

AGENDA

Synod
Christian Reformed Church

*To convene June 10, 1936
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

THE present volume is **PART II**, of the Agenda for the 1936 Synod, containing belated Reports, several Annual Reports, list of synodical delegates, overtures, list of protests, etc.

Tuesday evening, June 9, 1936, at 8:00 p. m., D. V., **PRAYER MEETING FOR SYNOD** in the Oakdale Park Church of Grand Rapids, corner of Hancock St. and Butler Ave., led by the Rev. W. P. Van Wyk, president of the Synod of 1934.

Wednesday, June 10th, at 10:00 a. m., in the Calvin College chapel, the 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

DIT 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, verschillende verslagen van Staande Commissies, een lijst der synodale deputaten, voorstellen voor de Synode, lijst van protesten, enz.

Aan den avond van Dinsdag, 9 Juni, 1936, te acht ure, wordt, D. V., in het kerkgebouw der Oakdale Park gemeente te Grand Rapids, hoek van Hancock St. en Butler Ave., het **SYNODALE BIDUUR** gehouden, geleid door Ds. W. P. Van Wyk, president der Synode van 1934, die den volgenden morgen, Woensdag, 10 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 10 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

REPORT XVII.

CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE

ESTEEMED FATHERS AND BRETHREN
OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

WE HEREBY submit a report of the work done the last two years. As you will notice from the financial report, 16 churches have again been helped by this fund (new loans). We have been very careful in making these loans and have stressed the importance of repaying 5% per year. These loans are a great help to the churches. No interest is charged and the repayment of 5% per year is credited to the principal. Our greatest problem is, however, to collect this 5% per year.

About one-half of the churches have kept their promise to repay 5% per year. In 1935 there were 22 churches which paid nothing and 18 more which repaid less than 2% of their loans. Altogether there are 91 churches which still owe money to this fund. The total amount outstanding is now \$111,397.18.

While this has been a very useful fund, we believe it could be made more useful. Instead of the churches paying hundreds of dollars to banks and individuals in interest charges, this fund could help many more churches and we could perhaps, in time, finance the building of most of our churches. We have a plan which we herewith submit for your approval. The plan is as follows:

We suggest that interest be charged on all loans, except those which are repaid promptly. If the church will repay 5% each year, as has been the rule in the past, no interest will be charged. No other discounts should be given, such

as those offered now; namely, 20% if it is all paid back in 5 years, 10% discount if it is all paid in 10 years, and 5% if it is all paid back in 15 years. These inducements, great as they are, have not resulted in prompt payment. Most churches are not able to pay it back so soon. Very few churches have taken advantage of these offers. It also creates the impression that we have money to give away.

A penalty of 5% interest to churches which fail to repay 5% per year, will result in a prompt payment on nearly all outstanding loans, we believe.

We also suggest that you permit us to require that churches give us a mortgage on their buildings a security if the loan is a large one, and also in the case of churches which need a second loan but are delinquent in their 5% payments on the first loan.

The suggested amount to be contributed to this fund the last two years was 50c. per family. We suggest that the apportionment remain the same for the next two years.

In regard to the Bradley Church debt, about which the Synod of 1934 decided that Classis Grand Rapids East should reimburse us, this has not yet been done. The officers of the Classis have assured us, however, that they are making arrangements to do this.

Mr. J. J. Buiten has again served as our treasurer. He keeps the books, conducts most of the correspondence, and submits requests for loans to us for approval or rejection; he also sends statements to delinquent churches for collection, etc. His books have been audited by a public accountant and a copy of the accountant's report is filed with the Stated Clerk. We attach herewith a copy of the Treasurer's report.

Respectfully submitted,

D. DE BEER,
CLARENCE GROOT,
HENRY J. VERMEER.

SUMMARY OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS Church Help Committee of the Christian Reformed Church of America, January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935

Balance on hand January 1, 1934.....			\$ 1,358.44
RECEIPTS			
	1934	1935	COMBINED
Classical Collections	\$ 2,425.09	\$ 4,046.39	\$ 6,471.48
(see Schedule A)			
Repayments by Churches.....	2,862.32	3,266.29	6,128.61
(see Schedule B)			
TOTAL RECEIPTS.....	\$ 5,287.41	\$ 7,312.68	\$12,600.09
TOTAL BALANCE AND RECEIPTS			\$13,958.53
LESS:			
New Loans Granted.....	\$ 6,150.00	\$ 6,900.00	\$13,050.00
(see Schedule B)			
			\$ 908.53
LESS:			
Administrative Expense			251.26
Balance on hand December 31, 1935.....			\$ 657.27

SCHEDULE A

CLASSICAL COLLECTION RECEIPTS

Church-Help Committee — Christian Reformed Church of America

CLASSIS	1934	1935	COMBINED	1932-33
California	\$ 45.28	\$ 139.71	\$ 184.99	\$ 111.19
Grand Rapids East.....	113.08	310.63	323.71	453.09
Grand Rapids West.....	389.82	491.82	881.64	438.47
Hackensack	66.96	135.85	202.81	436.33
Holland	174.81	252.42	427.23	196.90
Hudson	179.99	258.14	438.13	358.42
Illinois	336.77	743.80	1,080.57	788.35
Muskegon	536.91	958.47	1,495.38	912.33
Orange City	109.30	50.19	159.49	153.91
Ostfriesland	5.00	31.22	36.22	7.00
Pacific	131.51	251.79	383.30	461.40
Pella	87.40	158.92	246.32	267.11
Sioux Center	110.52	115.39	225.91	237.48
Wisconsin	47.47	161.21	208.68	181.98
Zeeland	90.27	86.83	177.10	248.66
TOTALS	\$ 2,425.09	\$ 4,046.39	\$ 6,471.48	\$ 5,252.62

SCHEDULE B
LOANS STATEMENT

Church-Help Committee — Christian Reformed Church of America

Church at	Amt. Owing 1/1/34	New Loans	Paid in 1934	Paid in 1935	Amt. Owing 12/31/35
Ada, Michigan ----	\$ 100.00	-----	\$ 25.00	\$ 25.00	\$ 50.00
Aetna, Michigan ---	662.14	-----	10.17	40.11	611.86
Alameda, Calif. ---	2,400.00	-----	195.75	-----	2,204.25
Alamosa, Colo. ---	400.00	-----	50.00	50.00	300.00
Arlene, Michigan ---	127.00	-----	-----	10.00	117.00
Atwood, Michigan ---	1,380.00	-----	75.00	-----	1,305.00
Austinville, Ia. ---	490.00	-----	35.00	35.00	420.00
Bauer, Michigan ---	625.00	-----	50.00	25.00	550.00
Bellflower, Calif. ---	2,690.00	-----	190.00	150.00	2,350.00
Bigelow, Minn. ---	1,900.90	-----	-----	288.68	1,611.22
Birnhamwood, Wis. ---	2,110.00	-----	16.75	-----	2,093.25
Bradley, Michigan ---	550.00	-----	-----	-----	550.00
Broton, Minn. ---	1,235.00	-----	-----	80.06	1,226.94
Chandler, Minn. ---	1,140.92	\$ 700.00	5.50	48.84	1,786.58
Chatham, Ont. ---	3,000.00	-----	-----	25.00	2,975.00
Colton, S. Dak. ---	975.00	-----	25.00	-----	950.00
Columbus, Mont. ---	525.00	-----	-----	12.00	513.00
Conrad, Mont. ---	1,820.00	-----	-----	50.00	1,770.00
Coopersville, Mich. ---	1,425.00	-----	7.07	-----	1,417.93
Crookston, Minn. ---	750.00	-----	50.00	50.00	650.00
DesPlaines, Ill. ---	1,000.00	1,000.00	50.00	65.00	1,885.00
DeMotte, Indiana ---	1,000.00	-----	30.00	75.00	895.00
Decatur, Michigan ---	3,500.00	-----	-----	-----	3,500.00
Detroit, Michigan ---	475.00	-----	50.00	100.00	325.00
Dutton, Michigan ---	400.00	-----	25.00	50.00	325.00
East Martin, Mich. ---	1,260.00	-----	50.00	50.00	1,160.00
East Muskegon, Mich. ---	3,800.00	-----	6.87	32.34	3,760.79
East Palmyra, N. Y. ---	102.64	-----	60.00	42.64	-----
Ellsworth, Mich. ---	1,300.00	-----	100.00	100.00	1,100.00
Estalene, S. Dak. ---	2,412.75	-----	3.21	3.65	2,405.89
Fremont, Mich. II ---	130.00	-----	70.00	25.00	35.00
Goshen, Indiana ---	550.00	-----	-----	50.00	500.00
G. R. East Leonard ---	6,025.00	-----	-----	30.00	5,995.00
G. R. Godwin Hts. ---	2,900.00	-----	-----	-----	2,900.00
G. R. Lee Street ---	1,700.00	-----	25.00	25.00	1,650.00
Grangeville, Idaho ---	-----	500.00	-----	-----	500.00
Hamilton, Ont. ---	3,000.00	-----	-----	-----	3,000.00
Hamshire, Texas ---	2,250.00	-----	125.00	125.00	2,000.00
Hancock, Minn. ---	1,078.00	-----	11.17	9.07	1,057.78
Hanford, Calif. ---	102.99	-----	-----	62.50	40.49
Hawarden, Iowa ---	850.00	-----	-----	50.00	800.00
Hills, Minn. ---	75.00	1,000.00	37.00	38.00	1,000.00
Holland, Iowa ---	1,415.00	-----	115.00	120.00	1,180.00
Holland, Minn. ---	1,440.00	-----	-----	-----	1,440.00
Hollandale, Minn. ---	-----	1,200.00	-----	30.00	1,170.00
Holland Center, S. Dak. ---	1,240.00	-----	70.00	70.00	1,100.00
Ireton, Iowa ---	-----	500.00	-----	25.00	475.00
Lansing, Illinois ---	875.00	-----	50.00	75.00	750.00

Church at	Amt. Owning 1/1/34	New Loans	Paid in 1934	Paid in 1935	Amt. Owning 12/31/35
Lark, N. Dak. -----	500.00	-----	-----	-----	500.00
Los Angeles, Calif. -	2,040.00	-----	25.00	115.00	1,900.00
Lynden, Wash. II ---	2,350.00	-----	150.00	100.00	2,100.00
Martin, S. Dak. -----	-----	250.00	-----	12.50	237.50
McBain, Michigan ---	1,202.11	-----	20.00	73.67	1,108.44
Millwood, Michigan -----	-----	500.00	-----	25.00	475.00
Momence, Illinois -----	-----	1,000.00	-----	50.00	950.00
Mountain Lake, Minn. 420.00	-----	-----	-----	20.00	400.00
Muskegon Hts., Mich. 355.00	-----	-----	35.00	35.00	285.00
Neerlandia, Can. ---	5,095.00	-----	-----	95.00	5,000.00
Noordeloos, Mich. ---	61.41	-----	4.61	2.51	54.29
North Blendon, Mich. 185.00	-----	-----	25.00	10.00	150.00
Ocheyedan, Iowa ---	1,022.79	-----	7.14	7.30	1,008.35
Ogilvie, Minn. -----	585.00	-----	30.00	28.00	527.00
Ontario, Calif. -----	1,000.00	1,000.00	7.69	-----	1,992.31
Orange City, Ia. II. ---	1,500.00	-----	75.00	150.00	1,275.00
Oskaloosa, Ia. -----	157.74	-----	22.06	-----	135.68
Pella, Iowa II -----	-----	500.00	-----	9.00	491.00
Portland, Michigan ---	825.00	-----	43.00	37.00	745.00
Purewater, S. Dak. ---	740.00	-----	50.00	-----	690.00
Riverbend, Mich. ---	1,175.00	-----	-----	-----	1,175.00
Rock Rapids, Ia. -----	2,625.00	-----	5.06	-----	2,619.94
Roseland, Ill. IV ---	3,110.00	-----	35.00	50.00	3,025.00
Rudyard, Mich. -----	443.61	-----	90.00	67.65	285.96
Sanborn, Ia. -----	190.43	-----	-----	31.36	159.07
Shepherd, Mont. -----	3,056.80	-----	-----	-----	3,056.80
Sibley, Iowa -----	1,495.50	-----	30.00	40.00	1,425.50
Sioux Center, Ia. I. ---	1,655.97	-----	174.32	-----	1,481.65
Sioux City, Iowa ---	760.00	-----	-----	40.00	720.00
Sioux Falls, S. Dak. ---	1,609.70	-----	6.96	-----	1,602.74
Sullivan, Mich. -----	150.00	-----	-----	10.00	140.00
Sully, Iowa -----	-----	2,000.00	18.24	31.76	1,950.00
Sultan, Washington ---	1,050.00	-----	-----	20.00	1,030.00
Tracy, Iowa -----	72.65	1,000.00	-----	-----	1,072.65
Vancouver, Cana. ---	1,725.00	-----	34.00	82.00	1,609.00
Volga, S. Dak. -----	-----	500.00	-----	25.00	475.00
Vona, Colorado -----	82.25	400.00	15.00	-----	467.25
Waupun, Wisconsin ---	600.00	-----	420.00	180.00	-----
Wellsburg, Iowa II -----	-----	1,000.00	-----	50.00	950.00
West Branch, Mich. ---	984.13	-----	10.00	92.93	881.20
Winnipeg, Cana. -----	365.00	-----	5.27	5.20	354.53
Worthington, Minn. ---	1,581.75	-----	4.48	42.52	1,534.75
Wyoming Park, Mich. ---	1,029.51	-----	-----	75.00	954.51
TOTALS -----	\$104,987.79	\$13,050.00	\$2,956.32	\$3,684.29	\$111,397.18

NEW LOANS BY LOCATIONS:

Iowa -----	5
Minnesota -----	4
Illinois -----	2
Idaho, Michigan, S. Dak., Calif. and Colorado 1 each -----	5

J. J. BUITEN, Treasurer.

REPORT XVIII.

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

ESTEEMED FATHERS AND BRETHREN
OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE following report covers the affairs of the Seamen's Home in Hoboken, N. J., from January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935.

During the last two years the work in the Seamen's Home has been performed with regularity and devotion. Since the coming of Rev. A. H. Kort to Hoboken in December, 1934, the missionary work of the Home has been in charge of Hoboken's pastor. Mr. E. Apol, who manages the administration affairs of the Home, has ably assisted him. Hundreds of ships in the harbor have been visited. Mr. and Mrs. C. Fisher have faithfully performed their duties as janitor and matron.

The Board is composed of four members of Classis Hackensack and four members of Classis Hudson. In the course of 1935 the term of office of Mr. H. Hamstra and Mr. B. Stap expired. Both men rendered faithful service. The Board, as constituted at present, consists of the following members: Rev. J. J. Hiemenga, President; Rev. D. De Beer, Treasurer; Mr. J. Faber and Mr. J. L. Westervelt, all of Classis Hackensack; and Rev. P. Van Dyk, Vice-President, Rev. E. Van Halsema, Secretary, Mr. F. De Haan, and Mr. A. Kes, of Classis Hudson. The Board mournfully remembers the sudden departure of its former secretary, Rev. J. L. Van Tienen, on July 30, 1934; he had served the Seamen's Home for twelve years.

The Board meets regularly on the second Thursday of the month. At every meeting reports are submitted by Rev. A. H. Kort on the spiritual work, and by Mr. E. Apol on the management of the Home, the work on the ships in the harbor, and the immigration work.

We have already stated that Rev. Kort is in charge of the missionary work at the Seamen's Home. Before the com-

ing of Hoboken's present pastor, Classes Hackensack and Hudson decided, in April, 1934, that the best possible arrangement under present circumstances would be that the pastor of Hoboken be in charge of the missionary work in the Seamen's Home. The Consistory of Hoboken readily promised its co-operation and called Rev. A. H. Kort with the understanding that among other duties, he also would be in charge of the missionary work in the Home, which would include:

1. Conducting two short services every week in the Seamen's Home;
2. Consulting with the Assistant as to the work to be done by him;
3. Supervising all the missionary work of the Assistant;
4. Devising ways and means by which the work in the Home can be effectively continued and enlarged;
5. Submitting a monthly report of all this work to the Board.

Since the coming of Rev. Kort in December, 1934, the missionary work has been carried on with zeal and devotion.

In the Fall of 1935 Classes Hackensack and Hudson decided that \$200 be paid out of the Seamen's Home Fund to Rev. Kort in consideration of the work he performs in and for the Home.

Necessary repairs in and on the building have been made.

From the reports of Mr. Apol we glean the following facts:

Ships visited	498
Barges and other craft.....	636
Meetings held	132
Attendance at meetings.....	3,014
Portions of Scripture and tracts distributed.....	8,890
New Testaments distributed.....	606
Bibles	200
Free beds provided.....	51
Free meals provided.....	297

In 1934 — 260 emigrants, 37 sailors, and 5 visitors found lodging in the Home.

In 1935 lodging in the Home was provided for 275 emigrants, 15 sailors, 11 visitors, and eleven immigrants.

Approximately \$60 per month was realized from this source

Immigration

Immigration has not increased much since 1932.

In the last two years 314 persons were assisted on the incoming ships, among whom were 48 immigrants and 41 visitors. On the outgoing ships 322 persons were assisted.

Finances

As to the financial status of the Seamen's Home, on January 1, 1934, the deficit totaled \$2,290.02. On December 31, 1935, this had been reduced to \$839.16.

In 1934 the Home yielded an income of \$1,167.91; in 1935 an income of \$1,291.12. Although these sums do not represent the final balances for the two years, the Board appreciates the fact that these sums, yielded by the Home, have made it possible that the annual expenses for Home maintenance could be defrayed from this income to an amount represented by the above mentioned figures.

