode der Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Noord-Amerika om advies inzake de uitoefening van de tucht na *ongeoorloofde echtscheiding* en daarop gevolgd nieuw huwelijk.”

(Rapporten, Synode van Utrecht, p. 1.)

Secondly, we do not consider it to be part of our task to reëxamine the correctness of the official standpoint of our Church that adultery is the only Biblical ground for divorce. To begin with, no “gravamen” or official objection has been entered against this position. Even the consistory of Alpine Avenue, in its request to Synod of 1914, enters its objections not so much against the stand of the Church as such, but rather against the *application* of that standpoint in such a way that illegitimately divorced and remarried parties cannot be given the privileges of membership.

Moreover, the last Synod urged our Committee to limit itself to the practical question,<sup>1)</sup> and the Synod of 1926 asked of the Committee to come with definite advice, and as soon as possible, regarding the question of the ecclesiastical status of illegitimately divorced and remarried parties, rather than to postpone its report till the Netherlands Synod had acted on the question of one or more grounds.<sup>2)</sup>

Finally, though the question of one or more grounds for divorce and the aforesaid practical question are from the very nature of the case interrelated, they can nevertheless

<sup>1)</sup> Acta 1928, p. 134, (b).

<sup>2)</sup> Acta 1926, p. 54, (b).

very well be considered separately. For, whether a particular Church takes the position, as does our Church, that there is only one Biblical ground for divorce, or adds other grounds, or holds that there is no Biblical ground at all for divorce, the question always remains for each Church on its own standpoint: can those who are divorced on grounds which the Church does not recognize as Biblical, and who are then remarried (to other parties, namely) be given the rights and fellowship of membership in the Church, and if so, on what conditions?

The Committee therefore conceives its task to be, to give advice to Synod on the following question: Can parties who were divorced on grounds our Church does not recognize as Biblical (or, in other words, on grounds other than adultery) and who marry again (with other parties, namely) be given the rights and fellowship of membership in our Church, and if so, on what conditions?

#### B. THE ANSWER OF THE NETHERLANDS CHURCHES

The answer of the Netherlands Churches is contained in the report of their Committee submitted to the Synod of Utrecht in 1923. It should be remarked here that this report deals not only with the question our Synod submitted, but also, yea especially, with the question of one or more Biblical grounds for divorce. And in the answer received from the Netherlands is included the official information to our Church that the Synod of the Netherlands Churches leaves the question of one or more grounds "onbeslist" for the present. But on the question our Church submitted, the question of the ecclesiastical status of illegitimately divorced and remarried parties in case they repent, there seems to be no difference whatsoever. The Committee was unanimous in its opinion that such parties could be given the rights and fellowship of church-membership if they repent of the sins of un-Biblical divorce and illegitimate second marriage. And the Synod seems to have adopted this part of the advice of its Committee without question.

We quote from the official Acts of the Synod of Utrecht, 1923, Art. 91, p. 88, where we are told that the Synod

adopted the following two points of advice of the Committee of "prae-advies":

"1. Uit te spreken, dat zè zich vereenigt met de conclusies van het rapport omtrent de vragen: welke roeping de Overheid ten opzichte van de echtscheiding heeft, hoe de Kerk ten opzichte van het scheidingsrecht der Overheid zich heeft te verhouden; en welke tucht de Kerk heeft te oefenen, wanneer haar leden op eene naar het oordeel der Kerk ongeoorloofde wijze echtscheiding aanvragen en tot een nieuw huwelijk overgaan.

"2. De genoemde conclusies van het rapport als advies der Synode te zenden naar de Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Noord Amerika, met bijvoeging van het rapport, opdat deze Kerk ook de gronden zou leeren kennen waarop dit Advies rust; en tevens aan genoemde Kerk mede te deelen, dat de Synode onbeslist laat of ook op grond van kwaadwillige verlating echtscheiding geoorloofd is . . . "

We herewith present a few quotations from the report of the Netherlands Committee that touch directly on the question before us. The Committee itself gives the following resumé of its position:

"1. Dat de Kerk zeer zeker geroepen is om, wanneer leden der gemeente op ongeoorloofde wijze of onder leugenachtige voorwendzelen echtscheiding verkrijgen, en evenzoo wanneer zij daarna tot een nieuw huwelijk overgaan, tucht tegen hen te oefenen.

"2. Maar dat, wanneer na het begaan van deze zonde berouw wordt betoond en de schuldigen tot de gemeenschap der Kerk willen terugkeeren, de Kerk — gelijk dit bij elke zonde het geval is — alleen als eisch kan stellen dat de zonde beleden en berouw over deze zondige daad getoond worde;

"3. Dat er dan alleen reden zou wezen voor de Kerk om aan de oprechtheid van zulk een berouw te twifelen, wanneer dezelfde zonde van lichtvaardige echtscheiding en hertrouw daarna herhaald werd." <sup>1)</sup>

We also quote from the more general resumé of its position, as given by the Committee on p. 32:

"4. Dat, wanneer na zulk een volgens de Kerk ongeoorloofde echtscheiding, de Overheid een nieuw huwelijk toestaat, de Kerk zulk een huwelijk als een zondige daad heeft te veroordeelen, en daartoe op geenerlei wijze hare medewerking heeft te verleenen.

"5. Maar dat de eisch dat de aldus gehuwden zich dan van elke huwelijksgemeenschap hebben te onthouden, in de Schrift geen genoegzame grond vindt, aan de conscientien een te zwaren last zou opleggen, en de deur zou openzetten voor andere en nog veel ergere zonden."

We feel constrained to add one more quotation, found on p. 31 — a passage which in our opinion is fully as funda-

<sup>1)</sup> Rapporten, Synode van Utrecht, p. 34.

mental to the problem we are considering as anything said by the Committee in its own resumé's quoted above:

“Hieromtrent nu merken deputaten in de derde plaats op, dat Christus wel het aangaan van zulk een huwelijk als een daad van overspel veroordeelt, maar dat deze daad van overspel zelf, naar Christus' eigen woord, den band van het vroegere huwelijk verbreekt. . . . De daad van overspel door het aangaan van dit tweede huwelijk begaan, valideert dus achteraf de door de Overheid uitgesproken echtscheiding.”

### C. THE ANSWER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CHURCHES

Your Committee has no information to the effect that the South African Churches have submitted to our Synod an official answer to our question. However, we do have some unofficial material regarding the answer of the South African committee to the question we submitted, an answer included in a report of said committee to their Synod. We herewith submit a copy of a portion of this report, translated and incorporated in an editorial by Dr. H. Beets in *The Banner* of September 24, 1922.

#### “South African Report on the Divorce Problem

“The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America requested our Church to furnish advice regarding the exercise of Christian discipline after illegal divorce, followed by a new marriage. First of all it should be defined what kind of divorce is permissible and which is not permissible. Regarding this your committee wishes to express itself as agreeing entirely with the standpoint taken by the Christian Reformed Church in North America and by Prof. Ridderbos in the Netherlands, viz., that only the ground named in Matt. 5:32 is a legal ground for divorce for a Christian. Your committee therefore differs from those of the brethren in Holland who desire to recognize malicious desertion as an additional ground for divorce. The committee judges that the words of Christ are to be taken in a limited sense such as not alone is shown by the expression ‘fornication,’ but also by the clause: ‘Whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.’ This expression can refer only to a woman which has been forsaken on no other grounds than adultery. In the eye of Christ such putting away is no dissolution of the marriage tie before God, consequently He says that a man who marries such a woman commits fornication. Now, it is true that in Matt. 5:32, taken strictly literal, mention is made only of a woman who has been put away and not one who has been maliciously deserted by her husband, but at bottom this means the same thing, for the essence of malicious desertion must be sought herein that there is an obdurate refusal to live together. Concerning the other text which is used in this connection, viz., I Cor. 7:15, your committee is of the opinion, following most of the newer exegetes, that we must depart from the

traditional exegesis, viz., that in this case malicious desertion on account of difference in religion is named as a ground for divorce, and that according to analogy malicious desertion on account of other reasons may be tolerated. The above named exegesis seems to be natural because Paul shortly before, in verse 10, appeals to the command of Jesus, a command which certainly is the equal of what is written in the gospels. Compare especially Mark 10:4-12 and Luke 16:18. Also in the case of mixed marriages Paul accordingly forbids a Christian party to separate on account of differences in religious views, verses 12 and 13.

"That more recent exegetes in general have come to a more correct conception of Paul's words, your committee explains with Prof. Ridderbos from the fact that at the present the tie between Church and State is no longer so obnoxiously close (knellend) as formerly, so that exegetes are not forced to find in I Cor. 7:15 and similar texts rules for marriage legislation.

"Concerning the traditional conception of I Cor. 7:14, also favored by Calvin in so far as he considers the special case of desertion on account of religious hatred a legal ground for divorce for a Christian, your committee desires to remark that such a case can occur only in a missionary congregation (zendings-gemeente); possibly also when one of the married parties who formerly lived away from God and His command came to conversion, as the brethren in the Netherlands remarked in their report. But in no case did your committee feel at liberty to deduce from that text that malicious desertion for any other cause than religious difference should be a legal ground for divorce, and that is the point especially at issue in practical life.

"In order to do justice to Calvin we should also point out that he expresses himself with great carefulness, even if he accepts in part the traditional exegesis. In the first place the ground for divorce in his view is not considered to be that of desertion as such. He gives as his reason that the one who forsakes his partner of life separates himself from God more than from man. In the second place, Calvin says very carefully about the application of Paul's words: 'Although some think at the present that we have nearly the same cause to separate from Papists, but we should nevertheless carefully note the difference in this case so that we do nothing light-heartedly.'

"In view of this all it is the safest to reach the conclusion on the ground of verse 11, that the divorced one, also in the case of radical religious difference, must remain unmarried.

"In regard to the question how the Church is to exercise discipline with reference to those who marry a second time after illegal divorce, the committee is of the opinion, first, that in such cases discipline must be exercised. The consistory must herein judge about each case separately. In cases concerning which in the Christian Church there is so much difference of opinion, such, as for example, divorce on the ground of malicious desertion, the consistory will do well to reckon with this difference of opinion.

"Secondly, when after illegal divorce as well as in the case of a new marriage following, the guilty persons confess their sins, then the Church must again receive them into its communion when the sins have been confessed and repentance has been shown.

"Thirdly, that the uprightness of such repentance must not consist in this, that the new marriage be annulled, which would be fornication anew, but herein that sorrow is felt on account of the sinful step which has been taken. Doubt concerning repentance may be en-

tertained only when there is persistence in the sin of light-hearted divorce and repeated marriage.

"Herewith your committee considers its task to be discharged, and it closes with the remark that it is the calling of the Church to above all exhort its members to reconciliation so that even in the case of fornication a separation need not take place, but reconciliation, for, says Calvin aright: 'The desire for divorce is foreign to our confession'."

## D. THE ANSWER OF THE COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY SYNOD OF 1932

### I. Exegetical Study

In the institution of marriage God provided for the merging of two lives into one. It requires that a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and it effects such a close union between the two that they can be called one flesh. The relation thus established is evidently closer than that between parents and children and is intended to supersede it. While it does not sever the bonds of love between parents and children, it does terminate their communal life in the parental home and sets up a new social center with a new community of interests. The union thus established finds strong expression in the words: "they two shall be one flesh." It is not merely a physical union, as the words might seem to indicate, but a union of two persons, and therefore both psychical and physical; a union as close as that of the members of a single physical organism, and therefore in its very nature indissoluble. It is a union for life with permanently binding mutual duties and privileges. The fact that God brings man and wife together gives the marriage tie a sacred character and renders it inviolable. Man has no right to break it. Normally, it can be broken only by death. But while it is true that man may not break it, this does not mean that he cannot and does not, as a matter of fact, sometimes break it. He does, but in doing this, he goes contrary to the divine ordinance and violates a divine institution.

The entrance of sin into the world gave rise to the evil of divorce. There is no allusion to this evil in the book of Genesis, though it was evidently practised by the Israelites soon after the exodus. They may have learned this in Egypt. At first men evidently put away their wives with-

out any formality whatsoever. The Mosaic law did not prohibit divorce altogether, but regulated the evil in a way that would tend to put a check on it. The regulation found in Deut. 24:1-4 proceeds on the assumption that a man may put away his wife, if he finds some "unseemly thing" in her. Opinions differ very much as to the meaning of the expression "unseemly thing." In the days of Jesus some adopted the strict interpretation of Shammai to the effect that it denoted adultery, while others accepted the lax interpretation of Hillel, according to whom it indicated things that did not please the husband, even those of a very trivial character. The expression certainly does not refer to adultery, for the law explicitly requires that an adulterous wife and her paramour be put to death, Deut. 22:23, 24. Moreover, the statement of Jesus in Matt. 19:8, 9 clearly implies that He does not recognize the permission of the Mosaic law as a permanent validity, but in distinction from this law regards adultery as the only valid cause for divorce.

The passage in Deuteronomy does not contain a law of divorce; there is no such law in the Old Testament. It merely serves to regulate and restrict an existing custom and contains the following restrictions: (1) If a man wants to send his wife away for some unseemly thing, he must write her a bill of divorcement, and not simply send her away by word of mouth, as was customary in those days. The formality thus required made the divorce a somewhat public matter. Some third party had to be called in to draw up the bill of divorcement, and this, according to the rabbis, had to be handed to the woman in the presence of two witnesses. The necessity of such a formality would naturally tend to make the man reflect before taking definite action. (2) If a woman, after being sent away, married another husband and he died, her former husband could not take her again as his wife. The reason for this is given in the words: "after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah." This expression evidently does not refer to the ordinary defilement connected with co-habitation, for this could be purified by washing or bathing in the evening. It in all probability denotes that a divorced woman defiles herself by re-marriage and thus

detracts from her feminine purity. The more honorable course was that she should remain single, and thus leave the possibility of a reunion open. Notice that women are said to be similarly defiled by adultery, Lev. 18:20; Numb. 5:13. May it not be that the expression is used in Deut. 24:4, because the re-marriage of the divorced woman is regarded as a species of adultery? Keil so regards it, and says that this regulation paved the way for the teaching of Jesus in Matt. 5:32: “. . . and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery.” The second marriage of the divorced woman made the restoration of the original marriage tie impossible. This is even called an abomination by which the land would be caused to sin. (3) There were cases in which a man could not divorce his wife, and these are mentioned in chapter 22: (a) If he had falsely accused her of not being a virgin when he married her, Deut. 22:12-19; and (b) if he had lain with her before marriage and was thus compelled to marry her, Deut. 22:28, 29. These restrictions served to protect the woman against unjust discriminations.

While the law permitted the evil custom of divorce to continue, but regulated it and thereby sought to restrict it, the prophets gradually led Israel up to higher ground. When after the exile the evil became more prevalent, and many an Israelite dealt treacherously by putting away the wife of his youth, Malachi took them to task for their unfaithfulness. He finally makes the following unconditional statement: “Let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate putting away, saith Jehovah, the God of Israel,” Mal. 2:15, 16. The wife of one’s youth is the wife of one’s covenant, and to put her away is to deal treacherously with her. The prophet clearly regards the marriage tie as an indissoluble tie. This position leads on to that of Jesus in the Gospels.

The Gospels contain four passages pertaining to the matter of divorce and re-marriage after divorce, namely, Matt. 5:32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18. We start the discussion of these passages with Matt. 19:3-9 and Mark 10:2-12, which introduce the statements of our Lord in a definite historical setting. The controversy that was raging

during the earthly ministry of Jesus between the followers of Hillel and those of Shammai gave rise to the question of the Pharisees: "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" In answer to this question Jesus calls attention to the original institution of marriage. God brings man and wife together and ordains that the two become one flesh, and what God has joined together, man may not put asunder. He thereby declares that marriage is in its essential nature indissoluble. Normally the tie cannot be broken. The Pharisees then call attention to the command of Moses that the man in putting his wife away should write her a bill of divorcement. In replying to this Jesus says that Moses permitted men because of the hardness of their heart to put away their wives, but that this was not in harmony with the original institution. According to Matthew He follows this up at once with the words: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

The passage in Mark is slightly different and was probably uttered on another occasion. According to the evangelist the disciples asked Jesus again of the matter when they were in the house. And then He said: "Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another she committeth adultery." This passage differs from that in Matthew in some respects: (1) It was occasioned by a question of the disciples; (2) it leaves out all indication of the exception to which Jesus refers in Matthew; and (3) it clearly brings out that the prohibition to put away one's mate applies to the woman as well as to the man.

The statement in Luke agrees on the whole with that in Matthew 19, though there is no indication of the exception mentioned in Matthew. The passage reads as follows: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery."

Finally, there is another statement of the matter in Matt. 5:32 which again differs slightly from the others: "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." Here the exception is mentioned, and we are told that a man who puts away his wife makes her an adulteress. The last expression in all probability means that a man by putting away his wife for any other cause than fornication exposes her to the temptation of marrying someone else, while the original tie still exists and of thus committing adultery.

It is quite evident that the position taken by Jesus in all these statements is that the marriage tie is in its very nature an indissoluble tie, and therefore cannot normally be broken. In Matt. 19 and Mark 10 He appeals to the original institution of marriage, according to which God brings man and wife together and declares the two to be one flesh, thus establishing a union which man may not dissolve. From the beginning it was not so that man might put away his wife (Mark 10:2 ff.), much less so that he might put her away for every cause (Matt. 19:3 ff.). His statements in Mark 10:11, 12 and Luke 16:18 clearly proceed on the assumption that a man by putting away his wife or a wife by putting away her husband does not annul or dissolve the marriage tie. The union remains intact in spite of such action on the part of husband or wife. And if either one of them marries, he or she commits an act of adultery just as surely as a married man or woman who, while still living with his or her mate, is guilty of fornication. The man who puts away his wife makes her an adulteress, Matt. 5:32, since this act, permitted by Mosaic law, "because of the hardness or their hearts," carried with it the further permission of re-marriage. He also deprives her of her means of support and thus exposes her to the danger of marrying someone else and thus actually becoming an adulteress. Moreover, the person who marries a woman thus put away also becomes an adulterer. All these statements of Jesus proceed on the assumption that the original tie still remains intact.

According to the statements of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew, there is an exception to the rule, however. The entrance of sin into the world gives rise to abnormal conditions also in the marriage relation. There may be a vio-

lation of the marital union so fundamental as to afford a sufficient ground for divorce. The Saviour does not expressly assert, but in what He says clearly implies, that a man may divorce his wife on account of fornication (PORNEIA), illicit intercourse. While there is in some cases a distinction between fornication and adultery (MOICHEIA), yet the fornication of a married person is always adultery. In this sin and in this sin only Jesus finds a sufficient cause for divorce. It is quite evident that the exception must be connected with the whole statement. A man may not put away his wife, except for fornication or adultery. If he does the marriage tie still remains binding, and then it follows: (1) that he commits adultery, if he marries another; (2) that his wife commits adultery, if she marries another; and (3) that the persons who marry them also commit adultery. He may put away his wife, however, for fornication and thus dissolve the original tie, though it be in an abnormal way. But if he does this, he destroys the former compact, so that this ceases to be binding not only for him but also for his unfaithful spouse. The natural conclusion would seem to be: (1) that he can marry another without committing adultery; (2) that his former wife can marry another without being guilty of adultery; and (3) that others can marry either one of the original parties without the sin of adultery. These are conclusions, of course; nevertheless conclusions that, in our opinion, are natural and justified.

But now the question arises, what effect it has on the original marriage tie when one of the parties to an illegitimate divorce marries another. Does the original union still remain binding in such a case or does it not? Has the adultery thus practised destroyed the former marriage or has it not? It can hardly be maintained that adultery necessarily terminates the marriage relationship, though it furnishes a legitimate ground for divorce. It should be noted, however, that according to the law of Moses a divorced woman, who defiled herself by marrying another, could not be reclaimed by her former husband. The restoration of the original union was entirely out of the question. In that case therefore the divorce plus a second marriage (which

evidently was in some sense an illegitimate marriage) effectively terminated the original marital relation. Now the statements of Jesus clearly imply that an illegitimate divorce does not terminate the marriage relation. The parties divorced for any other cause than fornication are still man and wife, and neither one of them can marry, nor can anyone marry either one of them, without committing adultery. They do not imply, however, that the marriage of either one of them would automatically terminate the original marriage relation. This might be the case, if they intimated in any way that fornication had such an effect on the original union. But they merely suggest that a man may put away his wife for the cause of fornication, and fornication on the part of a married person is always adultery. However, they naturally imply that if any one of the parties to an illegitimate divorce enters upon a second marriage, and thus commits adultery, he or she thereby furnishes the other party with what would be a legitimate cause for divorce. The question, whether this ground can be adduced to legitimate in some way the divorce which is already an accomplished fact, as the Netherlands committee holds, cannot be settled by exegesis, since the text contains no indications bearing on this point. In our opinion, the practical question that arises is of a somewhat different nature, namely, whether the *separated state* of the parties illegitimately divorced can henceforth be recognized as legitimate by and in the sphere of the Christian Church. The natural inference would be, *yes*. In other words, the one party is now free before the Church of the party that has re-married.

It has been argued from Matt. 19:9 that even after a man has put away his wife for some other cause than adultery and has married another, thus committing adultery, his wife still remains his wife, since Jesus says: "and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." This means that even the second marriage of the man does not destroy the first union. But the correctness of this interpretation may well be doubted. Jesus simply says that, if a man puts away his wife for some other cause than fornication, two things follow: (1) if the man re-marries,

he commits adultery; and (2) if someone marries the woman, he also commits adultery. The condition on which these two assertions depend is simply that the man has put away his wife for some other cause than fornication. His re-marriage does not form part of the condition on which the second assertion depends. The following considerations would seem to argue in favor of this position: (1) if the other position be taken, the condition is not the same in both cases; there is a difference without any apparent reason. In the case of the man the previous re-marriage of the woman is not presupposed, while in the case of the woman the previous re-marriage of the man is presupposed; (2) the conclusion in the second assertion does not in any way depend on the preceding re-marriage of the man. If the man has put away his wife for some other cause than fornication, then the one who re-marries her that is put away commits adultery, merely on the ground of illegitimate divorce. (3) That the illegitimate putting away is the only condition which Jesus had in mind, is also evident from the fact that He mentions this and this only in the second assertion: "and he that marrieth her *when she is put away* (He does not add: *and her husband has re-married*), committeth adultery." (4) in Matt. 5:32 Jesus makes no mention whatever of the husband's re-marrying, while he does say, just as in chapter 19:9, "and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." Here it is quite evident that the re-marriage of the man does not form a link in the chain which He has in mind. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the objection under consideration proceeds on the assumption of the contention that adultery *ipso facto* destroys the marriage tie, which is not the position taken in the preceding.

The question may be raised whether the rebuke which John the Baptist administered to Herod for continuing his marital relation with Herodias does not prove that even re-marriage of one of the parties to an illegitimate divorce does not destroy the original union, Matt. 14:4. Here again it is necessary to call attention to the fact that it is not assumed that re-marriage does automatically sever the exist-

ing tie, though this was the case under Mosaic law. It may be thought, however, that this case clearly proves that John does not proceed on the assumption that re-marriage after an illegitimate divorce legitimates the unlawful divorce. But it is quite evident that the real point which John had in mind was not that Herodias was still the wife of another, but that she was the wife of Herod's brother. According to Mark 6:18 John said to Herod: "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Such a marriage as that of Herod was contrary to Mosaic law, more particularly to the regulations found in Lev. 18:16; 20:21.

Romans 7:1-4 might conceivably be quoted to prove that the marriage tie can be dissolved only by death, and that, if a woman marries another man during the life-time of her husband, she becomes an adulteress. It is only after her husband dies that she can marry another without becoming guilty of adultery. But if this is really the positive teaching of Paul, then his view of the indissolubility of marriage is stricter than that of Jesus, since he does not even allow of the exception mentioned by the latter. But the apostle does not in this passage lay down a rule of marriage and divorce. He simply uses the marriage relation and its natural termination by death to illustrate the transition of the Jews from their natural condition in which they were under the law to that of Christians who are members of the body of Christ. And he found this in the case of a widow who after the death of her husband was at liberty to marry another man. Just as death made the woman free from the law of the husband, so death to the law sets believers free from the law and gives them the liberty to join another, namely, Christ. It was foreign to Paul's purpose to inquire whether a woman might during the life of her husband be released from the marriage tie by an exceptional permission extending only to a certain class of cases. There is no reason whatever to think that Paul would not allow of the exception stated by Jesus.

Neither does Paul's admonition in I Cor. 7:10, 11 conflict with the statements of Jesus. We read there: "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." The apostle is simply stating the ideal in this passage. The ideal is that husband and wife do not separate, and that if they do separate, they remain unmarried or else be reconciled. It might be said by some that Paul would regard this as the ideal even if adultery had been committed by one of the parties. Perhaps he would, but even that does not prove that he would not permit divorce in such cases.

## 2. The Practical Question Before Us

We now turn to the practical question in the solution of which this exegetical study must guide us. It is as follows: Can parties who were divorced on grounds our Church does not recognize as biblical (or, in other words, on grounds other than adultery) and who marry again (with other parties, namely) be given the rights and fellowship of membership in our Church and, if so, on what conditions?

We call attention to the fact that we are dealing here with two questions. The first is: Can such parties be admitted? Is this possible and permissible? If not, the second question (on what conditions they can be admitted) is automatically eliminated. On the other hand, if illegitimately divorced and remarried parties can be admitted, the question still remains: on what conditions?

The first question is in our opinion easily answered. On basis of Scripture the position would seem to be incontrovertible that any truly penitent sinner who believes in the Lord Jesus Christ not only can, but must, be admitted into the Church. Throughout the New Testament repenting and believing are the only conditions of church membership. A particular denomination may and must, of course, demand agreement with its particular standards and rules. But we presuppose such agreement on the part of anyone seeking admission into our Chr. Ref. Church. And aside from this denominational requirement, there are no other conditions for church membership. No sinner is excluded from the church merely because of his sin and regardless of his attitude of penitence or impenitence. As Prof. W. Heyns says in his *Kybernetiek*, p. 326, in the chapter on

excommunication: "Dus wordt in die bekendmakingen niet de nadruk gelegd op zijn zonde, maar op zijn hardnekkigheid en onboetvaardigheid, want niet zijn zonde, maar zijn onboetvaardigheid zal er de oorzaak van zijn als hij afgesneden moet worden. Wat zijn zonde ook mag zijn, zij kon door boetvaardigheid en schuldbelijdenis worden verzoend; derhalve als hij afgesneden wordt, zal dat alleen om zijn onboetvaardigheid geschieden." We also quote in this connection from our Heid. Catechism, Question 81, "For whom is the Lord's Supper instituted (i.e., who can and should enjoy the privileges of church membership)? Answer: For those who are truly sorrowful for their sins . . ."

We do not consider it necessary to present more proof in support of the position that the rights of church membership can and must be accorded to anyone who is truly sorrowful for his sins. There are no exceptions. There is but one unforgivable sin, and the very nature of that sin is such that they who are guilty of it will not repent nor seek church membership. But no truly penitent sinner may be excluded. Therefore the first part of our question is easily answered: Parties illegitimately divorced and remarried can, as all other sinners, enjoy the rights and privileges of church membership if they sincerely repent of their sins.

The more important question still remains, however. Wherein must this repentance consist and manifest itself? That is, what are the sins which the parties must repent of and leave? To this question we give the following answer in the light of and on the basis of the exegetical study given above.

(a) Parties illegitimately divorced (i. e., on some ground other than adultery) make themselves guilty of an unlawful breaking of the sacred tie of marriage. They must truly repent of this sin, confess it, and do all in their power to restore the tie broken before the State (but not before God), if they are to enjoy the rights and privileges of church membership.

(b) He that leaves his wife except for fornication *and marries another* thereby commits adultery. There must

be sincere sorrow over and confession of this grievous sin if such parties are to enjoy membership in the Church of Jesus Christ.

(c) The sinful act of contracting a second marriage, being adultery, gives to the other party the right to leave the party that is re-married. Since they are divorced before the State, this right in such cases means the right to leave before God and His Church. It follows that the Church can and must now recognize the separated state of the party that leaves the adulterous mate as legitimate also in the sphere of the Church. And since God and His Church no longer regard the tie of the original marriage as valid or binding, a second marriage by this innocent party would not be adultery. Nor is there any indication in Scripture that such a second marriage after the other party has re-married, is sinful in any measure or degree, since it is simply a marriage contracted by one who is free.

(d) The first party that re-marries has by his adulterous act given to the other party freedom to leave. But he has done more than that. By establishing marriage relations with a third party before the law, he has made the restoration of the original union impossible. In most cases proper self-respect would create in the heart of the other party an aversion to such a restoration. But in any case the former marriage cannot be restored, nor can the resumption of marriage relations be legitimately and honorably sought by either party to the first marriage. There is nothing left to do for the divorced but not re-married party but to relinquish in thought, word, and deed all marriage claims upon the party that has re-married, and to ask the Church to recognize his (her) separated state as legitimate also before the Church. There is nothing the Church can do but to declare, in answer to such request, that the first marriage is no longer valid and binding upon the party that did not first re-marry.

(e) But how about the party that first re-married? Is he still bound by that first marriage? If so, the marital relations of that second union must be termed a constant living in adultery. And if such a one is to be admitted as a penitent sinner, he must show his true penitence by desisting

from this adultery, i. e., by breaking the second marriage and seeking to re-establish the first. But he cannot and may not do this. He is bound before God and man to discharge the duties of the second marriage, and he may not resume the relations of the first. He would sin if he did either the one or the other or both. To say that the Church must nevertheless ask this of him in proof of the genuine penitence is to teach that the Church must demand of him that he show his penitence by committing new sin. It is plain that this view leads to absurdities. And the root of these absurdities is the mistaken view that the first marriage, though it is no longer binding for one party, is still binding for the other. We maintain that this is impossible. If a marriage is no longer binding before God or man for one party, this can be only because it no longer exists. And if it no longer exists, it cannot bind the other party either.

The party that re-marries first may be much more guilty before God. He may begin his second marriage by an act of adultery. But if the first marriage is no longer valid, even his second marriage is not a "constant living in adultery." How can it be this if the first marriage is no longer valid? We conclude, therefore, that the first party to re-marry cannot and should not be asked to show his penitence by breaking the second marriage and resuming the first. That would be continuing in sin instead of desisting from it. On the contrary, he must show his penitence by confessing the illegitimate divorce and the adulterous act of contracting the second marriage, but he must also be true to the duties and responsibilities of his second marriage. For that new marriage, though begun in sin, is nevertheless a permanently binding tie before God and men. It is in that sense sacred. It must be honored. To break it would be continuing in the sin of divorce.

We remark by way of conclusion that in our estimation this position does not merely commend itself to reason and common sense, but rests on sound exegesis. We refer in this connection to the following passage from our exegetical study: "He may put away his wife, however, for fornication and thus dissolve the original tie, though it be in an abnormal way. But if he does this, he destroys the former

contract, so that this ceases to be binding not only for him but also for his unfaithful spouse. The natural conclusion would seem to be: (1) that he can marry another without committing adultery; (2) that his former wife can marry another without being guilty of adultery; and (3) that others can marry either one of the original parties without the sin of adultery."

This passage refers, of course, to the re-marriage of a divorced party guilty of adultery *before* divorce. And our problem concerns the party that commits adultery by marrying again after illegitimate divorce. But the principle, it will be agreed, is the same in both cases. It is the principle that a marriage that is dissolved because of adultery binds neither the guilty nor the innocent. It cannot, because having been dissolved on grounds that Scripture recognizes it has ceased to exist.

In conformity with the foregoing your Committee again advises Synod to adopt the following as the official position of our Church:

*Persons divorced on non-biblical grounds and remarried, can enjoy the full rights and privileges of membership in the church of Christ if they sincerely repent of and confess their sins. The sin of unbiblical divorce must be confessed by the guilty party or parties. The first party to remarry must confess his (her) adulterous act of contracting a second marriage.*

The Committee on Marriage and Divorce,

PROF. L. BERKHOF.