The Board presents the following proposed annual budget for the Seamen's Home for 1936 and 1937:

Salaries	\$2,560.00	
Gas and Electricity.....	300.00	
Coal	213.00	
Water	60.00	
Interest	40.00	
Repairs and Incidentals.....	500.00	
Total	\$3,673.00	
Less Estimated Income:		
Income from Home.....	\$1,200.00	
Dividends, Miami		
R. R. Stock.....	320.00	
Interest on Mortgage....	200.00	1,720.00
		\$1,953.00 per year, or
		\$3,906.00 for two y'rs.

ASSETS OF THE SEAMEN'S HOME

Three-story building at 310 Hudson St., Hoboken, N. J.....	\$15,000.00
Three-story building at 334 River St., Hoboken, N. J.....	25,000.00
Miami R. R. Stock (80 shares).....	7,200.00
First Mortgage	4,000.00
Total Assets.....	\$51,200.00

LIABILITIES

A Deficit, as of December 31, 1935, of.....\$ 839.16

Respectfully submitted,

Eastern Home Mission Board,

(Signed) E. VAN HALSEMA, *Sec'y.*

REPORT XIX.

FINANCIAL REPORT OF JEWISH MISSIONS — GENERAL FUND

of the Christian Reformed Church
(Compare Report VI, p. 22, Agenda Part I)

FROM JANUARY 1, 1934, TO DECEMBER 31, 1935

Classis	Families	Amount Required	Amount Received	Received Less Than Required	Received per Family	Received Less per Family	Included in Amount Sent Direct to Chicago
California	570	\$ 926.25	\$ 625.07	\$ 301.18	\$ 1.09	\$.53	
East Friesland	618	1,004.25	763.94	240.31	1.23	.39	
Grand Rapids East	2,842	4,618.25	2,573.32	2,044.93	.90	.72	
Grand Rapids West	3,421	5,559.12	2,530.47	3,028.65	.74	.98	
Hackensack	646	1,049.75	632.35	417.40	1.09	.53	
Holland	1,930	3,136.25	1,476.49	1,659.76	.76	.86	
Hudson	1,496	2,431.00	1,956.62	474.38	1.30	.32	
Illinois	2,822	4,585.75	2,608.31	1,977.44	.92	.70	\$ 1,601.59
Muskegon	1,990	3,233.75	2,557.11	676.64	1.28	.34	
Orange City	1,794	2,915.25	1,125.39	1,789.86	.63	.99	
Pacific	940	1,527.50	957.74	569.76	1.02	.60	
Pella	1,108	1,800.50	942.85	857.65	.85	.77	
Sioux Center	1,309	2,127.13	900.40	1,226.73	.68	.94	
Wisconsin	691	1,122.88	640.81	482.07	.92	.70	62.67
Zeeland	1,525	2,478.12	1,984.20	493.92	1.30	.32	
TOTALS	23,702	\$38,515.75	\$22,275.07	\$16,240.68	\$.98	\$.64	\$ 1,664.26
Societies, Churches, Individuals			1,157.32				
Interest			138.75				
Balance on hand January 1, 1934			283.31				
Total Receipts to December 31, 1935			\$23,854.45				

Method of Computation per Family

Jan. 1, 1934—June 30, 1934 @ \$1.00 per year
July 1, 1934—Dec. 31, 1935 @ .75 per year

DISBURSEMENTS

Chicago	\$14,078.00
Paterson	7,297.50
Direct to Chicago.....	1,664.26
Gratuity	150.00
Stamps, Bond, Box, etc.....	60.28

Total Disbursements to Dec. 31, 1935 \$23,250.04

Balance on hand Jan. 1, 1936..... \$ 604.41

CHICAGO:

From General Fund.....	\$14,078.00
Sent Direct	1,664.26
Other Sources	693.57

Total Receipts..... \$16,435.83

PATERSON:

From General Fund.....	\$ 7,297.50
Other Sources	447.41

Total Receipts..... \$ 7,744.91

GRAND TOTAL..... \$24,180.74

IN RESERVE:

Michael Vanden Berge Memorial Bonds.....	\$1,000.00
Johanna Woltman Legacy — Certificate —	
5 Shares Paid-up Stock.....	500.00

EXPECTANCY:

Beneficiaries under Will of the late H. Schaafsma.
Amount is unknown — Will in Probate.

Expected from Jan. 1, 1934—Dec. 31, 1935.....
.....\$1.625 per family
Number of families average for two years.

Notice — All money for Jewish Missions should be sent direct to the Treasurer of the General Fund; not to Treasurers at Chicago and Paterson.

CHICAGO:

Appropriated by Synod.....	\$26,192.43
Received	16,435.83

Less than appropriated..... \$ 9,756.60

PATERSON:

Appropriated by Synod.....	\$12,323.32
Received	7,444.91

Less than appropriated..... \$ 4,878.41

Respectfully submitted,
PETER HOLWERDA, *Treasurer.*

February 25th, 1936.

The books and records of Rev. P. G. Holwerda, Treasurer of the Jewish Mission, General Fund, including an examination of the Reserve Securities have been audited and found to be correct and the above report reflects a true condition of this fund according to the books of account for the period stated.

IRA STRUCK,
BARNEY J. STAP,
Auditing Committee.

REPORT XX.

REPORT OF THE PATERSON HEBREW MISSION

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE Board of the Paterson Hebrew Mission submits the following report:

Report of the Superintendent

This work covers a period from January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935, of all work done by the personnel.

The work of preaching the gospel has been carried on in the usual way, teaching and preaching and visiting with the Jews, to make our work as effective as possible.

At the Gospel Meetings, held on Saturday evenings, there has been an increase in attendance. Many strangers visit our meetings. By strangers we mean Jews who have not been in our Mission before. The Jews who attend our meetings are reverent and attentive, when the message is given. We have had as many as 44 Jews attend our meeting at one time. During the course of two years we had an average attendance of 28 Jews. These are not Dispensary meetings.

On Thursday afternoons our Dispensary is open to the sick. Before the sick are admitted to the Dispensary, they must attend our Gospel meetings. These meetings are well-attended, and the messages are well-received. Dr. Walter Dunning, our Christian physician, is a great help in carrying on the work, and is greatly esteemed by the Jews. During the past two years he has treated 1,429 patients. The average attendance at our Dispensary was 17 Jews.

The Women's Class had a normal attendance. Only Jewish mothers attend this class. A Bible lesson is given in the form of a story and is greatly appreciated. Also personal work is done, and part of the time is devoted to sewing. This class has an average attendance of 9 Jewish mothers.

The attendance of the Esther Club has been small of late. This is due to the opposition of the relatives of the chil-

dren, and to threatenings of the Jewish teachers. Those who attend regularly, come with the consent of the parents. This is very encouraging. A Bible lesson is taught at each meeting, hymns are sung, and Scripture passages are memorized. The average attendance is 5 Jewish children.

The Jewish men come to the Bible Class on Sunday evenings. An elderly son of Abraham is very regular in attending these meetings. Like Nicodemus he comes at night, for fear of the Jews. Here our program is to read and discuss the Scriptures.

All our time is devoted to Jewish Mission work. Much time is given to visiting Jewish homes and shops. This is an important phase of the work; as we go from home to home, or shop to shop, we can read and explain the Scriptures to them. In this manner we meet many Jews, who are interested, and thus acquaintances are made and often friendship is established, so that at any time we can visit these people and invite them to come to the Gospel meetings. We made 2,973 calls, distributed 2,153 tracts, 119 gospels, 31 New Testaments, and 13 Bibles.

On the second Thursday of each month (except the summer months) we have a Social Meeting. The purpose of these meetings is to create an interest in Jewish Mission work among the people of our churches. These meetings have been very encouraging, and have been well attended by both Jews and Christians. The Jews are pleased to meet Christian friends, and the Christians get an inside view of our work. Thus a feeling of fellowship is established. It is no uncommon thing to find, after the meeting, a Jew conversing with a Christian. The Men's and Ladies' Societies of our local churches are very faithful in helping us. The pastors also are very considerate in lending a helping hand. An average of 25 Jewish men and women attend these meetings.

On the whole our work is very encouraging. Let it not discourage us that we cannot point to any direct converts. Jesus did not tell us to make converts. He commanded to preach the Gospel. Therefore let us be obedient to the command, and faithful in witnessing for our Lord and Savior.

Humbly submitted,

(Signed) HERMAN H. SCHULTZ.

Report of the Secretary

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

Again the time has arrived that you are looking for information in regard to the work of the Paterson Hebrew Mission.

The work is being cared for faithfully by the Board. The Board meets the first Monday of each month. At these meetings the reports of the personnel and the Treasurer, as well as other work, is carefully considered.

Some very necessary repairs have been made to the Mission Building. The building has been painted inside and outside; the outside at a cost of \$70.00, the rear hall at a cost of \$34.00 (this includes the lavatory room on the first floor). The inside of the Mission has also been painted one coat on the metal side walls and ceilings at a cost of \$26.00, and the woodwork varnished at a cost of \$17.00. Now the building is in a very presentable condition to receive our visitors.

The financial condition has improved to such an extent that we have been able to meet our bills. We still owe \$500.00 on a note, which has been running for a long time. We look forward to clearing this up also. We would like to put our lady worker and Dr. Dunning back on full time, as well as bring our personnel up to normal by putting on another lady worker, since it is not desirable for a lady to visit some of the Jewish homes alone.

The reports of the personnel are very encouraging. The visits in the homes are received in a friendly spirit. This phase of the work brings many Jews in the mission meetings, as you can see by the report of the Superintendent. We have reason for gratitude in this respect, and also to go forward with renewed energy and courage. Prayerfully hoping that God will give the increase, we go forward in His name. He will give results in His own good time.

In conclusion, we would say that we urgently request the moral and financial support of God's people.

The Paterson Hebrew Mission Board,

(Signed) H. VAN OSTENBRIDGE, *Sec'y.*

**Financial Report of Paterson Hebrew Mission from
January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935**

RECEIPTS

Cash on hand January 1, 1934.....	\$ 80.62	
From Synod (thru Revs. J. L. Van Tielen and P. J. Holwerda)	7,297.50	
From Churches, Societies, and Individuals.....	447.41	
From Collections at Mission Meetings.....	31.84	
From Rent of Second Floor of Building.....	845.00	
		<u>\$8,702.37</u>

DISBURSEMENTS

Salary of Missionary.....	\$3,799.68	
Salary of Part-time Worker for entire two-year period	1,147.50	
Gas, Electricity, Fuel, Water, and Telephone.....	748.75	
Medical Department (Salary of Physician, and Supplies for Dispensary).....	713.97	
Paid Off on Notes.....	600.00	
Interest on Notes.....	132.99	
Repairs to Building.....	374.97	
Insurance	212.97	
Literature, Printing Postage, Sundry Supplies and Expenses	232.31	
Balance on hand January 1, 1936.....	739.23	
		<u>\$8,702.37</u>

**SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED FROM
THE CHURCHES**

From General Treasurers, Revs. J. L. Van Tielen and P. J. Holwerda	\$7,297.50
From Churches, Societies, and Individuals.....	447.41
Total.....	<u>\$7,744.91</u>

(Annual Contribution \$3,872.45)

Appropriated by Synod of 1934—

Received\$7,744.91

PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR PATERSON HEBREW
MISSION FOR 1936 AND 1937

Salaries of Missionary and Worker.....	\$3,000.00
Gas, Electricity, Fuel, Water, and Telephone	370.00
Medical Department (Salary of Physician and Supplies for Dispensary).....	720.00
Insurance	15.00
Building Repairs and Replacements.....	260.00
Literature, Printing, and Miscellaneous	
Supplies and Expenses.....	125.00

\$4,490.00

(Total Budget for two years — \$8,980.00)

In addition to the above, we have a note to meet, amounting to \$900.00; as the note is of long standing, this extra amount should be received in order that the indebtedness may be liquidated.

P. S. Since writing the above, four hundred dollars (\$400.00) has been paid off on the note, on January 10, 1936, leaving the balance now due five hundred dollars (\$500.00).

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

ASSETS

Three-story Mission Building (unencumbered).....	\$10,000.00
Furniture and Equipment.....	500.00
Total.....	<u>\$10,500.00</u>

LIABILITIES — We have no liabilities.

Respectfully submitted,

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

C. SPOELHOF, *Stated Clerk.*

REPORT XXI-A

JEWISH MISSION, CHICAGO

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE Board of Jewish Missions of the Christian Reformed Churches of Chicago render you the following report of the activities and happenings in this branch of the the Kingdom work during the past two years, from January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935.

Again the Board is able to inform you that, notwithstanding difficulties, due to present economic conditions, we have been able to carry on the work entrusted to our care, in a comparatively satisfactory manner, and can look back on the work of the past two years with gratitude to God for what we were able to do.

In the beginning of these two years, May 5, 1934, one of our original and oldest Board members, Mr. H. Jacobsma, was taken from our midst by the hand of death, to his eternal reward. Due to his illness he had already previously been released from active service. No new member was appointed in his place, since the required number of five, by the Constitution, are still in the Board, an extra member having been added due to extra duties incurred at the time of building our institution.

Again the message of the coming of the promised Messiah was brought to the Jews in this community: by administering to their physical needs in the Clinic; by the preaching of the Word and speaking at every possible opportunity; by giving out tracts and house-visitation as well as in various classes.

The regular classes and Gospel meetings and their attendance during the past two years averaged as follows:

The first nine months of 1934 the attendance at the Sunday evening Gospel meeting averaged only five; the following fifteen months, after changing the Gospel meetings to Friday evenings, the weekly average attendance was 30. With the lowest at 6, and the highest of 54 at one meeting.

The Women's classes averaged a weekly attendance of nine over the two years; allowing for a two months' vacation.

The Girls' classes averaged a weekly attendance of 12.5 over the two years, allowing for three months' vacation.

The Boys' classes averaged 32 with an allowance of four months' vacation each year.

This makes a combined weekly average attendance at the various meetings of 72, allowing an average of about two months a year for summer vacations. Besides this, from 8 to 12 people are contacted with three times a week while waiting in the waiting-room of the Clinic.

An average of 154 people per month have received medical care at the Clinic during the past two years.

From the above it can be seen that the Women's and Girls' work is sadly in need of a lady worker. Efforts have been made to interest churches and societies in supplying this need, but so far with out success. We cannot do it from our income unless all congregations come up to their quota established by Synod. We have been obliged to further reduce the salaries of all our workers to a minimum, in order to meet our income. Even our Treasurer, who has an enormous lot of clerical work to do, has volunteered to donate his services. We have set our proposed annual budget at the lowest possible figure, and beg Synod to impress on the churches the need of filling their quota for this cause.

Our staff at present consists of one full-time missionary, Mr. A. Huisjen, two part-time workers: Dr. Wm. Yonker and Miss Delis the Nurse, who attend the Clinic three half-days a week, and a few volunteer helpers. Mr. Huisjen had completed ten years of service in 1934.

In the first part of 1935 two young men made confession of faith and were baptized in the Cicero First church. They are very promising young men. Other young men are showing a marked interest in the Christian faith, and profess to believe. From the last monthly report of our missionary we quote the following:

"On the morning of December 11th Mrs. M. and her daughter were present. She is an ardent believer who instructs her child in the way of salvation and is trying to win

her husband for Christ. She was engaged in earnest conversation with the patients in the waiting-room, talking with them over two hours regarding faith in the crucified Christ. One of the patients that took a lively interest in the discussion was Mrs. P., the mother of Sam, who was recently baptized in the First Christian Reformed church of Cicero. F. C., a young lady of 19, who was with us as a little girl and now comes again, professes to believe in Jesus as her Savior. L. A., now a young mother, who also came to our mission as a little girl, attends our meetings regularly again and confesses Christ as her Savior. A. Y., a boy of 17, continues to attend faithfully and shows evidence of faith in Christ. L. B., a girl of about 16 who has confided that she believes in Christ, for some time told us that she believes in Christ, but does not yet care to go to church or make the acquaintance of Christians, either Hebrew or Gentile. She has considerable fear. There are others who show a marked interest but have as yet not committed themselves."

We trust that with this information before you, Synod will see the need as well as the opportunities for the evangelization of the old Covenant people, and will accordingly give this cause the much-needed support, both spiritually and materially.

Respectfully submitted,

The Board of Nathanael Institute,

REV. P. A. HOEKSTRA, *Pres.*

C. LEENHOUTS, *Secy.*

REPORT XXI-B

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Chicago Jewish Mission of the Christian Reformed Church
from January 1, 1934, to December 31, 1935

RECEIPTS

	1934	1935	TOTAL
Balance on hand.....	\$ 95.28	\$.....	\$ 95.28
Synodical Treasurer	6,940.00	7,138.00	14,078.00
Classical Treasurer	1,404.60	259.66	1,664.26
Donations	318.45	375.12	693.57
Interest Donations	137.00	30.00	167.00
From Medical Fund.....	1,528.00	1,000.00	2,528.00
Workers' Fund	79.00	.....	79.00
Legacies	450.00	120.35	570.35
Refunds	12.69	45.41	58.10
Building Fund Transfer.....	31.74	.....	31.74
Bond Donated	100.00	.....	100.00
Rent Received .....	.....	343.71	343.71
TOTALS.....	\$11,096.76	\$ 9,812.25	\$24,409.01

DISBURSEMENTS

	1934	1935	TOTAL
Salaries	\$ 5,079.25	\$ 4,227.00	\$ 9,306.25
Principal	950.00	1,750.00	2,700.00
Interest	3,142.48	1,764.05	4,906.53
Medical Supplies	631.87	514.47	1,146.34
Coal	265.18	295.92	561.10
Gas	9.73	10.13	19.86
Electric	50.45	45.90	96.35
Books and Supplies	40.34	110.38	150.72
Repairs and Cleaning.....	25.69	103.67	129.36
Phone	143.84	140.02	283.86
Petty Cash Disbursements.....	75.00	97.21	172.21
Insurance	108.28	430.76	539.04
Bank Loss Refund.....	44.00	.....	44.00
Traveling Expense	4.00	.....	4.00
License	25.00	25.00	50.00
Check Charge and Exchange.....	.....	14.20	14.20
General Taxes .....	.....	286.11	286.11
TOTALS.....	\$10,595.11	\$ 9,814.82	\$20,409.93

DEFICIT \$.92

ASSETS

Property and Equipment in building located at No. 1241-45 So. Crawford Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.....	4,000.00
Property located at 3948 Grenshaw St., Chicago.....	4,000.00
Property located at 1324-30 West 14th St., Chicago.....	4,000.00
Estimated probable Equity in the Van Agthoven Estate.....	4,000.00
(For further details see appraisals on file)	

TOTAL ASSETS.....	\$40,750.00
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LIABILITIES

Notes past due and payable.....	\$11,350.00
Bonds past due and payable.....	14,600.00
Bonds not due.....	7,500.00
Mortgage (3948 Grenshaw St.) past due and payable.....	7,200.00

TOTAL LIABILITIES.....	\$40,650.00
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NET EQUITY	\$ 100.00
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NOTE: All assets are non-liquid and cannot be turned into cash for the above stated figures.

J. Belgrave, Accountant, audited the books for the year ending December 31, 1935, and found them correct.

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 1936

Salaries.....	\$ 6,750.00
Gas, Electric, Phone and Fuel.....	600.00
Insurance, Tax, and License.....	350.00
Repairing and Decorating.....	350.00
Literature and Supplies.....	200.00
Traveling Expenses.....	100.00
Interest on Indebtedness.....	2,450.00

Total for the year 1936.....	\$10,800.00
For the year 1937 the same amount.....	10,800.00

TOTAL FOR TWO YEARS.....	\$21,600.00
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NOTE — This Budget is still based on the curtailed activity.

REPORT XXII.

REPORT OF THE EMERITUS BOARD

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE Board appointed to administer the Emeritus Fund is constituted as follows:

Mr. H. Hekman, President; Mr. G. D. Vander Werp, Vice-President; Rev. J. O. Bouwsma, Secretary, Mr. W. K. Bareman, Treasurer; Rev. R. J. Bos, Vice Secretary-Treasurer.

We are happy to report that the beneficiaries gave us splendid co-operation in gathering particulars concerning their physical and financial condition, which facts we were instructed to secure. These can be presented to your honorable body.

Requests for aid were received since the last Synod of:

Classis Muskegon, for Rev. B. H. Einink.

Classis Orange City, for Rev. J. R. Rozendal, Rev. L. Ypma, Rev. F. Schuurmann, and Rev. N. Fokkens.

Classis Eastfriesland for Rev. D. J. Meyer and Rev. G. Westenberg.

Classis Pacific, for Rev. A. Guikema.

Classis Hudson, for Mrs. J. L. Van Tielen, widow of the late Rev. J. L. Van Tielen.

We gratefully acknowledge to the Synod that Mrs. J. C. Kruithof, Mrs. C. Cooper, and Rev. F. Welandt have notified us that at least for the present they are not in need of an allowance.

Classis Pacific has reported that Rev. D. H. Muyskens is no longer affiliated with the Christian Reformed Church.

The following Emeriti, beneficiaries of the Fund, passed to their reward: Rev. N. Fokkens, Rev. J. Manni, Rev. P. Steen, Rev. J. Plesscher, Rev. A. Keizer. The widow, Mrs. C. Van Houten, also departed this life.

The list of allowances proposed to the Synod of 1934 was referred to us with power to make necessary adjustments. It has been our earnest endeavor to administer and disburse the funds wisely and equitably. As the receipts were inade-

quate to cover requests and recommendations, we were compelled to cut some allowances. The beneficiaries, the allowances as of March 19, 1936, and the requests for aid, approved by consistories and by Classes with a few exceptions are:

NAME	PRESENT ALLOWANCE	REQUESTED ALLOWANCE
Rev. H. Ahuis	\$ 600	\$ 600
Rev. M. Borduin.....	650	650
Rev. S. Bouma.....	650	750
Rev. P. W. De Jonge.....	800	800
Rev. J. Dyk.....	800	1,000
Rev. B. H. Einink.....	700	800
Rev. H. Fryling.....	700	700
Rev. J. A. Gerritsen.....	600	600
Rev. A. Guikema.....	700	800
Rev. J. B. Hoekstra.....	600	650
Rev. J. Gulker.....	550	600
Rev. P. Jonker, Sr.....	550	550
Rev. H. Kamps.....	550	600
Rev. J. Keizer.....	500	600
Rev. W. Kole.....	550	600
Rev. D. J. Meyer.....	600	800
Rev. K. Poppen.....	700	800
Rev. J. A. Rottier.....	800	800
Rev. J. R. Rozendal.....	650	650
Rev. F. Schuurmann.....	600	800
Rev. J. Timmermann.....	600	600
Rev. J. B. Vanden Hoek..	600	600
Rev. E. Van Korlaar.....	800	800
Rev. T. W. R Van Loo....	600	600
Rev. J. O. Vos.....	600	600
Rev. G. Westenbergl.....	600	700
Rev. J. Westervelt.....	600	800
Rev. J. Wyngaarden.....	800	800
Rev. L. Ypma.....	600	600
Mrs. C. Bode.....	400	400
Mrs. M. J. Bosma.....	300	400
Mrs. E. Breen.....	400	500
Mrs. A. Brink.....	300	300
Mrs. A. Dekker.....	400	500
Mrs. N. Fokkens.....	700	700 or \$800
Mrs. N. Gelderloos.....	700	800
Mrs. J. Groen.....	500	500 if possible \$600
Mrs. J. H. Gruessing.....	500	500
Mrs. H. J. Haarsma.....	500	600
Mrs. J. Haveman.....	650	700
Mrs. J. L. Heeres.....	200	200
Mrs. H. J. Heynen.....	450	500
Mrs. G. L. Hoefker.....	400	400
Mrs. P. J. Hoekenga.....	600	600
Mrs. J. B. Jonkman.....	400	400
Mrs. A. Keizer.....	400	400
Mrs. W. Kuipers.....	750	800

Mrs. A. W. Meyers.....	150	150
Mrs. J. G. Plesscher.....	300	300
Mrs. B. Post.....	300	300
Mrs. J. Robbert.....	500	500
Mrs. J. H. Schultz.....	200	200
Mrs. P. Steen.....	500	600
Mrs. F. Stuart.....	500	600
Mrs. H. Temple.....	450	450
Mrs. H. Tuls.....	600	600
Mrs. E. J. Tuuk.....	400	500
Mrs. R. Vande Kieft.....	400	400
Mrs. H. Vander Ploeg....	450	450
Mrs. M. Vander Heide....	400	500
Mrs. S. Vander Heide....	400	600
Mrs. P. Van Vliet.....	350	350
Mrs. J. L. Van Tielen....	200	200
Mrs. J. Vissia.....	400	400
Mrs. A. B. Voss.....	.....	1,000
Mrs. D. Weidenaar.....	400	631
Mrs. P. Yff.....	500	500
Mrs. B. Zwaagman.....	400	600
Mrs. Zwaagman and Rev. Dyk receive a bonus of \$100 each for the year 1936	200	

TOTALS.....	\$35,200	\$39,281
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NOTE OF S. C.—No doubt a request for Mrs. L. P. Brink will reach Synod. H. B.

The beneficiaries were informed of the synodical ruling that they must renew application for aid every synodical year. A copy of all the applications with recommendations can be presented to the Synod.

A complete report of receipts, disbursements, and present assets, certified by a Public Accountant, will be made available for every synodical delegate.

The following is taken from the statement of Mr. William P. Dreyer, public accountant, who audited the books of the treasurer and found them in order:

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS, Wm. K. Bareman, Treasurer, for two years ending December 31, 1935, in comparative order

RECEIPTS			
ITEM	YEAR 1934	YEAR 1935	COMBINED
From:			
Classes	\$31,905.10	\$33,011.15	\$64,916.25
Miscellaneous Contributions.....	101.00	64.00	165.00
Interest on Current Funds.....		25.00	25.00
Interest on Restricted Funds....	49.72	63.26	112.98
Van Agthoven Estate.....	1,600.00	4,400.00	6,000.00
Total Receipts.....	\$33,655.82	\$37,563.41	\$71,219.23

DISBURSEMENTS

For or to:			
Beneficiaries:			
Ministers	\$18,527.51	\$20,187.50	\$38,715.01
Widows	16,151.25	15,291.67	31,442.92
Total to Beneficiaries.....	34,678.76	35,479.17	70,157.93
Expenses (Insurance, Printing, Postage, Traveling, Compensation)	379.30	184.63	563.93
Total Disbursements.....	\$35,058.06	\$35,663.80	\$70,721.86
Disbursements exceeded Receipts			
in 1934	\$ 1,402.24		
Receipts exceeded Disbursements			
in 1935		\$1,899.61	\$ 497.37
Current Funds on hand at beginning of year.....			
Release of Impounded Funds.....	\$ 1,417.13	587.08	
	572.19	4,402.58	4,974.76
Balances at End of each Year....	\$ 587.08	\$ 6,889.26	

STATEMENT OF FUNDS IN HAND OF TREASURER

DESCRIPTION OR ITEMS	JAN. 1, 1934	DEC. 31, 1934	DEC. 31, 1935
Balance in Open Account:			
First State Bank, Holland, Mich.	\$ 1,417.13	\$ 33.34	\$ 1,805.27
State Com'l & Sav. Bank, Zeeland, Mich.		553.74	1,083.99
Time Certificates (Savings) of Deposit, State Com'l & Sav. Bank, Zeeland, Mich.			4,000.00
Total Current Funds....	\$ 1,417.13	\$ 587.08	\$ 6,889.26
Still Impounded in First State Bank of Holland, Mich.....	\$10,477.96	\$ 9,905.77	\$ 5,503.20

The balance of December 31, 1935, \$6,889.26, may appear large. However, we remind the Synod that in the year 1935 \$4,400.00 was received from the Van Agthoven Estate, and \$4,402.57 was released from impounded funds by the First State Bank of Holland, Mich. This includes money received some years ago of the Lubbers Estate.

The Emeritus Fund has been made a beneficiary of the Estate of the late Mr. H. Schaafsma. The administrators of the Estate, however, have informed us that after some specific bequests have ben made, there will be little money, if any, left.

We humbly request Synod to take cognizance of the following:

(1) The allowances have been granted on the basis of \$1.60 per family assessment. This assessment is low and inadequate to meet the needs, for all congregations do not contribute at the rate of \$1.60 per family per year. Though considerable money was received from sources other than the assessment, the allowances were and are low, too low.

(2) We recommend to Synod the approval of the allowances, which have been granted by the Board, unless the assessment should be increased or other funds should be provided. Should either one of these be done, we advise that all the allowances should be increased.

(3) A communication of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. was received, in which they suggest our co-operation in aiding such ministers who have served that and our Church. A concrete case led to this suggestion.

(4) There is no synodically approved English translation of "The Rules for the Care of Emeritated Ministers and of Widows and Orphans of Ministers." The Rules could stand revision.

(5) A policy was adopted in the past to set aside moneys received from Estates as a Capital Fund, the interest of which should be used for the benefit of the Emeriti and the principal should be available only in case of great need. We inform Synod that in the last two years we have felt constrained to use a large amount of the Capital Fund. However, we ask Synod to continue this policy.

(6) As the membership of our Church increases, the number receiving aid may also increase. Questions may arise as to who are eligible to receive aid from this Fund, f. i. : Is a woman, who has married a minister after his emeritation, to be considered a beneficiary after his death? Is a child of a woman, who has married a minister after his emeritation, and said child is not a child of the minister, to be considered a beneficiary after the minister's death? Is a child born of a union, consummated after the minister's emeritation, to be considered a beneficiary after the father's death?

(7) There is a division of opinion as to what the beneficiaries must do to comply with the synodical ruling that they must renew application for aid every synodical year. The Synod of 1930 decided: "Every synodical year the consistories shall state what is needed for the support of the emeriti, widows and orphans under their supervision." The Rules state: "Every Classis determines, subject to the approval of Synod, the amount to be disbursed to those persons that by it have been emeritated or have become widows or orphans." In accordance with these decisions we requested the beneficiaries to secure approval of allowances of their present consistory and of the consistory which originally granted emeritation, and of Classes. We ask the Synod to declare that henceforth the recommendation of present consistory and Classis only should be secured.

(8) The term of appointment of Mr. H. Hekman and of Mr. G. D. Vander Werp expires. The Synod should appoint two members and two alternates.

Respectfully submitted,

By order of the Emeritus Board,

J. O. BOUWSMA, *Secretary*.

REPORT XXIII.

COMMITTEE ON SYNODICAL DELEGATION

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE matter entrusted to this Committee for study and recommendation concerns the representation of Classes at Synod. More particularly it relates to the question of the number of synodical delegates representing the respective Classes.

HISTORICAL SURVEY AND ANALYSIS OF MANDATE

By way of orientation we preface our discussion with a brief historical survey and a statement of our mandate.

In the year 1926 no less than nine Classes overtured Synod to reduce the number of delegates to Synod from six to four for each Classis. Three Classes sent in overtures opposing reduction. Synod was advised by its pre-advisory committee not to accede to these requests, and it so decided (cf. Acta 1926, pp. 66, 67).

Again in 1932 five Classes (including also Cl. Orange City, which in 1926 was one of the three Classes opposing reduction) requested Synod to reduce its delegation. At this Synod no opposing overtures were presented. This time the pre-advisory committee reported favorably and recommended that Synod "decide upon a reduction of one-third delegation to Synod by Classes as proposed by the Classis aforementioned." After stating its reasons for this advice the Committee further proposed that Art. 50 of the C. O. be amended accordingly (cf. Acta 1932, pp. 69, 70). Two grounds for this proposal were presented, namely: "(1) Sixty members can perform the work of Synod efficiently and expeditiously. The expense involved in sending thirty additional members is therefore unnecessary, and by that token unwarranted; (2) For some time past a large section of the Church has been impressed with the needlessness of a larger synodical constituency than four members from each Classis."

Synod simply rejected the advice of its committee without adducing any grounds for its action. (cf. Acta 1932 as cited above.)

Once more in 1934 the matter was presented by two Classes, (namely, Grand Rapids East and Grand Rapids West) overtureing Synod to reconsider the question and requesting reduction of the number of delegates. This time Synod took no action. Upon advice of its pre-advisory committee it decided to place these overtures in the hands of a committee which was "to offer in 1936 a well-grounded report" (cf. Acta 1934, p. 60).

Strictly defined the mandate of your committee embraces only the two overtures which were placed in its hands by the Synod of 1934. And these overtures will receive due consideration in this report.

Since, however, these overtures also refer to the consideration and disposition of the matter by the Synod of 1932, your Committee deems it necessary to discuss the whole question in its various aspects. Only in the light of the proper understanding of the principles and practical issues involved can our conclusions and recommendations merit the distinction of a "well-grounded" report for which our mandate calls.

The overtures in casu are as follows (cf. Acta 1934, pp. 59, 60):

"*Classis Grand Rapids East* overtures Synod to reduce the number of delegates to our synodical assemblies by approximately one-third. Grounds:

- a. The continued and growing sentiment in the Church for such reduction.
- b. The smaller group on the floor of Synod and in committees will work for greater efficiency.
- c. The example of other Churches akin to ours.
- d. It will tend to shorten the sessions, which now extend over two and a half or three weeks.
- e. It will cut the expense to the extent of approximately two thousand dollars.

Classis overtures Synod to revise Art. 50 of the Church Order, so that delegation to Synod shall be as follows:

1. That all Classes consisting of 12 congregations or less send two delegates.

2. That all Classes consisting of 13 to 24 congregations send four delegates.
3. That all Classes consisting of 25 or more congregations send six delegates. (This would make a total of 62 delegates.)

Grounds:

- a. It would be more in conformity with Art. 84, C. O., 'No church shall in any way lord it over other churches.'
- b. By this plan we can reach our aim of fairer distribution of delegates according to the number of churches, without in any way disturbing the present arrangement of Classes.
- c. It furnishes us with a permanent and simple method of determining more equal representation at Synod."

"*Classis Grand Rapids West* overtures Synod to reconsider its decision (Acta 1932, Art. 83, XIII, pp. 68-70) relative to the reduction of the number of delegates to Synod, and requests Synod to once more consider the advisability and feasibility of reducing the number of such delegates. Grounds:

- a. The continued economic conditions make a reduction of expenditures imperative.
- b. The increase of the number of Classes during the last decade, adding to the expense.
- c. The grounds adduced the committee of preadvise at the Synod of 1932 in this matter warrant serious consideration at this time (Acta, p. 70)."

An analysis of the above overtures discloses similarities and also differences. Both desire reduction of the number of delegates to Synod on approximately the same grounds. Cl. G. R. West overtures reconsideration of the decision of 1932 anent the question. Cl. G. R. East proposes the revision of Art. 50 C. O. according to a schedule proportioned to the size of the Classes. Hence it would seek not merely reduction of the number of delegates, but a new and fairer basis of representation of the Classes. These are two distinct matters which require separate consideration each on its own merits.

The question of reduction of delegates to Synod has been on the foreground and was doubtless the main objective of the various Classes which overtured Synod. At the same

time the principle of justice and equity is involved. Reducing the number of delegates, and leaving the present basis and system of delegation as it is, would not meet the wishes and requests of some of the larger Classes for more equal and proportionate representation.

QUESTION OF CHANGING OR PERPETUATING PRESENT BASIS OF REPRESENTATION

We shall first consider the question whether or not the present basis of representation should be continued. The status maintaining at present can be fairly stated thus:

Synod, the major assembly of our Chr. Ref. churches, is composed of a convocation of Classes. These Classes are all represented by the same number of delegates, irrespective of their size. This means that the Classis is not only the body delegating to Synod, but it is also the basis and unit of representation as well. Each Classis as an ecclesiastic unit has precisely the same right of representation to the major assembly. Its credentials have inherently and necessarily the same validity; its representation is likewise placed on an absolute par.