REV. W. P. VAN WYK.

REV. H. KEEGSTRA.

PROF. D. H. KROMMINGA.

PROF. H. SCHULTZE.

REV. G. HOEKSEMA, *Sec.*

P. S. (a) The Committee regrets to inform Synod that Dr. C. Bouma does not agree with the position and advice of your Committee, and exercises his privilege to submit a minority report. (Placed at end of this volume. S. C.)

(b) The report on the South African Question will be submitted later.

**REPORT XXIII.**

**GENERAL HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE —  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH**

**Schedule of Receipts from Jan. 1, 1932 to Dec. 31, 1933**

	PER FAMILY IN			
FROM CLASSIS:	1932	1933	1933	COMBINED
California .....	\$ 483.90	\$ 405.60	\$ .70	\$ 889.50
Grand Rapids East.....	2,600.22	1,284.02	.45	3,884.24
Grand Rapids West.....	3,463.34	1,865.01	.54	5,328.35
Hackensack-Hudson .....	1,646.18	800.00	.37	2,446.18
Holland .....	1,424.18	1,265.52	.65	2,689.70
Illinois .....	992.30	995.81	.35	1,988.11
Muskegon.....	1,063.26	764.46	.39	1,827.72
Orange City .....	336.79	286.00	.16	622.79
Ostfriesland .....	354.68	300.49	.49	655.17
Pacific .....	568.00	360.00	.40	928.00
Pella .....	1,038.82	486.76	.45	1,525.58
Sioux Center .....	399.97	307.79	.23	707.76
Wisconsin .....	406.78	361.71	.53	768.49
Zeeland .....	1,627.17	784.17	.51	2,411.34
<b>TOTAL FROM CLASSES.....</b>	<b>\$16,405.59</b>	<b>\$10,267.34</b>		<b>\$26,672.93</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>1932</b>	<b>1933</b>		<b>COMBINED</b>
Van Agthoven Estate.....	\$ 5,573.34	\$ 4,000.00		\$ 9,573.74
Various Societies .....	375.43	330.00		705.43
Various Personal .....	83.00	95.00		178.00
Bethel Church, Paterson.....	271.00	16.95		287.95
Blackwell Church, Ont.....	100.22			100.22
Dolfin, Rev. J., Treas.....	421.93	139.51		561.44
East Martin, Mich. Church.....	14.80			14.80
Englewood II, Illinois.....	271.21	412.99		684.20
Hamilton Bus Gifts.....		37.00		37.00
Hancock, Minn. Church.....		49.09		49.09
Neland Ave., G. R. Church.....	35.00			35.00
Netherlands Gift per H. Beets....	64.40	102.19		166.59
Other Gifts per H. Beets.....	179.90	213.47		393.37
Windsor, Ont. Church.....	95.00			95.00
Woodstock, Ont. Church.....	6.00			6.00
Interest and Exchange earned....	477.59	328.39		805.98
<b>TOTAL OTHER .....</b>	<b>\$ 7,968.82</b>	<b>\$ 5,724.99</b>		<b>\$13,693.81</b>
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS .....</b>	<b>\$24,374.41</b>	<b>\$15,992.33</b>		<b>\$40,366.74</b>

**Schedule of Disbursements from Jan. 1, 1932 to Dec. 31, 1933**

To:	1932	1933	COMBINED
Classis California .....	\$ 5,201.97	\$ 2,927.25	\$ 8,129.22
Classis Muskegon .....	258.76	129.38	388.14
Classis Orange City .....	744.28	2,514.76	3,259.04
Classis Ostfriesland .....	1,359.17	766.09	2,125.26
Classis Pacific .....	4,945.57	4,226.12	9,171.69
Classis Pella .....	107.48	608.11	715.59
Classis Sioux Center .....	2,233.82	1,940.71	4,174.53
<b>TOTAL TO CLASSES.....</b>	<b>\$14,851.05</b>	<b>\$13,112.42</b>	<b>\$27,963.47</b>
<b>To:</b>			
Chatham, Ont. Church.....	\$ 216.05	\$ 17.50	\$ 233.55
Hamilton, Ont. Church.....	1,541.89		1,541.89
Winnipeg, Can. Church.....	2,101.16	940.02	3,041.18
Rev. Wm. Meyer, Detroit.....	2,576.36	1,423.76	4,000.12
Colton, So. Dak. Church.....	51.11		51.11
<b>TOTAL OTHER .....</b>	<b>\$ 6,486.57</b>	<b>\$ 2,381.28</b>	<b>\$ 8,867.85</b>
<b>FOR: Administrative Expenses.....</b>	<b>\$ 383.82</b>	<b>\$ 141.64</b>	<b>\$ 525.46</b>
Purchase U. S. Gov't Bond..	5,000.00		5,000.00
<b>TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS .....</b>	<b>\$26,721.44</b>	<b>\$15,635.34</b>	<b>\$42,356.78</b>

**SUMMARY**

Balance on hand January 1, 1932.....	\$ 2,947.47
Total Cash Receipts 1932-1933.....	40,366.74
	<u>\$43,314.21</u>
Total Cash Disbursements 1932-1933.....	42,356.78
Balance on hand December 31, 1933.....	\$ 957.43
Bonds on hand December 31, 1933.....	\$ 8,300.00

I hereby certify that the foregoing statements as prepared by me are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

HERBERT BOUMA, *Accountant.*

REPORT XXIV.

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REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON INTERDENOMINATIONAL  
SYNOD OR CONGRESS  
(Acta 1932, p. 119)

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*To the Synod of 1934.*

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF SYNOD:

IN connection with the question as to the possibility of an interdenominational Synod of Reformed Churches or an international Calvinistic congress (Kongres), raised by the Reformed Church of South Africa, the Synod of 1932 appointed a committee to correspond with the Reformed Church of South Africa and, if necessary also with the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, on the matter under consideration, and to gather all the necessary data bearing on the matter, in order that some future Synod might be able to express itself more definitely on the matter than was possible in 1932. The Synod of 1932 considered the matter worthy of earnest consideration, but did not consider the motives suggested by the South African Church as sufficiently weighty to warrant the expense involved, nor the present time propitious for such an undertaking. Moreover, it desired more light on what was in the minds of the South African brethren and on what the convening of such a Synod would involve.

The Committee appointed by the Synod of 1932 carried on some correspondence with the Reformed Church of South Africa, more particularly with its committee for correspondence with Churches in foreign countries. In this correspondence the following particulars bear on the matter under consideration and would seem to be of importance for us:

1. The suggestion that two different methods can be followed in constituting such a Synod or Congress:
  - a. That the synodical delegates of the various Reformed Churches form a sort of "Synodus Contracta." It is thought that, though this would be something new in Reformed Church polity, it would not conflict with this.
  - b. That one of the Reformed Churches (say that of the Netherlands) call a Synod, in which the delegates of other Reformed Churches shall be seated with the right to vote.

In both cases the Church shall pay its own expenses.

2. The opinion expressed that, in the estimation of the committee, the present depression and financial difficulties make the execution of the plan impossible for the present.
3. The advice that our Church appoint a committee to continue with this matter.

In addition to this it may be said that the committee for correspondence with Churches in foreign countries of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands also reported on this matter at the Synod of Middelburg in 1933, and advised Synod as follows: "Rekening houdende met het feit, dat het samenkomen van eene oecumenische Synode zoowel bij de zusterkerk in Noord-Amerika als bij die in Zuid-Afrika instemming vond, maar de economische toestanden — gelijk ook die kerken zelve reeds opmerken — thans eene groote belemmering zijn, de verdere voorbereiding dezer aangelegenheid aan de deputaten op te dragen." This was accepted.

Your committee is of the opinion that it is impossible to execute the plan at present on account of financial conditions. With respect to the constitution of such a Synod it ventures to express the opinion that whenever one of the Reformed Churches is confronted with weighty problems, which concern all Reformed Churches and which would seem to warrant the expense of calling in delegates from

other Churches, that Church call a Synod, call in delegates from other Churches, and give them an advisory vote. Finally, your committee would suggest that Synod appoint a committee to keep in touch with the Churches of South Africa and the Netherlands in the matter under consideration, to give further thought to the matter, and to report at the following Synod.

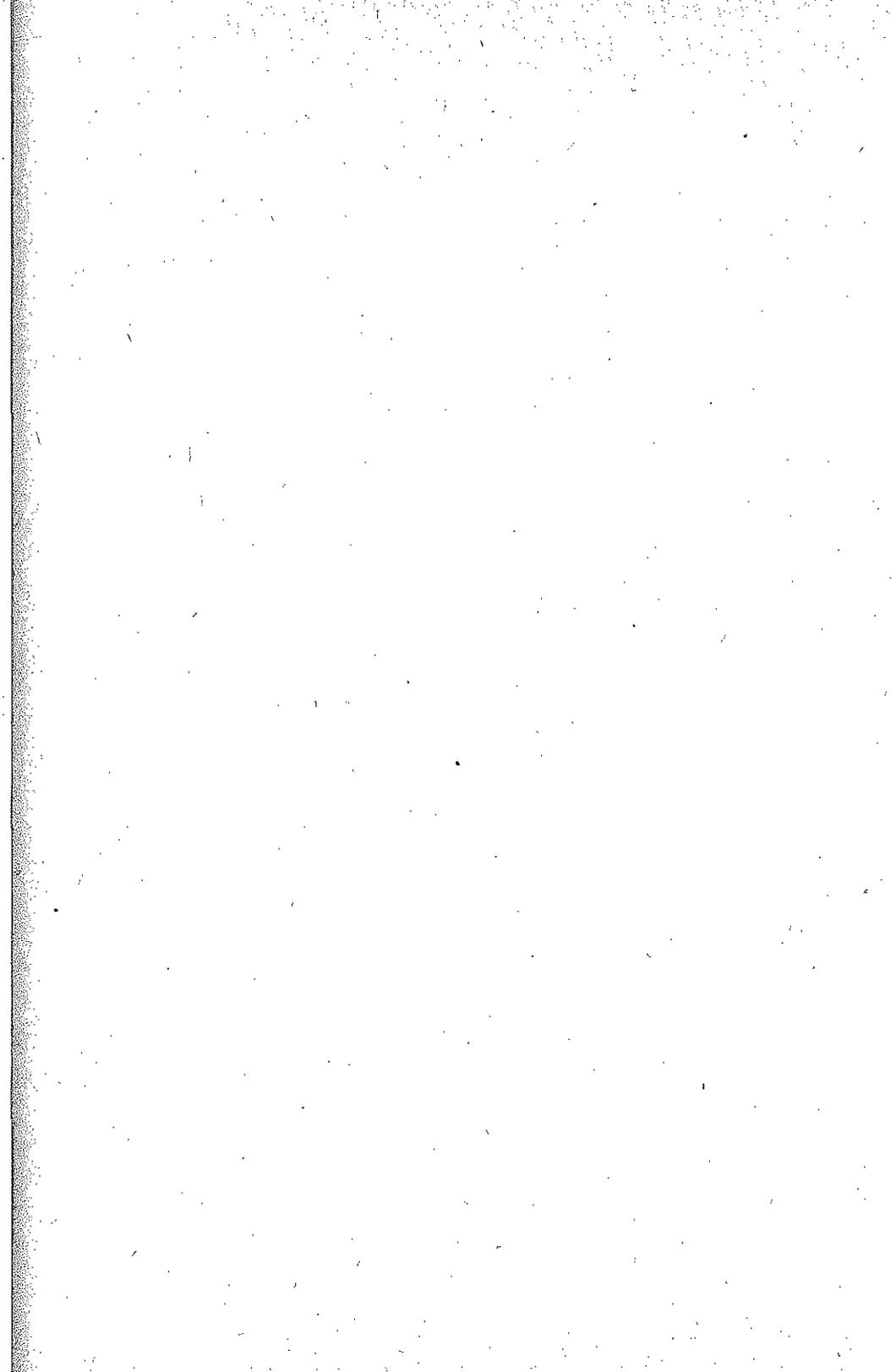
Respectfully submitted,

HENRY BEETS.

L. BERKHOF.

D. H. KROMMINGA.

I. VAN DELLEN.



## DEPUTATI SYNODI

### Primi

### Secundi

#### Classis California

H. J. De Vries.....	Minister	W. Groen .....	Minister
R. J. Frens.....	M	M. M. Schans.....	M
J. H. Bosscher.....	Elder	E. G. Schutt.....	Elder
R. Van Noord.....	E	K. Winters .....	E

#### Classis Grand Rapids East

Dr. G. Goris.....	Minister
W. P. Van Wyk.....	M
E. B. Pekelder.....	M
J. B. Hulst.....	Elder
J. Monsma, Sr.....	E
R. Huizinga .....	E

#### Classis Grand Rapids West

H. Baker .....	Minister
Dr. Y. P. De Jong.....	M
G. J. Haan.....	M
W. De Graaf.....	Elder
W. Mulder .....	E
J. Vander Schuur.....	E

#### Classis Hackensack

J. M. Vande Kieft.....	Minister	J. Beebe .....	Minister
J. Van Bruggen.....	M	D. De Beer.....	M
M. Botbyl .....	M	J. T. Hoogstra.....	M
J. V. Bogert.....	Elder	John Boer .....	Elder
M. Bolier .....	E	R. Meyer .....	E
C. Heerema .....	E	H. Van Ostenbridge.....	E

#### Classis Holland

D. Zwier .....	Minister	L. Van Laar.....	Minister
L. Veltkamp .....	M	H. Blystra .....	M
N. J. Monsma.....	M	H. Bouma .....	M
A. Peters .....	Elder	W. Beckman .....	Elder
J. Sturing .....	E	J. Jipping .....	E
N. Stielstra .....	E	M. Luidens .....	E

### Classis Hudson

E. Kooistra .....	Minister	P. Holwerda .....	Minister
H. J. Triezenberg .....	M	J. Cupido .....	M
P. De Leeuw.....	Elder	D. Velzen .....	Elder
B. Stap .....	E	H. Hutting .....	E

### Classis Illinois

G. Hoeksema .....	Minister	B. H. Spalink.....	Minister
J. O. Bouwsma.....	M	P. A. Hoekstra.....	M
Dr. H. Kuiper.....	M	Dr. M. Van Dyke.....	M
N. Yff .....	Elder	A. De Boer.....	Elder
G. Speelman .....	E	G. De Boer.....	E
W. Monsma .....	E	G. Kuiper .....	E

### Classis Muskegon

R. J. Bos.....	Minister	W. Hendriksen .....	Minister
C. Maring .....	M	J. P. De Vries.....	M
J. Dolfin .....	M	H. Goodyk .....	M
F. Keegstra .....	Elder	M. Jenema .....	Elder
M. A. Postmus.....	E	H. Mulder .....	E
A. J. Wibalda.....	E	B. Zenderink .....	E

### Classis Orange City

B. Van Someren.....	Minister	H. Moes .....	Minister
C. Groot .....	M	Dr. R. Bronkema.....	M
R. Cleveringa .....	Elder	H. Bruxvoort .....	Elder
H. L. Verhulst.....	E	J. Vander Pol.....	E

### Classis Ostfriesland

Dr. W. Bode.....	Minister	A. Koning .....	Minister
A. Folkema .....	M	D. H. Plesscher.....	M
E. Joling .....	M	J. Schuurmann .....	M
John Eekhoff .....	Elder	H. Folkert .....	Elder
H. M. Tjepkes.....	E	F. Arendholtz .....	E
W. Meyers .....	E	H. Christians .....	E

### Classis Pacific

J. Vanden Hoek.....	Minister	K. E. De Waal Malefyt.....	Minister
D. Hollebeek .....	M	H. Vander Woude.....	M
J. Mulder .....	M	A. H. Bratt.....	M
G. Ramerman .....	Elder	A. Witte .....	Elder
P. Vanden Berg .....	E	H. Cock .....	E
U. J. Otter.....	E	P. Warmenhoven .....	E

### Classis Pella

K. Bergsma .....	Minister	J. D. Pikaart.....	Minister
J. Weidenaar .....	M	F. De Jong .....	M
P. De Koekkoek.....	M	C. Witt .....	M
C. Groenendyk .....	Elder	C. B. Vander Hart.....	Elder
L. Moes .....	E	H. J. Veldhuizen.....	E
W. Pars .....	E	J. J. Kneubels.....	E

### Classis Sioux Center

J. M. Dykstra.....	Minister	L. Verduin .....	Minister
J. Gritter .....	M	A. Wassink .....	M
Dr. R. L. Haan.....	M	D. Flietstra .....	M
J. Ten Harmsel.....	Elder	T. Vander Lugt.....	Elder
A. Keuning .....	E	D. Le Febre.....	E
M. Huizenga .....	E	J. Streelman .....	E

### Classis Wisconsin

W. Terpsma .....	Minister	J. J. Holwerda.....	Minister
J. C. Schaap.....	M	C. R. Veenstra.....	M
K. W. Fortuin.....	M	N. Jansen .....	M
S. Tjepkema .....	Elder	J. R. Kerkstra.....	Elder
P. A. Westra.....	E	F. Sanders .....	E
G. Otten .....	E	L. Wyma .....	E

### Classis Zeeland

J. Geels .....	Minister	J. Jabaay .....	Minister
H. Keegstra .....	M	J. Kolkman .....	M
W. Kok .....	M	A. De Vries.....	M
N. Frankena .....	Elder	H. Yonker .....	Elder
F. Langeland .....	E	N. Tanis .....	E
S. Grasman .....	E	J. Zylstra .....	E

# AGENDA

**Part II**

::

**Overtures**

## I. CALVIN SEMINARY AND COLLEGE MATTERS, ETC.

REPORT CURATORIUM; RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (Report XIV); JUNIOR COLLEGE MOVEMENT (Report XII); REFORMED EVANGELIZATION (Report I); MISSIONARY TRAINING SCHOOL (Report II).

### *In re Calvin College:*

*a.* Inasmuch as the church is committed to the principle that education is not the task of the church, but of the parents, as it is applied to our institutions for primary and secondary education, and

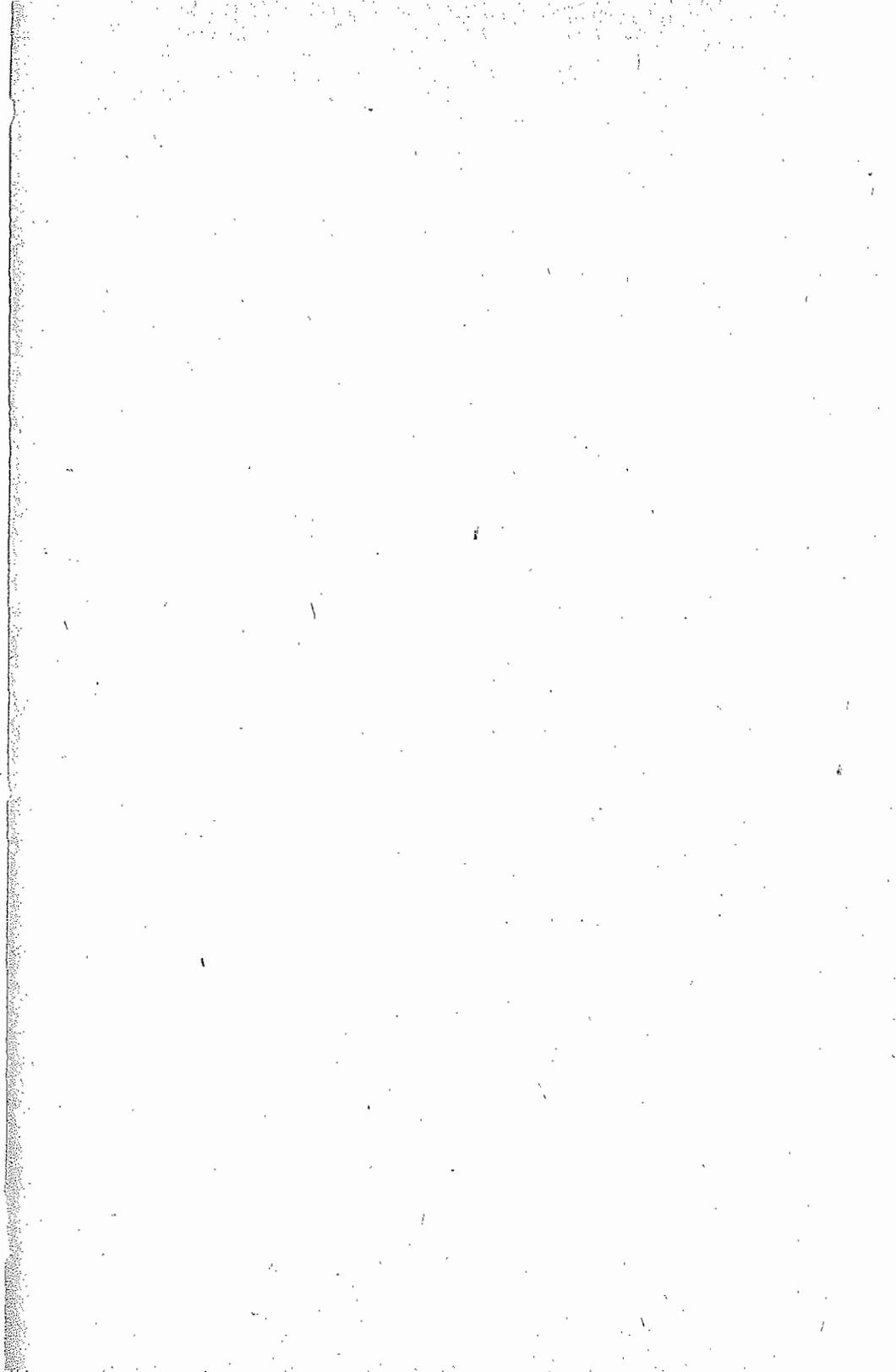
*b.* Inasmuch as the principle has apparently been neglected with respect to higher education, and

*c.* Inasmuch as practically nothing is done at the present time to reach the ideal which has been so zealously advocated by many of our leading men, and repeatedly upheld by former Synods, and

*d.* Inasmuch as Synod in 1924 decided (Acts, 1924, p. 24, Art. 30) to retain Calvin College as an ecclesiastical institution—FOR THE TIME BEING (VOORLOOPIG)—and again in 1926 (Acts, 1926, page 31, III-3) TO TAKE NO ACTION AT THIS TIME.

Synod consider whether the time has not come TO MAKE PREPARATIONS FOR AN EVENTUAL SEPARATION OF COLLEGE AND CHURCH.

(Classis Hackensack.)



*In re Synodical Committee on Education.*

In *The Banner* of February 16, 1934, the Synodical Committee on education calls the attention of the Consistories and Classis to the fact that the Committee's reports submitted to the Synods of 1930 and 1932 were referred by Synod to the Consistories for earnest consideration. The committee urges that each Consistory and Classis make it possible for the Synod of 1934 to act and kindly request all the Stated Clerks of the Classes to make this matter a part of their agenda for the Spring Classis meeting.

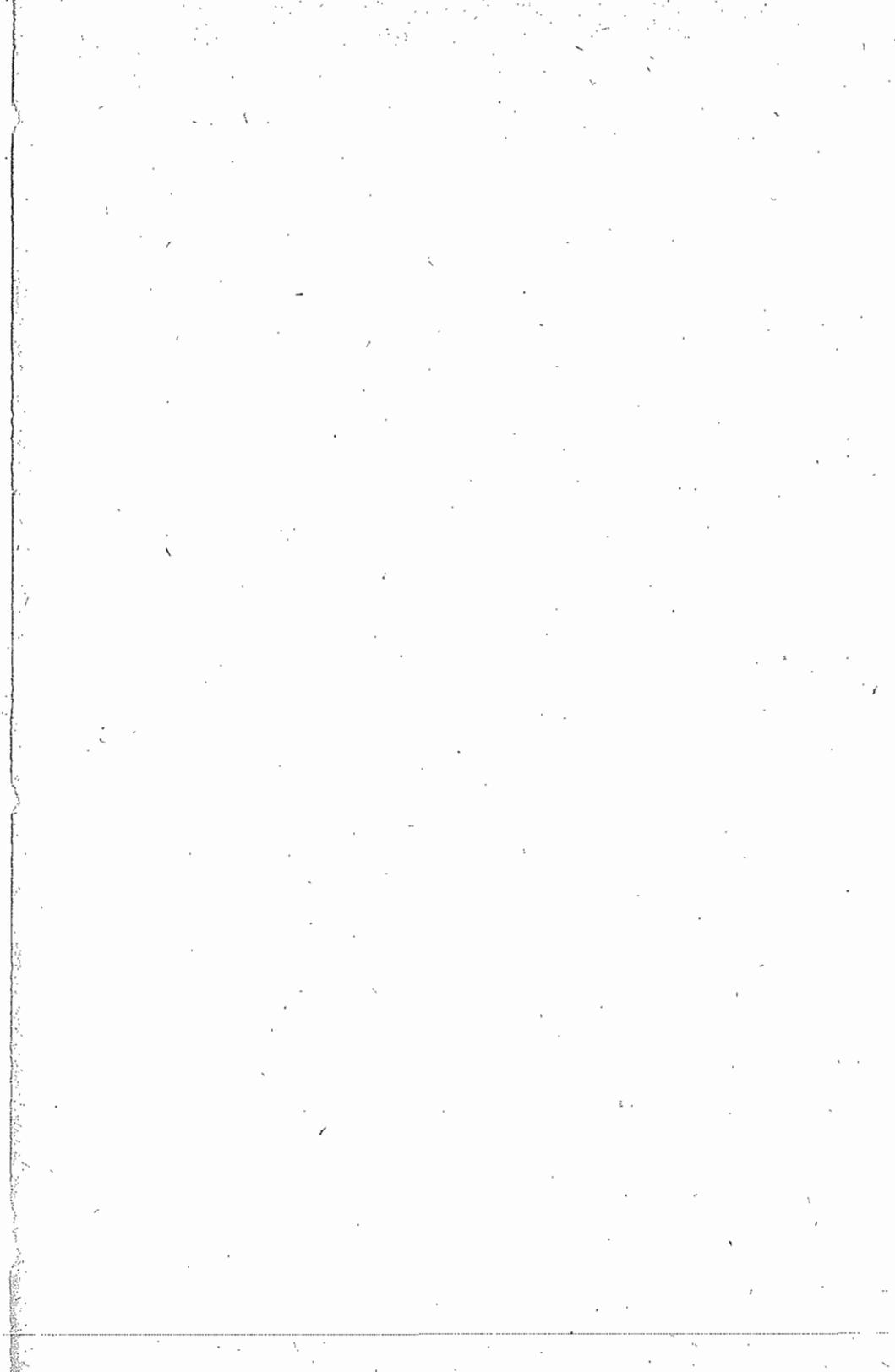
In compliance with this request, Classis Hackensack submits the following overture to the Synod of 1934 in re the report of the Synodical Committee of Education referred by the Synods of 1930 and 1932 for their earnest consideration:

Classis much appreciates the valuable data gathered by the Committee in its survey of the field of religious education within our churches. The study and appraisal of the work being done by the various agencies have served to clarify and crystalize the problems that we face. The effort to properly coördinate, systematize and grade the instruction as it is given by the church in catechism and Sunday School, and by the Christian Schools, is a step in the right direction.

Classis is pleased to note that the coöperation of the Christian primary and secondary schools has been sought and secured. The schools are now working out, and in some cases already applying a system conforming to the proposed progressive course of study presented, in consultation with their representatives, by the committee. The religious instruction given by the Christian Schools must be taken into account as a major factor.

Classis would particularly request Synod to give full authorization to the Committee on Religious Education to proceed at once to complete the progressive course of study in Sacred History and Christian Doctrine and to recommend it to the churches for adoption and adaptation according to local conditions.

Classis is fully aware that adjustments will be necessary to adapt the prescribed course for use in the various churches. The Committee has made this clear in its re-



port, and reckoned with this fact. Adapting the synodically approved and recommended course of study would remain a local problem. The church as a whole, however, needs the guidance of a well-planned system, based upon our Reformed conception of the truth, and of the requirements of religious training of the covenant youth. Such a system, Classis believes, has been proposed by the Committee, and should be adopted and recommended by Synod as the objective and ideal to strive for by our churches.

Classis finally overtures Synod that it give its committee mandate with full power to act in publishing the necessary books and lesson material for the progressive course of study in Sacred History and Christian Doctrine.

(Classis Hackensack.)

Classis Muskegon overtures Synod:

*Whereas* the Synod of 1920 (cf. Acts 1920, page 60) ruled with respect to the classical examination of candidates for the ministry that the test of gospel preaching shall include *preaching before the church* in hearing of the Classis; and

*Whereas* some of the Classes do not follow this rule, requiring no more of the candidates, so far as preaching is concerned, than that they shall deliver their sermon at one of the classical sessions; to either change this ruling or charge all the Classes to comply with it.

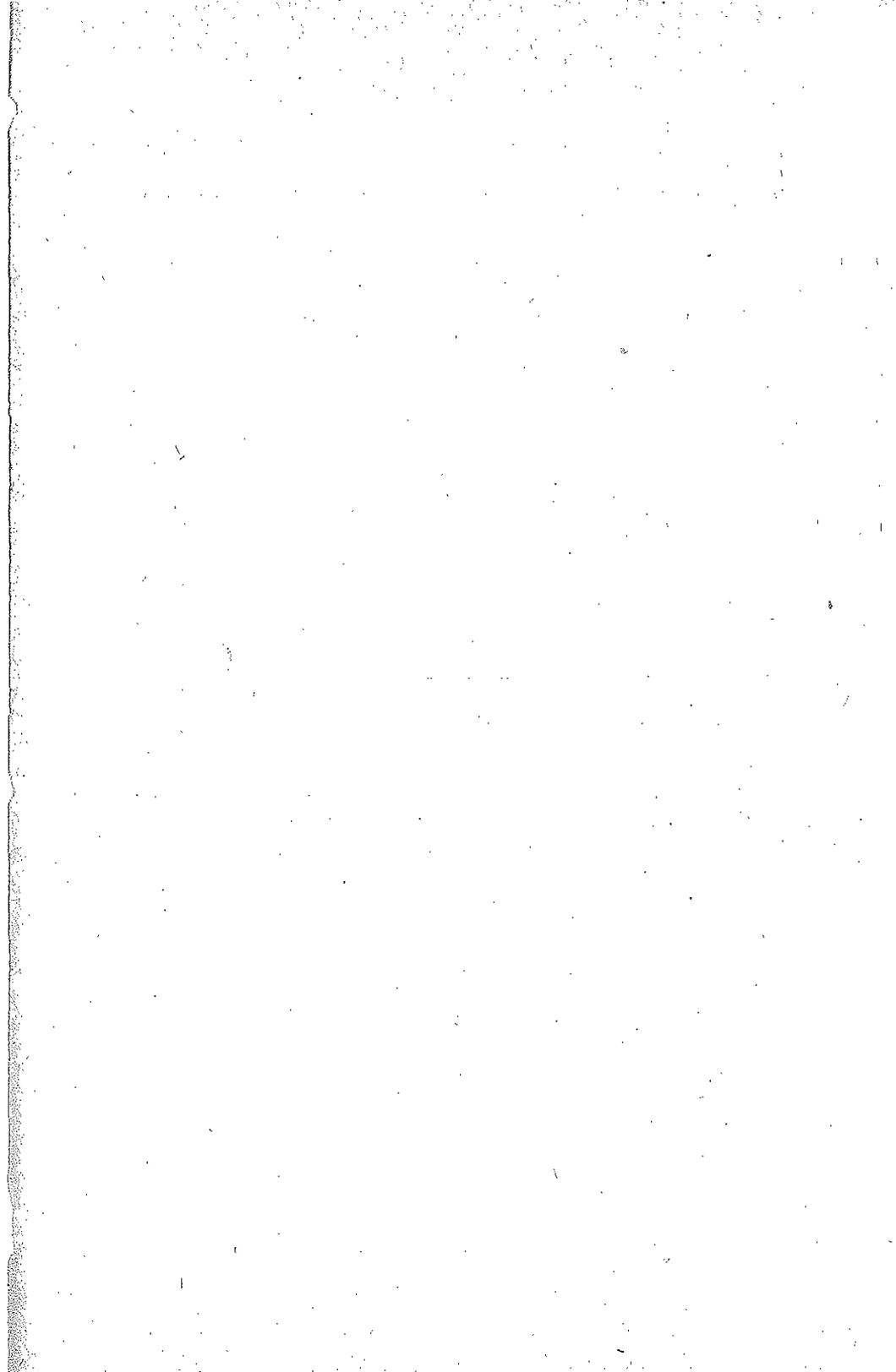
(Classis Muskegon.)

De Classis dringt er op aan bij de Synode dat de Hollandse taal door de theologische studenten meer bestudeerd worde.

(Classis Wisconsin.)

Classis Pella is in accord with the following overture of the Pella I Church.

Synod rescind its ruling (Acta Synodi 1912, pages 11, 12) touching the matter of "Studenten van elders, die in



VII

onze kerken wenschen beroepbaar gesteld te worden, etc.," for the following reason:

The decision is in conflict with the accepted Reformed principle of "Free Study," which implies that the churches of Reformed persuasion are willing to admit anyone to the ministry of the Word and the Sacraments who is able to satisfy the requirements regardless where a student has obtained this fitness and ability. (Classis Pella.)

*Whereas* a compromise was entered upon between Synod and Classis Ostfriesland in 1920—See Acts of Synod 1920, page 20;

*Whereas* said compromise was annulled by Synod without consulting our Classis,—See Acts of Synod 1922, page 20 ff.;

*Whereas* the last Synod has asserted that the action of the 1922 Synod was a final settlement, a claim which Classis Ostfriesland feels cannot be substantiated with actual facts:

*Therefore*, Classis Ostfriesland again *appeals* to Synod with the sincere hope that a final settlement may be made of this entire matter, since Classis feels that an injustice has been committed by terminating without our mutual consent the compromise of 1920. Indeed, this matter should no longer be left undetermined, for to do so would but continue the spirit of dissatisfaction.

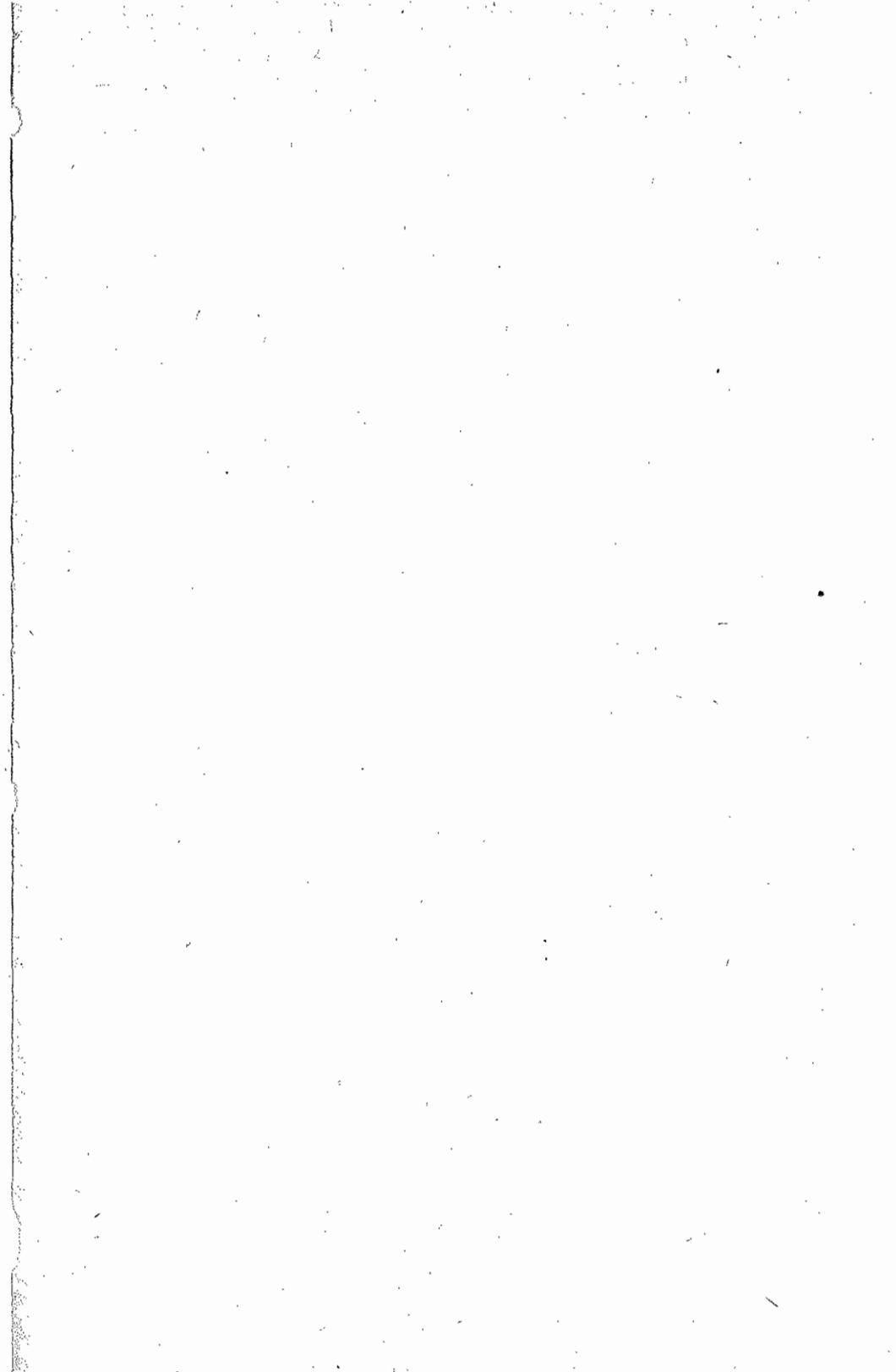
Classis would therefore request Synod that some equitable and mutually agreeable disposition be made of this unhappy relationship.

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

Classis Sioux Center overtures Synod to put forth anew every effort to reduce the assessments for Calvin College and Seminary: *Reasons*:

- a. Many mid-western congregations are unable to pay \$3.00 per family for this cause.
- b. A reduction of the assessments will foster the goodwill of the people and it will be a powerful incentive to henceforth meet the assessments.

(Classis Sioux Center.)



## VIII

Classis Sioux Center overtures Synod to appoint a committee to advise Synod as to the method which should be followed by; and the amount which shall be asked of; the congregations which are in arrears in the assessments.  
*Reasons:*

- a. There are many cases where it is well nigh impossible to pay all the arrears and the coming assessments for the next few years to come.
- b. It seems unfair to require all arrears for some years back of those who have tried to do their part as God has prospered them.
- c. If some equitable settlement is made it will give new courage and devotion for the Lord's work.
- d. We are living in a time in which all kinds of debts are taken out of the way by settlement.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

In regard to arrears of many of our churches in payment of their assessments, Classis Holland overtures Synod:

1. Not to cancel the unpaid balances by taking them off the books. **Grounds:**

This would undermine the sense of obligation toward synodical assessments and it would be unfair to those churches which have made special efforts to pay their assessments even during hard times.

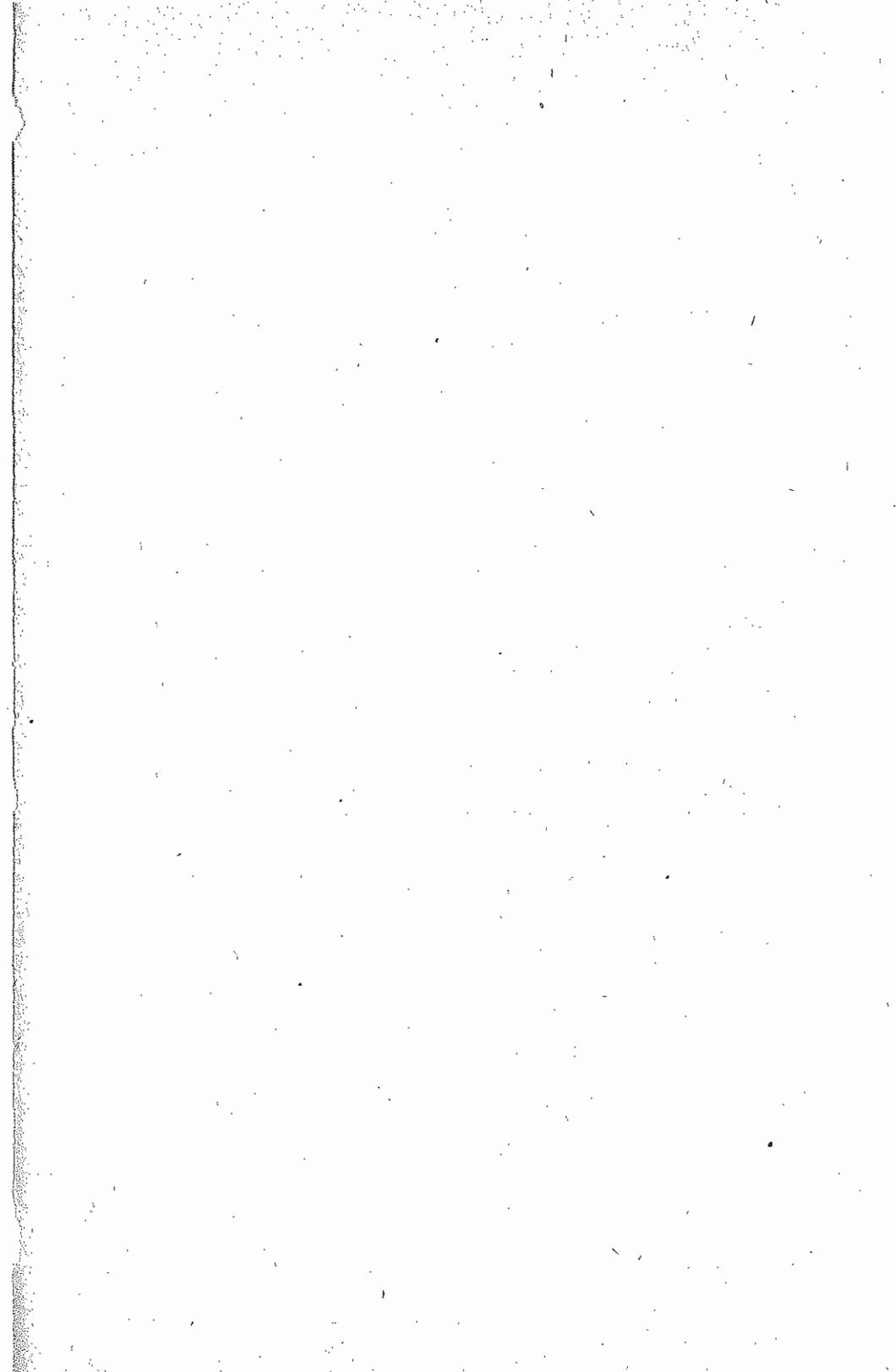
2. To make fair and adequate adjustments in this matter.

(Classis Holland.)

Classis Holland decides to overture Synod to reduce the assessments to a minimum basis consistent with present-day conditions.

(Classis Holland.)

Classis Muskegon overtures Synod not to make any provisions for a general *cancellation* of arrearages, but rather to appoint a committee whose duty it shall be to study the whole matter of these arrearages and if necessary investi-

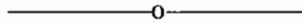


IX

gate individual cases, and thus come with detailed advice and recommendations to the following Synod.

- a. Since many of our churches are in arrears in the payment of their assessments; and
- b. Since the question of arrearages and their cancellation comes up from time to time; and
- c. Since either cancellation or readjustment of these arrearages may be the only logical and just thing in some cases while totally unjust in others.

(Classis Muskegon.)



II. MISSION MATTERS

REPORTS CHR. REF. BOARD OF MISSIONS AND GENERAL HOME MISSION COMM.; CHURCH HELP; JEWISH MISSION REPORTS AND BUDGETS; HOBOKEN SEAMEN'S HOME et. al.; SOUTH AMERICA; MANUAL OF MISSIONS; EMERGENCY COMM. REPORT

Classis California hereby thanks Synod for the financial aid afforded by the Synodical treasury during 1932-34 toward the bearing of the expenses of our classical meetings. Classis does not need such aid during 1934-36.

(Classis California.)

Classis hereby requests Synod to appropriate from the General Home Missions Fund the sum of \$4212.50 annually during 1934-36 for the Home Missions Fund of Classis.

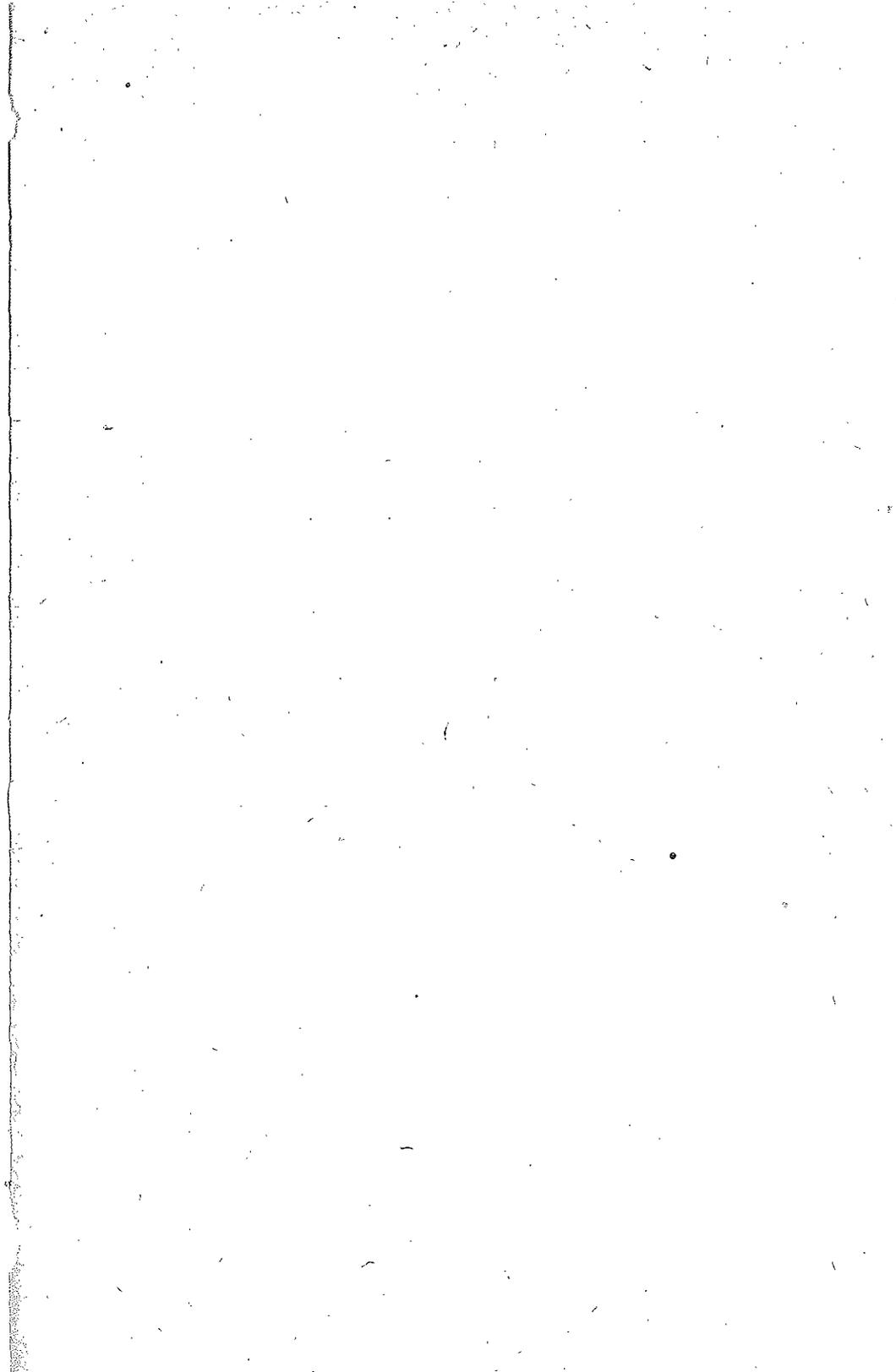
The Home Missions Budget of the Classis of California is:—

Salaries of 3 Missionaries at \$1,300.00 a year each.....	\$3,900.00
Auto Allowance of 3 Missionaries at \$100.00 a year each....	300.00
House rent for one Missionary at \$25.00 per month.....	300.00
Subsidy to Glendale .....	900.00

Total .....	\$5,400.00
Classis can contribute (475 families at \$2.50 per family)...	1,187.50

Therefore Classis requests an appropriation of.....\$4,212.50

(Classis California.)



Classis Grand Rapids East requests Synod for more detailed reports respecting the financial side of our Mission personnel and fields, both in New Mexico and China.  
*Ground:*

The Church must be conceded the right to know what salaries are paid our Mission personnel, and what allowance is made for automobile expenditures, additional allowances, etc.

(Classis Grand Rapids East.)

Classis Orange City vraagt ondersteuning uit de Algemeene Kas der Inwendige Zending voor haar Classicaal Inwendig Zendingswerk de som van \$6,565.00 per jaar.

The delegate to the General Home Mission Committee has been instructed to give the required information regarding classical needs for the synodical year.

(Classis Oostfriesland.)

Classis Pacific doet aanvraag bij de Synode voor de volgende subsidies, te zamen ten bedrage van \$9,450.00.

*Edmonton .....	\$ 700.00	Zillah-Sunnyside .....	\$ 500.00
Conrad .....	1,800.00	Sultan .....	800.00
Neerlandia .....	800.00	Monarch-Granum .....	400.00
Vancouver .....	1,800.00	Gen. Expense .....	950.00
Grangeville .....	900.00		
Shepherd .....	800.00		\$9,450.00

\* Het verzoek van Edmonton was oorspronkelijk \$800.00, maar de kerkeraad besloot na de Classis om dit met \$100.00 te verminderen.

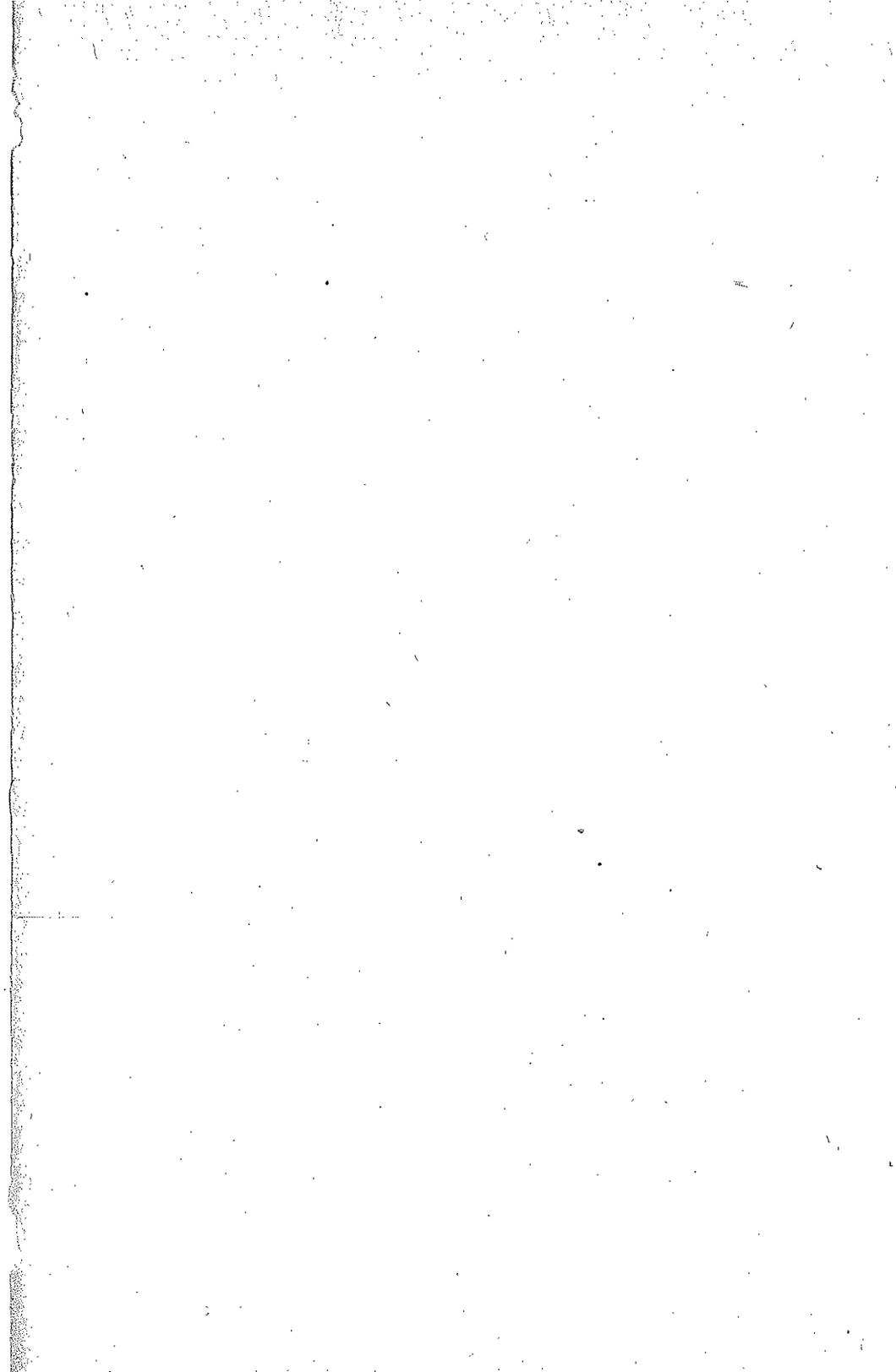
I. WESTRA, S. C.

[NOTE. The letters of correspondence of the Home Mission Comm. of Classis Pacific and of the Secretary of Missions are appended to this overture for information.]

(Classis Pacific.)

Aangezien de kerken nog geen inzage kregen van het rapport der Comm. in re herziening Zendingssorde, verzoekt Classis Pacific de Synode dat, indien mogelijk, ditmaal een nieuwe Zendingssorde worde opgesteld waarin en in beginsel en in hare uitvoering, het beginsel blijve gehandhaafd, dat de Zending door de kerken worde gedreven. Gronden:

1. deze arbeid is specifiek door Christus aan Zijne Kerk opgedragen;



2. in de practijk wordt dat beginsel niet gehandhaafd, als bijvoorbeeld, de oprichting van Women's Missionary Unions;
3. onze kerken zullen dan in de toekomst meer belang toonen in het werk der zending;
4. het gevaar dat onze kerken inactieve toeschouwers worden, zal worden voorkomen.

(Classis Pacific.)

Classis Pella sends the following overtures of the Denver Church to your honorable body and does so expressing agreement with their contents:

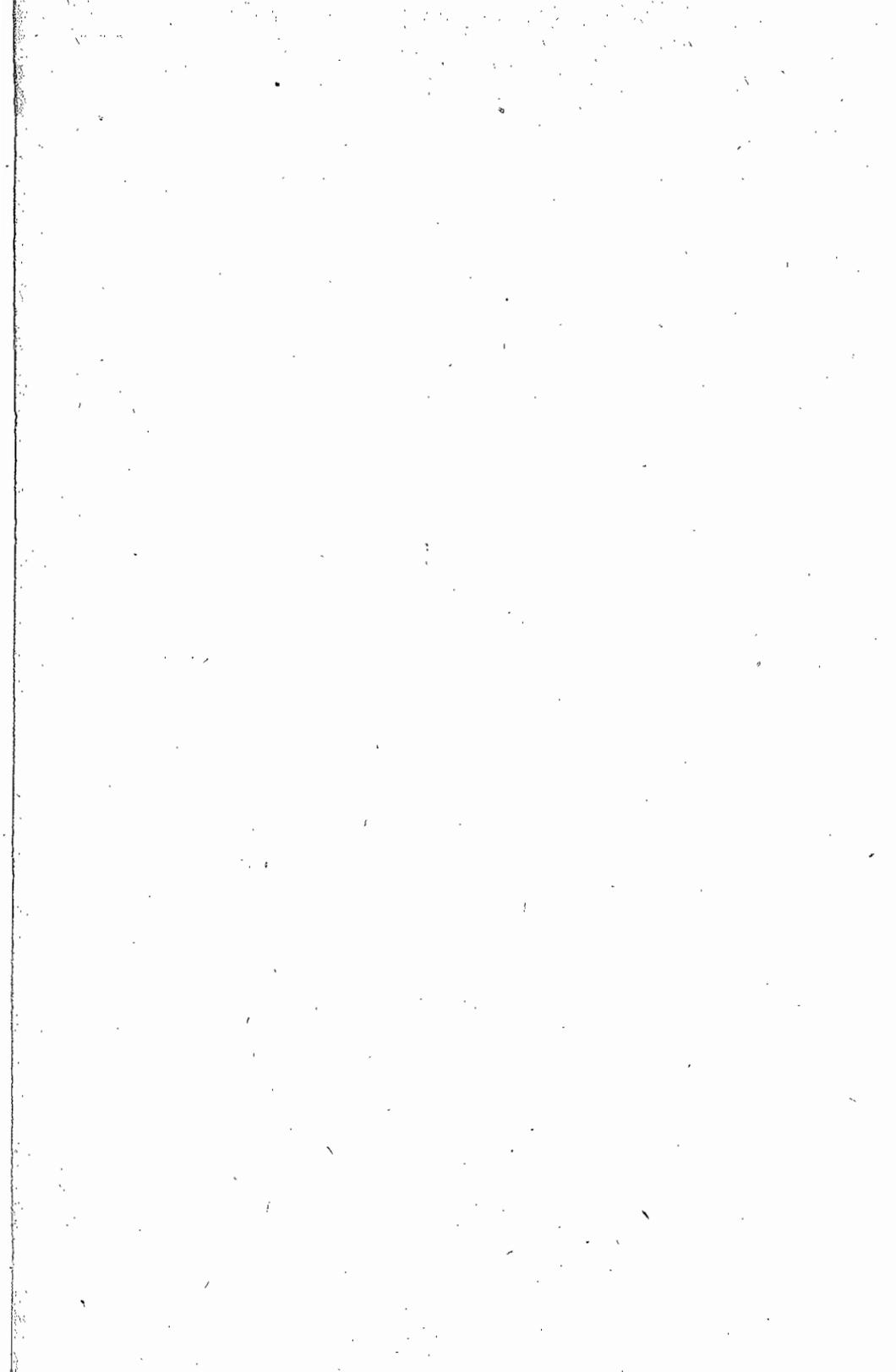
1. That Synod revise our Mission Order as far as possible while in session.
2. That Synod decide that our present practise must be brought in full accord with our Mission Order.
3. That Synod appoint a committee whose task it shall be to labor to the end that our mission practise be brought in full accord with our Mission Order.

In regard to *Overture No. 1* Classis suggests:

- a. That Synod clearly state the leading principles of our present M. O. to which we should adhere.
- b. That Synod incorporate in the Mission Order the deviations made by various Synods since the adoption of the present Mission Order in 1912, with the understanding that elements which prove to be in conflict with the principles stated be removed, and furthermore that, in conformity with those principles, such changes be made as are demanded by conditions in the home churches and on the field.

The *second overture* is deemed necessary by Classis for the following reasons:

- a. Our present practise is in conflict with our Mission Order, and has made the Mission Order a dead letter.
- b. Our present practise is bound to have a detrimental effect on our missions because it has a tendency to make the churches with their offices and assemblies



inactive and lukewarm in the cause of missions while giving influence and prominence to various societies and meetings which become willing agents of the Board.

- c. It creates problems which cannot be solved as long as we follow in our mission practise principles which conflict with our Church Order.
- d. It is bound to have a detrimental effect on our church government in general since it affects the heart and life of our church polity, viz., the preaching of the Word and the administration of the holy sacraments.

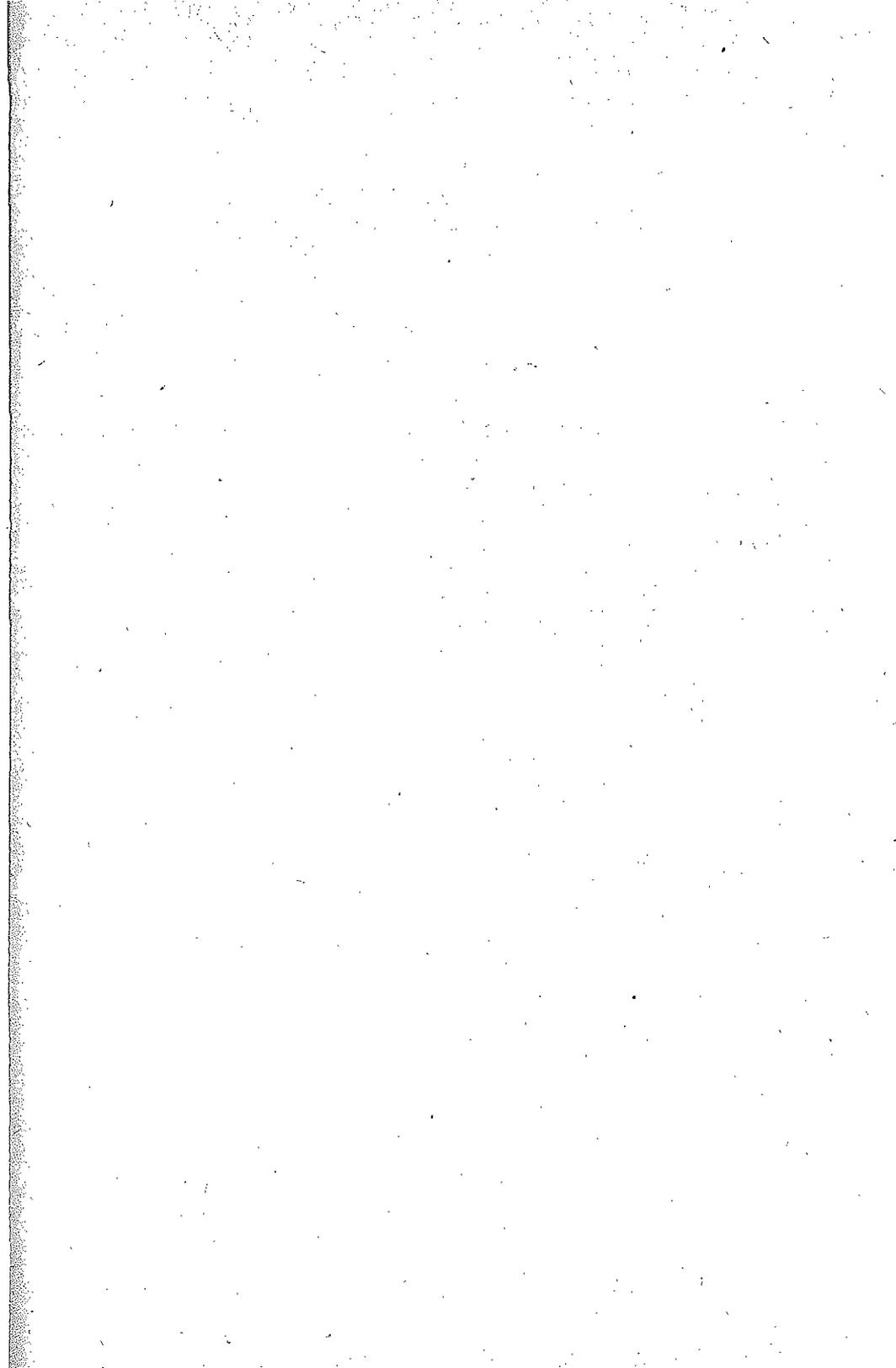
As to the *third overture*, Classis advises that this committee consist of five members, of whom one shall belong to a calling church, one to the Board, and three others not connected with the calling church or the Board. Further, that this Committee receive the following instructions:

- a. To assist the calling churches and the Board in making the changes which can be made before Synod of 1936.
- b. To submit to the next Synod a plan for the making of those changes which are beyond the committee's control and cannot be made before the 1936 Synod convenes.