The Classis in turn is a delegated body composed of representatives of consistories. The consistories all send the same number of delegates regardless of their size. The validity of their credentials, the voice and vote of their delegates is not in the least determined by the size of the respective consistories, or by the size of the congregations to which they belong. Each consistory has inherently the same and equal rights. This is in accordance with Art. 84 C. O. requiring that "no church shall in any way lord it over other churches."

Herein seems to lie the warrant and basis of the present system of equal representation at both Classis and Synod.

There is, however, an unwarranted assumption or pre-supposition underlying this practice. It is taken for granted that consistory and classis are coördinate units in ecclesiastical polity. Whereas Consistories are ecclesiastical units have the right to equal representation at major assemblies the same right is accorded to the Classes. This is an unwarranted assumption. It is a well known, and undisputed, fundamental tenet of Reformed Church govern-

ment that the Consistory is the one and only ecclesiastical unit in the Church of Jesus Christ. It represents the constituted authority of the organized church as a manifestation of the body of Christ. It alone is autonomous, deriving its authority directly from Jesus Christ, the King of His Church.

Classis and Synod are broader — not higher — judicatories or assemblies. The Classes are intermediate bodies deriving their authority, and receiving their mandates, from the consistories which they represent. Ideally, as is conceded by all, the consistories without exception should be represented not only at Classes but at Synods as well.

It is, therefore, a fallacy to conclude from the principle of equal representation by consistories to Classes to a similar equality of delegation by Classes to Synod. The primal and inherent right of the consistories as autonomous ecclesiastical bodies to be represented at all major assemblies of the churches as equitably as possible under the circumstances must be recognized.

The present disproportion in the ratio has driven us far from even the approximation of the ideal that all consistories shall be equally and fully represented at major or broader assemblies.

Hence in the view of your Committee it is desirable that the present system of delegation be changed in the interest of a more equitable and proportionate representation of the Consistories.

CHANGE BY SIMPLE REDUCTION: PROPORTIONATE REPRESENTATION OR RE-ALIGNMENT OF CLASSES

The proposed change could be effected in any one of three ways, which have been incorporated into overtures or suggestions to Synod. The first is rather simple and would involve no change in the present basis or system. Reducing the number of three ministers and three elders to two each in the interest of economy and efficiency might be a good move and has been recommended by the previous Synod to the Classes for voluntary action in delegating to the Synod of 1936 (cf. Acta 1934, p. 61). However, this would not meet the demand for more just and equitable

representation. The smaller Classes would still be sending the same number as the larger. And the contention would not be met, that this is completely ignoring the ideal of full consistorial representation and the virtual lording of one church over the other which is strictly forbidden "in any way" by the Church Order.

For this reason your Committee would dismiss this as a half-way measure, good in so far as it goes, but inadequate to meet the situation.

The second way in which the proposed change could be effected is by proportionate representation. Classis Grand Rapids East in its overture advocates this plan and proposes a fairly proportioned schedule. This would meet the objection of disproportionate representation urged especially by the larger Classes. It would give more and better opportunity for the ministers and elders of congregations belonging to these Classes to share with those of smaller Classes in the actual work of the Church in its broadest assembly. It could be easily executed without requiring a change in the constituency of the Classes which in some instances might meet with difficulties and cause disturbances.

However, it would be a rather radical departure from the present system which might create dissatisfaction in some of the smaller Classes. The more so, since these are mainly far distanced from our denominational center where Synod meets.

Moreover, it would not remove a similar disparity which exists at present in the number of classical delegates to the various Synodical Boards, e. g., Chr. Ref. Board of Missions; Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary. These Boards exercise important functions and have wide discretionary powers of direction and control. And the larger Classes have precisely the same representation and voice in these Boards as the smaller. Changing the number of delegates to Synod on a more equitable basis would not herein effect a corresponding change.

Hence your Committee does not favor this way of meeting the expressed need for change.

The third suggested change is that of re-alignment or re-allocation of the Classes, either by combining smaller into

larger or by dividing larger into smaller Classes. Such an arrangement would equalize the Classes, bring them either up or down to a suitable average and abolishing the extremes of disparity. The present difference in the size of Classes is due to historical and geographical reasons. In the past little control or regulation was exercised in allocating churches to respective Classes. It was largely a matter of choice determined by local conditions, circumstances and sentiment. Since the congregations are not equally numerous in each state and community in which our people have settled, there is great disproportion in the size of the various Classes. It might be objected that the proposal to re-allocate and territorially re-constitute Classes would be sure to cause disturbance and meet opposition on the part of some of the consistories and congregations effected. The practical consideration of the welfare and profit of the churches might require that the principle of equity and fairness in representation be waived. The peace of the churches should not be jeopardized without strong and sufficient reasons. Moreover, no one would think of advocating a re-distribution of our congregations in various localities in the interest of equalizing the size of consistories and thereby securing a fairly even representation of congregations at Classes.

Such an objection has less weight than appears on the surface. The proposed re-alignment, as we shall point out presently, would not involve any drastic changes. It would not in any direct way touch the vital and distinctive life and activities of the congregations as such. When once the change is made the consistories and congregations affected thereby would very soon adjust themselves. Surely, the lasting benefits of securing more equitable representation and more general participation of the various churches in the direct control of our denominational affairs would be worth the temporary difficulties that might arise in effecting the change.

Your Committee, therefore, favors this plan in preference to the aforementioned.

PLAN FOR CLASSICAL RE-ALIGNMENT

Considering next what definite plan for the re-allocation of Classes would be most feasible, your Committee senses

that in this Synod cannot be apodictic. The coöperation and good-will of all the Classes in the common interest for the welfare of our whole Chr. Ref. Zion, as a part of the Kingdom of God, is essential.

Keeping this in mind, we suggest the following to Synod:

The total of 280 Chr. Ref. churches is equally distributed among the 15 Classes, would average 18 plus per Classis. The actual distribution now ranges from 6 (Cl. Hackensack) to 31 (Cl. Orange City), with seven Classes (Orange City, Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids West, Illinois, Muskegon, Pacific, Sioux Center) above the average (and eight (Ostfriesland, Pella, Holland, Hudson, Zeeland, California, Wisconsin, Hackensack) below it. In the case of eight Classes the average is approximated, namely, Cl. Pacific and Sioux Center, each 19; Ostfriesland and Pella, each 16; Holland, Hudson and Zeeland, each 14, and California 13. In the case of the other seven the disparity either above or below the quotient is pronounced. Above it are Orange City with 31, Grand Rapids East and West each with 29; Muskegon with 25, Illinois with 24. While below we have Wisconsin with 11 and Hackensack with 6, a bare third of the average and a fifth of the highest.

Keeping the 18 as the middle or approximate average, Synod could establish a maximum and minimum, requesting the Classes to re-align themselves accordingly. Setting the maximum at 24 and the minimum at 12, the Classes numbering 25 or above would be required to split in two, or two such Classes could reorganize into three. Those below 12 would need to combine with other Classes or to seek additions from larger, adjoining Classes so as to attain the minimum. In effecting these changes the object should be to approximate the average and thus to equalize the size of the Classes as nearly as feasible.

Such a change would not affect the majority of the Classes as they are constituted at present, since these are within the absolute and minimum average.

The following Classes would be affected: Cl. Orange City, Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids West, Muskegon, Wisconsin, and Hackensack. Your Committee does not consider it within its province to offer a definite plan or proposal with respect to the way in which these Classes can best effect re-alignment. Should Synod establish the maxi-

mum and minimum it can seek the good-will and coöperation of the Classes in striving to conform to it without attempting, in the interest of the desired end of classical equalization, to coerce any of the Classes or congregations reluctant to change.

This re-arrangement would change the number of Classes from 15 to 17 or 18, which would somewhat lower the quotient or average (from 18 plus to 16 plus). It would be conducive to more efficient work by the respective Classes as well as securing more equitable representation. Over-sized Classes may often find their time pre-occupied with routine matters and financial details. Neither are under-sized Classes as satisfactory as the moderately-sized bodies.

The number of Classes increased by two, or by three, would increase the number of delegates to Synod. Your Committee is well aware of this, but has in mind the proposed decrease of delegates from six to four from each Classis. The total number would then be 68, or 72, where it is now 90. This number, we believe, would be sufficiently large and representative. Compared to the size of the Geref. Kerken van Nederland with its 727 churches and only 48 delegates, representing 12 Particular Synods, our Synod would still have a much higher ratio of representation.

CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE PROPOSED CHANGE

The change would require a revision of Art. 50 of the Church Order. This Article specifies that three ministers and three elders shall be delegated from each Classis. The reason why precisely three, and not two or four, was fixed upon as the number, is not apparent. It was probably due to practical considerations and exigencies maintaining at the time. We do not consider it a question involving principle. There is no doubt a principle at issue in prescribing that ministers and elders be delegated in equal numbers. This principle should be maintained. The precise number might presumably vary from time to time as conditions warrant and call for smaller or for larger numbers.

Hence your Committee suggests the following revision of Art. 50 of the Church Order: "To this Synod an equal number of Ministers and Elders out of every Classis shall

be delegated. The number of delegates shall be fixed by discretionary ruling of Synod."

In order not to leave this matter in dubito your Committee further suggests that Synod shall then adopt the following ruling: "Synod shall be composed of two delegate Ministers and two delegate Elders from each Classis."

CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Your Committee is fully aware that the proposed change would necessitate adjustments and involve difficulties, perhaps even some of a legal aspect. Merging or re-organizing ecclesiastical bodies cannot be done overnight. With the right spirit we do believe, however, that it can and should be done. The situation as it now exists is more serious than a maladjustment. It is manifestly unfair and inequitable and should not be perpetuated on grounds rooted in tradition and sentiment. When our churches (consistories) assert their right as ecclesiastical units and ask for more equitable representation under our Presbyterian system of church government, the Church (Synod) should heed their requests and accede so far as feasible in view of the profit of the churches.

As Committee we therefore humbly but earnestly recommend to Synod the third of the suggested proposals expounded above; namely, that Synod sponsor a re-alignment Classes, fixing as an approximate average 14 to 18 congregations per Classis, and an absolute maximum of 24, and an absolute minimum of 12. Further, that Synod request the Classes involved to effect the necessary changes to conform to this re-alignment. Finally, that Synod fix the number of delegates by Synodical Ruling at two ministers and two elders and revise Article 50 of the Church Order as suggested above. Grounds:

- 1) It is more in harmony with the principle that the consistory is the constitutive and basic unit in our church polity. Inequalities in representation would be greatly reduced.
- 2) It would also equalize the representation of Classes on Synodical Boards and Deputations.
- 3) It would meet the request of consistories calling for more proportionate representation.

- 4) It will not increase the size of Synod since delegation would be reduced by one-third.

May the King of the Church, personally represented by His Spirit, give light to Synod in deliberating and deciding upon this and all other matters coming before it.

Respectfully submitted,

E. KOOISTRA,

J. M. VAN DE KIEFT, *Sec'y*,

J. BEEBE,

H. J. TRIEZENBERG,

P. VAN DYK.

REPORT XXIV.

REPORT ON AN INDEX OF IMPORTANT SYNODICAL RESOLUTIONS

(Cf. Acts of 1934, p. 128, XII)

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

AT the Synod of 1934 it was moved that an alphabetical index of all important decisions of past Synods be prepared. With respect to this motion, the Synod adopted the advice of its Pre-Advisory Committee on Varia and Publication Matters, that "the matter be referred to the Faculty of Calvin Seminary, to see whether this (work) cannot be done by students under the supervision of the Faculty, as part of the work in Church History and Church Polity." In accordance with the closing suggestion of this resolution of Synod, the Faculty left the matter to the undersigned.

To make arrangements for having the work done by students as part of their work in Church History and Church Polity would not have been a simple matter. But since the government was providing work for indigent students, this difficulty was avoided by having the work done under the F. E. R. A. The research work and the work of preliminary classification was performed by student H. Stob, to whom was added student C. Vanden Heuvel when the task proved too extensive for one man.

A little reflection on the content of Synod's resolution will show, that in the direction of the labors of these students we had to make large use of our discretion. We have done so to the best of our ability. The question whether the "important resolutions" which Synod decided to have indexed comprise merely such as are at the present time of authority or include also such as are of historical importance was settled in the latter and wider sense. The resolutions were arranged according to the affinity which they showed to the various articles of our Church Order. The addition of new rubrics was avoided by giving resolutions

suggesting such addition a place under the Article of our Church Order on Preaching.

The material was collected from the printed Acts of our Synods and from the earlier unprinted records of the assemblies of all our churches. The only extant manuscript of these earlier records was kindly released from the synodical archives for our use by Dr. Beets. Very many of the decisions were in the Holland language, but they have all been rendered in English with a view to future usefulness. In cases where the resolutions were very lengthy, which cases occur only in the printed Acts, abbreviation has been resorted to and the fact indicated. In the case of the Conclusions of Utrecht the indication of their nature is rudimentary. In some instances, where a resolution would fit under more than one Article of the Church Order repetition has not been avoided.

The material thus collected we herewith present to Synod in a few typewritten copies only. We thought this best, since it was not known what use Synod might wish to make of it, and since it is quite doubtful, whether the form in which it is cast is acceptable. Should Synod wish to make the material in its present form available to office-bearers and to others who may desire to elaborate it, this can be done in the forthcoming Acts of Synod at no greater expense to the Church than if the material had been inserted in the Agenda. Should Synod prefer to postpone its publication till it has been cast in a more useful form, the slight disadvantage attaching to the limited number of copies is, in view of the nature and bulk of this material, easily compensated for by the saving on the expense for the Agenda.

A word must be said in explanation of our apparent disregard of the Synod's expressed wish for an alphabetical index. The reason lies in the fact, that we did not find it feasible to leave it to the students doing the research work also to devise such an index, nor did we find it feasible to undertake this ourselves as long as the material was being collected. And after that work was finished, we lacked the time necessary for the contrivance of a serviceable system of classification and the integration of the material according to it.

While the work we have performed was nearing completion, we learned that similar work was being done on the

same material by Rev. John L. Schaver. In fact, he asked and was given the privilege of inspecting our work and we were privileged to see a sample of what he was producing. With a view to the completion of the work which we have begun at the request of Synod, we believe it is important that Synod should know of what is being done by the brother. There is hardly room for the publication of two digests of the Acts of our Synods. From what we have seen we have gathered the impression, that the classification which Rev. Schaver is carrying through is well worth considering. Without presuming to suggest what could or should be done under the circumstances, we think Synod should be acquainted with the facts.

Respectfully submitted,

S. VOLBEDA,

D. H. KROMMINGA.

REPORT XXV.

REPORT OF AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVE

ESTEEMED BRETHRENN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

AS representative of Synod to the American Bible Society it is our pleasure to render the following brief report.

Since the last Synod, two meetings of the Advisory Council of the Society have been held. Your delegate was privileged to attend the 1934 session, but family conditions prevented his presence at the meeting of December 4, 1935. Representatives from thirty-four denominations were present on this occasion.

Last spring (1935) the undersigned sent out a form letter to all the churches emphasizing the need and informing them of the great work of the Society in translating of the Scriptures and distributing them to all nations of the world. The letter, according to Secretary Dr. G. W. Brown, was likely responsible for a great increase in the number of gifts for the Society's work. For your information, in the year 1934 there were 35 gifts amounting to \$458.64; in 1935 there were 95 donations totalling the sum of \$1,116.26 for the cause of the A. B. S. Hence, a marked increase in the number of donations for which we are very grateful. However, if you consider that our denomination numbers some 280 congregations, then about one-third of the group took up an offering or gave a donation for this very important cause. The other two-thirds did nothing. It is our fond hope that in the future we may more closely approach the ideal.

The Advisory Council of the Society at its December (1935) meeting, among other things, unanimously decided:

"We record our conviction as to the significance of the great and fundamental work which the American Bible Society is doing both in America and in the mission fields of the world by distributing the Word of God.

“We urge upon our churches a larger interest in, and a more consistent financial support of its work. We consider it to be one of the greatest agencies of the Church today, in our land and in other lands. Now, as always, it is true, ‘the seed is the Word of God.’

“We recommend that our home and foreign mission boards, on account of the vital relation of the work of the Bible Society to the Mission work of the churches, be urged to give help in their budgets to the Society wherever possible.”

Again we heartily endorse the cause of the American Bible Society to the churches for continued moral and financial support, that Synod may approve this great Bible agency and place it on the list of accredited causes.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN BEEBE.

REPORT XXVI.

REPORT OF NATIONAL CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION REPRESENTATIVE

DEAR BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

WE are happy to report that during the past two years the National Christian Association has continued its blessed work against secret societies. Anti-lodge propaganda has been made by means of lectures, the distribution of literature, and the monthly publication of the "Christian Cynosure."

Our total receipts for the year 1934 were the sum of \$2,597.54, and the total disbursements for the same year were \$2,596.96. The year 1935 brought us the sum of \$2,120.37, and our expenses were \$2,128.37. The Christian Reformed Church contributed \$314.00 in 1934. This sum was given by twenty-four congregations. In 1935 the sum of \$314.95 was received from twenty-eight of her congregations. These amounts are considerably less than in previous years. For example, in 1931 the Christian Reformed Church gave \$1,259.91, and in 1932 the sum of \$505.21. Would it be possible for all of the 284 congregations of the Christian Reformed Church to remember the National Christian Association with an offering or small donation? The work of the Association is very necessary. The opposition from the lodge is very great. Without financial support the work will be discontinued.

The Christian Reformed Church has three of her ministers on the Board of Directors: the Revs. B. Essenburg, J. R. Brink, and J. Putt. The first mentioned is chairman. The well-known Rev. G. M. Van Pernis of the Reformed Church in America is the editor of the "Christian Cynosure," the Association's monthly publication.

We can whole-heartedly recommend the National Christian Association to the continued moral and financial support of the Christian Reformed Church. May it please you to place it on the list of approved causes. And last but not least the Association solicits your prayers.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES PUTT.

REPORT XXVII.