(Classis Pella.)

Classis Pella, vernomen hebbende uit het rapport van haren deputaat voor de Heidenzending, dat er twijfel bestaat of de kerken die onder 's Heeren zegen op ons zendingsterrein in China door onze actie tot openbaring worden gebracht, met onze kerken zullen verbonden blijven, — dringt er bij de Synode op aan uit te spreken, dat onze Missionaire Dienaren des Woords geroepen zijn de institueering van dergelijke kerken voor te bereiden met dien verstande, dat ze als Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken worden georganiseerd en met onze kerkengroep verbonden blijven.

De Classis, overtuigd dat ons kerkelijk leven in China niet gecopieerd kan worden naar dat in ons land, verzoekt de Synode maatregelen te nemen om de noodige formulie-



ren te ontwerpen, vooral voor de bediening van den Doop en het Avondmaal, en om de Kerkenorde voor China zoo in te richten, dat gerekend wordt met de toestanden aldaar.

(Classis Pella.)

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### III. PUBLICATION MATTERS

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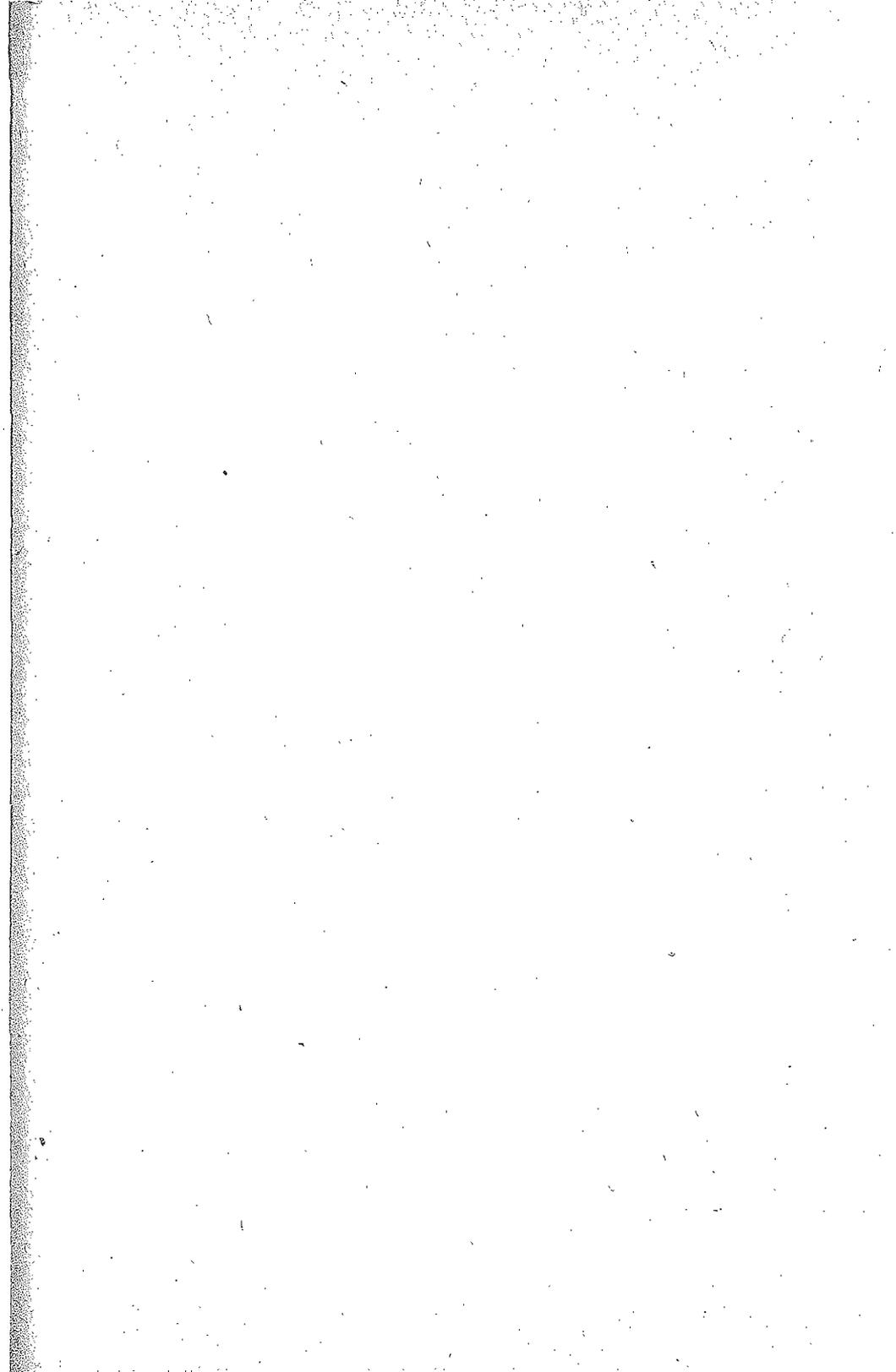
#### REPORT PUBLICATION COMM.

Compare overture Classis Hackensack about publishing books, etc., on Sacred History and Chr. Doctrine, sub. I.

Classis Pacific forwards the following overture to Synod in re English Sermons: That Synod foster or take steps, possibly through a committee to be appointed, to bring about the publication of English sermons sufficient in supply to answer the growing need for English reading services. This matter has previously been requested of Synod in some form or other, but never definitely undertaken and attempted, as e. g. in the Netherlands Reformed (Gereformeerde) churches, where it has been accomplished in the Holland language successfully for several years.

Now that we have passed thru the first stages of Americanization, which tends year by year to increase the need of approved, Reformed, English sermons for reading services, we believe, if properly arranged and executed, it could be successfully duplicated for our Christian Reformed Churches in America what has been no failure in the Netherlands.

We propose that some able Emeritus Theologians and active leaders in our churches (as e. g. our Seminary Professors, e. a.) who have more or less done with their sermon material, and have had a wider pastoral experience, be asked for contributions to a 52, say fifty-two, English sermon book of Heidelberg Catechism sermons, and for another one (ditto) of free select sermons, to begin the undertaking with.



That to procure a paying publication of these, all consistories be requested to assume responsibility of copies equal to half the number of its members, for use and distribution in its own congregation.

That Synod take steps to keep the publication price as low as is reasonably possible. (Classis Pacific.)

Classis Orange City hecht hare adhesie aan de bovenstaande instructie van Classis Pacific:

"That Synod take steps, possibly through a Committee to be appointed, to bring about the publication of English sermons sufficient in supply to answer the growing need for English reading services, etc."

(Classis Orange City.)

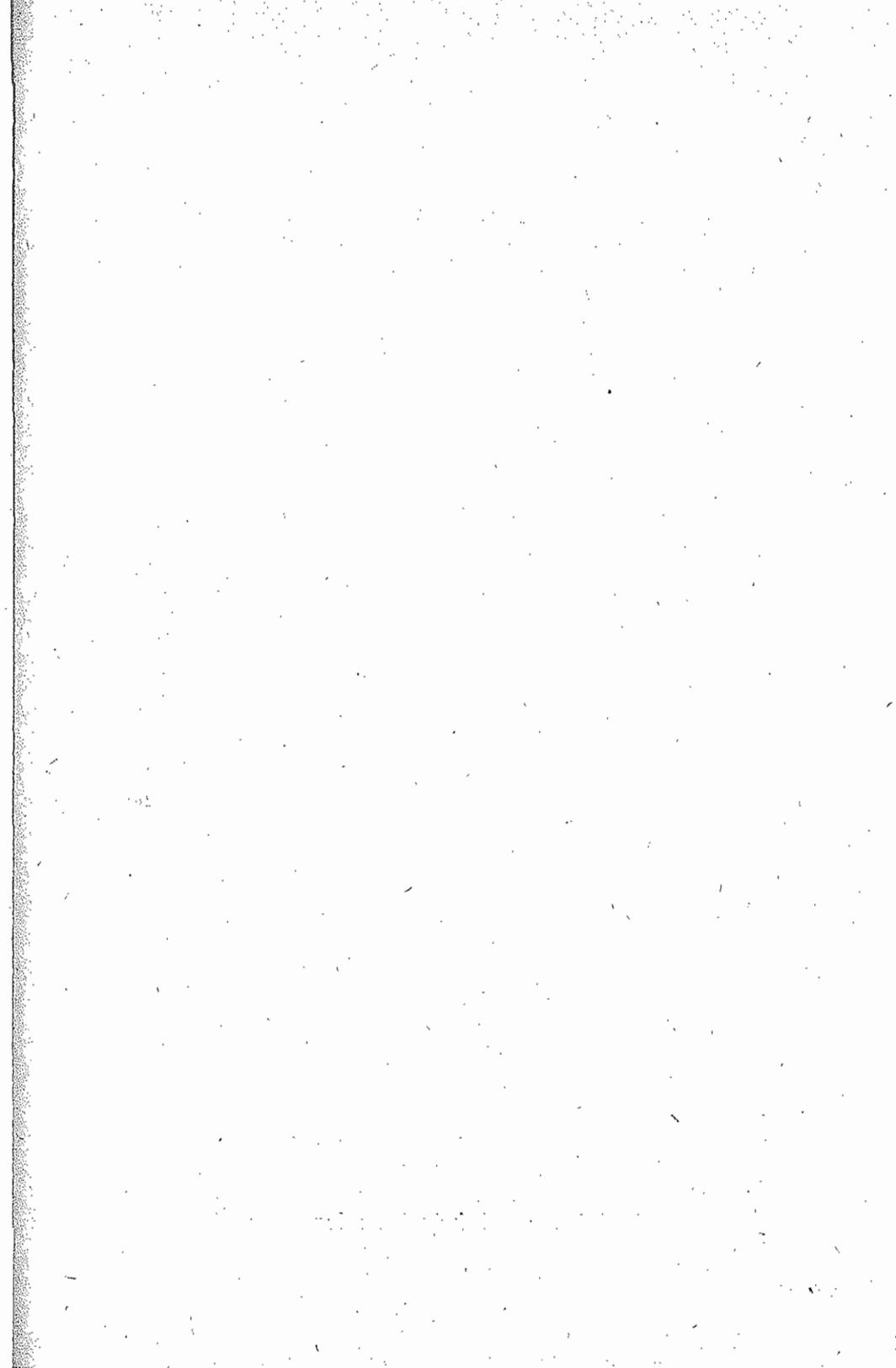
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#### IV. CHURCH ORDER, EMERITI MATTERS, ETC.

EMERITUS BOARD REPORT; EMERITI FUND COMM., REPORT V; COMMITTEE ON DIVORCE REPORTS; MINISTERIAL EXCHANGE, REPORT VII; STATUS REV. F. H. WEZEMAN, REPORT IV.

Classis California transmits to Synod the request by the four churches of New Mexico to be organized into a Classis of New Mexico. The grounds upon which this request is based are:

- a. The distance from New Mexico to California is so great that delegation of the missionaries to Classis takes them out of their work too long.
- b. Although some of the missionaries can travel to Classis on railway passes, large expenses are nevertheless incurred by our churches by sending delegates to California.
- c. The churches of New Mexico can point with a measure of just pride to the manner in which they have fulfilled their obligations to denominational funds. As the Lord prospers these churches they will continue this expression of loyalty to our Church and its institutions.



- d. There are problems which concern the work with the Indians which cannot be brought before the Classis of California, because these problems cannot be understood by people who are not acquainted with Indian life and character.
- e. The organization of a Classis of New Mexico will bring our church life closer to our Indian Christians and will promote the stability of the native constituency of our churches. It will enable native elders to assume a larger share of responsibility as they gradually become more acquainted with our system of church government.

(Classis California.)

Classis Grand Rapids West recommends Mrs. D. Weidenaar and family (widow of the late Rev. D. Weidenaar) to Synod for support from the Emeritus Fund to the extent of \$400.00 per annum.

(Classis Grand Rapids West.)

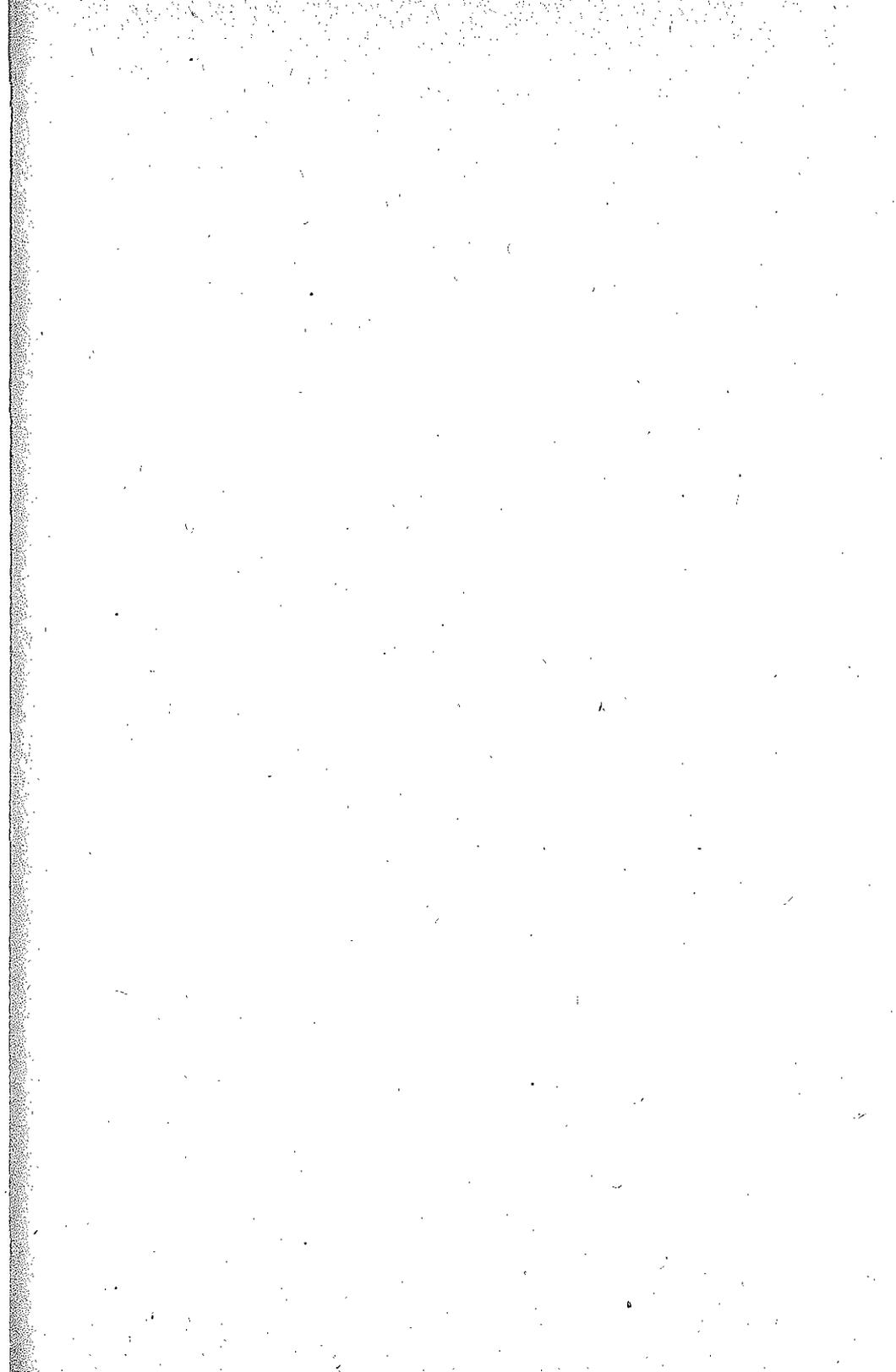
The Classis of Hackensack recommends to the Emeritus Fund the Rev. J. A. Westervelt for the sum of \$800.00, and Mrs. C. Van Houten for the sum of \$500.00. The amounts asked for are the same as the last two years.

(Classis Hackensack.)

*In re the Emeritus Fund.*

- a. Synod state definitely who IS and who is NOT entitled to support from the Emeritus Fund. Classis has specially in mind the principles expressed in Articles 12 and 13 of our Church Order, viz., "Inasmuch as a minister of the Word once lawfully called as described above, is bound to the service of the church for life," etc.

The Synod of 1932 in adopting part of the Majority Report accepted the following also: "The application of the principle evolved from Holy Scripture, requires that all ministers and their dependents should be fully



taken care of by the churches who have accepted them into their ministry for life," etc.

Synod define what it means by, "SERVICE OR MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH FOR LIFE."

- b. Inasmuch as Synod has adopted the differentiation between Relief and Sustentation (Acts 1932, pages 51-54) it has thereby implied the principle of right of pension. Now Synod has "tabled indefinitely" the recommendation of its committee to "allow ministers a proportionate claim on the Sustentation Fund according to his years of service" (Acts 1932, p. 52). Synod is petitioned to reconsider this and establish a definite scale based upon the number of years of actual service in the church.
- c. Synod consult reliable insurance companies in regard to rules and methods to be followed in the maintenance of our emeriti and their dependents, before final action is taken.

(Classis Hackensack.)

Classis Holland, upon instruction from East Saugatuck, recommends Mrs. H. M. Vander Ploeg to the Emeritus Fund to the amount of \$600 per annum.

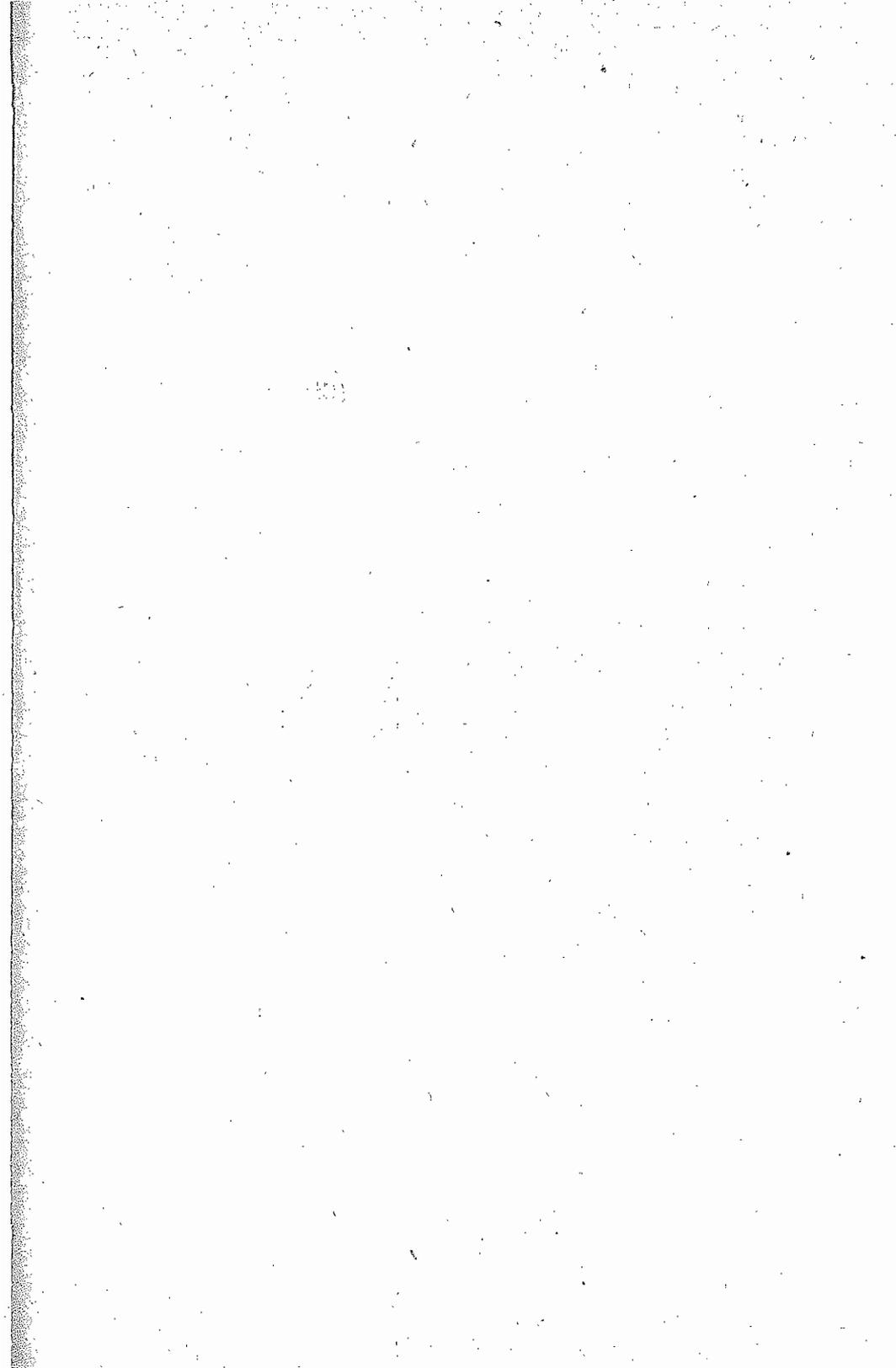
(Classis Holland.)

At the meeting of Classis Hudson, held Jan. 24, 1933, Rev. J. Timmermann, through his Consistory, presented his request for his emeritation on the grounds of age (68) and inability to take care of the pastoral work as it should be done, this emeritation to take effect during the Summer of 1933.

Classis Hudson reluctantly decided to grant this request (subject, of course, to the approval of Synod), and at the meeting of May 9, 1933, decided to recommend Rev. J. Timmermann for support in the amount of Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800) per annum.

We hereby ask the approbation of Synod.

(Classis Hudson.)



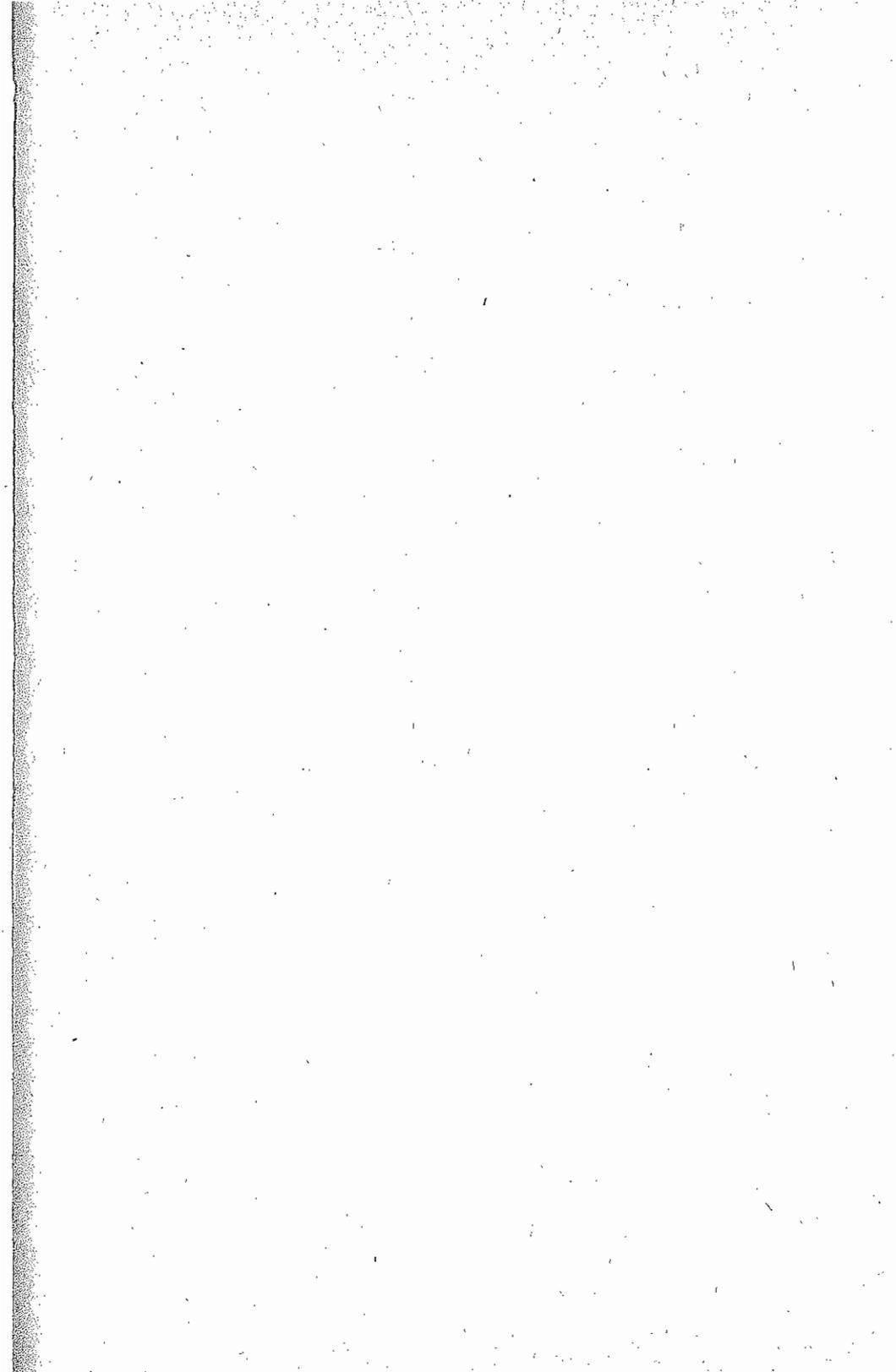
Classis Hudson at the meeting held Jan. 16, 1934, decided to recommend Mrs. William Kuipers to the Emeritus Board for support in the amount of Eight Hundred Dollars (\$800) per annum, and, if possible, that the maximum amount of \$1,000 per annum be granted, inasmuch as Mrs. Kuipers is a widow with six children, none of whom are working.

This request has already been made to the Emeritus Board.  
(Classis Hudson.)

Classis Illinois overtures Synod to reconsider Art. 73, par. 7, of the Acts of Synod, 1932, which article was tabled indefinitely. The recommendation of the Synodical Comm. for the Emeritus Fund was as follows: "Synod consider the possibility of allowing a minister with less than 35 years of service, and less than 65 years of age, a proportionate claim on the Sustentation Fund, according to his years of service. The Majority Report makes at present no provision for those who have served less than 35 years and are under 65 years of age. Their only recourse is to the Relief Fund. This seems to be out of harmony with the principle of right or pension which it has endeavored to maintain. On this account the Advisory Comm. feels that some provision out of the Sustentation Fund should be made for ministers who are emeritated earlier in their ministry."

Classis overtures Synod to *reconsider* the above proposal that ministers receive aid from the Emeritus Fund according to their years of service. At a time when there is a shortage of money in this Fund and the old ministers are not receiving their due, it seems no more than fair that men who have served the Church all their life should receive more consideration than those who are disabled after one or two years in the ministry. This happens so frequently in our Church that it is a matter of public comment.

Classis overtures Synod, that before any final action is taken in regard to *rules and regulations* for emeritated ministers the Synodical Comm. consult with a reputable firm of Actuaries, in order to determine the actual soundness of the system to be adopted, since the development of an efficient retirement and disability plan involves problems which we believe can only be solved by experts in this



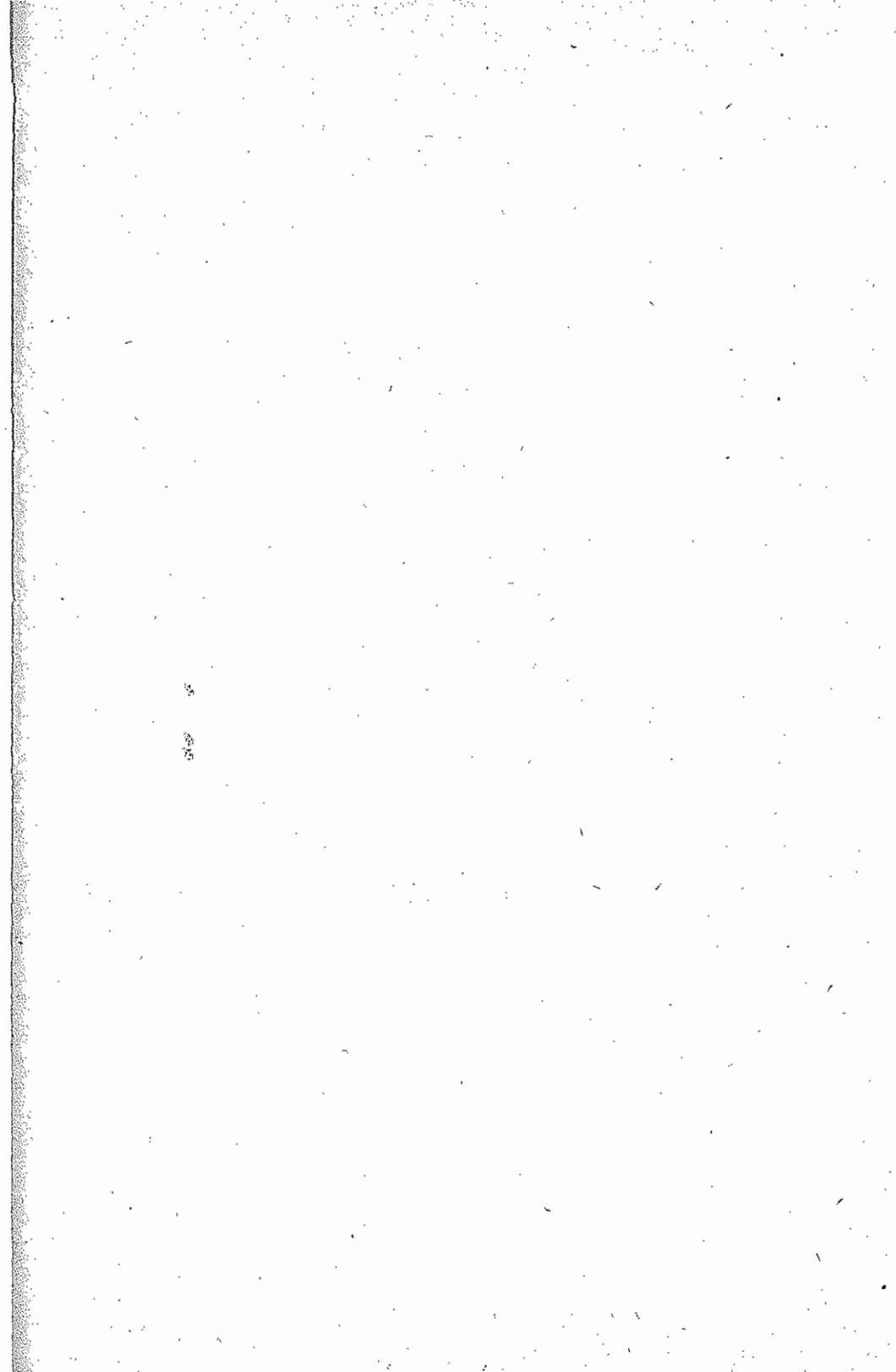
particular field. Many retirement and disability plans have utterly failed because they were not founded on a scientific basis. (Classis Illinois.)

Classis Muskegon overtures Synod not to adopt the advice of the committee in re the *Emeritus Fund*, to postpone the consideration of possible new ways to raise this fund to some possible future date. *Grounds:*

- a. The present financial status of this fund demands that something be done. According to the figures in the Yearbook only sixty per cent of the assessments have been paid in 1933. In Classis Muskegon alone nineteen of the twenty-five churches were in arrears to this fund.
- b. The undoubted unpopularity of this fund with many if not all of our people makes it imperative that some changes be made.

In order that in harmony with the foregoing something definite may be before Synod, Classis Muskegon overtures Synod to adopt the following plan:

1. The Synodical assessment for the Emeritus Fund shall be \$1.75 per family.
2. Every minister shall contribute to this fund every year five per cent of his salary above \$800.00. Ministers who receive \$800.00 or less shall contribute \$5.00 per year to this fund.
3. Synod appoint a committee with instructions to ascertain whether this arrangement is feasible or not and to report to the Synod of 1936 its findings with possible corrections or improvements that may be made in case it does not prove feasible. *Grounds:*
  - a. The income of this fund shows that the present assessment is too high for most of our churches. This makes a reduction necessary shall not some of our churches become altogether discouraged because of mounting arrears. The present assessment may be retained, but it loses its effectiveness as arrears mount. This is evident if we but notice one concrete case of mounting arrears. At the



Synod of 1930 one Classis was reported to be in arrears \$100.00. This same Classis was \$1,800.00 short in 1932. According to the latest report this Classis is now \$3,600.00 in debt to this fund. These facts must be faced.

- b. With the reduction it can be expected that the churches will make a greater effort to do all in their power to raise the assessment.
- c. The plan that ministers shall contribute to this fund is in harmony with the fact that Synod of 1932 instructed the committee to recognize the possibility that a certain percentage of the minister's salary be devoted to this fund. It will certainly do much to meet those who object to the present arrangement, and with the reduced assessment may do much to restore this fund to a place in the hearts of our people.

(Classis Muskegon.)

Classis Wisconsin, in hare zitting van April 10 en 11 te Randolph, Wis., schonk aan Rev. J. O. Vos op zijn eigen verzoek, welk verzoek gesteund werd door den kerkeraad van Kenosha, eervol emeritaat, insluitende gewone ondersteuning uit de Emeritus Kas, ingaande Juli 1, 1934. Gronden: de klimmende jaren. Hiermede legt de Classis dit werk der Synode voor met het verzoek voor approbatie.

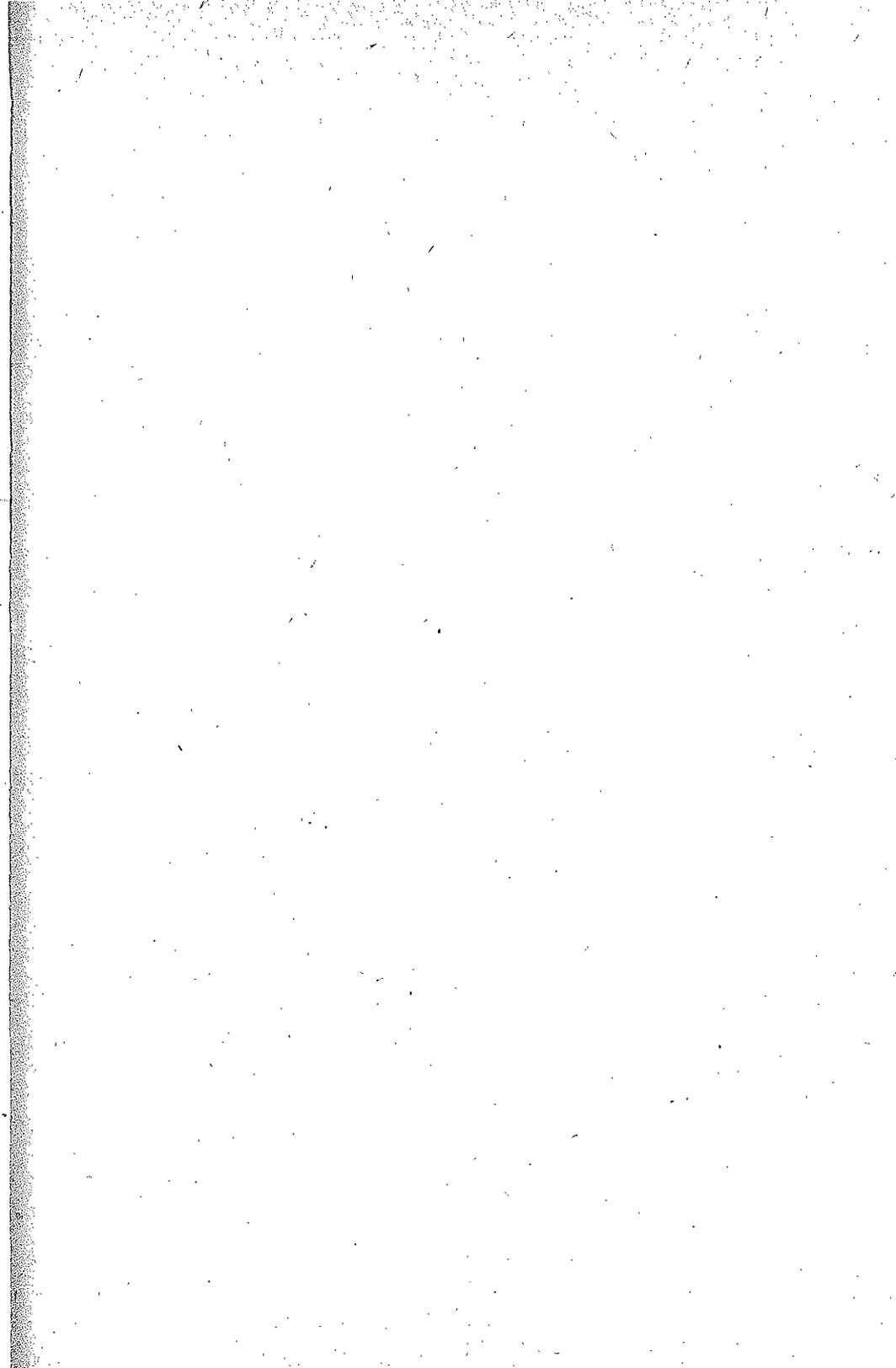
(Classis Wisconsin.)

Classis Wisconsin, in hare zitting van October 11 en 12, 1932, te Oostburg, Wis., schonk aan Rev. Wm. Borgman op zijn eigen verzoek, welk verzoek gesteund werd door den kerkeraad van Alto, eervol emeritaat ingaande November 1, 1932. Gronden voor bovengenoemd verzoek:

1. Zwakheid des lichaams, en
2. de moeilijkheid om het Engelsch te gebruiken in den dienst.

Hiermede legt de Classis Wisconsin dit werk der Synode voor met het verzoek voor approbatie.

(Classis Wisconsin.)



Classis Wisconsin komt met het vriendelijk en tevens dringend verzoek om het besluit der Synode van 1928, te vinden op bladzijde 134 der Acta en luidende: "dat voortaan een nominatie door een kerkeraad waarop de naam of namen voorkomen van een predikant of predikanten uit eene andere Kerk dan de Chr. Geref., zulk een nominatie de goedkeuring moet hebben niet alleen van den Consulent, maar ook van de genabuurde Deputaten ad Examina," te herroepen. *Gronden:*

1. Dat besluit is in strijd met Artikel 30 onzer K. O. in verband met Artikel 5 en zelfs ook Artikel 9.
2. Het geeft den consulent een autocratische macht die met zijn consulentschap geheel in strijd is en dringt den consulent iets op waarover eerst de Classis zeker te beschikken heeft.
3. Eene Synode heeft geene bevoegdheid over door een Classis aangestelden consulent.
4. De verhouding is onbillijk, één consulent tegenover drie deputaten, eene onbillijkheid in strijd met Art. 84 onzer K. O.; en
5. In alle andere gevallen hebben deputaten ad examina slechts "adviseerende stem," het besluit van 1928 kent hun in deze zaak een "beslissende stem" toe, en dat zelfs geheel buiten den betrokken Classis om.

Op bovengenoemde gronden verzoekt Classis Wisconsin herroeping van het besluit van 1928.

(Classis Wisconsin.)

Classis Orange City overtures Synod to appoint a Committee to make a study of the question of unpaid assessments for the Theological School and Emeritus Funds in order to come to a fair conception of the matter. *Grounds:*

- a. There is a general tendency to regard the unpaid assessments as debts.
- b. It is very much a question whether these unpaid assessments may be held as debts when there is insufficient income to pay.



- c. The unpaid assessments are becoming such an unbearable burden to many congregations, that they despair of ever being able to pay them, and the desire to contribute is beginning to lag on that account.
- d. There is a widespread feeling that payment of many debts of Calvin College and of the claims against the Emeritus Fund should no longer be demanded.

(Classis Orange City.)

Classis Orange City beveelt aan bij de Synode voor ondersteuning uit de Emeritus Kas de volgende:

Rev. J. Gulker.....	\$900.00
Mrs. Schultz .....	200.00
Mrs. H. J. Heynen.....	600.00
Mrs. P. Van Vliet.....	500.00
Mrs. A. W. Meyer.....	150.00

(Classis Orange City.)

Classis requests support from the Emeritus Fund as follows:

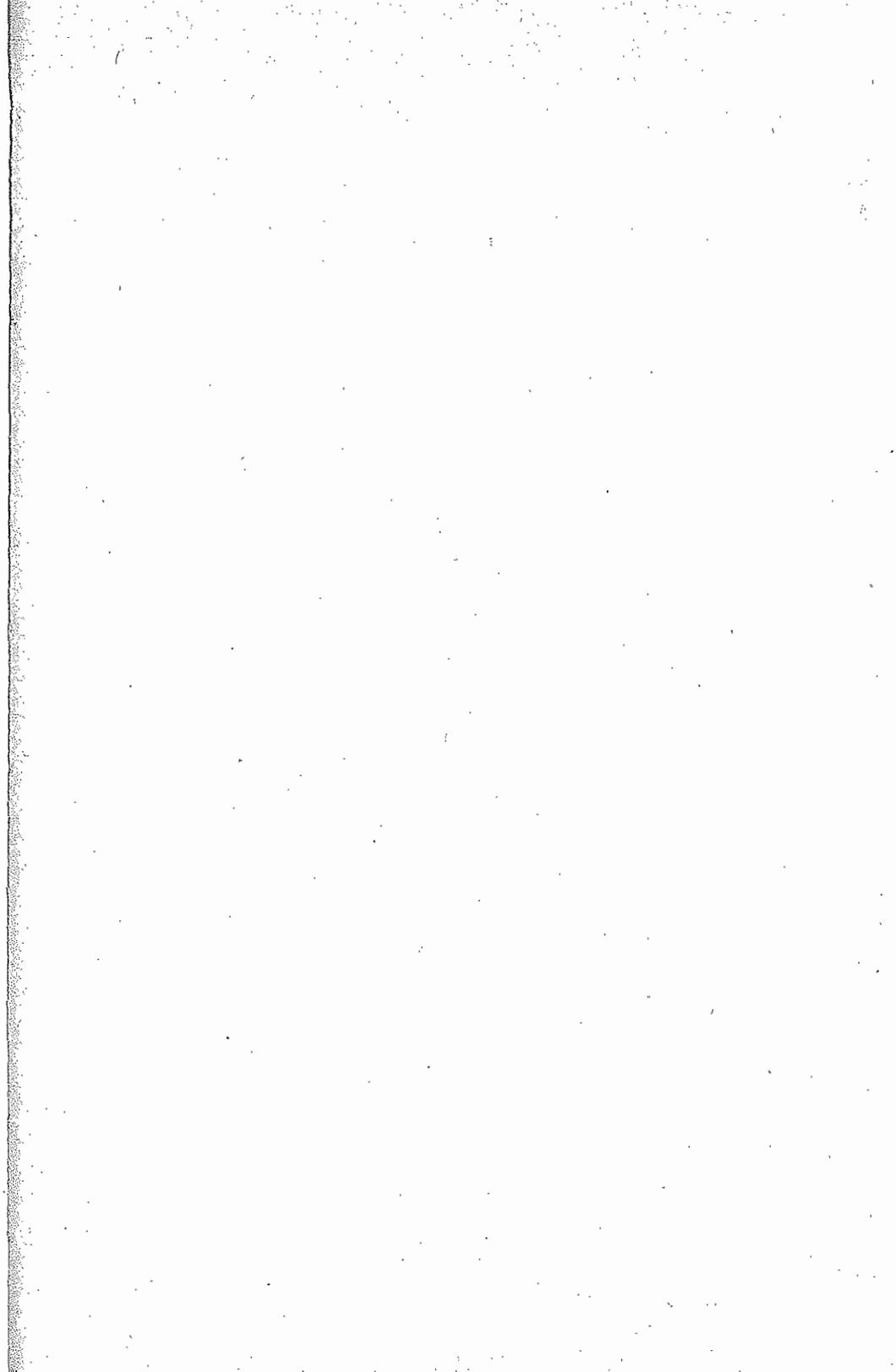
Rev. J. Plesscher, Sr.....	\$800.00
Mrs. J. H. Gruessing.....	700.00
Mrs. C. Bode .....	600.00
Mrs. G. L. Hoefker.....	400.00
Mrs. J. G. Plesscher.....	300.00

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

Classis Ostfriesland overtures Synod to adopt the following; "That *all* of our ministers in active service in our Church anticipating support from the Emeritus Fund for themselves or their dependents be requested to deposit a certain per cent of the annual salary in this Fund, based upon the years of service (exemptions possible in rare cases for weighty reasons, passed upon by the Emeritus Board, and published in their official report) as follows:

1 to 10 years, 3%; 11 to 25 years, 2%; the remainder, 1%. In return for such co-operation Synod pledge an annual income (as may be decreed from time to time) to the Emeriti." *Grounds:*

1. A better relationship will be created between the churches and this Fund.



2. A handsome income will be added to this Fund.
3. It will dispense with the "embarrassing investigations" as to one's needs.
4. It does seem just to ask of those who receive benefit from this Fund to make special contributions.

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

Classis Pacific verzoekt de Synode om de emeriteering goed te keuren van de leeraren I. Westra, M. Borduin en D. H. Muyskens op de volgende pronden:

- a. Ds. I. Westra, gezondheidsredenen die hem noodzaken geruimen tijd rust te nemen.
- b. Ds. M. Borduin, voortdurende krankheid zijner gade, en vrij gevorderden leeftijd van den broeder.
- c. Ds. D. H. Muyskens, gezondheidsredenen die hem noodzaken rust te nemen.

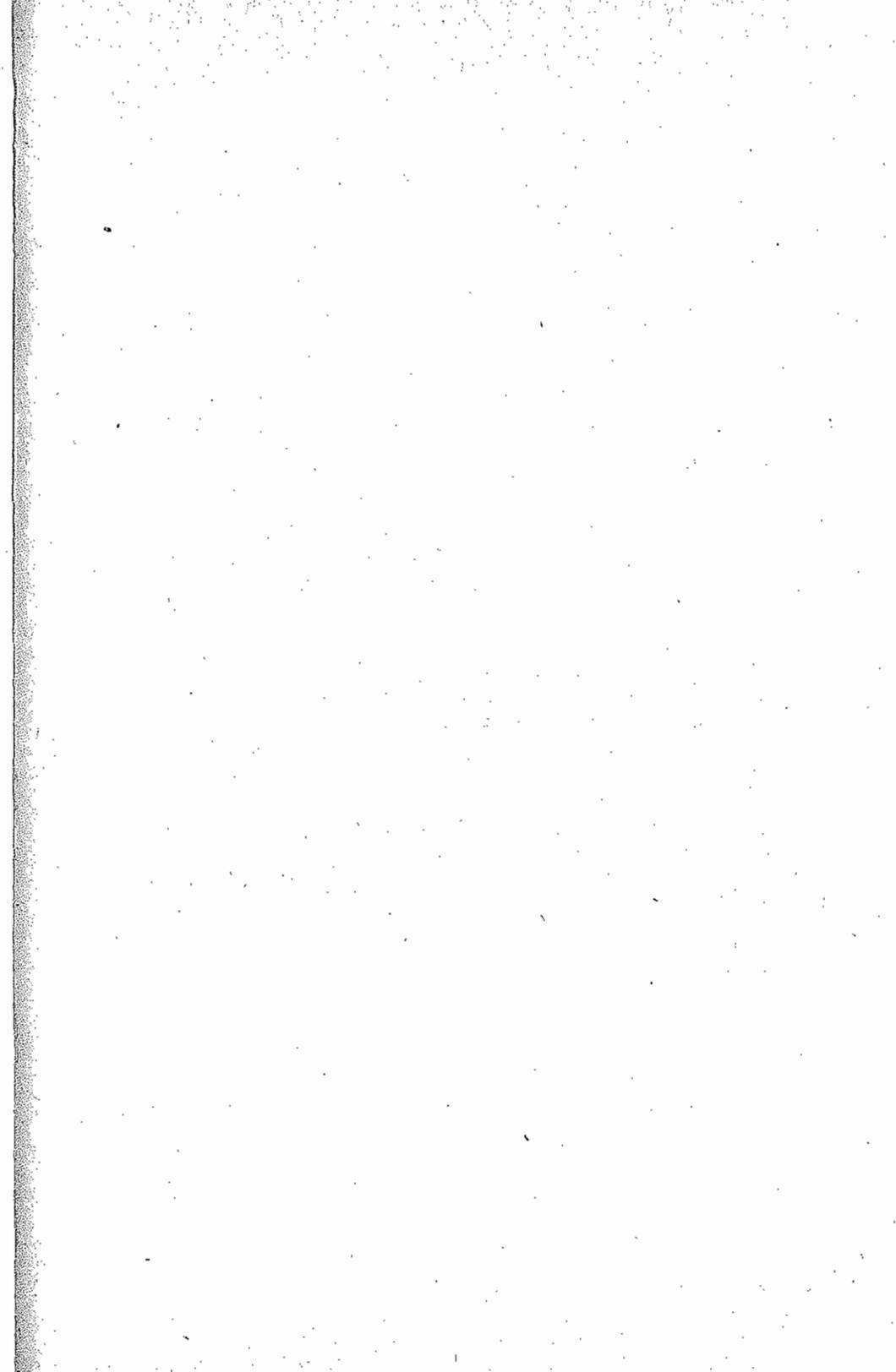
(Classis Pacific.)

Classis Pella verzoekt dat de Synode goedkeure de emeriteering van Ds. J. J. Dyk, op grond van lichamelijke zwakheden en neurotische ongesteldheid in verband met de heerschede spannende toestanden in de gemeente welke, met het oog op zijn lichamelijke toestand, het uiterst bezwaarlijk maken om met vrucht langer te kunnen dienen in de gemeente van Tracy.

Ook verzoekt Classis dat de Synode inwillige de aanvraag tot steun uit de Emeritus Kas ten bedrage van \$1,100.00, welke aan de Emeritus Board gezonden is. Deze som wordt verzocht voor Ds. J. J. Dyk met het oog op ziekte in zijn huisgezin.

(Classis Pella.)

Synod of 1930 permitted "the status of the Rev. J. S. Dykstra as a minister in good standing to continue until the Synod of 1934. *Grounds:* (1) The Rev. Dykstra was deprived of his church through no fault of his own; (2) The Rev. Dykstra declares it is his desire to remain in the ministry; (3) The Reformed Churches have always proceeded slowly in depriving one of his status as a minister in the Church" (Decision recorded in Acta, Art. 139.)



The Rev. J. S. Dykstra requested Classis Pella at her March session: "to seek at the forthcoming Synod of 1934 a continuation, if possible an indefinite continuation, of my ministerial status." For reasons mentioned in his letter, the brother also writes: "I therefore waive all rights to any financial support which ordinarily is given to emeritus ministers."

Classis Pella hereby petitions Synod to grant the request of Rev. J. S. Dykstra, and sends the brother's own letter and a related statement of his own (Dennis Avenue) Consistory for information.

(Classis Pella.)

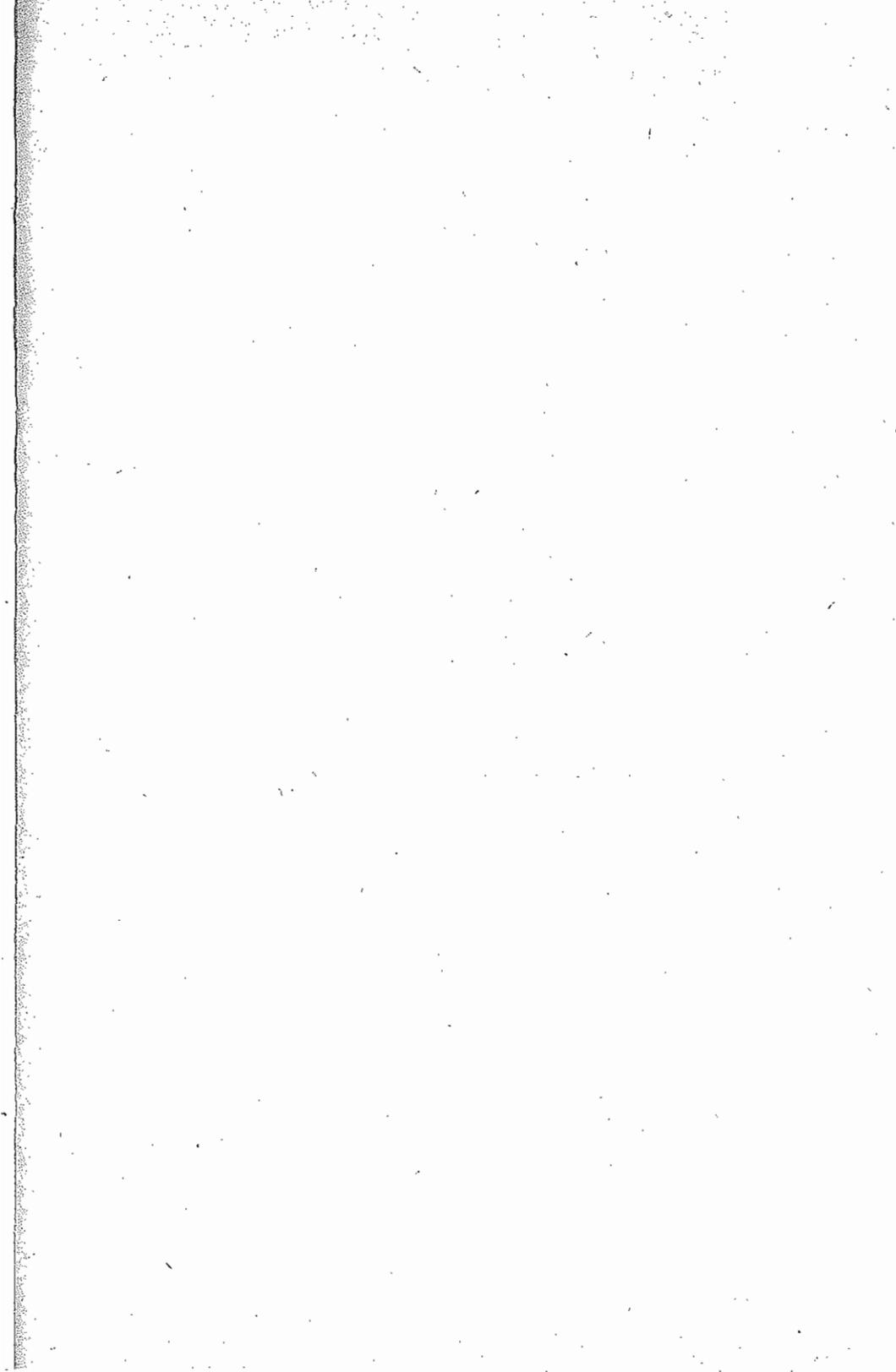
Classis Sioux Center stelt voor aan de Synode om een deputaat in elke Classis te hebben voor de Emeritus Kas, opdat de Kerk meer meeleve in deze zaak.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

Waar op de classicale vergaderingen bij de rondvraag naar Art. 41 der K. O. ook gevraagd wordt of de scholen onderhouden worden; en waar dit begrip "scholen" blijkbaar door velen onderscheiden wordt opgevat, zoodat sommigen daardoor verstaan de lagere Chr. Scholen, en anderen ook of alleen middelbare of hogere Chr. Scholen; en waar dit verschil van opvatting somtijds op classicale vergaderingen aanleiding geeft tot onaangename discussies en misverstand; en waar door dat feit de rondvraag naar Art. 41 verzwakt wordt en de steun voor het Chr. Onderwijs verzwakt wordt:

Dringt de Classis er bij de Synode op aan om een Comm. te benoemen om op de volgende Synode te rapporteeren over deze vragen:

- a. Welke scholen bij de rondvraag naar Art. 41 bedoeld zijn.
- b. Wat er verstaan moet worden door "De Scholen onderhouden"; of dit ziet op het hebben en onderhouden van een plaatselijke school, of op medewerking aan scholen buiten eigen gemeente, zooals Calvin College en Seminarie of andere.



- c. Wat de Classis heeft te doen indien men naar het oordeel der Classis niet naar vermogen arbeidt tot het onderhouden van zulke scholen.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

Classis Sioux Center having become cognizant of a letter of the Clerk to Synod to the Stated Clerk of Classis, begs Synod to express its disapproval of the irregularity on the part of the Synodical Committee in urging the various Classes to act contrary to the Church Order and the decision of Synod of 1932 in re delegates to Synod.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

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## V. LITURGICAL MATTERS

### REVISION LITURGICAL FORMS AND WORSHIP IMPROVEMENT (REPORTS VIII, IX, X, XI)

De Classis besluit de Synode te verzoeken om de Nederlandsch-sprekende gemeenten onzer kerken de vrijheid te geven om de gezangen die op de laatste Synode der Geref. Kerken in Nederland zijn aangenomen, in den eeredienst te zingen.

(Classis Pacific.)

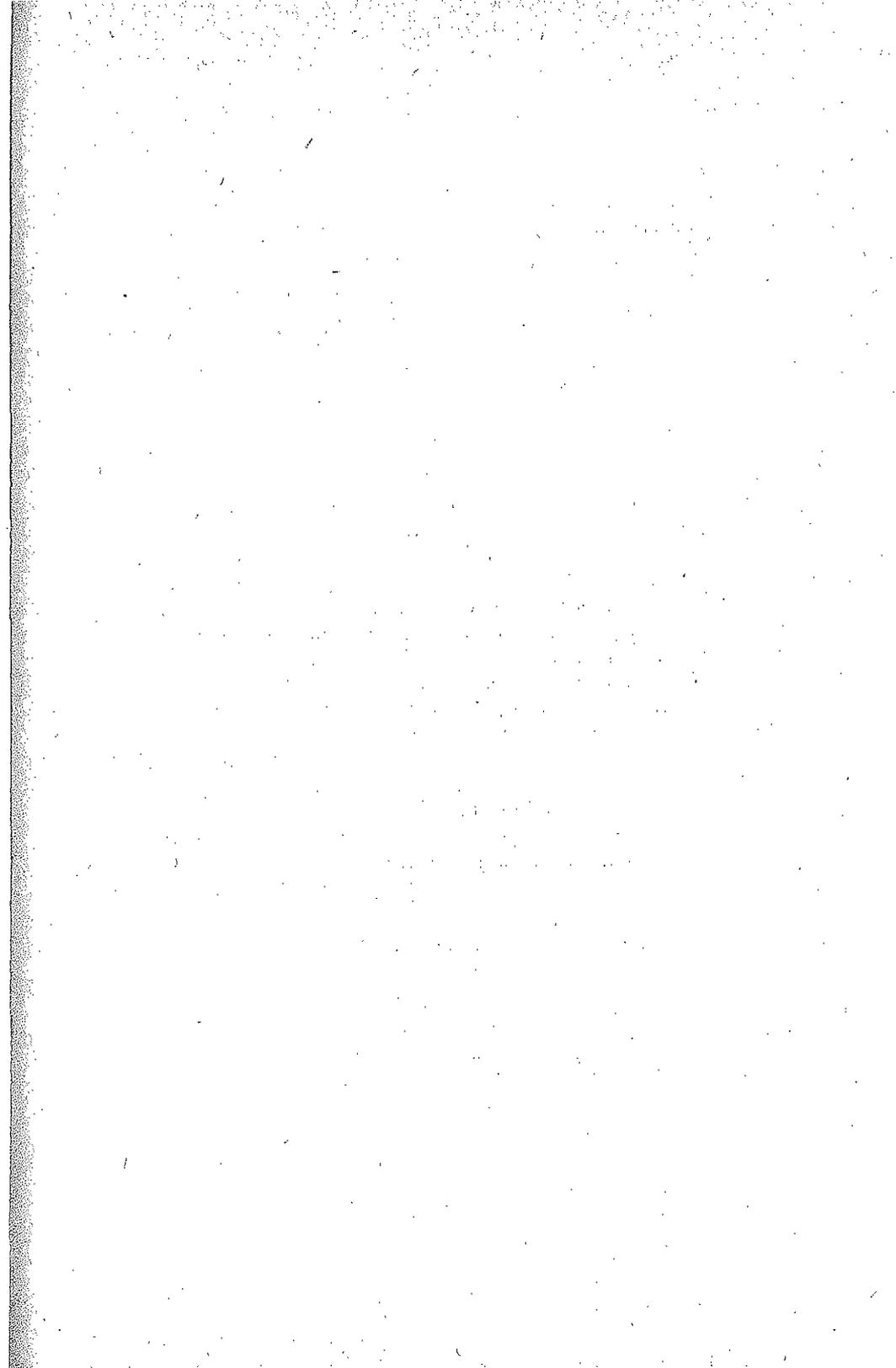
Classis Sioux Center verzoekt de Synode om de uitdrukking in de Twaalf Artikelen onzer Geloofsbelijdenis (Am. taal, zie p. 109, Agenda, Part I, 1934) "*Maker of heaven and earth*" te veranderen in "*Creator of heaven and earth.*"

*Gronden:*

1. Omdat dit met de Nederlandsche taal overeenkomt.
2. Omdat het woord *Creator* de scheppingsgedachte, dat is, de gedachte van een scheppen uit niets meer tot haar recht doet komen. (Classis Sioux Center.)

Classis Sioux Center suggests that the Nicene Creed and the Creed of Athanasius be given a proper place in our new Psalter-Hymnal. *Grounds:*

1. These Creeds are a distinct part of our spiritual heritage and are worthy for that reason of being printed in our Psalter.