A COMMUNICATION TO SYNOD ANENT ARTICLE XXXVI OF THE CONFESSION

TO THE SYNOD OF 1936.

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

THE Faculty of Calvin Seminary feels constrained to call the attention of Synod to an inconsistency or conflict in the creedal formulation of the position which our churches hold respecting the proper relation between the Church and the State. The conflict obtains between the thirty-sixth Article of our Confession of Faith and the note appended to it by action of the Synod of 1910. In the English rendering given in our Psalter-Hymnal and approved by the Synod of 1934, these read, as follows:
Article XXXVI)

"THE MAGISTRACY (CIVIL GOVERNMENT)

We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of mankind, has appointed kings, princes, and magistrates; willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency. For this purpose He has invested the magistracy with the sword for the punishment of evil-doers and for the protection of them that do well.

Their office is not only to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state, but also that they protect the sacred ministry, and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship,* that the kingdom of antichrist may be thus destroyed and the kingdom of Christ promoted. They must therefore countenance the preaching of the Word and Gospel everywhere, that God may be honored and worshipped by every one, as He commands in His Word.

Moreover, it is the bounden duty of every one, of whatever state, quality, or condition he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates; to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which

are not repugnant to the Word of God; to supplicate for them in their prayers that God may rule and guide them in all their ways, and that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity.

Wherefore we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates and would subvert justice, introduce community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men."

(The Note)

"* This phase, touching the office of the magistracy in its relation to the Church, proceeds from the principle of the Established Church, which was first applied by Constantine and afterwards also in many Protestant countries. History, however, does not justify the principle of State domination over the Church, but rather a certain separation of Church and State. Moreover, it is also contrary to the New Dispensation that authority be vested in the State arbitrarily to reform the Church, and to deny the Church the right of independently conducting its own affairs as a distinct domain alongside the State. The New Testament does not subject the Christian Church to the authority of the State that it should be controlled and extended by political measures, but only to our Lord and King as an independent domain alongside and altogether independent of the State, that it may be governed and built up only by its officebearers and with spiritual means. Practically all Reformed Churches have relinquished the idea of the Established Church as not in accordance with the New Testament, and advocate the autonomy of the Churches and personal liberty of conscience in the service of God.

The Christian Reformed Church in America, being in full accord with this view, feels constrained to declare that it does not conceive of the office of the magistracy in this sense that it is in duty bound to exercise political authority also in the sphere of religion by establishing a State Church, maintaining and advancing the same as the only true Church, and to withstand, destroy, and exterminate by means of the sword all other Churches as embodying false religions; and also to declare that it does positively hold that

within its own secular sphere, the magistracy has a divine duty with reference to the first table of the Law as well as the second; and furthermore that both State and Church as institutions of God and Christ have mutual rights and duties appointed them from on high, and therefore have a very sacred reciprocal obligation to meet, through the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. They should not, however, encroach upon each other's domain. The Church as well as the State has the right of sovereignty in its own sphere."

* * * * *

The movement which culminated in the addition to Article XXXVI of the Confession of this note, which officially contradicts part of the contents of the Article, was occasioned by a similar movement in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. A proposal to revise this Article was entertained by the Middelburg Synod of those Churches in 1896, and after nine years of deliberation a revision was actually adopted by their Utrecht Synod in 1905. By this revision the words, "and thus may remove and prevent all idolatry and false worship, that the kingdom of antichrist may thus be destroyed" (in Dutch: "om te weren en uit te roeien alle afgoderij en valschen godsdienst, en het rijk des antichrists te gronde te werpen"), were deleted from the Article.

In view of our close connection with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and in view of the American conception of the relation of Church and State, it was to be expected, that this revision should find a strong echo in our own churches. In 1906 no less than four overtures were presented to our Synod, every one of which bore on the question of a revision of Article XXXVI. One asked for a revision; another requested Synod's opinion on the action taken by the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in this matter; a third petitioned Synod to consider the desirability and necessity of such a revision as adopted by those Churches; the fourth transmitted to Synod a gravamen against Article XXXVI (Acts of Synod, 1906, p. 53).

In response to these overtures our Synod then declared a revision of Article XXXVI desirable and necessary, since

according to the Word of God the government may not exercise authority over men's convictions of faith and, therefore, eradication of heresy by the sword of the government is out of the question. In order to obtain the desired revision in the proper way, Synod furthermore decided,

- a) prior to the next meeting of Synod to present the revision to the consistories for consideration, since the fact that the question concerns the revision of a part of the Confession calls for the recognition of all churches in the matter; and,
- b) although the Netherlands Churches had already altered this Article for their own circle, nevertheless to try to procure the judgment of our sister-Churches, in order thus to reach a definite decision regarding revision, since the bond between the Reformed sister-Churches demands that such a revision should not materialize without foreknowledge of the sister-Churches (Acts of Synod, 1906, pp. 53/4).

However, the Committee appointed to carry out these resolutions of Synod did not find them definite enough, and the Synod of 1908 continued the Committee with the definite direction, that in a note of further explanation of the criticize clause in Article XXXVI be given (Acts of Synod, 1908, p. 49). Two years later the Committee presented such a note to Synod (Acts of Synod, 1910, pp. 104/5), and Synod adopted it and ordered its addition to the Article (*ibid.*, p. 9).

* * * * *

We deem it highly advisable and even necessary, that the inconsistency between Article XXXVI of our Confession and the footnote appended to it be removed, and take the liberty to present the following facts to the attention of Synod:

- a) For the addition of an explanatory note to an article of the Creed there would seem to be room only in case the Article is open to more than one interpretation, and it becomes necessary to determine officially, which of the various interpretations represents the conviction of the Church. But the character of the note appended to Article XXXVI is in no sense explanatory of the Article, but frankly critical, and in fact contradictory. In the words of the note, the Article upholds the principle of the Established Church, while the note

advocates the principle of a certain separation of Church and State.

- b) In support of its advocacy of the principle of the separation of Church and State the note appeals not merely to the verdict of history and the consensus of practically all Reformed Churches, but also to the nature of the New Dispensation and the teachings and demands of the New Testament, specifically the lordship and kingship of Christ over His Church. If this is really the conviction of the Church, it should find expression in the body of the Creed itself, since this is the formal and official declaration of the faith of the Church.
- c) Certain phenomena in the world round about us make the subject-matter of this Article and its footnote highly actual and the removal of the contradiction between the two exceptionally urgent. While the legal regulation of the relation between the Church and the State which obtains in our own country harmonizes with the principle advocated in the footnote and not with that enunciated in the Article to which the footnote is appended, recent developments in more than one foreign country indicate that the drift of our time is definitely toward the totalitarian State, which subordinates the Church to its own ends and subjects her to its own will. Surely, this situation makes it incumbent upon the Church, to take a clearcut and unequivocal position regarding the proper relation which ought to exist, according to the Word of God, between the State and the Church.
- d) As teachers of theology, appointed by the whole Church, we find our official work to be not merely intimately concerned in this matter, but also to be positively hampered by the inconsistency of footnote and Article. We are, as a group, charged with the duty of teaching theology on the basis of our Confession, but find it simply impossible to teach concerning the relation of Church and State in harmony with both, Article XXXVI of our Confession, and its official footnote.

For these reasons we petition Synod, to take these matters into serious consideration and, if our representations are found to be correct, to take effective measures looking toward the removal of the present conflict between Article

XXXVI of our Confession of Faith and the footnote appended to it in 1910. As to the mode of removal, whether by a deletion as made in the Netherlands, or by a more extensive deletion, or by an overhauling of the whole Article, or in some other way, we do not venture to express any preference, but pray that the Lord may guide the Church to a proper solution of the problem.

Respectfully submitted,

The Faculty of the Calvin Seminary,

LOUIS BERKHOF,

SAMUEL VOLBEDA,

CLARENCE BOUMA,

MARTIN J. WYNGAARDEN,

HENRY SCHULTZE,

DIETRICH H. KROMMINGA.

Postscript. After we had taken this matter up, the fact was brought to our attention that the Committee on Revision of the Constitution of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America also is considering the revision of Article XXXVI on this point and plans to report on the matter to the forthcoming meeting of the General Synod.

REPORT XXVIII.

REPORT ON THE DIVORCE QUESTION Hoeksema-Sherda Report

(Compare Report X., Agenda, Part I, p. 46 ff.)

ESTEEMED BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

THE Synod of 1934 appointed a committee on the divorce question, consisting of the following brethren: Rev. Z. Sherda, Rev. W. Hendriksen, Rev. G. Hoeksema, Dr. C. Bouma, and Prof. D. H. Kromminga. The last named withdrew from the committee, as explained more fully in the report already before the Church signed by Dr. C. Bouma and Rev. W. Hendriksen. The other two members herewith present their report to your honorable body.

The last Synod, after some discussion and after the report of the Committee on Divorce had been rejected, decided "to appoint a committee to consider the practical application of the principle adopted by the Synod of 1890 and re-affirmed by the Synod of 1908, this Committee also to consider the Minority Report and both the reports of the Pre-advisory committee of the Synod, and to present its conclusions to the Synod of 1936" (Acts 1934, p. 146).

To understand clearly the meaning and purport of this charge, it will be well that we briefly sketch the historical background. For more than twenty years, a question involving the problem of divorce has been before our churches. The committee appointed as far back as 1914, formulated this question as follows:

"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?"

And the Committee reporting in 1932 formulated the question 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?"

This, then, is the fundamental question on which we must report. And the Synod gave to our committee the charge quoted above, in the hope that in carrying out that charge, we could aid the next Synod in the solution of this difficult problem.

The first thing necessary therefore is to *understand the fundamental question itself*. And we wish to say this with emphasis, because it is often misunderstood or misrepresented. Strictly speaking, the question on which we are asked to give advice is not primarily a divorce question. As the quotations given above plainly indicate, the stand of our Church that all divorce is contrary to Scripture, except on the one ground of adultery, is not in question in the slightest degree.

No one in our midst is championing a laxer attitude on the question of divorce. No one is suggesting that we should recognize other grounds for divorce, in addition to the one Biblical ground of adultery. In a word, on the divorce question proper we are in unanimous agreement.

It follows therefor that the question before us is not primarily a divorce question. It is not primarily a divorce question but a *gospel* question. *This* is the question, as it was beautifully formulated by the committee in 1916:

"Does our stand that fornication is the only Biblical ground for divorce absolutely exclude from the membership of the Church of Christ those who were divorced on other grounds and remarried (to other parties, namely)?"

In other words, have we a gospel for such people, or have we not? Must we say to them, you have sinned, and you have become so involved in your sins that the door of the Church is closed to you? Or must we say also, to this class of sinners, if you sincerely repent, the door of the Church of Christ is open for you as it is for all repentant sinners?

Now it would seem to be beyond all dispute that only the last answer is soundly Biblical. It is the only gospel answer. And it is the specific and divinely given task of the Church *to proclaim the gospel to all sinners*.

This *gospel principle* was fully and clearly recognized by the two committees that reported to the Synod of 1916. Both committees advised that, upon certain conditions, parties illegitimately divorced and re-married should and could

be received into the Church. Neither committee, it would seem, ever thought of saying to these parties: you have sinned and the door is closed to you, no matter what your present attitude may be.

We emphasize this point, in order that our churches may jealously guard this gospel principle also at the sessions of Synod of 1936. But let us continue the history of the question.

Neither of the reports mentioned above was adopted. Indeed, *both were rejected*. It was then decided to ask the advice of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and South Africa, churches with which we maintain full and complete ecclesiastical fellowship.

The Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, after some years, advised our Church to receive illegitimately divorced and re-married parties upon their confession of the sins of divorce and re-marriage (namely of the *first* party to re-marry). The first marriage was considered null and void after the first re-marriage. This was the unanimous view of the committee appointed to study the question and advise the Netherlands Synod. And the advice was adopted by the Synod, without any dissenting opinion it would seem, and submitted to us as the official advice and position of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

We shall refer to this fact again. It would be most regrettable if the tremendous significance of such advice from our sister churches is not understood by our people. But for the present we return to our brief historical sketch.

From the Reformed Churches in South Africa we have never received an official answer. A committee was appointed, however, and it reported to their Synod. In this report, the same position is taken as officially adopted by the Netherlands Churches, the position, namely, that such parties can be received upon confession of past sin or sins, though continuing the relations of the second marriage. (For a fuller statement of both advices from abroad, see later parts of this report, and Agenda 1934, Part II, pp. 235 to 238.)

Now, in view of this advice, it surely could hardly have been considered an unreasonable expectation that our Synod also should arrive at a speedy solution of this problem. However, this was not to be. Not until 1930 was a report submitted to Synod that embodied a definite stand. Our

own divorce committee, counting among its members such men as Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor, Rev. W. P. Van Wyk, Prof. D. H. Kromminga, and Rev. H. Keegstra, advised Synod to receive parties illegitimately divorced and re-married upon confession of past sins, as the Synod of the Netherlands and the Committee of South Africa had advised.

Synod of 1930, however, 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 again came with the same advice. Again the question was referred back to the committee, and Dr. C. Bouma was added to the committee. And soon after Synod, Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor ceased to participate actively in the work because of ill-health.

At the Synod of 1934 the committee, having profited greatly by a fuller exegetical study from the pen of Prof. L. Berkhof and Prof. H. Schultze, again advised Synod to receive such parties upon confession of sin and evidence of sincere repentance. This advice was rejected.

Dr. C. Bouma submitted a minority report. This report contained two elements that in our opinion were very strange indeed, as we shall explain more fully later. First, the gospel attitude, which had been faithfully adhered to by every committee that had ever reported on the question, and that had stood out so prominently in the advice from the Netherlands and South Africa — the gospel attitude, we say, was altogether absent in the main position defended. The door was closed to parties illegitimately divorced and re-married; closed at any rate, till death opened the door; closed because the first marriage was held to be still in force, and therefore the relations of the second marriage were a constant living in adultery. Until the original marriage partner died, or so long as the present marriage continued, such parties could not be received.

And then a second strange thing characterized the report. After the position had been defended in most solemn and unqualified language that such parties could *not* be received into the church, lo and behold, a *considerable number of such parties were after all to be admitted by way of exception*. In other words, this position was not so much a position as a *contradiction*.

It is not surprising therefor that the Synod, though it had rejected the report of the committee, did not now adopt the advice of the minority report, though it was somewhat of a surprise to have the author of this report himself arise on the floor of Synod and explain that he must not be understood as pleading for or strongly urging an immediate or hasty acceptance of his report.

And not only did the Synod not adopt the advice of the minority report, but it showed very plainly that it was far from through with the position on which it had just taken an adverse vote. For it appointed a committee to examine more closely, not only the decisions of 1890 and 1908 and the minority report of Dr. Bouma, but also the *two pre-advisory reports*. One of these reports, a minority report of one member, differs from the position of the Synodical committee on *only one point*; the other, signed by all the members of the committee but one, *agrees on every point of its advice with the position of the committee that reported to Synod*. Moreover, twenty-five delegates of Synod had voted to adopt this position. And as already explained, this is the advice of the Netherlands Churches and of the committee of South Africa.

Small wonder therefor that the Synod decided to have the position that was voted down *in the form* it was presented to Synod by the synodical committee, once more considered *in a different form* by a new committee that must report on it to your honorable body.

* * * * *

After this brief historical sketch it would seem to be in order now to turn directly to our Synodical charge, beginning with a consideration of what is mentioned first, namely the practical application of the decisions of 1890 and 1908. However, we shall follow a different course. To be able to judge our critical examination of the decisions and reports submitted to us, Synod should be guided by a brief exegetical study of the passages that relate to our problem.

What does Scripture say? *That* is the first question. That must decide the issue. And we wish to say this with all the emphasis at our command.

We must let Scripture speak for itself. We must come to it without any bias or prejudice. Does Scripture teach that this one class of sinners, (parties illegitimately divorced and re-married) must be excluded from the Church

of God, or does it open the door to all who sincerely repent?

We aim to give an exergetical study that will help the Synod in answering that question.

EXEGETICAL STUDY

The first passage that bears directly on our problem is Deut. 24:1-4. The American Standard Version translates:

"When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, who took her to be his wife; her former husband who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before Jehovah; and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which Jehovah thy God giveth thee for an inheritance."

Some, as for instance the committee of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, prefer another translation. According to this translation, everything that is said in these four verses is conditional, up to the words "her former husband * * * * may not take her again to be his wife." If she be divorced, re-married, etc., *then* her former husband may not take her back again.

The difference between the two translations is of course this, that in the first case, divorce on minor grounds (not fornication) is made a matter of positive Mosaic statute — "Let him write her a bill of divorcement." In the latter case, divorce on such grounds is merely recognized as existing. It is *permitted, tolerated*. But the only *positive* Mosaic legislation in the whole passage is this, *the woman's first husband cannot take her back again*. This also agrees with the words of Jesus in Matth. 19:8, "Moses for your hardness of heart *suffered* you to put away your wives."

We shall not enter into a detailed study of the question which translation is the more accurate. However, we know that the other report submitted to Synod gives preference, though without any real proof, to the latter translation. Therefore, in order that Synod may not waste time unnecessarily on questions that do not really concern us or divide us, we gladly follow this same translation.

It has the advantage, moreover, that it fixes our attention rather exclusively on the one declaration that bears directly on our problem. A woman divorced on minor grounds

(not fornication) can not after she has been married to another man, be taken back again by her first husband. Not even if her second marriage has been dissolved by death. Not only is this not permissible but it is particularly added that this would be *abomination before Jehovah*.

Now this is a most significant, emphatic and decisive declaration. It absolutely contradicts the favorite line of thought of many on this question. Parties divorced and remarried should if at all possible, we are told, be brought together again, especially if the second marriage is dissolved by death. But God's Word forbids this, and in the strongest possible language. It is not an ideal to be cherished; it is an abomination before Jehovah. Even the death of the second marriage partner cannot open the door. Even then, when no other marriage ties bar the way, the re-union of parties to the original marriage would be an abomination in the sight of a holy God.