2. They are valuable formulations of the truth of God's Word, crystallized under the guidance of the Holy Spirit during the battle of our spiritual forefathers against false doctrine.
3. Aside from being referred to in Art. IX of our Belgic Confession, it is advisable that these Creeds be printed in full in our Psalters so that our people may have ready access to them.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

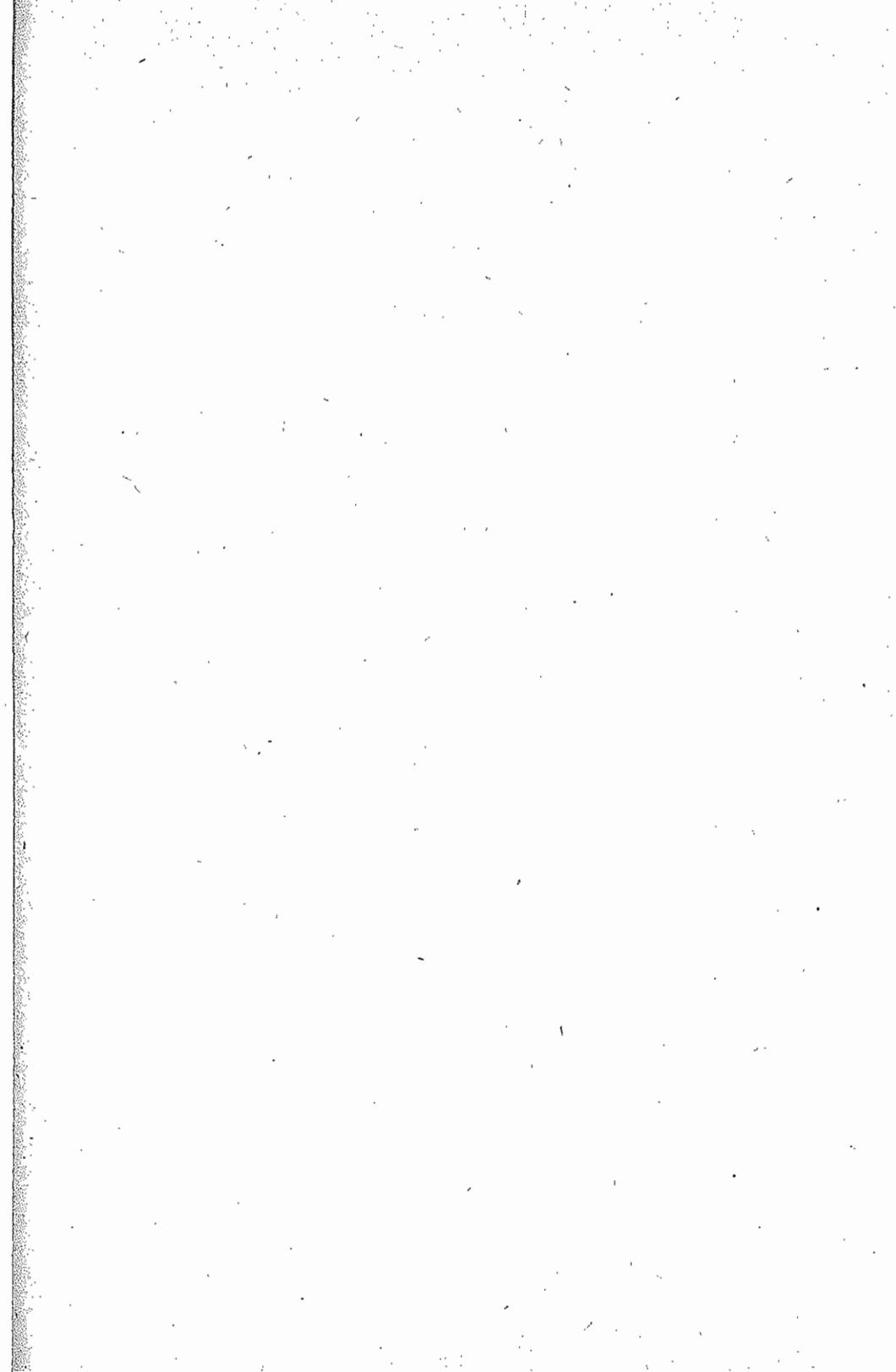
*Instructie over het doopen van aangenomen kinderen:*

Waar het doopen of niet doopen van aangenomen kinderen in sommige gemeenten moeite aangebracht heeft; en waar die moeite voorkomt uit het feit dat men kinderen aanneemt van wie men niet weet of ze in de lijn des verbonds zijn geboren of van wie men weet dat ze in die lijn niet geboren zijn, en voor wie men de doop begeert; en waar er gewoonlijk wel gelegenheid is voor het aannemen van kinderen die in de lijn des verbonds geboren zijn; en waar verbondskinderen bij echtparen die een kind wenschen aan te nemen de voorkeur behooren te hebben, dewijl God toch Zijn zegen beloofd in de lijn des verbonds; dringt de Classis er bij de Synode op aan dat de Synode uitspreke: Dat geloovige echtelieden die kinderen wenschen aan te nemen, beslist voorkeur behooren te geven aan kinderen van welke men weet dat ze in de lijn des verbonds geboren zijn.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

De Classis verzoekt de Synode advies te geven aangaande het volgende:

Bij welke gelegenheid (of gelegenheden) is het naar onze Gereformeerde opvatting dat de *Zegen*, zooals wij die gewoon zijn aan het einde onzer diensten, zal uitgesproken worden? Zal men het alleen doen daar waar bediening des Woords, onder toezicht van een plaatselijke Kerkeraad plaats had? Of mag het ook bij andere gelegenheden gebeuren, b. v. bij het sluiten van een huwelijk, op Schoolvergaderingen, op Zendingsfeesten? Gronden voor dit verzoek:



1. In de Amerikaansche kerkwereld is men zeer vrij en kwistig in het uitspreken van den Zegen; zelfs bij gelegenheden die kwalijk een beslist godsdienstige kleur hebben, geschiedt het. Niet gaarne zagen we dat onze kerken hierin gingen volgen. Daarom achten wij het gewenscht dat de Synode de juiste lijnen aangeve.
2. Er schijnt in de praktijk geen eenheid te zijn onder ons aangaande deze zaak.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

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## VI. VARIA

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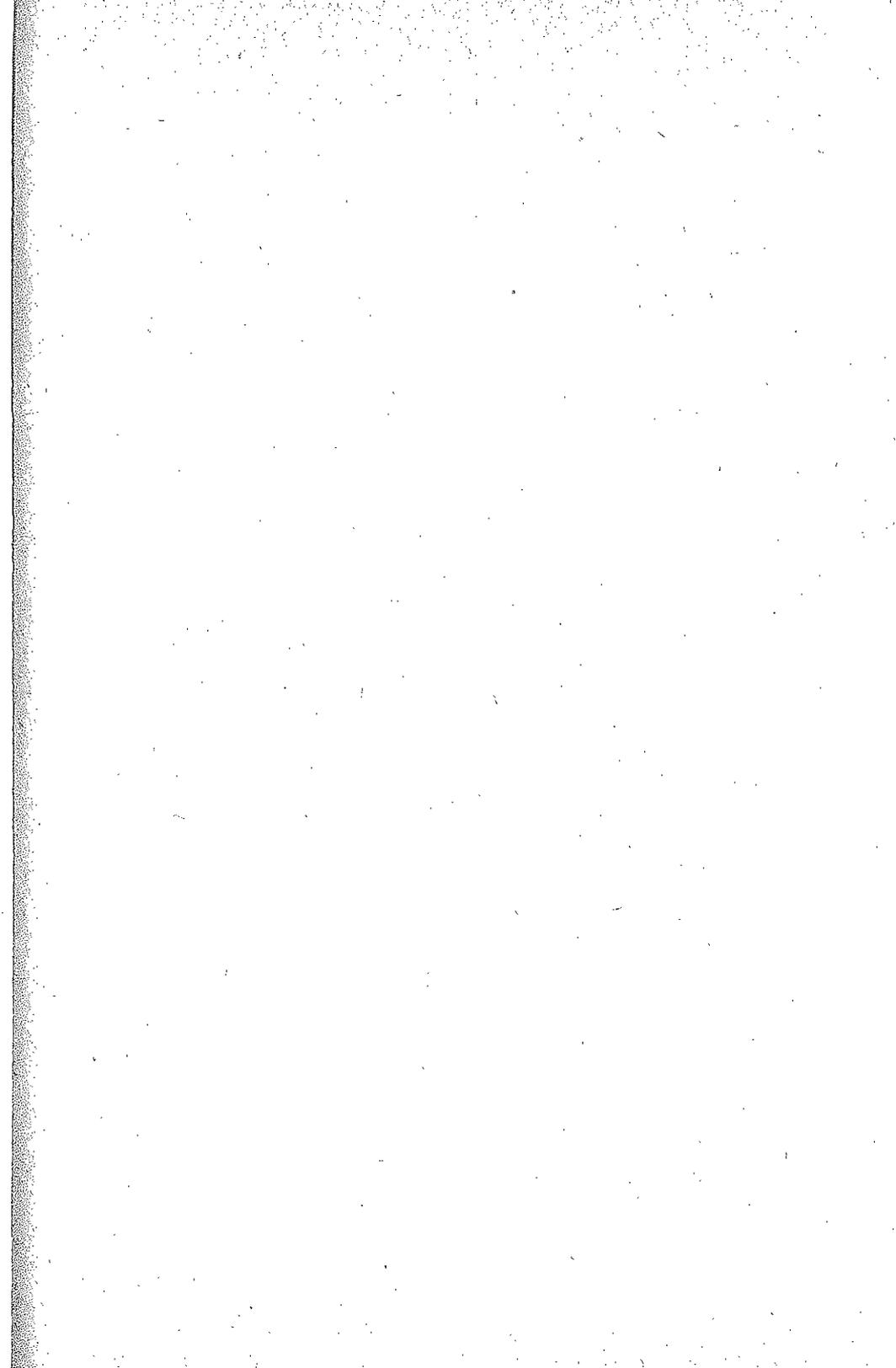
REPORTS REPRESENTATIVE AM. BIBLE SOCIETY (Report XVII); CHICAGO TRACT SOCIETY; NATIONAL CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION; LORD'S DAY ALLIANCE, ETC.  
 RULES FOR SYNODICAL PROCEDURE (Report XII); REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL SYNOD OR CONGRESS, REFORMED CHURCHES  
 (Report XXIV)

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Classis Orange City submits the overture: That Synod reconsider its decision in regard to Mutual Church Insurance, and decide to have Mutual Insurance on church properties (churches, schools, and parsonages). *Grounds:*

1. The objections, which were mentioned at the Synod of 1922, were of such a character that they lose their meaning by the proposed plan.
2. Much money could be saved for the individual congregations by having such a Mutual Insurance.
3. The money which is now paid for insurance on church properties goes to the large companies of the world, whereas with a mutual insurance organization it would remain within the Church.
4. It would be more in accordance with the teachings of Christ: "Bear ye one another's burdens."

(Classis Orange City.)



The Consistory of Lafayette presented the following overture to the meeting of Classis Illinois in session Jan. 16, 1934. The Classis, however, declined to concur in it in its entirety and therefore Lafayette's Consistory decided, with the consent of the Classis, to send it direct to the Synod of 1934 as follows:

"In view of the fact that the repeal of national prohibition makes the question of the use of strong drink no longer a legal but an exclusively moral and religious one,

"In view of the known dangers associated with the frequent and continued use of strong drink; and

"In view of the new perils to which the repeal of prohibition exposes particularly our youth, the Classis overtures Synod:

- "1. To issue a timely warning against the frequent and regular use of intoxicants.
- "2. To urge our ministers to preach from time to time wisely but firmly against the frequent and regular use of intoxicants.
- "3. To solemnly warn ministers, office-bearers, and other leaders in the Church against the use of intoxicants either in their own home or elsewhere, lest they should cause others to stumble; and
- "4. To strongly disapprove of the use of intoxicants on part of the members of the church, lest the use should lead to abuse and intemperance."

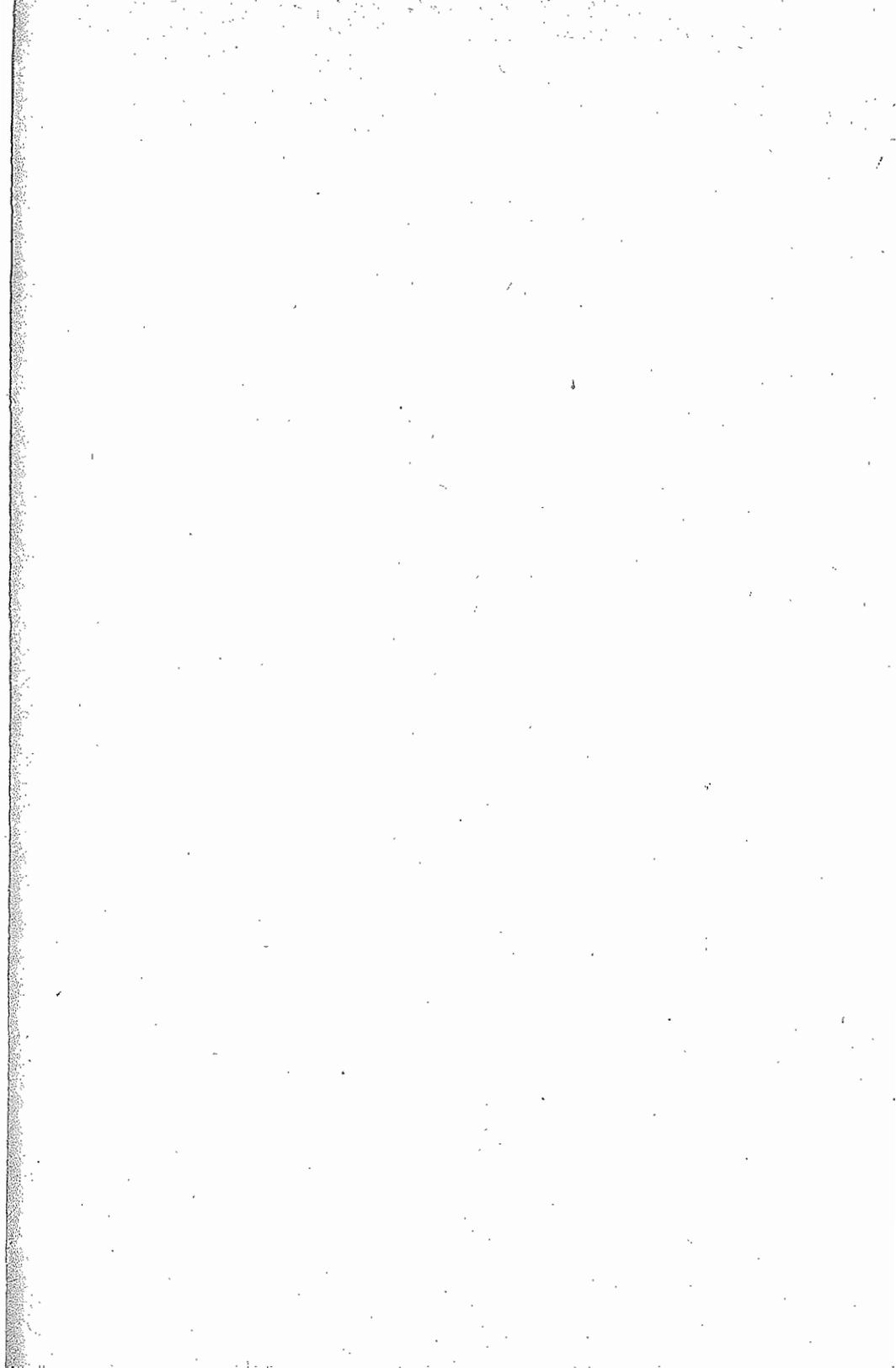
(Consistory Lafayette.)

This Classis decided to forward above overture to Synod in this form:

"In view of the fact that the repeal of national prohibition makes the question of the use of strong drink no longer a legal, but an exclusively moral and religious one;

"in view of the known dangers associated with the frequent and continued use of strong drink;

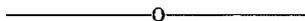
"and in view of the new perils to which the repeal of prohibition exposes particularly our youth;



“Classis overtures Synod:

- “1. To issue a timely warning against the sin of drunkenness.
- “2. To urge our ministers to preach from time to time, wisely but firmly, on the evils of strong drink.”

(Classis Illinois.)



## VII. PROTESTS AND APPEALS

J. Sytsma, Evergreen Park, Ill.

F. W. Van Oyen vs. Consistory South Holland I.

Nine confessing members, Graafschap church.

Appeal to Synod, by daughters of the late Mrs. L. Ensing.

Protest van A. Godeke.

Protests vs. Prinsburg et al.

Protest F. Nymeyer, Chicago, Ill.

## REPORT XXV.

### REPORT ON THE ECCLESIASTICAL STATUS OF PERSONS UNBIBLICALLY DIVORCED AND REMARIED

#### (The Minority Opinion)

#### OUTLINE OF ARGUMENT

- I. THE POSITION OF THE MAJORITY COMMITTEE STATED AND ANALYZED.
- II. CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST ADOPTING THIS POSITION.
  - A. It apparently rests upon an insecure exegetical basis.
    1. The position of the committee.
    2. Its argumentation linked to Mt. 19:9b; Mt. 14:4; Rom. 7:1-4; I Cor. 7:10, 11; Deut. 24:1-4.
  - B. Its claim that the guilty as well as the innocent party to a divorce for adultery may remarry is untenable.
    1. This view is untenable on exegetical grounds.  
—The exceptive clause passages interpreted. Zahn quoted.
    2. This view untenable in the light of historical and ethical testimony.
  - C. Its stand that in a case of non-biblical divorce the marriage bond is completely dissolved by the remarriage of one of the divorcees cannot be maintained.
    1. The argument on this score offered by the Fakkema petition.
    2. The moral inconsistency involved in the attitude of office bearers, on the assumption of this position.
  - D. Its implied assumption that the Church ought to recognize as valid in its sphere any remarriage after unbiblical divorce contracted under civil law is open to serious objection.
  - E. Its final claim that the Church should admit to its fellowship all unbiblically divorced and subsequently remarried persons provided they show sincere repentance, is untenable.
- III. THE MINORITY POSITION.
  - A. As summarized in a few theses.
  - B. As confirmed by the stand of other churches.
  - C. As reaffirming the present stand of the Church but allowing for certain definite exceptions to the general rule.
- IV. ADVICE TO SYNOD.

*To the Synod of 1934.*

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF SYNOD:

**I**T is with sincere regret that I inform you that I found it impossible to concur in the opinion of the majority of the brethren of the "Divorce Committee," to which the

Synod of 1932 saw fit to appoint me. I hereby submit a minority opinion.

The question concerns the ecclesiastical standing of parties illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried. Stated a bit more accurately and in the form of a question: Can persons who have been divorced upon a ground (or, grounds) which the Church does not recognize as biblically valid, and who have thereupon married any party other than their original consort, be accorded the rights and privileges of Church membership during the lifetime of their original consort? And, if so, on what conditions?

#### I. THE POSITION OF THE MAJORITY COMMITTEE STATED AND ANALYZED.

The majority of the Committee present the same advice as offered by them (at that time constituting the entire Committee) to the Synod of 1932. It reads as follows:

“Persons divorced on non-biblical grounds and remarried, can enjoy the full rights and privileges of membership in the Church of Christ if they sincerely repent of and confess their sins. The sin of unbiblical divorce must be confessed by the guilty party or parties. The first party to remarry must confess his(her) adulterous act of contracting a second marriage.”

There are no grounds affixed to this advice. These are found throughout the body of the report. They are part of the entire chain of reasoning presented by the majority committee. This reasoning is, from the very nature of the question, complicated and involved. It will possibly aid us in making clear our agreement and disagreement if we skeletonize the argumentation in the majority report and present what we conceive to be the chain of reasoning upon which the advice rests.

There appears to be one basic assumption underlying all the reasoning in the majority report. This is the key to the entire argument. This key assumption is a double-headed one and has been expressed most clearly and explicitly in two passages of the 1932 divorce report. No one, I trust, will consider it beside the point if I quote

that report in this connection, when it is recalled that the conclusion reached, the line of argumentation presented, and, in fact, even the membership itself, of the 1932 committee and the 1934 majority committee are all one and the same.

In that report we read (p. 121, Agenda, 1932, Part I): "This Committee takes the position that adultery in the form of a second marriage gives the same freedom to the other party as would adultery committed before divorce has been granted. Jesus, in the passage in question, speaks of adultery in the most general sense. He does not limit the meaning of the word to any particular form of adultery. Nor have we any right to limit its meaning in any way. Adultery, any adultery, all adultery, gives the right to the innocent party to leave the other." And on page 117: "But the question of remarriage rights is determined solely by the question whether the first marriage is still in force. If it is, neither party has the right to remarry. If not, both parties are free. A tie that does not bind the one can impossibly bind the other. After the first marriage has been legally dissolved, in the sight both of God and man, both parties are in the unmarried or single state, and have the natural right to seek a mate." And then another formulation of the position embodied in this second quotation, but now applied to the case of unbiblical divorce, is found on p. 122, "But after Mr. B. marries again, Mrs. B. has biblical right to leave him in the full sense of the word. Her separated state has become legitimate through his act of adultery. And a marriage tie that no longer binds her can, from the very nature of the case, no longer bind him."

These passages contain the key assumption of both the 1932 and the 1934 majority report. I think we may state the assumption in this form: *All adultery gives the right to the "innocent" party to remarry; and any such adultery, once it is committed, is the sufficient moral ground before God for the complete cancellation of the previous marital tie and its obligations.*

(Note: It is, of course, understood that in the case of a divorce for adultery, the adultery precedes the divorce; whereas in the case of remarriage after non-biblical divorce, the act of the first remarriage is the adultery which follows the divorce. In the former

case, the actual cancellation of all previous marital obligations takes place at the time of the granting of the divorce; in the latter case, this takes place after the divorce, at the time of the consummation of the second marriage. But (and this is the important point) in both cases it is held that adultery, any adultery, is the sufficient moral ground, the ground before God, for the cancellation of the previous marital tie and its obligations.)

Now the majority committee's chain of reasoning, including this key assumption, I believe may be stated as follows.

*It is assumed that:*

All adultery gives the right to the "innocent" party to remarry; and any such adultery, once it is committed, is the sufficient moral ground before God for the complete cancellation of the previous marital tie and its obligations.

*From this it follows that:*

In case of a divorce for adultery:

1. Such a divorce completely dissolves the marriage bond before God; and
2. The guilty as well as the innocent party has the right before God to remarry.

*From this it further follows that:*

In case of a divorce on non-biblical ground:

1. The first remarriage, seeing it is an act of adultery, completely dissolves the original marriage bond before God; and
2. The second party does not sin in remarriage.

*And from this it follows finally that:*

The Church has no right to insist that unbiblically divorced and remarried persons are in any way bound by their original marriage vows; and hence

The Church should readmit them upon confession of the sinful act of procuring an unbiblical divorce or (and) the sinful act of contracting the first remarriage.

## II. CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST ADOPTING THIS POSITION.

### A. IT APPARENTLY RESTS UPON AN INSECURE EXEGETICAL BASIS.

The familiar four gospel passages dealing with divorce are taken up in the exegetical part of the majority report. With much of what is said there on the teaching of these passages I find myself in hearty agreement. There is no need to repeat what the report states on the occasion of this teaching of our Lord as found, in general, in the lax divorce practices of that day and in the rabbinical differences of opinion on the meaning of the disputed phrase in Deut. 24:1. I am also entirely in accord with the emphasis which the report there places upon the prominence of the thought of the indissolubility of the marriage tie in its very essence and according to the divine intent as forming the main thrust of our Lord's teaching in these passages.

In this connection it may not be out of place to insert a brief comment on the reading of one of the phrases in Matthew 5:32, which often occasions misunderstanding and to which the majority committee also alludes. It is the phrase, "maketh her an adulteress." "But I say unto you, that everyone that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress." The question is: how can a woman unjustly put away be said to become an adulteress? Even though the emphasis is placed upon the guilt of the man who puts her away by saying that he "maketh her" an adulteress, yet it also plainly implies an incrimination of the woman in that she is said to become an adulteress. To say, as the majority report does: "The man who puts away his wife makes her an adulteress, Matt. 5:32, since this act, permitted by Mosaic law (because of the hardness of their heart) carried with it the further permission of remarriage, and also deprived her of her means of support and thus exposed her to the danger of marrying someone else and thus becoming an adulteress," is perfectly correct and also to the point but does not remove the difficulty. This explanation still implies that she becomes an adulteress.

The difficulty, it appears, may readily be removed when we translate the verb in the original not as a middle but as a passive. "He makes her to suffer, to undergo adultery; to be debauched." This is the rendering proposed by Thayer (*N. T. Lexicon*, p. 417); Zahn (*Das Ev. des Matthäus*, 1922, p. 240); Grosheide (*Het Ev. van Mattheus*, p. 63); Van Leeuwen (*Tekst en Uitleg: Mattheus*, 2de Druk, p. 26); and W. Hendriksen (*The Sermon on the Mount*, pp. 251-254). The Dutch exegetes are also followed in this translation by the author of the Dutch report on divorce. (See *Rapportenboek*, 1923, pp. 9 and 10, where we read: "De vrouw lijdt overspel en die haar huwt bedrijft het.") We now return to the position of the majority report.

The majority report argues first that the two Matthew passages, containing the statement "except for fornication," teach that the guilty party in a divorce for adultery has the right to remarry. Let us quote the report. "In this sin (i. e., PORNEIA) and in this sin only Jesus finds a sufficient cause for divorce. It is quite evident that the exception must be connected with the whole statement. A man may not put away his wife, except for fornication or adultery. If he does, the marriage tie still remains binding, and then it follows: (1) that he commits adultery, if he marries another; (2) that his wife commits adultery if she marries another; and (3) that the persons who marry them also commit adultery. He may put away his wife, however, for fornication and thus dissolve the original tie, though it be in an abnormal way. But if he does this, he destroys the former compact, so that this ceases to be binding not only for him but also for his unfaithful spouse. The natural conclusion would seem to be: (1) that he can marry another without committing adultery; (2) that his former wife can marry another without being guilty of adultery; and (3) that others can marry either one of the original parties without the sin of adultery. These are conclusions, of course, nevertheless conclusions that, in our opinion, are natural and justified."

The report then proceeds to argue that not only in the case of a divorce for adultery but also in the case of a divorce on non-biblical ground the marriage tie and its

obligations can be dissolved before God. This becomes the case, according to the committee, as soon as the first divorcee to such an unbiblical divorce remarries. Such remarriage is an act of adultery, and since divorce for adultery is permissible according to Scripture, the not-remarried (possibly we might also say: not-yet-remarried) party to an unscriptural divorce is free from the remarried party. The Dutch committee which takes this same position, argues that this first remarriage, seeing it is an act of adultery, constitutes a subsequent validation of the divorce received on non-biblical ground. Our majority committee prefers not to use that terminology; says that that point at least cannot be settled by exegesis; but concludes no less that the original marriage tie with all its obligations is cancelled. It says that "the separated state of the parties illegitimately divorced can henceforth be recognized as legitimate by and in the sphere of the Christian Church," and that "the one party is now free before the Church of the party that is remarried."

Let us now consider the proof offered by the majority committee to substantiate the correctness of this position. It is striking that no exegetical grounds are offered in connection with the interpretation of the exceptive clause passages. We do read there: "the natural conclusion would seem to be"; and, "these are conclusions, of course, nevertheless conclusions that, in our opinion, are natural and justified." The proof adduced for the correctness of this position is given chiefly in the form of a refutation of certain opposing views and is linked to five Scripture passages. These passages are: Mt. 19:9b; Mt. 14:4; Rom. 7:1-4; I Cor. 7:10, 11; and Deut. 24:1-4.

(1) *The argument linked to Mt. 19:9b.*

The report here refutes an erroneous conception of the meaning and implication of the latter part of Mt. 19:9, namely the words: "and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." The opponents' alleged position is stated in these words: "It has been argued from Mt. 19:9 that even after a man has put away his wife for some other cause than adultery and has married another, thus committing adultery, his wife still remains his

wife, since Jesus says: 'and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.' This means that even the second marriage of the man does not destroy the first union." Then a refutation is offered of this position. It consists of four points proving that in the statement of Mt. 19:9b the remarriage of the man in no way enters into the Lord's consideration. The woman designated by APOLELUMENEEN (*i. e.* "her when she is put away") is, of course, a woman dismissed illegally, as Meyer also points out (H. A. W. Meyer, *Matthew*, 1888, pp. 133; 339). The committee effectively establishes this point.

But by establishing this point the committee has not in any way furnished proof for its main thesis. From the first part of the reasoning on this point it would appear that the committee wishes to refute the position that Mt. 19:9 proves "that even the second marriage of the man does not destroy the first union." But that question is not touched in the four-pointed refutation of the committee. To prove that the remarriage of the man does not enter into the thought of our Lord in his utterance of Mt. 19:9b does not prove that those are wrong who hold that Mt. 19:9b cannot be used to prove that Jesus taught that when a man sends away his wife for adultery (as the exceptive clause contemplates), that then the man who marries that divorced woman does not commit adultery. And this is what the committee contends and should seek to prove.

The real question in this connection is: What bearing does the exceptive clause have upon the latter part of the verse? If the case contemplated in the exceptive clause be real, *i. e.*, if a man divorces his wife on the ground of adultery, what would that mean for the guilt (or innocence) of the man who marries that divorced woman? *I. e.*, just what does this utterance of Jesus teach on that point? In answer to that question, three different positions may be taken. The first holds that Jesus specifically teaches by Mt. 19:9b that under any and all circumstances the man that marries a divorced woman commits adultery. From this it follows that there is no room for any legitimate remarriage because divorce can only consist of judicial separation, separation of bed and board. This is the Roman Catholic position, and I agree

with the majority committee in rejecting it as well as the exegesis which it offers on this point of Mt. 19:9b. The second position holds that Jesus does not teach anything in Mt. 19:9b beyond the idea that he who marries an illegitimately repudiated wife is guilty of adultery. That is to say, Jesus teaches nothing about the guilt or innocence of the man who marries a legitimately repudiated wife (such as the exceptive clause contemplates). That exceptive clause case simply does not enter into the consideration of Jesus' teaching in the last clause of the verse. This is my position. The third position holds that Jesus in Mt. 19:9 teaches that a man who marries an illegitimately divorced woman commits adultery, and also that a man who marries a legitimately divorced (hence: adulterous) woman does *not* commit adultery. This teaching is said to be implied in the exceptive clause. As I understand it, that is the position of the majority committee. It is a consistent clear-cut position, as the skeletonized statement of the argument of the committee given above shows. But the discussion offered on Mt. 19:9 in the majority report does not in any way prove its correctness. Moreover, it offers no refutation of the second position (which is the current one in our group). It only offers some cogent reasoning against one aspect of the Roman Catholic position.

(2) *The argument linked to Mt. 14:4.*

In this passage it is reported that John the Baptist told Herod he was not permitted to have his brother Philip's wife. The question is raised whether this does not prove that John did not consider the original union of Philip and his wife dissolved by the adulterous marriage of the latter to Herod. The committee disposes of this objection (which has of late been given some prominence in the discussion by the pamphlet of F. Nymeyer on *Prohibited Marriages*) by saying that John objected to Herod's marriage not as adulterous but as incestuous. Mr. Nymeyer maintains that the marriage was not incestuous. This is, no doubt, a mistaken opinion. But there seems no justification for the easy way in which the majority committee disposes of this passage. It seems more probable that

this marriage was condemned on both scores, though it is both probable and natural that the incestuous feature should predominate in John's designation of the sin. That this marriage was to be condemned not merely for its incestuous but also for its adulterous character is the contention of such eminent commentators as Calvin (*Harmony of the Evangelists*, II, 220-221); Alford (*Greek Testament*, Vol. I [1859], p. 146); Plummer (*Exeg. Comm. Matthew*, p. 202); M. F. Sadler (*Matthew*, 208-209); A. B. Bruce (*Expos. Greek Test.* I, 206); Zahn (*Matthäus* [1922], p. 506, Note 77); and Baljon (*Mattheüs*, p. 227). It is worthy of note that Alford makes explicit mention of the fact that this marriage was adulterous by reason of the fact that both the husband of Herodias and the wife of Herod were still living.

(3) *The argument linked to Rom. 7:1-4.*

On Roman 7:1-4 it is argued that this passage does not teach, as some hold, that under no circumstances, not even adultery, can a woman ever lawfully marry another during the lifetime of her husband. The report, quite correctly, maintains that "it was foreign to Paul's purpose to enquire whether a woman might during the life of her husband be released from a marriage tie by an exceptional permission extending only to a certain class of cases." With this argument I am wholly in accord, and it is to the point over against the use that Roman Catholics and some Anglicans have often made of this passage to prove that under no circumstances can a person ever be lawfully divorced and remarried during the lifetime of his(her) original spouse. But this argument furnishes no proof for the contention that in the Matthew passages Jesus teaches that in the case of a divorce for adultery not only the innocent but also the guilty party may legitimately remarry and that in such a case all marriage obligations are cancelled, for both parties.