The question naturally arises, what is implied in this passage as *regards the validity of the first marriage*? There are of course but two possibilities. We must say: the first marriage is no longer valid, and then we can understand that God forbids that the parties return to each other; or, the first marriage is still in force, and then the passage we are considering becomes very mysterious indeed. Then God would consider it an abomination that parties that are married in His holy sight should live together again. Surely that position is an absurdity and a contradiction. Surely the implication of our passage is that parties whose return to each other would be an abomination in God's sight, are no longer considered man and wife. The first marriage is broken, also in God's sight, so absolutely broken that it may never be restored.

Now those who like to maintain that the first marriage is still in force are wont to emphasize, not this plain declaration, but *its purpose*. The purpose, we are told, is to check the evil of divorce. Certainly. But we would remark first of all that this purpose is not stated in so many words. What is stated most emphatically is that such parties may not return to each other. It would be poor exegesis to lay so much emphasis on a purpose which is not specifically stated, that we lose sight of and even contradict the one *positive, emphatic statement of the whole passage*.

Moreover, if it be agreed that one purpose surely of this Mosaic statute was to check the evil of divorce, let it not be forgotten that the Lord God checks the evil of divorce by

forbidding the first marriage partners, (after divorce and re-marriage), ever to live together *again*. And let us face the fact that when we try to check the evil of divorce by teaching that such parties should, if at all possible, be brought together again, we are checking the evil or trying to check it *by teaching the very opposite of Scripture*. And then we may be sure that we are on the wrong track.

So then from Deut. 24 we learn that (a) *parties divorced on minor grounds and remarried may not again live together as man and wife, not even after the death of the second marriage partner*, (b) *after divorce on minor grounds and remarriage the first marriage is no longer considered valid before God*.

This is also the interpretation given to this passage by Dr. H. Bavinck, H. H. Kuyper, A. Anema, F. W. Grosheide, J. H. Landwehr, H. Bouwman, J. Ridderbos, B. Van Schelven and other great leaders in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. We quote from their report, p. 7:

"Tenslotte is voor onze kwestie wellicht nog van belang om op te merken, dat blijkens dit verbod van terugkeer de eerste huwelijksband — ook krachtens het hier geponeerde hogere beginsel — als verbroken wordt beschouwd: indien ook niet door den scheidbrief en de wegzending, dan toch door de 'verontreiniging'." (Rapporten, Acta Synode, 1923.)

The last phrase in this quotation causes a question that deserves just a word here, though it is more fully considered in connection with New Testament passages later on. The question is, how or why is the first marriage broken before God? Evidently not completely by the divorce, even though this was permitted or tolerated; for the woman is said to be "defiled," presumably by the relations of the second marriage. She is defiled because she lives with a second husband while still in some sense the wife of the first. This defilement on the one hand was not adultery, for then she would be put to death. Moreover, the Mosaic law tolerated this divorce and re-marriage. But on the other hand, this defilement, this second marriage, does make a restoration of the first marriage impossible. After she has been "defiled" she cannot return to her first husband.

It is plain that we have here in Deut. 24, interwoven with this temporary Mosaic toleration of divorce, also a foreshadowing of the higher New Testament viewpoint, namely that divorce on minor grounds does not break the tie before God; that divorce is permissible only on the ground of adultery or fornication; that only unfaithfulness of one party can dissolve marriage before God (aside from death of

course); and that unfaithfulness in the form of a second marriage after illegitimate divorce does dissolve the first marriage also in God's sight.

THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

We now turn to the New Testament passages that shed light on our problem. In studying these passages, it must be remembered that divorce was a common evil among the Jews of Jesus' day — and divorce on the flimsiest grounds, as for instance when the wife burns the husband's food in preparing the meal. The school of Hillel considered this a sufficient ground. The school of Shammai held views somewhat stricter. But free and easy divorce was very common.

Secondly, it must be remembered that the divorce bill granted the right of re-marriage to the divorced party. It read in part: "Thou art therefor free for anyone who would marry thee." And of course, the party that divorced felt perfectly free to marry again, for the marriage had been legally dissolved, and supposedly in conformity with the Mosaic statute of Deut. 24.

Now the words of Jesus that we shall consider are a condemnation of these divorce and re-marriage views and practices. Our Lord goes back to the Divine creative ordinance, "what therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." He permits but one ground for divorce, namely fornication.

The problem we are studying was at that time not directly under discussion. However, the principles Jesus lays down give us a clear answer to our questions.

The first passage we must study is Matt. 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.*"

Let us first consider the first part of this passage. A man, Jesus tells us, who puts away his wife on minor grounds (not fornication) and then marries another *commits adultery*.

The Jews considered this perfectly legal and moral. Jesus calls it adultery, that is, a violation of the sacred marriage tie. A few questions need to be answered at this point. First, *what act* was adultery? It is evident that the mere act of putting away was not adultery. For adultery, properly speaking, always involves the marital act. It is wrong for the husband to put away his wife on trivial

grounds, but the adultery enters in when he establishes relations with another woman. For that reason also Jesus in Matt. 5:32, where the second marriage of the husband is not mentioned at all, speaks of the adultery which the woman suffers or commits; also speaks of the adultery of the man marrying her, but does not mention the adultery of the man who put her away. For his adultery could enter in only through his own re-marriage, and that is not mentioned in Matt. 5:32. The meaning therefor is, he commits adultery *by marrying another*.

Secondly, when Jesus says that the man by marrying again commits adultery, he surely cannot mean, that he would *always* make himself guilty of adultery by *any* re-marriage following his act of divorcing his wife on trivial grounds. For instance, the woman might die. In that case we would all be agreed that the man could marry another woman without thereby committing adultery.

Jesus' words therefor do not mean that a man who has put away his wife *always* commits adultery by a second marriage, regardless of what has happened to the woman in the interval. The meaning evidently is that any man who divorces his wife on trivial grounds, and then *on the basis of that divorce* assumes that he is *free* and marries again, is sinning against God. He is not free. The Jews so taught. Jesus condemns that view. The man commits adultery by marrying again after and on the basis of such a divorce.

Third—if we ask *why* such an act of remarriage is adultery, no other answer can possibly be given nor has ever been given than this, that he is still before God bound to his first wife. For else his re-marriage could not possibly be adultery, namely marital unfaithfulness. Such a man, Jesus says, makes himself guilty of unfaithfulness, unfaithfulness namely to the wife whom he has divorced. Therefore she must still be his wife. *The tie is not cut before God.*

So, then, a careful exegetical study of Matt. 19:9a presents us with the following fundamental propositions that will aid us in solving the problem we are considering:

A. *Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not sever the marriage tie before God. A husband and wife who have been so divorced are still, in God's sight man and wife.*

B. *Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not give re-marriage rights to the guilty party. Being still bound by the first marriage, he commits adultery if he, on the basis of such a divorce, marries again.*

Let us now consider Matt. 19:9b. It reads: "And he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery."

The meaning is, of course, that such a man commits adultery *by marrying* her, since no other act or condition is mentioned. And here again, as in the first part of the passage, the meaning cannot be: whoever marrieth her, regardless of what the first man may do or what may happen to him in the interval. He might die, for instance, and then we would all be agreed that that she could marry again or someone else could marry her with out committing adultery.

Or, he might himself, in the interval between the divorce and the woman's re-marriage, take another mate. Does our text mean to teach that then also the man marrying her would commit adultery? That view is held by some. However, it is not supported by careful exegesis. For Jesus does not say, "whoever marrieth her when she is put away *and* her husband is remarried." No, "he that marrieth her *when she is put away*"; that is he that marrieth her on that basis, in that capacity, commits adultery. That the only condition Jesus has in mind is the *putting away* of the woman is also the view of Prof L. Berkhof, Prof. H. Schultze and others (we mention these two names because the exegetical part of the report is first of all from their pen) as they express themselves in the report of the Divorce Committee to the Synod of 1934, Agenda, p. 245-246:

"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 he 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."

In other words, nothing is said or implied in this passage as to the legitimacy of the marriage with such a woman,

if other conditions enter in, such as the death of the first husband or his re-marriage. Jesus is merely referring to what was common practice at that time. If a woman was put away on trivial grounds it was considered perfectly legitimate and moral to marry her *on the basis of such a divorce*. She was held to be free of the former marriage. Jesus condemns this view. Whoever marrieth her *commits adultery*. She is not free. She is still bound to her first husband before God. Therefor it is adultery, it is establishing marital relations with a woman who is before God married to another man (her first husband).

One question rather naturally presents itself at this point. We are told in so many words that both the first husband and the second man commit adultery by the act of contracting a marriage on the basis of such a divorce. But *the remarriage of the woman is not mentioned* or condemned in so many words. Must we perhaps conclude that for her the act of remarriage was *not* adultery?

This question, we repeat, very naturally arises at this point. However, the answer is readily given. First, though the re-marriage of the woman (or the party unjustly put away) is not mentioned in Matt. 19:9, it *is* mentioned and condemned as we shall see in Matt. 5:32. Secondly, what Jesus does say concerning the first husband and the second man, namely that both commit adultery by marrying on the basis of such a divorce, can, as we have seen, mean but one thing, namely that *the woman is still bound to her first husband*. And from this it follows that remarriage would also on her part be an act of adultery, namely of marital unfaithfulness to her first husband.

And the reason *her* re-marriage is not specifically mentioned no doubt finds its explanation in the fact that she was so often the helpless, more or less passive victim of the misdeeds of the man. She was simply sent away when it pleased the man. For economic and other reasons, she must seek the home and protection of another man. But it was not first of all her doing or her responsibility. Therefor the sin of the *man* is placed on the foreground by our Lord. Therefor we are told also in Matt. 5:32 — He, the first husband, maketh her an adulteress. He is largely responsible for the adultery of her second marriage.

Some give a different translation of this passage. They read — he causeth her to suffer adultery. We shall discuss the point later. But whether we follow the one translation

or the other, it is plain that re-marriage on the part of the woman on the basis of such a *divorce was also adultery*. For she is still bound to her first husband and therefor it is adultery to marry another, though the men involved in her sad history have the greater responsibility and the greater guilt.

Now we should not fail to note at this point that we have reached a conclusion that is of direct significance for the solution of our general problem. The conclusion is this:

Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not give re-marriage rights to the innocent party. Being still bound by the first marriage, she (he) commits adultery if, on the basis of such a divorce, she marries again.

In a word, after illegitimate divorce the innocent party has no more re-marriage rights than the guilty. Our sense of justice might have led us to a different conclusion. The innocent must not suffer with the guilty, we would say. The woman unjustly sent away must not have her life spoiled by a marriage tie wilfully broken by the other party. She must be free to seek new happiness in a new marriage.

So we might be inclined to reason. And therefor the whole philosophy (and exegesis by the way) of some on this problem is dominated and vitiated by the ever-recurrent distinction between the innocent and guilty party. Not only re-marriage rights, but even the right of fellowship in the Church of Christ, is made dependent on this question of guilt or innocence as to the divorce illegitimately obtained.

But that whole line of thought finds no support anywhere in Holy Writ, and is very plainly condemned in the passage we are studying. It warns us very emphatically that not our human feeling, and not our poor beclouded sense of justice, but the Word of God and the sacredness of the marriage tie must decide the issue. It warns us that in these holy marriage relations, as in other relations, *the innocent must often suffer with the guilty*.

Is the holy tie of marriage broken before God? That is for our Lord the supreme, decisive question. *If not*, then the innocent has no more re-marriage rights than the guilty. Indeed, how could it possibly be that the guilty party was still bound to his wife, while she was no longer bound to him? How can it ever be that one party is still married, and the other not? And yet that is, as we shall see, the peculiar and un-Scriptural position defended by some.

Before completing our study of Matt. 19:9, we do well to turn for a moment to Matt. 5:32. It reads:

"But I say unto you that everyone 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."

The latter part of this text is practically identical with Matt. 19:9b.

However, the first part of this passage asks more particular attention. According to the American Revision, he that sendeth her away "maketh her an adulteress."

The question naturally arises, how or why does he make her an adulteress? He does not make her an adulteress, or cause her to commit adultery, as others translate, merely by *sending* her away. She is thereby somewhat lowered in honor, in the estimation of the public. But no one may call a woman an adulteress surely, merely because her husband has wronged her by sending her away.

Yet Jesus says, he maketh her an adulteress. And the meaning of our Lord's language is very plain, if we remember that the man in divorcing his wife, *gave her the right to marry again*. Secondly, by refusing his support and home to her, he practically forced her into a second marriage.

But, as we have seen, Jesus' teaching is that such a woman is still before God bound to her first husband. Therefor she, by marrying again, commits adultery. And for this the man is largely responsible. He maketh her an adulteress, or causes her to commit adultery, by giving her the right (legal) of re-marriage, by exposing her to the sin and practical necessity of contracting a second marriage.

This is also the explanation given to this passage by Prof. L. Berkhof, Prof. H. Schultze and others in the Divorce Report submitted to the last Synod. We read:

"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 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."

However, another translation(?) has been proposed, namely he causeth her to *suffer* adultery. The verb we are told is *moicheuthenai*, the passive aorist infinitive. Therefor it should never have been translated: he maketh her an adulteress, or he causeth her to commit adultery, but: he causeth her to suffer adultery, for the verb is *passive*.

This argument is however a fallacy. This is not a question of translation, but of textual criticism. The reading or text generally followed is not *moicheuthenai* but *moichasthai*, (Expositors Greek New Testament, Meyer and practically all translations). Evidently the editors of the American Revised Version also followed this text, and therefor translate: he maketh her an adulteress. If the middle is to be stressed, for *moichasthai* is the present middle infinitive, then this translation is to be preferred to the active, "he causes her to commit adultery."

May we remark in this connection that the American Revised Version is given general recognition also in our Church, as the ripest product of scholarly study also in the field of textual criticism.

At any rate, it is a palpable fallacy to contend that practically all scholars have failed to see that a passive (*moicheuthenai*) should not be translated as an active. They have simply not adopted the passive reading. The point to be proved, if the generally accepted translation is to be set aside, is not the comparatively simple point that a passive must be translated as such, but that the passive reading is correct. Some manuscripts N. B. D. have *moicheuthenai*. Westcott and Hort follow this text. But the evidence in favor of this text has evidently not been considered sufficiently weighty by most scholars.

So then, if the generally accepted text is followed, Matt. 5:32a teaches that also the woman put away commits adultery when she marries again, except, of course, if she be put away for fornication. Then, as we shall see, her second marriage is not adultery, for then her first marriage is no longer binding, even before God.

However, in order to meet all possible argument, we finally remark in passing that even if one should follow the less-favored text, and translate: he causeth her to suffer adultery, even then the teaching of this passage remains fundamentally the same.

For how or why would he (supposing this reading were correct) cause her to suffer adultery? Here again the mere *act* of sending her away does not supply the answer. For someone must *commit* adultery if she is to *suffer* it. And her husband does not commit adultery merely by sending her away.

Nor does our text mean that he causes her to suffer adultery through his second marriage. His second marriage is not mentioned at all in Matt. 5:32. For this reason it is

also a logical fallacy to consider Mark 10:11, where we read, "*he commits adultery against her*," a parallel passage. Nothing could be further from the truth. Mark teaches that the man commits adultery against his wife *by marrying again*. Matthew 5 teaches that the man, by sending her away, (no second marriage on his part is in the picture) causes her to suffer adultery.

But how and why? The only possible explanation is, (as also in the case of the more favored text), that the man by giving her the right to marry again and by withdrawing his support is largely responsible for her re-marriage.

But the man that marries her, as Jesus plainly tells us, commits adultery. And she would then *suffer* adultery (if this reading were correct). She would be the object of it. And her first husband would be chiefly responsible. This is also the view of the committee of the Netherlands that reported on this question to the Synod of Utrecht, 1923. They say,

"Door den scheidbrief stelde dus de man zijn vrouw aan overspel bloot, veroorloofde hij haar zich in te laten met een ander. De schuld daarvan draagt de man, die haar heeft weggezonden; de vrouw lijdt overspel en die haar huwt bedrijft het." Rapporten, Acta 1923, pp. 9-10.

But does this mean that she is *not* guilty? Not at all. For she is not raped or debauched against her will. She enters as a free agent into the second marriage. And being still the wife of her first husband, she commits adultery by so doing.

So, then, even if the less-favored reading is followed, the fundamental teaching remains the same. It is this that the re-marriage of the innocent party after illegitimate divorce is adultery.

And so we reach the general principle of tremendous importance for our problem:

Any marriage or re-marriage on the basis of a divorce on non-Biblical ground is an act of adultery, since the first marriage is still valid in the sight of God.

The same principle is enunciated in Luke 16:18. There we read:

"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."

Notice that the exceptive clause, "except it be for fornication," is lacking here. This passage, as also the passage in Mark, is for this reason appealed to by Roman Catholic and other theologians in defense of their view that *no*

divorce is permissible, not even on the ground of adultery. However, we shall not enter upon this question, since we are all agreed that the exceptive clause must here be supposed or supplied on the basis of and in agreement with the passages in Matthew.

Finally before turning to three very important questions that are answered in the Matthew and Mark passages, we remark that in Mark 10:12 it is particularly pointed out by our Lord that if *the woman* puts away her husband and marries another *she* commits adultery. In other words, though the man usually would be the guilty party, the rule Jesus lays down applies equally to both sexes.

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And now we turn to the direct consideration of three questions that must be answered to solve our problem. The first is this:

When Jesus says that he (she) that marries again after and on the basis of a divorce on minor grounds commits adultery, does this mean that such a marriage is a *constant* living in adultery?

We answer, there is absolutely nothing in the words of Jesus, neither as translated nor in the original Greek, that gives the slightest exegetical basis for this view. Consider for instance Matt. 19:9:

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."

The meaning, as all are agreed, is, he commits adultery *by marrying again*, in other words, *by that act*. *That act* is adultery. That is all the text states.