(4) *The argument linked to I Cor. 7:10, 11.*

Neither does the Corinthian passage do this. The discussion on that passage, at the close of the exegetical study, quite plausibly argues that Paul in that connection is only stating a certain ideal and does not conflict with

the teaching of Jesus that under certain conditions divorce is permissible. Also here the argument has value to refute the Roman Catholic position, but it does not bear upon the question whether it is biblical to hold that the guilty party is justified before God to remarry as well as the innocent in the case of a divorce on the ground of adultery.

(5) *The argument linked to Deut. 24:1-4.*

The last of the passages used in the exegetical part of the majority report is Deut. 24:1-4. It must be said that this passage, though discussed at length in the historical part, is used only in passing in the argument. Nevertheless, it is presented as corroborative of the position proposed by the committee. Speaking of the effect which remarriage of illegitimately divorced persons has upon the original union, the statement is made: "It can hardly be maintained that adultery necessarily terminates the marriage relationship, though it furnishes a legitimate ground for divorce." Then the argument continues: "It should be noted, however, that according to the law of Moses a divorced woman, who defiled herself by marrying another, could not be reclaimed by her former husband. The restoration of the original union was entirely out of the question. In that case therefore the divorce plus a second marriage (which evidently was in some sense an illegitimate marriage) effectively terminated the original marital relation." Apparently the report of the Dutch churches also takes this position, though the position is only stated in passing and not argued out. (*Rapporten Syn. Ger. Kerken in Ned. 1923*, p. 31. Cf. p. 7.)

On the surface this appears to be strikingly similar to one of the phases of the practice proposed by the majority committee. It must be remarked, however, that it seems strange that the only passage in the Scriptures in which this explicit teaching would be found should be an Old Testament passage. This seems the more remarkable in view of the fact that the conditions and terms of divorce in the O. T. were so radically diverse from those in the N. T. But this would still be conceivable. However, when we give the passage a closer look, we find some

serious reasons why it cannot be accepted as proof for the policy proposed. The similarity is merely on the surface. I would direct attention to the following: 1) This woman, repudiated by her husband, remarried, and then released again from her second husband, could not return to her first husband even when her second husband had died. It made no difference whether her release was occasioned by the death of her second husband or by a new repudiation on his part. How radically different this is from our Christian situation becomes apparent when we remember that the remarriage of a divorced woman after the death of her second husband would undoubtedly be looked upon by all of us as morally desirable. The reason does not lie in our departure from a supposed divine ordinance, but in the fact that the situation concerning which Deut. 24:1-4 makes provision is a radically different one in its ethical implications. 2) The fact that in the Old Testament the man could divorce the woman for an indefinite number of causes, whereas she could not divorce her husband at all, makes the situation so radically different that comparison on the score of the issue under discussion is out of the question. To say of this woman, as the Dutch report does in a passing sentence, (*Op. cit.*, p. 7) that she had this in common with the adulteress that she had become unworthy of the first marriage bed, is utterly beside the point for the issue before us. The Israelitish woman could be divorced and was divorced for many, even frivolous, reasons. It was never for adultery, for then she was stoned to death. The woman had nothing to say in the divorce. The husband wrote a bill of divorce in which the statement was made, "thou art free"; "I dismiss and expell thee"; and "thou art free therefore for any man"; (See Strack-Billerbeck, *Matthäus*, p. 311; or, H. Goodwin, *Matthew*, p. 85) and then, after she remarries and her second husband dies, she may not marry her first husband again, because (so says the Dutch report) she has become unworthy of the marriage bed! This almost becomes ludicrous; and the trouble does not lie with the divine command, but with the mistaken significance that is ascribed to it by the report. 3) It should

be remembered that the divine commandment in Deut. 24 is not aimed at the woman but at the man. The application made of it by the report bears almost entirely upon the woman. 4) The real reason for this prohibition lay in the divine intent to put restrictive measures upon divorce. It "would put restraint upon a frivolous rupture of the marriage tie" (Keil & Delitzsch, III, 418). In the words of Driver: "The further provision in Dt. that a divorced woman who had married a second time, should not return to her former husband, would operate similarly as a deterrent from hasty divorce, or, if the divorce had actually taken place, it would lead the husband to consider the possibility of taking his wife back, while he was still at liberty to do so, viz., before she had bound herself to a second husband; it would also be of value in a different direction by checking, on the part of a woman desirous of returning to her former home, the temptation to intrigue against her second husband." (Int. Crit. Comm., *Deuteronomy*, p. 272). 5) There is an interesting parallel in Dutch civil law. Until recently the Netherlands had a national law on its statute books forbidding the remarriage to one another of two persons once divorced. (The Dutch report alludes to this on page 30.) The motive was to discourage divorce. It would be quite beside the point to make any inferences from this former Dutch statute as to the views of the indissolubility of the marriage tie in the minds of the members of the Dutch parliament at the time this law was enacted.

**B. ITS CLAIM THAT THE GUILTY AS WELL AS THE INNOCENT PARTY TO A DIVORCE FOR ADULTERY MAY REMARRY IS UN-  
TENABLE.**

That this view is untenable we would argue both on exegetical grounds and in the light of the testimony from history and from Christian moralists.

**1. This view is untenable on exegetical grounds.**

Above we have devoted some space to the discussion of biblical passages bearing upon the issue before us, but only in refutation of the arguments advanced in the majority report as grounds for its advice. We shall now try to show that the teaching of Scripture does not allow

the claim that the guilty as well as the innocent party may remarry after divorce for adultery. This discussion very naturally centers in the proper interpretation of the teaching of our Lord in the familiar four gospel passages.

These passages read as follows:

Mt. 5:32. "But I say unto you, that everyone that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress (more correctly: makes her to suffer, to undergo, adultery): and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."

Mt. 19:9. "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

Mk. 10:11, 12. "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: and if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

Lk. 16:18. "Everyone that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery."

The main thrust of these passages, as we are all agreed, is our Lord's assertion of the sacredness and the indissolubility of the marriage bond. Whatever the meaning of the exception, explicitly mentioned in the two Matthew passages, it is an exception—not the rule. The rule stated emphatically in everyone of these four passages may be formulated as follows: Divorcing one's spouse is a serious breach of the divine commandment against adultery, because according to the divine creation ordinance marriage is a union for life and hence indissoluble.

A word about the exceptive clause. "Except for fornication"; and, "saving for the cause of fornication." This exception is not found in the Mark and Luke passage, but it is in both Matthew passages. There has been much dispute over the textual genuineness of these two exceptive clauses (or, rather, two instances of the exceptive clause) and also much speculation on the reason for its absence from Mark and Luke. Though the textual testimony is not at all unanimous, and though it is true that not only Roman Catholic and Anglican but also many of the more recent exegetes hold that our Lord did not originally utter this exceptive phrase, we adopt the position that the exceptive clause is genuine and belongs to the

text. Its absence from the Mark and Luke passages may possibly be accounted for by the fact that it was assumed as self-evident or, more probably, by the fact that the occasion and setting of these two passages called rather for the prophetic assertion of the true ideal without any qualifying statement looking to an exception. However this may be, we assume that Jesus taught that the case of adultery constitutes an exception to the rule of the indissolubility of the marriage tie as specified in the two Matthew passages.

Just what then do these gospel passages teach about the right or wrong of the remarriage of the guilty party in a divorce for adultery? Let us take this deliverance of our Lord, for convenience sake, in the form of Mt. 19:9. The elements of difference between this and the other three passages would make no difference for the essential argument before us now. Note that this passage makes an assertion about three parties, viz., a husband, a wife, and a third party (a man).

What does the passage affirm concerning each of these three parties in case of a divorce for any reason except fornication? In that case: 1) The husband by putting away his wife and marrying another is guilty of the sin of adultery; 2) The third party by marrying the divorced wife is guilty of the sin of adultery; and 3) The wife by remarrying likewise is guilty of the sin of adultery. Hence in the case of a divorce for any cause except adultery, neither of the divorcees is justified before God in remarrying.

But now does it follow that, in the case of divorce for adultery, that is, in case the condition contemplated in the exceptive clause should obtain, that then each one of the above affirmations becomes a negative? So that the conclusion would be that the husband by putting away his wife and marrying another does *not* commit adultery, and the third party by marrying the divorced adulterous wife does *not* commit adultery, and the adulterous wife herself in so remarrying does *not* commit the sin of adultery either? This is the position of the majority committee. But is not this a mistaken inference in reference to the two last-named parties? Must we not take the

exceptive clause as making a negative assertion only for the sentence in which it stands? This appears to me not only the more plausible but also the only possible interpretation.

The statement made by our Lord in this passage is not to be viewed as a proposition in formal logic. It is a moral judgment, and a moral judgment flowing from the lips, not of a lawyer, but of a prophet. The great moral principle asserted is that of the indissolubility of the marriage bond, and this is put primarily from the point of view of the husband, who is the most responsible party in the relation as viewed by the Israelites in the O. T. and the Jews in Jesus' day. The main statement in the verse hence concerns him. Now to that statement there is only one exception, and that exception stands in the clause bearing upon the (Jewish) husband. To that main statement of the verse the exceptive clause applies. Jesus does not say specifically what his judgment would be about the woman or about the third party in case the ground stated in the exception holds. But in that case, *i. e.*, the case of adultery, the man (*i. e.*, in this case the innocent party) is free from the wife (*i. e.*, in this case the guilty party). Nothing is said about the freedom of the (guilty) woman, nor about the freedom of a third party to marry her. Apparently for them the general judgment stands: "He that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

The situation as contemplated in the exceptive clause (*i. e.*, in the case of adultery) is hence as follows. The woman commits adultery. The husband is hence sinned against by his adulterous wife. He now does not sin in divorcing her. Of course, he is not obliged to divorce her. As a Christian he may and, in fact, has a certain duty to, forgive her. They may hence be reconciled. But as far as the right (yes, right before God) is concerned, the husband, as the innocent party does not sin in divorcing her and in remarrying. But, the question is pertinent, whence would the adulterous wife have any such right? She, as the guilty party (and, of course, the same would be true of the husband if the rôles were reversed and he should be the guilty party), has done fundamental vio-

lence to the marriage tie. Both she and the man whom she may thereafter marry surely commit adultery in so doing. Only the innocent party in a divorce for adultery may remarry.

Is this position confirmed by the testimony of reputable commentators? It must be said that most of the commentators pass over this specific point in their interpretation of Mt. 5:32 and Mt. 19:9, or they imply one or the other view without fuller explanation. They hence do not help us much either one way or the other. There is, however, at least one happy exception on this score. So eminent and orthodox Protestant an exegete as Zahn gives a full statement of his view of the specific element in the problem before us in his comment on Mt. 5:31, 32, and we find that he entirely corroborates the position just laid down. Let us quote him. Says he: "In this case (*i. e.*, when the wife has committed fornication) the marriage is already broken before the divorce takes place, and hence this case must be excepted from the judgment that the man who puts away his wife is the cause that another man makes an adulteress of her. The judgment already indirectly herein expressed, that every marriage of a man with the divorced wife whose husband is still living constitutes adultery, Jesus then expresses also directly in verse 32*b*. He does this, however, without at this time making mention of an exception to the rule. . . . It would be out of place, as far as the sense is concerned, to supply in this passage the phrase 'except for fornication'; for also in case fornication on the part of the wife constituted the ground for the divorce, the judgment of verse 32*b* still stands. For this judgment (MOICHATAI, cf. 19:9, not MOICHEUEI AUTEEN, cf. verse 28) does not say that the second man by his marriage with the divorced woman makes her an adulteress, but that he himself becomes an adulterer. Insofar as she had committed adultery before the divorce, that is, according to the judgment of Jesus, had already become an adulteress, her remarriage would be for her a second act of adultery; and this would even be true in case it would be one and the same man with whom she before the divorce had committed adultery by PORNEIA and whose wife she

after the divorce became. But this would not have been left unsaid if the case had demanded it. Supplying the phrase 'except for fornication' in the last clause of verse 32 would moreover have the impossible consequence that the marriage with a woman divorced on any, possibly very unjust, ground would be declared adultery, whereas on the other hand the marriage with a woman divorced because of a gross or refined form of adultery would be declared less sinful or possibly even permissible." (Translated from Theodor Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Matthäus*, 1922, p. 242.)

2. *This view untenable in the light of historical and ethical testimony.*

The following authorities are cited for either historical or ethical confirmation of the position that in case of a divorce for adultery the innocent party, and the innocent party only, can sue out a divorce and has the right to remarry.

Westermarck in his three-volume work on the *History of Human Marriage* says of Christian practice in New Testament days: "A man who married the divorced adulteress was himself guilty of adultery, but there is no indication whatever that the innocent husband was prohibited from remarrying." (III, 327, in 1922 edition.)

The same author writes as follows on the position of the Reformers: "The canonical doctrines that marriage is a sacrament and that it is indissoluble save by death were rejected by the Reformers. They all agreed that divorce, with liberty for the innocent party to remarry, should be granted for adultery. . . ." (III, 334.)

In the Smalcaldic Articles, one of the early Lutheran creeds, we find the following statement: "So ist dies auch unrecht, dass, wo zwei gescheiden werden, der unschuldig Theil nicht wiederum heirathen soll." (J. T. Müller, *Die symbolischen Bücher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 1912, p. 343.) And the Confessio Saxonica contained a more extensive deliverance to the same effect. (See G. B. Winer, *A Comparative View of the Doctrines and Confessions of the Various Communities of Christendom*, p. 325.)

The Westminster Confession, one of the outstanding creeds of the Reformed group, says: "Adultery or fornication, committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce, and after the divorce to marry another, as if the offending party were dead." (Westminster Confession, Ch. XXIV, par. V.)

Martensen, a Danish Lutheran moralist, writes: "The Lutheran Church decrees the lawfulness of an actual divorce, and allows the innocent party to remarry." (H. Martensen, *Christian Ethics (Social)*, p. 41.) Paulus, an American Lutheran theologian, quotes Von Oettingen's opinion approvingly in the following statement: "Wherefore Christ himself expressly permits divorce in case of adultery. 'But even in this case a normal marriage with some other person is conceivable only of the innocent party.' [V. Oettingen.]" (C. F. Paulus, *The Christian Life*, p. 325.) And a more recent American Lutheran moralist puts it thus: "Since the adultery itself constitutes a breaking of the marriage covenant, the innocent party is entitled to seek a divorce. Some persons maintain that this does not justify another marriage on the part of the innocent party, but only confers a permanent legal freedom from the obligations of the first marriage. But there does not seem to be any valid reason for denying the right to another marriage to the innocent one, if without his or her fault the first marriage has been actually and legally dissolved." (Joseph Stump, *The Christian Life*, 1930, p. 218.)

Hovey in his excellent little book on divorce declared in reference to the familiar gospel passages: "But while the passage before us teaches by implication that a Jew might put away his wife without sin, provided she was an adulteress, and marry another woman, it does not teach that a wife, thus divorced for good cause, had a right to marry again." (Alvah Hovey, *The Scriptural Law of Divorce*, p. 14.) Another New Englander, who wrote a solid and widely quoted treatise on the divorce issue, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, a former President of

Yale, likewise took this position. Dr. D. S. Schaff in a footnote to his translation of Augustin's work on the Sermon on the Mount says: "President Woolsey unhesitatingly declares, that, by Christ's precepts, marriage is dissolved by adultery, so that the innocent party may marry again." (*Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. VI, p. 22, Note 1.) And a third New Englander states the same opinion thus: "It must be, in any event, admitted that the first gospel gives its support to those who would permit remarriage for the innocent party in a divorce for adultery." (F. G. Peabody, *Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 153.)

Here is the testimony from an Australian Presbyterian: "But, if the marriage tie is thus in effect dissolved by the misconduct of one of the partners, quite as much as if he or she had died, the innocent partner is no longer under obligation because of its broken bond, and may, without sin, contract a marriage with another." (D. S. Adam, *A Handbook of Christian Ethics*, p. 249.)

And finally I offer the testimony of Dr. Geesink on this point. Says he, speaking of the dissolution of marriage, "Behalve door den dood kan ook tengevolge van de doorwerking der zonde bij één of beide echtgenooten het huwelijk zich ontbinden; en dan kunnen er gevallen zijn waar naar onze opvatting van de moraal de onschuldige partij erkenning dier ontbinding bij de overheid kan vragen." He then speaks of the difference on this point between the Roman Catholic, the Lutheran, and the Reformed position, and continues: "Calvijn leerde, dat overspel een grond oplevert voor de onschuldige partij tot echtscheiding. . . . Voetius behandelt de zaak in zijn *Politica ecclesiastica* en neemt aan als gronden overspel en desertio. De onrechtvaardig verlaten partij mag ontbinding van het huwelijk vragen en een nieuw sluiten." (W. Geesink, *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, II, 283-285.) And, even more explicitly, the same author says: "Ook de ethische kwestie of de staat een tweede huwelijk van den schuldige mag toelaten, moet met het oog op Matt. 5:32 naar christelijke ethica ontkennend worden beantwoord." (*Op. cit.*, III, 392.)

This position is finally also confirmed by the fact that

Reformed moralists have usually taken the stand that, in case both of the marriage partners are guilty of adultery, neither can have a divorce and neither can remarry. (See e. g., Willem Amezes, *Vijf Boeken van de Conscientie*, Editie 1896, p. 355.)

C. ITS STAND THAT IN A CASE OF NON-BIBLICAL DIVORCE THE MARRIAGE BOND IS COMPLETELY DISSOLVED BY THE REMARRIAGE OF ONE OF THE DIVORCEES CANNOT BE MAINTAINED.

The second stage in the reasoning of the majority committee, as we pointed out above, concerns the dissolution of the marriage bond in the case of illegitimate divorce. It is held that such dissolution is accomplished by the first remarriage of one of the divorced parties. The reasoning is as follows. Adultery breaks the marriage bond and cancels its obligations. Now when two parties are divorced on illegitimate ground, the marriage tie is not so dissolved and remains intact. But as soon as one of the parties now remarries, that party commits adultery and by that act of adultery dissolves the marriage bond morally, *i. e.*, before God (it being understood that the bond was legally already dissolved when the divorce took place). Here again it is clear that the underlying assumption of the majority committee's position is that adultery, all adultery, morally dissolves the marriage bond in such a way that, in case no divorce has yet taken place, such an act of adultery becomes the sufficient ground for suing out a divorce, and, in case the divorce has already taken place, such an act of adultery now puts the seal of moral approval upon the severance of the bond already legally accomplished before.

Now it is clear that this position rests upon the assumption that in a case of divorce for adultery, the divorce not only gives the innocent but also the guilty party the right to remarry because for both the bond is broken. The untenability of that position we have exhibited under A and B. Insofar as that argument was cogent against the position there attacked, insofar it also serves to refute the present conclusion regarding remarriage after illegitimate divorce. But there are also additional arguments that

may be urged against this second position quite apart from (or in addition to) the reasoning urged above.

This position, it seems to me, suffers from a serious moral inconsistency. We may possibly bring out this moral inconsistency by viewing the matter from more than one angle.

1. The first angle from which this position will appear morally untenable, inconsistent, is stated very clearly by one of the brethren who presented a petition to the 1932 Synod in the matter of divorce. This is one of the documents which that Synod decided to place in the hands of our divorce committee for due consideration. In this petition elder Fakkema argues that there is so great a difference between an instance of adultery in a legitimate divorce and an instance of adultery in the form of remarriage after an illegitimate divorce, that it is improper to draw the same inferences from the one as from the other in its bearing on the dissolubility of the marriage bond. I quote from Mr. Fakkema's petition:

"The Committee contends that when one of the parties divorced on non-biblical grounds contracts a new marriage a situation is created which is fundamentally equivalent to the situation which exists when one of the parties united in holy wedlock commits adultery. The question is are these two given situations sufficiently identical so that the privilege granted by Scripture to one situation must as a matter of logic also be extended to the other situation." He then analyzes these two situations and, in reference to the first, points out that in the case where Mrs. A. divorces Mr. A. for adultery, she has the right to remarry because there is faithfulness on her part but only unfaithfulness on his part. Then he continues as follows in reference to the second situation.

"Let us now consider the situation in which Mr. A. who divorced by collusion Mrs. A. on non-Biblical grounds, waits till Mrs. A. remarries and who then bases his right to remarry on the Scriptural ground that adultery of one party frees the other party. . . . . In the first place the condition of the one party being unfaithful to the other party cannot be said to be present, since in obtaining a divorce in which both parties consented, the one relieved

the other of the promise of marital fidelity. In obtaining such a divorce the one gave up the claim one had on the other. Hence the remarriage of Mrs. A. which is adultery before God cannot be regarded by Mr. A. as a breach of trust and in so far he may not regard her as one who has committed an adulterous act against him. We therefore take it that since Mr. A. cannot accuse Mrs. A. of any adultery committed against him, Mr. A.'s claim to remarry is without basis, for it entirely lacks the occasion of unfaithfulness which gave rise to the right to remarry in the first situation.

“In the second place the condition of faithfulness on the part of one cannot be said to be present. Mrs. A. in remarrying is guilty of adultery, but Mr. A. is a co-partner in the crime for ‘he causeth her to commit adultery.’ (Matt. 5:32.) We take it that since Mr. A. is co-guilty with Mrs. A., he has no more right to remarry than she. For it should be noted that the right to remarry granted by Scripture in the first situation is not granted to the guilty party but only to the innocent party. But there is no ‘innocent party’ where the responsibility of the sin of adultery must be shared by both. Since Scripture grants the right to remarry to the innocent (faithful) party only, Mr. A. is not entitled to remarriage rights.

“We have pointed out that there are important differences between the two situations cited above. These differences concern themselves with the very heart of marriage, namely, the pledge of being faithful one to the other. In view of the presence of differences which are fundamental to marriage itself, it is illogical to contend: because one party in the first situation has the right to establish a new union that therefore one of the parties of the second situation has also the right to establish a new union.” These paragraphs speak for themselves and I do not feel it necessary to make any further comment.

2. Another angle from which this moral inconsistency will come to view we have in the attitude which it necessarily involves on the part of church officers toward the sin of such a divorcee. For instance, if a person gets a divorce on non-biblical ground, he is declared to have

sinned against the seventh commandment, and the consistory holds the solemn obligation to return to his wife before him. He is disciplined and he may face excommunication unless he repents and returns to his marriage partner. But if that person persists in that sin, ignores the admonition of the consistory, and then adds to his sin the new sin of remarrying, then the consistory says to him: You must still confess your violation of the seventh commandment, but you need no longer meet your obligations toward your marriage partner. His own sin of remarriage, added to the previous sin, has been the means of cancelling part of his previous obligation.

Virtually such an attitude on the part of the consistory toward this erring brother may be epitomized in these words: Commit a sin, and you are not only guilty but also have some serious obligations to meet before you can be cleared. But if you commit an additional sin in this same realm, then, though you are still guilty, you no longer need to make good what we formerly demanded you should. Or, to put it in more concrete language. The consistory virtually says to him: Commit the sin of an unbiblical divorce, and you must not only confess guilt but also meet solemn obligations not cancelled before God and which you are refusing to meet (*viz.*, live with your wife); but, sin some more (add remarriage to your divorce), and though you must still confess guilt, you no longer need before God and in the court of your own conscience to meet the obligations of the original marriage. By your additional sin you have been the responsible agent to cancel that obligation of yours!

This whole position, though claiming to be biblical by its appeal to a certain interpretation of the exceptive clause in Jesus' words in Matthew, in reality is a travesty of our Lord's teaching; seeing that whereas the main thrust of Jesus' teaching is the sacredness and indissolubility of the marriage tie, this position virtually reduces to this: Any subsequent marriage (just so it is legally recognized by the state) cancels for all practical purposes the solemn obligations of the previous one.

D. ITS IMPLIED ASSUMPTION THAT THE CHURCH OUGHT TO RECOGNIZE AS VALID IN ITS SPHERE ANY REMARRIAGE AFTER UNBIBLICAL DIVORCE CONTRACTED UNDER CIVIL LAW IS OPEN TO SERIOUS OBJECTION.

It is assumed throughout the argument of the majority committee that the Church should always recognize as valid the most recent marriage bond sanctioned by the magistrate between previously divorced parties. If we adopt the advice of the majority committee, unbiblically divorced persons, no matter how often they have remarried, just so they were married legally before the magistrate, will be accepted into the fellowship of the Church. The sole condition is sincere repentance and confession of their sin.

The report of the Netherland Churches, drawn up at the request of our own Church for advice in the matter, argues this point. (See *Rapportenboek*, 1923, pp. 27-32.) It raises the issue as to the proper attitude of the Church toward the divorce legislation and divorce practice of the civil government. One cannot say that this discussion is free from ambiguity. On the one hand, great emphasis is apparently laid on the truth that the Church has its own standards in this matter and that it should not follow the policy of adopting the standards of the civil magistrate. But then it is argued that nevertheless the Church ought not to refuse to ascribe validity to a divorce granted by the state on unbiblical grounds, unless it has first protested against this policy of the government, and even then only in case the general Christian foundations have been repudiated in the current divorce legislation. This apparently allows for a wider latitude on the part of the Church in its recognition of divorces and remarriages than the biblical view would normally permit.

However this may be, it is clear the Dutch report holds that when people illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried seek the fellowship (or restoration to full fellowship) of the Church, the consistory cannot refuse them if they confess their past sin. In that respect the position of our majority committee is the same, the only difference apparently being that the Dutch report allows for refusal to recognize certain divorces and remarriages

in case the generally Christian foundations for marriage should no longer be recognized in a certain country. Whatever this restriction may mean (and to it we must return in another point), our majority committee does not have any such restriction. The assumption of our majority committee is simply that the Church should always recognize the most recent marriage bond sanctioned by the magistrate between previously divorced parties.

But is this a tenable assumption? The 1932 Synod felt need of studying this point, for one of the questions which it referred to its present divorce committee for study reads: "To what extent should the Church of Christ attribute validity to unbiblical divorces granted by the state." (Acts, 1932, p. 154. Cf. also p. 151, point c.) The majority committee takes the stand that this question can be left aside. It says: "Such a study might lead us far afield. It would perhaps lead to more controversy, and such a thorough study of this question is not necessary for the solution of our present divorce problem." This last judgment would be correct on the assumption that the Church should receive into its fellowship upon evidence of penitence any remarried unbiblically divorced person, so that the question of the recognition or non-recognition of a civil divorce can be left out of consideration. But it is clear that this is done on the assumption that the Church simply abides by (*i. e.*, recognizes as valid) any divorce and remarriage, provided only the guilty parties make confession of sin. And so the question returns: Is this assumption of the majority committee sound?

Now it seems to me the answer to this question is not so difficult. Even if we admit (as, I think, we must) that the civil government in most countries (or states) cannot maintain the same rigidity in upholding the biblical stand on divorce and remarriage, there can be no question as to what the stand of the Church must be in the sphere of its own jurisdiction. The stand that the Church should abide by the decisions of the civil courts in these matters does not commend itself to the mind of the thoughtful Christian. It is perfectly true that it is characteristic of the Protestant in distinction from the Roman position that

it views marriage and related matters as civil, and not merely as ecclesiastical, in character. But surely this cannot be pressed to mean that the Church would have to surrender its standards of right and wrong in these matters as touching jurisdiction in its own realm.

The testimonies of some authorities may be helpful in this connection.

Such an orthodox Lutheran moralist as Luthardt writes: "And if the State is prepared on grounds of expediency to make concessions, and to legalize relations, which ought to be called not marriages, but decent concubines, it is still the office of the Church, as guardian of the highest moral possessions of mankind, to enforce those stricter moral principles which may prevent the moral ideal, without which life threatens to sink to its lowest level, from vanishing out of the world." (C. E. Luthardt, *Apologetic Lectures on the Moral Truths of Christianity*, 1873, p. 133. Cf. also his *Kompendium der theologischen Ethik*, 1898, p. 319.)

Charles Henderson, an American moralist, and that of a rather liberal stripe, writes: "The church is not obliged to accept the divorce pronounced by the courts of a state as final and satisfactory. For example, a divorced man who has married while the first wife lives may ask for membership in a church on the ground that he has been legally divorced from this former wife. But many things are legal which are not moral, much less on a level with the morality required for membership in a church." (*Social Duties from the Christian Point of View*, pp. 46, 47.)

Dr. Abraham Kuyper, speaking of this same issue, writes as follows: "Vooral van de zijde der echtscheiding dreigt hier gevaar. Staat de overheid toe, dat personen, wier Huwelijk zij voor ontbonden verklaart, opnieuw huwen, dan kan en mag de Kerk dat nieuwe Huwelijk niet erkennen, indien, naar eigen oordeel, de echtscheiding niet heeft mogen, en dus feitelijk niet heeft *kunnen* plaats grijpen. Nu is het, bij dezen stand van zaken zeker het meest gewenscht, dat de Kerk, door tijdig ingediend protest, de Overheid afhoude van zulke onberaden stappen; maar baat dit niet, en wordt almeer de grondslag van het

Christelijk Huwelijk losgelaten, dan wordt hieruit voor de Kerken de zeer stellige plicht geboren, om binnen den eigen kring den grondslag, die door het Evangelie voor het Huwelijk is gelegd, te handhaven. En ware het al, dat andere Protestantsche Kerken hiervan de noodzakelijkheid niet inzagen, dan zou toch de Gereformeerde Kerk hier niet stil mogen zitten. Voor haar toch is de belijdenis van het Genadeverbond een essentieel stuk van haar kerkelijk optreden, en daar het Genadeverbond ook met de kinderen der geloovigen rekt, kan het Huwelijk niet buiten den kring van hare belijdenis worden gesloten." (*Gemeene Gratie*, III, 365.)

Charles Hodge, the well-known Princeton theologian, speaks also unequivocally on this question. Writes he: "No act of any human legislature contrary to the moral law can bind any man, and no such act contrary to the law of Christ can bind any Christian. If, therefore, a human tribunal annuls a marriage for any reason other than those assigned in the Bible, the marriage is not thereby dissolved. In the judgment of Christians it remains in full force; and they are bound so to regard it. And on the other hand, if the state pronounces a marriage valid, which the Bible declares to be invalid, in the view of Christians it is invalid. There is no help for this. Christians cannot give up their convictions; nor can they renounce their allegiance to Christ." And applying this position to the question of church membership, he continues: "As the Church and its officers are under the highest obligations to obey the law of Christ, it follows that where the action of the state conflicts with that law, such action must be disregarded. If a person be divorced on other than Scriptural grounds and marries again, such person cannot consistently be received to the fellowship of the Church." (*Systematic Theology*, III, 404-5, 406.) And a former Princeton professor of Church government summarizes the issue in this sentence: "A dissolution of the contract (*i. e.*, marriage contract) by any court or forum of civil justice cannot absolve the moral obligation from its binding force in the authority of the Church except for cause which has been specified in Holy Scripture." (Alexander T. McGill, *Church Government*, p. 538.)

**E. ITS FINAL CLAIM THAT THE CHURCH SHOULD ADMIT TO ITS FELLOWSHIP ALL UNBIBLICALLY DIVORCED AND SUBSEQUENTLY REMARRIED PERSONS PROVIDED THEY SHOW SINCERE REPENTANCE IS UNTENABLE.**

The reader may be of the opinion that this has already been proved. We also claim that it has. *I. e.*, it is the inescapable inference from all that has preceded. But it must also be argued independently, if we are to meet the argument of the majority committee fully.

The majority committee stresses the fact that adultery is not an unpardonable sin. This is perfectly true. But the question for the Church is: What is our duty when an unbiblically divorced remarried person applies for admission (or reinstatement) to the fellowship of the Church? And the answer to that question depends upon another: What is involved in the sincere repentance which the sinner must exhibit? This the majority committee also recognizes, for it proceeds to argue that there is no original binding marriage tie any more in such a case, in harmony with its argument on the dissolution of the first marriage by the subsequent adulterous act of remarriage. Now as we have argued, that original marriage tie is not dissolved as far as its moral obligations are concerned for anyone except the innocent party in a divorce on biblical ground. And so we are justified in concluding from our preceding argument that such persons cannot be admitted to Church membership, however much they protest their sincerity as repentant sinners.

That the objection that this minority opinion holds the sin of illegitimate divorce followed by remarriage to be an unpardonable one does not hold, becomes apparent when it is remembered that the Church will be only too glad to receive such persons into its fellowship upon the death of their previous lawful marriage partners. The sin is not unpardonable, but the persons concerned have placed themselves by their adulterous acts in such a position that they cannot meet some of the conditions for a sincere repentance. That is the situation, and no blame of unwillingness to pardon is to be laid at the door of the Church. If the Church did anything else, it would fail of its duty to safeguard the sanctity of the marriage tie.

It has sometimes been objected to this position, that also in the case of other sins there are many elements in the moral situation that are beyond remedy and which the Church must, on that account, simply accept as inevitable. Sometimes murder is cited as such an illustration. The murdered man cannot be recalled to life, yet we would not think of refusing to accept for church membership a murderer sincerely repentant for this past sin. But the argument is based upon a misunderstanding. This report does not hold that these remarried persons cannot be admitted for the reason that something that happened in the past cannot be undone. The real reason is that such persons, as long as they continue in their present marital relations, are unable to meet the full obligations involved in sincere repentance. This is not the case with the murderer. It is the case with these remarried persons, and will continue to be the case as long as their former lawful marriage partners are living.

And if, finally, it should be asked by way of objection, how it must be explained that this sin of adultery is so unique and has such unique consequences with reference to the privileges of church fellowship—consequences apparently different from those of all other sin—the answer is not far to find. The sin of marital infidelity is in a class by itself. And it is not surprising that its consequences should be in a class by themselves. For marriage is in a class by itself. It is an absolutely unique contract in which two persons are bound together in conjugal union and fidelity to the exclusion of such a union with any third party. This fidelity of two persons of the opposite sex to one another in the sex and love union for life is of the very essence of marriage as God originally intended it. (Gen. 1:27; 2:24; Mt. 19:4-6). Its permanence is a permanence of the divinely intended sex-love union. "What God hath put together, let not man put asunder." When this is done violence to, and a new union is entered upon, valid before the civil magistrate, the person guilty of doing violence to the original union, still binding in the sight of God, necessarily places himself in an impossible position by entering upon a new

contract which, in turn, by its very nature as marriage, binds him as far as the civil magistrate is concerned.

But his inability to undo his own sin cannot be made the ground for the Church to surrender its moral standards determined by the plain teaching of our Lord. Whatever a government, even a Christian government, may be forced to do in accommodation to the level upon which its citizens are actually living, the Church of Jesus Christ cannot and may not surrender its view of the sanctity of Christian marriage by accommodating itself on the grounds of expediency to the lower and ever lowering standards of the marriage relation in our country.

### III. THE MINORITY POSITION.

The position which seems to us the only tenable one has already been argued rather fully in the extensive refutation of the majority opinion offered above. There is hence no need of an extensive exposition at this time, for such exposition would have to repeat much argumentation already implied and expressed under point II.

Under this heading I propose to present the minority opinion as summarized in a number of propositions; as confirmed by a comparison of it with the stand of some other churches; and, finally, as allowing for certain very definite exceptions without in any way doing violence to the general principle maintained.

#### A. THE MINORITY POSITION AS SUMMARIZED IN A FEW THESES,

Perhaps we may best gather up the threads of the previous argument in its bearing upon the formulation of a constructive solution of the problem before us by compressing the main features of our position into a number of theses. We submit the following twelve propositions.

(1) According to the divine creation ordinance, expressed in Genesis 1 and 2 and re-affirmed by our Lord in Matt. 19 and Mark 10, marriage is an indissoluble union resting on mutual fidelity and normally terminated only by the death of one of the parties.

(2) In a sinful world the marriage bond is done violence to again and again, so that, as a matter of fact, the

ideally indissoluble marriage bond is frequently broken. But though such marriages may be broken *de facto*, they are not thereby broken *de jure divino*; and though the obligations of the original marriage are cancelled by civil contract, they are not thereby cancelled in the court of the Christian conscience nor in the sight of God.

(3) The Roman Catholic position that no divorce, not even in case of adultery, is scripturally ever justified cannot be maintained.

(4) The Protestant position that Scripture allows for a divorce from the bond of matrimony (*i. e.*, such divorce as permits one to put away husband or wife and be married to another person) is sound.

(5) According to the teaching of Scripture the sin of adultery does such violence to the moral nature of the marriage union that it justifies (though it does not require) the innocent party to secure a divorce and to remarry.

(6) The claim that the exceptive clause in Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9 allows for the remarriage of the guilty party in a divorce for adultery is untenable.

(7) The act of adultery does not before God break the marriage bond, nor does a divorce for such cause wipe out all moral obligations of the marriage union. It only justifies the innocent party in seeking the dissolution and in remarrying. This releases (also before God) the innocent party from all the obligations of the previous marriage union, but does not imply the complete cancellation of the marriage bond and its obligations, for in case both marriage partners would be guilty of adultery, neither of the two parties would have the right before God to sue out a divorce.

(8) It is contrary to the teaching of Scripture that adultery in the form of a second marriage gives the same freedom to the other party as would adultery before divorce has been granted.

(9) Whatever accommodation to actual sinful conditions may be required in the divorce legislation even of a Christian state, the Church in dealing with its members

can be guided by no lower standards in the matter of marriage and its dissolution than those of Scripture.

(10) Without claiming that the Church has the right to insist that a person who has contracted a new and adulterous marriage must repudiate his obligations of this second marriage legally recognized by the civil magistrate, there can be no doubt that the Church in its moral evaluation of marriage and divorce acts of its own members must insist upon recognizing the divine ordinance bearing upon the indissolubility of the marriage bond.

(11) The position of Dr. Charles Hodge expressed in the statement: "If a person be divorced on other than Scriptural grounds and marries again, such person cannot consistently be received to the fellowship of the Church" (*Systematic Theology*, III, 406), constitutes a sound basic policy for the Church to pursue.

(12) Without excluding the possibility of allowing for certain definite exceptions, the decisions of our 1890 and 1908 Synods in their implied bearing upon the ecclesiastical status of illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried persons are fundamentally sound and scriptural.

#### B. THE MINORITY POSITION AS CONFIRMED BY THE STAND OF OTHER CHURCHES.

The stand which other Protestant churches in our own land and in the Netherlands take on this issue is of some value in this connection.

As for the American denominations, it must be remembered that the church polity of some of them is of such a nature as not to allow for a general ruling or universally binding policy for the entire body. In those cases each individual church does as it sees fit. The larger assemblies may from time to time issue a warning against certain divorce evils, but owing to the independent type of church organization a uniform rule and policy for the whole Church in this matter of the admission of illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried persons does not exist. Here belong such denominations as the Northern Baptist Church, the Southern Baptist Church, the Congregational and Christian Churches, the Disciples of Christ, and the Evangelical Synod of North America.

(That this is the stand in the case of each one of these Churches has been ascertained by correspondence on this specific matter with the Stated Clerks of these bodies.) From these bodies we hence get no light on our problem. But there are also other bodies. Let us take them in turn.

1. *The United Lutheran Church in America.*

This is the more "liberal" of the Lutheran churches in our country. It came into existence in 1918 through a fusion of various Lutheran groups, one of the most important of which was known as the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U. S. A. This last-named body had before its General Synod in 1907 a resolution refusing church membership "to persons divorced for causes other than those recognized by the Church." (*Proceedings of the Gen. Syn.*, 1907, p. 64. Quoted by J. P. Lichtenberger, *Divorce*, p. 236.) The resolution was referred to a special committee, which drew up a much milder position. This position, which was adopted by the Synod, read: "Resolved, That after the pastor and other members of the Church Council have carefully examined the person or persons applying for Church Membership, as to their present fitness to be received into the congregation, have prayerfully considered said application in its relation to their own Church and the Church in general, and have unanimously agreed that, under present circumstances, they are justified before God to grant such privilege, then 'persons who have been divorced for other reasons than those mentioned in the report of the Committee on Marriage and Divorce, and were subsequently remarried, may be admitted to membership in our Churches, but not before.'" (As quoted by Lichtenberger, *Op. cit.*, p. 236.)

Apparently the latest deliverance by the United Lutheran Church on this matter is that of 1930. It reads: "The matter of retaining within, or admitting to, the membership of the Church persons who have been divorced on other than scriptural grounds and who have remarried during the lifetime of the former husband or wife falls under the rule of discipline provided for by the constitution of the congregation. In all such instances pastors and church councils are exhorted to proceed with care

and true spiritual wisdom, having proper regard for the Church's purity and honor, but also mindful of her mission to minister the means of grace so that sinners may be converted, restored and saved." (*Minutes of the Seventh Biennial Convention of the United Lutheran Church in America*, 1930, p. 112. Cf. p. 116.)

## 2. *The American Lutheran Conference.*

This is another large group of Lutherans, more conservative than the United Lutheran Church. One of its best-known constituent bodies is the Augustana Synod. The stated clerk of this Conference writes under date of Nov. 1, 1933: "I can state that the constituent bodies, officially at least, recognize no other grounds for divorce except the Biblical, *i. e.*, adultery, and do not permit the guilty party to hold membership in the church. The Augustana Synod has also recognized 'malicious and permanent desertion' as grounds for divorce, and applies the same rules in regard to membership as in the case of adultery."

## 3. *Evangelical Synod of Missouri, etc.*

Another large body of American Lutherans, known commonly as the Missouri Lutherans, have likewise taken a stand similar to the one proposed in this report. These Missouri Lutherans are decidedly orthodox, maintain their own parochial schools, and, like ourselves, refuse to admit lodge members to their fellowship. The stated clerk of this body writes under date of Oct. 31, 1933: "Anyone who has not procured a divorce on scriptural ground will not be married by a pastor of our church. If his remarriage has taken place elsewhere, our church does not recognize this remarriage as valid and he cannot remain a member in good standing in our church or be admitted or readmitted into membership unless he or she repents and forsakes such adulterous union."

## 4. *Presbyterian and Reformed Bodies.*

Both the Northern and the Southern Presbyterian Churches claim to be guided by the rules on marriage and divorce laid down in Chapter XXIV of the Westminster Confession. As this document does not speak of

the specific question before us, and seeing there is no further legislation of General Synods on this point (according to the testimony of both stated clerks), we must conclude that each Church decides as it sees fit in the matter of the admission of persons divorced on non-biblical ground and remarried. The same is true of the Reformed Church in the U. S., known as the German Reformed Church. And the Reformed Church in America (popularly known as the Dutch Reformed Church) has a 1904 decision of General Synod enjoining upon the ministers of the R. C. A. not to remarry divorced persons, excepting the innocent party in a divorce obtained for the cause of adultery. (E. T. Corwin, *A Digest of Constitutional and Synodical Legislation of the R. C. A.*, 1906, p. 218.)

On the specific point before us, however, there seems to be no synodical ruling. Professor S. C. Nettinga, President of Western Theological Seminary, Holland, Mich., writes under date of Nov. 14, 1933: "As to the re-admission into the membership or even the admission into the membership of the Church of persons who have been divorced on non-scriptural grounds and subsequently remarried, there is no official action of any kind to my knowledge, and it is therefore left entirely to the local consistory to deal with as it deems right in each particular case. And as to that there is no uniform policy either, so far as I know. Our people, even our ministry, is very much divided on the matter, some being in favor of excluding them from all membership in the church because they are, according to them, living in a continual state of sin, despite their confession of sorrow for past sins and despite their profession of conversion, while others are just as strongly of the opposite opinion and admit them to membership when there are evidences of sorrow for past sins and a desire to serve Christ henceforth." This shows that there exists the same difference of opinion on this matter in the Reformed Church in America as in our own. The need for Synod to adopt a definite policy is very apparent.

5. *The Methodist Episcopal Church.*

This is the body commonly known as the Northern Methodists. As in most other large denominations of our land, the liberal policy has gradually begun to prevail. In 1888 an overture was presented to the general conference for adoption which read: "Resolved, That rule 46, p. 33, of the Discipline be so amended as to prevent persons (who have secured divorces on frivolous grounds not warranted in the Word of God or the Discipline of the Church) from holding membership in our Church." (*Journal of the General Conference, 1888, p. 231; as quoted in Lichtenberger, Divorce, p. 226.*) This overture failed of adoption. And in 1928 this body adopted the following: "A divorced person seeking admission into membership in our Church, who manifests a proper spirit and satisfactory answers the usual inquiries, may be received." (As quoted by Lichtenberger, *Op. cit.*, p. 230.)

6. *The Church of the Nazarene.*

This is one of the conservative bodies, marked by a spirit of loyalty to scriptural truth in ethical matters. Their position is stated as follows in their church manual: "We hold that persons who obtain divorce under the civil law where the scriptural ground for divorce, namely adultery, does not exist, and subsequently remarry, are living in adultery, and are unworthy of membership in the Church of the Nazarene; and though there may exist such other causes and conditions as may justify divorce under the civil law, yet only adultery will supply such ground as may justify the innocent party in remarrying." (As stated in letter from the General Church Secretary, dated Nov. 2, 1933.)

7. *The Seventh-Day Adventists.*

This body, with which we differ on the Lord's Day question, is known for its faithful adherence to the scriptural standards of the moral life. Its stand in the matter before us follows: "Now in cases where people apply for membership who have been converted after their marriage, our Church attempts to deal with each case, taking into consideration the conditions which have surrounded it. Sometimes members who have been expelled for un-

scriptural marriage in after years apply for membership. These are dealt with in each case according to the conditions which obtain. If the innocent party has died in the meantime, and the attitude of the married individuals has been approved by the local church or the local conference in which they reside, they may sometimes be taken into fellowship again. On the other hand, if a man and wife separate and both remain in the church, and afterward one of these remarries while the other is still living in the church, we do not feel that we can retain their old membership, nor re-admit them into membership so long as such conditions obtain." (From a letter from headquarters of Gen. Conf. of Seventh-Day Adventists, dated Nov. 8, 1933.)

#### 8. *De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.*

Our high regard for the judgment of our mother church in the Netherlands is a matter of common knowledge, and hence its opinion will weigh heavily in our own synodical deliberations. That the advice adopted by the Dutch Synod of 1923 agrees substantially with the advice of our majority committee, is also a matter of common knowledge. If, however, the question be raised whether the advice of these Dutch churches necessarily implies the approbation of the advice of our majority committee, I believe the answer must be in the negative.

There is one important difference between the report of the Dutch Churches and that of our majority committee, and it is a difference which is far-reaching in its bearing on the point under discussion. Though the conclusions of both reports sound almost alike, there is an important proviso contained in the advice of the Dutch Churches. One of the important links in the argument of both reports is the position that the Church should recognize as valid the most recent marriage by the magistrate, so that when illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried persons apply for membership to the church only a sincere confession of past sin is required and for the rest the church abides by the ruling of the state in regarding the second, originally adulterous, marriage now valid. This is the position of our majority committee

without any reservation. But this is not the case with the advice of the Dutch churches.

On this point the Dutch report has the following: "Wordt door de Overheid in hare wetgeving al meer de grondslag van het huwelijk, zooals Gods Woord die vastgesteld heeft, losgelaten; beschouwt de Overheid het huwelijk als een vrij contract tusschen de echtgenooten; staat zij daarom echtscheiding toe op willekeurige gronden, en laat zij na zulk een echtscheiding een nieuw huwelijk toe, dan wordt hieruit voor de Kerk de zeer stellige plicht geboren om binnen haar eigen kring den grondslag, door het Evangelie voor het huwelijk gelegd, te handhaven. Maar evenzeer dient er op gewezen, dat uit het conflict, dat daaruit ontstaan zou, zulke ontzettende gevolgen voor heel de samenleving zouden voortvloeien, dat de Kerk hiertoe niet zou mogen overgaan tenzij vaststaat, dat Gods Woord dit gebiedend van haar eischt." The report then continues by saying that it is happily true of the Netherlands that in its divorce legislation the "Christelijke grondslagen nog niet zijn losgelaten." And after quoting the Dutch civil code on the subject and stating some serious objections against certain of its features, the report again continues: "Maar hoe bedenkelijk deze beide feiten ook zijn mogen, en hoezeer ze onze kerken nopen om toezicht te houden, dat langs dezen weg geen naar Goddelijk recht ongeoorloofde echtscheiding verkregen wordt, toch staat onze wetgeving, wat hare grondbeginselen betreft, nog op het Christelijk standpunt. Mocht echter in de toekomst dit standpunt verlaten worden en ook in onze wetgeving het beginsel worden opgenomen, dat de echtscheiding op grond van onderlinge overeenstemming der echtgenooten of zelfs op verzoek van één der echtgenooten kan worden uitgesproken, dan zou dit zoo beslist ingaan tegen Gods Woord, dat de Kerk zich hier niet bij zou mogen nederleggen." After stating that before the Church would adopt this policy, it would be duty bound to make its stand known to the government, the report continues in direct application to us and our situation (it will be recalled that this advice was occasioned by a question from our Synod): "In hoeverre dit geval zich nu reeds in Amerika heeft

voorgedaan, kunnen deputaten niet beoordeelen, omdat zij niet genoegzaam op de hoogte zijn van de in Amerika geldende wetten. Voor zoover de Overheid echter, gelijk dit in ons land het geval is, in haar wetgeving nog aan de Christelijke grondslagen van het huwelijk in het algemeen vasthoudt en alleen in bepaalde gevallen op gewichtige gronden echtscheiding veroorlooft, achten deputaten, dat de Kerken ten opzichte van de erkenning van zulk een echtscheiding en een daarop gevolgd huwelijk het volgende standpunt hebben in te nemen:" (Then follows the well-known position.) (See *Rapportenboek*, 1923, pp. 28, 29.)

In other words, this advice of the Dutch Churches is predicated upon the assumption that the Christian foundations for marriage and divorce are generally speaking still recognized in the civil legislation and jurisprudence. It is specifically said that the (Dutch) committee cannot judge whether this can be said about the legislation and court procedure in our country, but it feels confident it can still be said of marriage and divorce legislation in the Netherlands.

This point, to which the Dutch report itself directs our attention, should not be slighted. It is not correct to say that the final advice is after all the same as that of the majority committee. If the general Christian principles as touching marriage and divorce are no longer recognized in our legislative halls and divorce courts, the whole advice of the Dutch churches is nullified and we have no moral right to appeal to their advice in support of the position of the majority committee.

Now there may be difference of opinion on the question whether our marriage and divorce legislation and court procedure has already fallen from the Christian foundations. One thing is certain, there is a great deal of difference between the moral attitude toward matters of marriage and divorce, both officially and in the public mind, on the part of the Dutch nation and that of our own. In the Netherlands there are only four grounds for divorce recognized by the "Burgerlijk Wetboek," viz., adultery, malicious desertion, imprisonment for four years, and acts of dangerous violence ("zware en levensgevaarlijke

mishandeling"). (See Cecil Chapman, *Marriage and Divorce*, p. 98; W. Geesink, *Gereformeerde Ethiek*, I, 411; II, 285; for a critical discussion of these and other grounds proposed in the year 1904, see Anne Anema, *De Gronden voor Echtscheiding in het Nederlandsch Burgerlijk Recht*.) In our country each state has its own divorce laws. As for the grounds allowed, these range all the way from no ground to 14 grounds. Speaking of divorce in the United States in the decade 1914-24 a writer in *The New International Encyclopaedia* makes the startling statement: "Counting certain duplications, there were in the United States 363 causes for divorce: in one state, New York, unfaithfulness alone; in others, for varied reasons down to bad temper." (Supplement, Vol. I [1925], p. 380.) There is no country in the Christian civilized world with a higher divorce rate than our own. Already in 1885 we had as many divorces as all the following countries combined: Canada, Great Britain, France, Italy, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Austria, Rumania, Russia, and Australia—and 3,000 to spare. Today for every six marriages there is one divorce in this country, and in some states one out of every four marriages ends in the divorce court. Conditions are really appalling. Respect for the sanctity and indissolubility of the marriage union is fast losing ground. Although it is true that we have not sunk to the depths of Russia on this score (See Maurice Hindus, *Humanity Uprooted*, Chapters VII-IX), there is room for a serious argument on the issue whether we are still adhering to the Christian moral foundations in the matter of marriage and divorce.

Just what bearing all this would have upon the advice of the Dutch Churches if the facts were known to them, I do not profess to know. I do know that it is incorrect to claim that, irrespective of these conditions, the Dutch Churches are supporting the advice of our majority committee.

Bringing this survey of the stand taken by other denominations to a close we may say, as far as the American denominations are concerned, that those denominations which are spiritually farthest removed from us are

precisely the churches that have taken a lax attitude in the matter before us, and that those churches that stand spiritually closest to us are either finding themselves torn between two opinions, not having as yet reached a synodical decision in the matter, or have taken a definite stand for the position which this minority report champions.

C. THE MINORITY OPINION AS REAFFIRMING THE PRESENT STAND OF THE CHURCH BUT ALLOWING FOR CERTAIN DEFINITE EXCEPTIONS TO THE GENERAL RULE.

The main thrust of this minority opinion constitutes a reaffirmation of the present stand of our Church. There is such a stand. It is true that on the exact question as formulated at the beginning of this report none of our Synods has specifically ruled. But the Church has ruled on the admission of the guilty party in a divorce for adultery who has subsequently remarried. From the very nature of the issue, this stand has such definite and inescapable implications for the present question, that the adoption of the majority report would mean the repudiation of that stand. This minority opinion urges Synod to reaffirm the historical stand of the Church and to make a deliverance that shall make explicit the implications of that stand on the question before us.

The stand of the Church, which the majority committee would necessarily cancel and which this report would reaffirm, may be found in the Acts of 1890, Art. 66, and the Acts of 1908, Art. 54, sub X, pp. 38, 39.

The 1890 decision reads as follows: "Een andere vraag uit het agendum komt aan de orde: 'Mag een man van wien de vrouw zich wettig liet scheiden omdat hij overspel bedreef, ingeval hij bij het leven zijner eerste vrouw weer in het huwelijk treedt, lid der gemeente zijn?' De Synode antwoordt ontkennend."

At the Synod of 1908 Classis Grand Rapids West urgently requested Synod to give an exposition of the grounds for this decision of the 1890 Synod, and Synod passed the following: "Het is natuurlijk voor deze Synode onmogelijk om aan te geven op welke gronden een Synode nu bijna 20 jaren geleden alzo geoordeeld heeft. Wat zij doen kan is alleen uit te spreken, wat zij zelve voldoende

gronden voor zulk een besluit zou achten. En dan komt het ons voor, dat zulk een man geen lid der gemeente kan zijn, omdat zijn overspel wel zijn beleedigde vrouw heeft vrijgemaakt, maar niet hem. Hij bleef desniettemin voor God aan die vrouw gebonden, en zijn tweede huwelijk is mitsdien een leven in overspel. Ware dit niet zoo, dan stond voor ieder de weg open, om door overspel zich van zijn wettige vrouw te bevrijden, en een andere die het voorwerp is van een overspelige begeerte, te huwen, en toch in vrede met de Kerk te blijven, door nadat alles met goddeloos opzet geschied was, door een openbare belijdenis zich met de Kerk te verzoenen. De spits van de Goddelijke ordinantie: Wie zijn vrouw verlaat anders dan om hoereri, die doet overspel, ware dan afgebroken; zij ware van haar kracht beroofd. Er zou naar de wijze der Schriftgeleerden een weg gevonden zijn om Gods gebod te ontduiken, en een besluit, dat zoo iemand wel lid der Gemeente zou kunnen zijn, zou het karakter dragen van een instelling, waardoor Gods gebod krachteloos werd gemaakt."

The case presupposed is that of a person divorced and remarried after a divorce for adultery in which he was the guilty party. The case presupposed in the question before us is that of persons illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried. It is a further application, as well as implied reaffirmation, of this same principle to hold that persons divorced on non-biblical ground and subsequently remarried cannot be received into the fellowship of the Church as long as either their former or present marriage partner is still living. This is the position of the present report.

But though this rule in its main thrust would appear to be scriptural and ethically sound, further reflection upon the problem as discussed above also demands, I believe, that provision must be made for certain definite cases by way of exception. I believe there are three such cases.

The first concerns parties illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried who must be judged to be guiltless of the divorce procedure and who have remarried after the guilty party remarried. This case was also contemplated by the advisory committee of the 1932 Synod,

and at that time a proposal was made to make special provision for such cases; a proposal which Synod tabled. (Acts, 1932, p. 153, D.) Though not necessarily upon the same grounds as proposed by that advisory committee, it would seem there is justification for making an exception on this score. This would not be so, if the position had been taken in this report that in the final determination of the propriety to admit to the fellowship of the Church illegitimately divorced and remarried parties the only question that need be taken into consideration is: does the original marriage bond still exist? This is not the only question, though it is an important consideration. The other question that may not be ignored is that of the guilt or innocence of the party concerned. That element has been stressed in this report; it is basic in the determination of the difference between the guilty and innocent party in a divorce for adultery; and, it seems to us, it cannot be ignored in a divorce on unbiblical ground either, though it is readily granted that the "innocence" has a different background in the two cases. We do not claim that for the determination of the right to remarry this matter of guilt or innocence in an unbiblical divorce is decisive, but we do claim that for the determination of the question whether a person unbiblically divorced and subsequently remarried can be admitted or restored to the fellowship of the Church, the relative guilt or innocence of the party concerned cannot be left out of consideration. And then it seems to me that it would serve the ends of justice and mercy both, without doing undue violence to the sacredness of the marriage vow, provided the innocence of such a person is established beyond dispute to the satisfaction of the consistory, that the door of admission to the Church be not closed to that person. This innocence must be apparent through proof that this party has neither directly nor indirectly, neither passively nor actively promoted the illegitimate divorce; that the passive party has in no way contributed to the guilt alleged against him(her) in the bill of divorce; and that remarriage in his(her) case has followed only after the party which sued out the divorce had done so. This exception will go a great way to remove instances of apparent in-

justice that occur in our modern marriage and divorce tragedies as coming under ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The second case concerns parties of whom it can be established that at the time of the divorce and the remarriage they were not sufficiently aware of the Christian demands maintained by the Church to hold them fully responsible for the consequences as would be the case with members of the Church. This refers to those who were not at the time members of the Church, lived possibly pagan lives in the midst of our Christian civilization, and who later came to conversion. In view of the fact that such parties were at the time of their divorce and remarriage guided by the moral standards in the matter which were recognized in the sphere of the civil life of a Christian country, but not by the standards upon which the Church rightfully insists and which it holds up to its members in preaching and discipline, it would be manifestly unfair to hold them responsible for the knowledge of these standards. To this difference the Dutch report also alludes when, referring to such parties, it says: "Het zou bovendien, waar deze zonde hier meestal in onwetendheid is geschied, al te hard zijn, wanneer de Kerk weigerde hen als lidmaten te ontvangen, zoolang zij in dit huwelijk voortleven." (*Op. cit.*, p. 34.) It will no doubt be difficult to determine in certain individual cases whether the condition stated obtains, by reason of the fact that not everyone outside of the bounds of the Christian Reformed (or even Christian) Church can be said to be ignorant of the moral standards in the matter maintained by the Church, but this can be no objection against the policy as such. This exception to the general rule, it would seem, is perfectly justified and would largely take care of such divorced and remarried parties who through missionary endeavor come to conversion and seek admission to the fellowship of the Church. Surely such parties, however illegitimate their divorce and remarriage, and however great the need of genuine penitence over these past sins, cannot be placed on a par with those who knew the Christian demands of marriage and, against their better knowledge and the warning and admonition of the

Church, broke their marriage bond and entered upon an adulterous union.

The third case is of an entirely different nature, but would, it seems to me require some provision, in case Synod should adopt the advice of this report. I refer to parties guilty in the past of illegitimate divorce and subsequent remarriage whose case has been disposed of by some recognized sister church (particularly de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland) and who subsequently are transferred as members in good standing to one of our congregations. Since the official stand of de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland is such as it is since 1923 (when the conclusions sent as advice to our Church were officially adopted by the General Synod; see *Acta Syn. Geref. Kerken in Ned. 1923*, art. 91 en Bijlage XXVI), it would seem proper to make special mention in the decision which is to govern the policy of our Church in this matter of such cases which have been dealt with and disposed of in the Dutch Churches and are transferred to our fellowship. It may be urged that such cases would not in any sense come under the terms of our discipline by reason of the fact that they were closed cases in the Netherlands and such parties were transferred as members in good standing to our fellowship. This is perfectly true, but the possibility exists that charges of living in an adulterous union might conceivably be brought against such parties by members of our own Church. In order to preclude this possibility, it would seem both wise and proper to make special mention of such cases in our decision. The justification for this policy must be sought in the fact that we must honor the rules and decisions in the matter of discipline of any of our sister churches, even when such procedure might depart rather markedly from our own.

#### IV. ADVICE TO SYNOD.

The following resolution is hereby submitted to Synod for its prayerful consideration and, if possible, adoption.

*Synod*, having heard both the majority and the minority report on the right to church membership of persons unbiblically divorced and subsequently remarried; and

deeply convinced that after a study over a period of twenty years the time has come to reach a definite decision in this urgent and serious matter;

*Resolves,*

To reaffirm the deliverances upon the status of persons divorced and remarried made by the Synods of 1890 and 1908; and

To declare that a person divorced on non-biblical ground and remarried during the lifetime of the other marriage partner cannot enjoy the privileges of membership in the Christian Reformed Church so long as the present marriage union continues or the original marriage partner continues to live;

With the distinct understanding, however, that this rule shall not be made to apply to the following parties:

1. Persons who, though illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried, can be proved to the satisfaction of the consistory to have been guiltless in the matter of the divorce and whose remarriage did not take place before the remarriage of their marriage partner.
2. Persons concerning whom the consistory has reasonable assurance that at the time of their illegitimate divorce and subsequent remarriage their moral consciousness was not so trained as to be aware of the evil involved in such illegitimate divorce and remarriage as the Church views it.
3. Persons at one time illegitimately divorced and subsequently remarried who, at the time, were members in a church of a sister-denomination which follows a procedure differing from ours in dealing with such cases (as, *e. g.*, de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland), provided their case was adjudicated when they were transferred to one of our churches.

Respectfully submitted,

CLARENCE BOUMA.

REPORT XXVI.

REPORT OF MISSION ORDER COMMITTEE

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF SYNOD:

Your Committee begs to report:

1. That it lost a valued member in the death of the late Rev. J. L. Heeres, whose memory we hold precious.
2. That the Synod of 1932 rejecting the Report rendered to it, as well as the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on the subject, p. 47 of Acts, continued the Committee and instructed it to perform its task, *without giving it any definite instructions*, so that we are simply left to guess at what was expected from us.
3. That in view of the agitation on the subject now going on, it appeared untimely and futile to us to now present a lengthy report.
4. That we believe that Synod should first of all and definitely determine on which *principle* it wishes mission work to be conducted, viz., on that of local autonomy or synodically regulated authority.
5. We suggest that, after having determined this principle, *general* rules and regulations be drawn up, to precede articles of a mission order for the different *departments* in which the work naturally divides itself, such as Home Missions, in the sense of church extension; Home Missions, in the sense of evangelization work; and Jewish, Indian, and Foreign Missions. We suggest the above in the interests of the so desirable uniformity and interaction, and in the expectation that our Church may ultimately obtain a Mission Order of sufficient scope and at the same time of elasticity, consonant with sound Reformed principles, to cover and guide the work efficiently and fruitfully for a long period, to the praise of God's Name and the coming of His blessed Kingdom.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Committee,

J. DOLFIN

H. BEETS

Z. SHERDA.