To use this passage, and similar passages, to prove that such a marriage *results in* or leads to continuous adultery, you have to read into the text what simply is not there. For Jesus' statements are manifestly limited to a judgment upon the act of *marrying again*. *That* is adultery. However, it is contended by some that the resulting relations are a constant living in adultery.

And the attempt *is made* to establish this position upon the basis of Matt. 19:9 and similar passages. It is pointed out by W. Hendriksen in his "Sermon on the Mount," p. 255, that in Matt. 5:32b we have, in the original, not the active but the middle voice. And the significance of the middle is this, we are told, that it represents the subject as acting *in relation to himself* somehow. Therefor we must translate, he makes himself guilty of the sin of adultery.

But it will be seen at once that even if the middle must be stressed (and Greek scholars are agreed that often it has a meaning hardly distinguishable from the active) that such stressing of the middle has nothing to do with the point to be proved. Suppose we do translate with the cumbersome phrase, he makes himself guilty of the sin of adultery; we still have absolutely nothing to establish the point that he lives in *permanent* adultery. You still have only the thought that he makes himself guilty of the sin of adultery *by the act of marrying again*.

Of course, if you translate: he involves himself in the sin of adultery, you do subtly suggest the idea that the man is permanently caught in the toils of that sin. You suggest to the mind of the reader that he read that in the text. But this is *then a theory that is introduced into the text*. The middle voice suggests nothing of the kind. If it is to be stressed, it merely emphasizes the *guilt* of the man, and not merely of the act.

However, practically all translators and commentators make no attempt to bring out the special meaning of the middle, perhaps also for this reason that the proper meaning of the middle is this that it represents the subject as *acting in relation to himself*. But adultery happens to be one sin that you cannot commit in relation to yourself, but must commit in relation to another. Is it not then a fine sense of the fitness of things that has led practically all commentators and translators to lay no stress on the middle, but to translate: he committeth adultery!

At any rate, the middle does not prove, does not even suggest, that the adultery is continuous or permanent. And that is the point to be proved.

However, the further question must be faced, are there not reasons to hold that a marriage begun in adultery necessarily continues in adultery, even though this is not taught in these gospel passages? Some seem inclined to the view that this follows as a matter of course. A marriage begun in adultery necessarily continues in adultery. But this is very evidently a fallacy. Even the brethren of the other half of our committee would not subscribe to it. For instance, the death of one of the original marriage partners would suddenly legitimate those adulterous (?) relations, as they see it. Of course, we believe nothing of the kind. But we here refer to this view to establish the point that *nobody* holds that a marriage begun in adultery necessarily continues in adultery. In other words, a marriage begun in

adultery can in its subsequent relations be perfectly pure in the sight of God. On this we are all agreed. Which means, of course, that he who holds that the later relations are adulterous *must prove this*. It does not necessarily follow from the fact that the first act of marriage was adultery.

Now some have sought proof in the words of John the Baptist to Herod: "It is not lawful for thee to *have* thy brother's wife" (Mark 6:18). Emphasis is laid on the fact that John did not merely say, it *was* not lawful for thee to *marry* thy brother's wife; no, it is not lawful for thee to have her.

However, this passage has absolutely nothing to do with our question. Herod's marriage to Herodias was a case of incest. He had his brother's wife, expressly forbidden by Jewish law. It was a marriage, or rather a relation, *that could never be recognized*. That fact alone sufficiently explains John's language: it is not lawful for thee to have her.

What John would have said had Herod merely married a divorced woman we can only conjecture. The fact is we are not dealing with such a marriage. Herod had his brother's wife. That was incest. That was the point that John had in mind. It is not lawful for thee to have thy *brother's wife*. To find any proof here for the view that a second marriage after illegitimate divorce is a constant living in adultery, one would first have to prove that John would have said the same thing, if this were not a case of *incest*. Such proof could be found in this passage only if what John says does not find its adequate explanation in the fact of incest.

But the fact of incest adequately explains everything that John says. Therefor no one can prove from this passage that John would have said the same thing of an ordinary marriage *after illegitimate divorce*.

This is also the view of Prof. L. Berkhof and Prof. H. Schultze and others, Divorce Report, 1934, Agendum, p. 247.

"It is quite evident that the real point John had in mind was not that Herodias was still the wife of another, but that she was the wife of Herod's brother."

And the committee of the Netherlands, asked to consider this very question whether a second marriage after illegitimate divorce was continuous adultery, did not even devote a moment's time to this text. In other words, they evidently did not consider it a passage that had any bearing on the problem.

* Another passage that is supposed to prove that a marriage after illegitimate divorce is a constant living in adultery is Rom. 7:2, 3. There we read:

"For the woman that hath a husband is bound by law to the husband while he liveth, but if the husband die, she is discharged from the law of the husband. So, then, if while the husband liveth, she be joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress."

This passage has, however, nothing to do with the question we are discussing. The committee of the Netherlands, for instance, does not even refer to this passage, in the discussion of the problem of marriage and divorce.

The only way that this passage can be used to defend the view that any marriage begun in adultery results in a relation of constant adultery is to read the text and encourage others to read it, *after the fashion of the Catholics*. The interpretation then is: a married woman is bound to the man she once married *till he dies*. Only death can release her, only death can break the tie. If that is correct, then of course a second marriage is a constant living in adultery, for she is still bound to her first husband.

But, this interpretation is the purest Roman Catholicism. We of Reformed persuasion deny that only death can break the tie of marriage. We are all agreed that a marriage tie can also be broken before God as the result of unfaithfulness of one party.

Therefore we must read the text with a mental reservation or addition. A woman is bound to her husband as long as he liveth, *unless the tie is broken on the ground of adultery*. Then also, a second marriage is not a constant living in adultery, for the first marriage is void, and therefore the second marriage is not adultery.

So then, if we remain consciously and consistently Reformed in our thinking, we will see at once that this passage has nothing to say on our problem.

And now, after pointing out that there is no Scriptural proof for the position that a second marriage after illegitimate divorce is a constant living in adultery, we wish to state very positively that it *contradicts Scripture*. It plainly contradicts Deut. 24. As we have seen, God's Word here forbids parties once divorced to live together again, even after the death of the second marriage partner might seem to have opened the way. The Lord declares that such a re-union is an abomination in His sight. That first marriage may never be restored or resumed. All of which, as we have seen, plainly implies that that first marriage is completely and permanently dissolved in His sight.

Now, this is a pointed condemnation of the view that a second marriage after illegitimate divorce is a constant living in adultery. For there is only one way in which that position can be maintained, namely by proving that the first marriage still exists. *Then and only then can the relations of the second marriage be a constant living in adultery.* If the first marriage is void in the sight of God, no adultery can attach to the permanent relations of the second marriage. And Deut. 24 says, the first marriage is gone, never to be restored. Therefor the second marriage cannot be a constant living in adultery. We have now again reached a conclusion of tremendous significance for the solution of our problem. It is this:

The relations of a second marriage after illegitimate divorce are not a constant living in adultery. The Scriptures nowhere teach this; and this view is contradicted by Deut. 24 and other passages of Scripture.

The question naturally arises, *just how* is that first marriage dissolved, since it is not dissolved by the divorce? We shall answer that question in the light of Mark 10:11. But first permit us to ask, why should anyone, why should any Christian be so eager and determined to prove that the relations of the second marriage are a constant living in adultery?

For what is the inevitable result of this mistaken zeal? This, that you get a certain class of sinners for whom there is no gospel door open, no way of repentance, and no hope! We shall enlarge upon this point later.

But, let us see very clearly that there is only one way in which there can be an open door of repentance and mercy for those who marry again after illegitimate divorce. If the first marriage is no longer valid before God, then and then alone is there an open door. We should therefor be more than ready to accept the plain implication of Deut. 24 that such is the case. And if we will put aside all traditional bias, we will rejoice to find the same implication in the teaching of our Lord in Mark 10:11.

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We now turn to the discussion of the second important question that must be answered. The question is this: What is the effect of the second marriage begun in adultery, on the first marriage? Some would answer: the second marriage has no effect whatsoever. Though married again, the party or parties to the second marriage, are still bound by the tie of the first marriage.

Deut. 24, as we have seen, contradicts this theory very plainly, and even in very solemn language.

And this teaching of Deut. 24 is also plainly implied in Mark 10:11. We there read:

"Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another committeth adultery against her."

Now this is a most significant statement. The Jews reasoned that this man no longer had anything to do with his former wife. Had he not sent her away? Was he not free of her?

But Jesus says, if that man marries another he thereby commits adultery *against his first wife*. He is unfaithful to her. He commits the same sin against her as he would have done if, still being married to her, he had co-habited with another woman.

It is plain that Jesus here not only condemns the easy divorce of those days, but he protects the innocent victim. The man commits adultery against her. He is unfaithful to her by marrying another.

And that can mean only one thing. If the woman is thus wronged and the man is thus unfaithful, just as in the case of adultery while they are still married, *then the woman must have the same rights as she would in the latter case*. The woman is wronged, says Jesus. The man is unfaithful. And now the woman has the rights a wronged party always has.

What are those rights? What may she now do? Some would answer, now she may marry another.

But that is not true at all. Neither law nor Church nor public opinion, nor Christian conscience give her that right.

For she is still married to this unfaithful man. His adultery does not per se break the tie. And as long as the tie is not broken, she may not marry another man. And as a Christian wife, she would in many (not all) cases do well to forgive and resume relations, if he repents. So you see how basically false, how illegal and un-Christian even is the teaching that the adultery of one party gives to the other party the right to marry another.

But the question remains, what right does it give her? We answer: it gives her the right to ask the proper authorities to declare the tie of marriage dissolved on the ground of *adultery*. And when the proper authorities so declare, then, and not until then, has she the right to marry another. And the fundamental legal and moral basis of that

right is simply this, that she is before God and man, a single woman with the natural inalienable right to seek a mate.

Now let us return to the text. Jesus says the husband who had put away his wife, *commits adultery against her* by marrying again. She has therefor the same rights that a wronged woman always has. She has the right to go to the proper authorities, and to ask them to declare that the tie of their marriage is dissolved. And she may ask this on the ground of his adultery.

There are, of course, two points of difference to be noted. She need and can no longer ask the court of the state to do this. That court has already declared the tie dissolved. All that she can do and need do is to ask the spiritual court, the Church, to declare that now, after his second marriage, the tie is dissolved also before God. And of course she then has the right also in the Church to marry again with the blessing of the Church.

Secondly, since the first marriage cannot be restored (Deut. 24), it is not merely her right, but even her duty to ask the Church to declare it null and void.

So, then, it is plain that the words of our Lord, "he commits adultery against her" mean that the second marriage of one of the parties to an illegitimate divorce commits adultery by marrying again, the other party may and must ask the proper court to declare the marriage dissolved also before God.

For that act of contracting a second marriage is an act of adultery. And as we are all agreed, adultery gives to the innocent party the right to ask the proper authorities to declare the tie of marriage dissolved.

In the case of simple adultery the court of the state so declares and the Church recognizes this decree. In the case of adultery in the form of a second marriage, the Church alone so declares, since the state has already acted.

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And now we approach our final problem. Granted that the innocent party, the party whose mate first marries again, is now free, what must we say of the other party? Is he also free of the tie of the first marriage? Or is one free and the other bound?

Common sense, it would seem, could easily solve the problem. If the tie is declared dissolved by the Church, why then the tie is dissolved. If the marriage is null and

void, it is null and void. If one party is free, he (she) is free only because the tie is dissolved. And if the tie is dissolved, how can it be otherwise but that the other party also is no longer married? Or can perhaps a certain man be bound by marriage to a woman while the woman is no longer married to him?

We repeat, common sense, it would seem, easily solves this problem. However, Scripture also does not leave us in the dark here. Jesus' teaching plainly implies that if a marriage is dissolved on the ground of adultery, *the re-marriage of neither party is adultery*. To understand this we must consider the exceptive clause.

May we remark that in discussing the exceptive clause, we seem to turn away for a moment from the direct discussion of the subject we have been busy with, namely the effect of a second marriage (after illegitimate divorce) on the first.

We now, on the basis of gospel passages, discuss legitimate divorce, divorce on the ground of fornication. However, the underlying question in both cases is this: if one party is unfaithful and the marriage is broken, is it broken for both parties?

I think we are all agreed if this is true in the case of legitimate divorce, it must also be true in case of a dissolution of marriage before God by the adultery (second marriage) of one party after illegitimate divorce.

THE EXCEPTIVE CLAUSE

Jesus says in Matt. 19:9a:

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."

We cannot but ask, why the exception? It is not a sufficient answer to say that in case a woman makes herself guilty of adultery, she must be stoned according to Old Testament law. For, in the first place, this death penalty, though technically binding till 30 A. D., was not generally enforced during Christ's ministry. Indeed, in John 8:3-11, when a woman was brought to Him caught in the very act of adultery, Jesus Himself did not insist upon the death penalty. Therefor our Lord, when He stated the exception, could not simply have meant that in the case of adultery, the whole question whether a man might put her away need not be considered at all because she was put to death anyway.

No, Jesus reckoned with the actual facts in the case. The woman who had committed this sin was as a rule no longer put to death. And with that situation before His mind Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another, committeth adultery; except when she is put away (not stoned, but put away), because of fornication."

Moreover, we may be very certain that our Lord gave a rule to be used and followed throughout the whole New Testament dispensation, when as Jesus well knew, the law of stoning would be abolished. It would therefor be very unhistorical, it would rob the Church of a fundamental rule of Christ in a matter of supreme importance, to explain the exception merely by saying: the adulteress was put to death. No, Jesus gave the exception as a thing full of meaning in a Church and for a dispensation that would not and should not recognize the Old Testament law of the death penalty for the adulterer.

Jesus contemplated the situation that the adulterer would live. For and in that situation the significance of the exception must be understood.

And then there can be no doubt as to the reason for this exception, for it is rooted in the very principle itself that Jesus enunciates. That principle is this that it is the command of God that those who are bound together in the sacred tie of marriage shall be faithful to each other. Marriage, if God is to recognize it as marriage, must be the faithful union of one man and one woman, both physically and spiritually.

We are all agreed, are we not, that this is the teaching of our Lord. And therefor the exceptive clause is not so much an exception to the sacredness of marriage Jesus insists on; *it is rooted in it, it comes forth from it*. Because marriage, to be recognized by God, must be the faithful union of one man and one woman, therefor Jesus teaches that a man may not put away his wife, *except for fornication*. For then the very essence of marriage is denied. Then he may put her away, and we do not hesitate to say, unless the marriage relation can be restored and resumed on the basis of a new promise of faithfulness, it must be broken. As things stand, one party being unfaithful, the marriage cannot go on and be approved in God's sight.

And now after we have seen the reason for the exception, let us consider the exception itself.

It reads in Matt. 5:32, "saving for the cause of fornication"; in Matt. 19:9, "except for fornication"; in the parallel passages from Mark and Luke, the exceptive clause is not found at all. However, we are all agreed that it should be supplied or assumed in these passages. And therefor we do not further enter into this question.

Now the exceptive clause is an exception to the statement "he committeth adultery." What Jesus says therefor is this: Whosoever putteth away his wife and marries another, commits adultery *unless he puts her away for fornication*. Then — this is the meaning of the exceptive clause — then the statement does not hold. Then he does not commit adultery. Then his act of contracting a second marriage is not adultery. Then he has the moral and legal right to marry again.

So, then, if a man put away his wife for fornication, then he has second marriage rights. That is the plain teaching of our Lord.

However, something else is just as plain, *namely that the first marriage is broken, is null and void also before God*. For as long as the first marriage is still valid in God's sight, it would be an act of adultery to contract a second marriage. Therefor when Jesus says that a man who has put away his wife for fornication *does not commit adultery by marrying again*, he thereby plainly teaches that the first marriage is null and void also in the sight of the Lord.

We have now arrived at a fundamental position that is of great significance for the solution of our problem. It is this:

When a divorce is obtained or granted on the ground of fornication, the marriage is dissolved also in the sight of God.

Now, that is a position that some do not like to accept, (we shall see later why not). They are eager to emphasize the fact that the party that was not unfaithful has second marriage rights. But in explaining those second marriage rights, the plain fact that they imply the dissolution of the first marriage, is put into the background.

And if the question be asked, how then do you explain these second marriage rights, if it be not plainly stated that the first marriage is dissolved, the answer is: the unfaithfulness of the one party gives to the other party the right to marry again.

(Notice that nothing is said about the dissolution of the first marriage. And by laying all emphasis on the unfaith-

fulness of the one party as the basis of the second marriage rights of the other; the way is paved for the triumphant question: why should the *guilty party* have second marriage rights? What basis is there, since the only basis for second marriage rights is the unfaithfulness of one's mate?

Now we are here at the very crux of the serious difference in our Church on this whole question. It is well therefor to proceed carefully, and to put all prejudice aside, and be ready to accept the Lord's teaching also here.

The question is: how can you explain the second marriage rights of the party whose mate was unfaithful? The answer some would give is: the unfaithfulness of the one party gives to the other party the right to marry again.

Now that sounds plausible. But the fact is that it finds no basis in Jesus' teaching, it is untrue, and even dangerous.

First, Jesus says nothing of the kind. He does not say, if a man's mate is unfaithful then his second marriage is not an act of adultery. No, Jesus says something very different. If a man divorce, *put away his wife* for fornication, then his second marriage is not adultery. In other words, Jesus Himself plainly tells us: not the unfaithfulness alone, but the divorce, the breaking of the tie (on a ground that God approves, of course) gives second marriage rights. You are therefor getting away from the plain words of Jesus when you say: the unfaithfulness of the one party gives second marriage rights to the other. Jesus does not say that. Jesus says, the *divorce* on that ground opens the way for another marriage.

Secondly, as we have already seen in discussing Mark 10:11, it is not true that the unfaithfulness of the one party gives second marriage rights to the other. Let us just take an example from real life to show how false and even dangerous and unmoral this proposal is. Here is a married woman member of one of our churches. She has submitted to the embraces of another man. What now? Has the husband now the right to marry another woman? Why, of course not. It is even his Christian duty to earnestly consider the question whether he cannot and should not forgive his erring wife, and resume and restore the marriage on the basis of a newly-promised faithfulness.

But aside from that angle of the matter, it would be bigamy for that man to marry another woman. Church and state and his own conscience, all tell him, you have no right to marry another just because your mate has been unfaithful.

For there is a marriage, even though one partner has been unfaithful. That adultery has not *per se* destroyed the marriage. And the only thing that can give second marriage rights to either party is death or *the breaking of the tie in some other way that God approves.*

In a word, the proposition: the unfaithfulness of the one party gives second marriage right to the other, finds no support in Jesus' words, it is not true, and neither Church nor state nor conscience nor public opinion recognize such supposed rights.

Therefor, when Jesus says, if a man put away his wife for fornication, his second marriage is not adultery, then the explanation of these second marriage rights can be found only herein that the first marriage is broken also before God.

The force of the exception therefor is this: in divorce on minor grounds the tie is *not* broken before God, therefor the second marriage is adultery; *but* in divorce for the cause of fornication the marriage is *broken* before God therefor the second marriage is not adultery.

However, as we have intimated, this plain teaching of Jesus that, in the case of the exception the marriage is broken, is of decisive significance for our problem. For the question naturally arises, If the marriage is broken, does it not follow that the second marriage, even of the guilty party, is not adultery. How can it be adultery, or unfaithfulness to a marriage tie, if the marriage tie be broken before God?

However, logical as the conclusion is, we do not have to depend at this point either on conclusions or inferences. Jesus plainly teaches that after a marriage has been dissolved in God's sight on the ground of fornication, the second marriage even of the unfaithful party is *not* adultery.

Let us just take time to read once more what Jesus plainly says. Matt. 5:32: "But I say unto you, that 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." Now this can mean but one thing. As we have seen, in the case of the exception the statement or statements made do not hold. Then they are not true. If she is put away for fornication then the first husband does not make her an adulteress, and then whosoever marrieth her does not commit adultery. In other words, then the

second marriage of the woman is not adultery, neither for her nor for the man that marries her.

And Matt. 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, committeth adultery; and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." But again, in the case of the exception, the statements do not hold. If she be put away for fornication then the man, by marrying another, does not commit adultery, and the man who marries her does not commit adultery.

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Now we have arrived at a rule of Christ that runs counter to a deeply-rooted prejudice. Notwithstanding this plain teaching of our Lord, some hold that the second marriage of or with the guilty party *is adultery*. She has no second marriage rights.

And to bolster up this opinion, some suggest that the exception does not apply to the re-marriage of the guilty party. If she, though put away for fornication, marries again, (so they would read the text), or if someone marries her, this *is* adultery. But it is easily shown that this is not exegesis.

(a) The exception and the statements Jesus makes concerning the re-marriage of a guilty party are plainly both parts of a compound sentence in Matt. 19:9. Jesus tells us that if a man puts away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, two things follow. First, the man's re-marriage is adultery; second, the remarriage of or with the wife is adultery. We have therefor two statements, neither of them forming a separate sentence, but both conditioned by the clause: if a man put away his wife except for fornication. The condition evidently applies to both statements. *But, the exception is itself part of the condition.* Therefor the exception also applies to both statements. In other words, neither statement holds in the case of the exception.

(b) It is evident from the very form of Matt. 19:9b, that it is not a separate sentence, but part of a compound sentence. "And whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." We naturally ask, who he meant by "her when she is put away," and how, for what reason put away? In other words, the phrase, "her when she is put away," refers back to the preceding condition: whosoever shall put away his wife, except for

fornication. That condition is evidently a part of the thought, also of the second part of the sentence. *But*, the exception is part of the condition, *and we have no right to take it out*.

(c) Matt. 5:32 settles the question most conclusively. There we have the exception *and in direct connection only with the remarriage of the guilty party* (the re-marriage of the innocent party is not mentioned in Matt. 5:32). To say therefor that the exception does not apply to the re-marriage of the guilty party is to plainly contradict Matt. 5. For it is there.

So then, the exception applies also to the re-marriage of the guilty party. In other words, that re-marriage is adultery, *unless* the woman be put away for fornication. Then her re-marriage, and the second man's marriage to her is not adultery.

This is also the teaching of prominent exegetes. It is the view defended by Prof. L. Berkhof, Prof. H. Schultze and others, in the Divorce Report of 1934. They say:

"It is quite evident that the exception must be connected with the whole statement. . . . 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; (3) that others can marry either one of the original parties without the sin of adultery." Agenda, 1934, p. 244.

That the exception refers to the re-marriage of the guilty party, or marriage with her, is also the view of Meyer, Gospel of Matthew, p. 133, where he says on Matt. 5:32: "That by *apolelumenen* a woman who is dismissed illegally, consequently *not on account of adultery* is intended, was understood as a matter of course, according to the first half of the verse." In other words, according to Meyer, when we read in the second part of the compound sentence "whosoever shall marry *her when she is put away* committeth adultery," then we must, *as a matter of course*, interpret this in the light of the condition and exception mentioned in the first part of the verse. And he makes the same comment, referring back to the above quotation, on Matt. 19:9, p. 339.

This is also the view of Ellicott, "The Four Gospels," p. 28, where he says on Matt. 5:32: "But if he was free to marry again, then the guilt of adultery could not possibly

attach to her subsequent marriage with another. The context therefor requires us to restrict that guilt to the case of a wife divorced for other reasons."

However, when it is established that the exception does apply to the re-marriage of the guilty party, we are given a rule of our Lord that has decisive bearing on our problem. It is this:

When a marriage is dissolved, also before God, on account of unfaithfulness of one party, the re-marriage of that party is not adultery.

Now, to see the full force of this rule, we must ask what is its proper application, in the case of illegitimate divorce and re-marriage?

As we have seen in the discussion on Mark 10:11, if a man commits adultery (after divorce on minor grounds) by marrying again he commits adultery *against his wife*. He therefor gives her the same rights as he would if he were unfaithful before divorce. She may leave him. And since the divorce is already granted by the state, and since the first marriage can now never be restored (Deut. 24) she can do nothing else but ask the Church to declare the marriage dissolved in God's sight.

So also here you have a dissolution of a marriage before God on the ground of unfaithfulness. Also here therefor the teaching of Jesus applies that the (first) marriage is now broken for both of them.

Neither commits adultery by living with another mate. The party who committed adultery by marrying again nevertheless does not live in continuous adultery, for the first marriage is null and void. And the party that re-marries last does not commit adultery by marrying again, for the first marriage is null and void.

In a word, the second marriage of neither is continuous adultery for *that* marriage is now the only one God recognizes. The first is broken.

Now, as already stated, this rule of our Lord runs counter to a prejudice that is rather deeply rooted with some of our people. Indeed, another theory was officially adopted (without the slightest exegetical ground) by the Synod of 1890. It was re-inforced by the Synod of 1908, again without the slightest attempt at exegesis. The argument is purely of a practical nature.

It is therefor well that a word^e be said her as to

PRACTICAL OBJECTIONS

We do not hesitate to say that there is not one single practical objection to this view. And for the simple reason that there cannot be. There cannot be any real valid practical objections to any rule laid down by the Lord.

The Lord says, as we have seen, after a marriage tie has been dissolved because of the unfaithfulness of one party, the remarriage of *neither of them is adultery*.

The real question before the Synod is this: *is that truly the teaching of the Lord?* If it is, there are no valid objections to it.

Christ's teachings are never dangerous. They never lead us on the wrong track.

On the other hand, it is very dangerous, it is fundamentally wrong, to say, for *practical reasons we dare not accept this view*. The *only* question is, is a certain rule or principle the teaching of Christ. If so, we must follow it. If so, it is safe to follow it. If so, it is dangerous to imagine that there *can* be practical objections to it.

In view of the foregoing, it would be perfectly in order to ignore all so-called practical objections to the view that the second marriage also of the guilty party in a legitimate divorce is not adultery. However, these objections are made so much of, and there is so much danger that they shall obscure the true teaching of our Lord, that it would seem wiser to refer to them very briefly.

Objection I. According to this view, the woman justly put away (for fornication) has more rights than the woman unjustly put away. The first has second marriage right, the latter has not. We answer, the facts are stated correctly. But first we ask, if it is the Lord's will so to rule, who are we that we should dispute His authority? Secondly, the implication of the argument is fundamentally false. It is this, that greater guilt or innocence in the matter of divorce determines future marriage rights. If you are very guilty, you may not marry again. If you are not so guilty, you may.

But Jesus Himself warns us that this whole line of reasoning is false. For He teaches very plainly, and on this we are all agreed, that in the case of divorce on minor grounds, *neither* party has the right to marry another, the innocent no more than the guilty.

And why not? Because the first marriage is still in force. *That* decides the issue, according to the teaching

of the Lord. Is there a marriage or is there not? That decides the issue, (not greater guilt or innocence). So Jesus teaches on the one hand, that if the first marriage is still in force, neither guilty nor innocent may marry again. On the other hand, if the marriage is broken, both may marry again. And when others say, *not* the question whether the marriage is broken, but the question of greater guilt or innocence, must decide the question of marriage rights, they are setting up an arbitrary standard without exegetical basis.

Objection II. By adopting this view the Church would open the door.

Notice that the language of this objection is very vague. And therein lies its potency. For our people are conservative, and for this we thank God. And so many doors are being opened today also in the Church, that our people are justly afraid of "opening the door." The result is that you can usually do a great deal with that cry, "you are opening the door."

But surely, not a popular phrase, but calm thinking must decide important issues in the church of Christ. Let it therefor be said with emphasis, *that opening the door is one of the chief tasks of the church of Christ.*

We *must* open the door to all penitent sinners. That is our duty and glory as the Church of Christ. And that means, in this particular connection, that we open the door to those who repent of their *past sins of divorce and (or) remarriage*, and who convince the consistory that they are truly penitent. And we propose to admit them, without demanding of them, what neither man nor God, neither conscience nor the state permits, namely that they leave their present mates.

In that sense, we mean to open the door. And in a sense, that *is* opening the door, for the Church up to this time has hesitated to do this. We now advise that this be done. And our advice is supported by the unanimous advice of our sister Churches in the Netherlands and of the committee of our sister Churches in South Africa.

Some may believe this is wrong. *But*, you do not *prove* it wrong, by crying: you are opening the door. We admit it. We glory in it.

What others must do, if they want to keep that door *closed* is to prove that such parties are not repentant; that they are living in continuous adultery. Else it is the solemn

duty of the Church to open the door, and by keeping the door closed it would be remiss in its duty.

This fear of "opening the door" often finds its explanation in a desire to keep the Church pure. It is better not to admit such parties, some say, for else the evil of divorce will creep into the Church.

But let us understand and remember that the Church must seek to keep itself pure, first by testifying against all sin; secondly by demanding confession and sorrow over their sins from those who err in doctrine or life; and thirdly by refusing admission to those who harden their hearts.

But when the Church seeks to keep itself pure by saying to a certain class of sinners: you are *out*, you cannot enter, no matter how sorry you may be for your sins, then it is not keeping itself pure; it is corrupting its own gospel, it is becoming so strict that it is more righteous than the Lord Himself.

Objection III. *According to this view, a man frees himself by his own sin.* For instance, a man divorces his wife on minor grounds. He is now still bound to her. He then, however, adds another sin to the first. He commits adultery by marrying another woman. By his own adultery, he has now gained his freedom. Surely, it is mentally added, this view must be wrong. And no further Scriptural arguments are needed.

And *that* is the weakness of this whole argument. We appeal once more to Scripture. Does Deut. 24 teach that, in case of divorce on minor grounds, and re-marriage, the first marriage is null and void? It does. Does Jesus teach that if a marriage is dissolved for the reason of adultery, that the second marriage of neither party is constant adultery? He does. And you cannot destroy Scripture by presenting its teachings in a light that appears to make them unacceptable.

But you ask, does sin ever make us free? We answer, it depends on what you mean by freedom. Sin never gives real freedom. It always leads to deeper slavery. But it may give what *sinners consider freedom*.

Illustrations are at hand, too numerous to mention.

A man murders his wife. Does this give him freedom? Not in any real sense of the word. *But*, he is no longer bound to his wife by marriage.

So also a man after first divorcing his wife, can add another sin by marrying another woman. Does this give

him *real freedom*? Some brethren are ready to answer, certainly. We deny this. Aside from the fact that his new sin results (as great sins always do) in a deeper slavery, we hold that his real freedom lies in returning to his first wife. When he makes the restoration of that first marriage impossible (Deut. 24) by his second marriage, he is not gaining freedom for himself, he is *robbing himself*.

The direct result of his sin is that he is more guilty before God. The direct result of his sin is that his wife may and must now ask the church to declare the marriage dissolved before God. And therefor the *indirect* result of his sin is that the marriage is broken also for him. How can it be otherwise?

And finally, what is really the objection in this connection? Is it this, that sin cannot cancel sacred obligations? But, sin is cancelling them every day in the year. We ask again, the man that murders his wife, does he not cancel his sacred marriage obligations?

Objection IV. (Really another form of objection III.) A man could misuse this teaching. He could plan the whole thing beforehand. First he will get a divorce, on minor grounds, since his wife is not unfaithful. Then he will marry another. Then he is *free*. Indeed, he could go to his consistory and lay the whole plan before them, and they would have to admit that, after his second marriage, they would no longer hold him bound by the ties of the first marriage.

Surely, the answer is not far to seek.

Must we, to show the emptiness of these objections, with apologies to the Synod, also draw a picture of a young man who asks the consistory whether it is not true that he can indulge in pre-marital experience, and that if he only marries his sinning partner and makes a little confession, everything will be all right?

Is there any doubt what a consistory should and would say to such a party, who came before the consistory with such a program of premeditated sin and confession? Would not every consistory say: you are in a very sinful and hardened state of mind, and unless you turn from your sin and repent, no Church can receive you? And would not the same answer be given in another case, namely when a man asks his consistory: if I first divorce my wife and then marry another am I not free?

And finally, would any sane man seriously think of appearing before a consistory unashamed with such a program of premeditated sin?

No, the question is: if a man would go through all this sinful experience, and *later* would convince the consistory that he sincerely repented, must we then say to him, you are living in constant adultery? Jesus says he is not.

And the question is not, whether we must agree to the sinful premeditated program of the hardened sinner, but must we receive the penitent sinner.

Objection V. According to this view, we must recognize the latest marriage legalized by the state.

Our answer is, first, we are directly concerned only with the marriage relations of those who are members of the church or seek to become members. With respect to them, our position is that we may not and need not consider *their* second marriage as a constant living in adultery. This is the teaching of Jesus. If some believe otherwise, they must prove that the first marriage is still in force, contrary to Deut. 24, and the teaching of our Lord.

Secondly, the Church that teaches its members to honor and obey the state in all lawful things, must itself set an example by honoring the marriage laws of the state, when such laws are not repugnant to the Word of God. (See Art. 36 of our Confession:

"Moreover, it is the bounden duty of everyone, of whatever state, quality or condition he may be, to subject himself to the magistrates, to pay tribute, to show due honor and respect to them, and to obey them in all things which are not repugnant to the Word of God."

Therefor a second marriage can and should be honored by the Church since the unfaithfulness of one party has resulted in the dissolution, also before God, of the first marriage. And if the first marriage is dissolved before God, what gives the right or the duty to the Church to refuse to recognize the second marriage?

And finally we ask, would those who present this objection dare to say publicly that the obligations of the second marriage are not to be recognized by the parties themselves? Would they dare advise them to leave each other? If not, do *they* not *recognize* that second marriage and therefor lose all right to condemn us for recognizing it?

We wish to say two more things in this connection. First, it is only in the gospel passages we have discussed, that the second marriage rights of the guilty (adulterous) party and the innocent party *are specifically referred to*; and that in the same passages. And there, as we have seen, second marriage rights are accorded to both parties.

This does not mean, of course, that the Lord's judgment on both parties is the same. That is a very different question. A righteous Lord will deal with the guilty according to his sins. And the Church must ask confession and penitence of the guilty party, not of the innocent.

But, as to second marriage rights the Lord says the same thing, in the same passage, and practically in the same language concerning both parties.

Secondly, the only other passage which might seem to touch upon this question is the rule of the Old Testament that the adulteress must be stoned. And then it is said: do you not see, the guilty party had no second marriage rights, *for she was put to death*.

But surely the emptiness of the argument is evident at once.

It would be just as logical and just as superficial for us to say: God has abolished the death sentence, *therefor* we must give re-marriage rights to the guilty.

Both arguments mean or would mean absolutely nothing. All you can prove from the death sentence of the olden day, is that *at that time* God did not give to the adulterer the *opportunity* to seek another mate.

But now the death sentence has been abolished. They now have the opportunity to marry again. Have they also the right? The abolition of the death sentence cannot *prove* this. At the very most it suggests a positive answer. Surely there can be no proof that they have not that right in a death sentence that has been abolished!

Let us now sum up the teaching of Scripture, especially of our Lord Himself.

First, the Christian ideal. Marriage must be the faithful union of one man and one woman. Matt. 19:6 — "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Second: Because marriage must be the faithful union of one man and one woman, unfaithfulness of one party gives legitimate ground for divorce to the other. Matt. 5:32; Matt. 19:9.

Third: If divorce is obtained on the ground of adultery, the marriage is broken also before God. It therefor binds neither party, and the re-marriage of neither party is a constant living in adultery. Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32. (They commit adultery when they remarry, *except* the woman (or man) be put away for fornication.)

Fourth: Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not sever the marriage tie before God. A husband and wife who have been so divorced are still in God's sight man and wife. Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18.

Fifth: Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not give re-marriage rights to the guilty party. Being still bound by the first marriage, he commits adultery if he, on the basis of such a divorce, marries again. Matt. 19:9a; Mark 10:11; Luke 16:18a.

Sixth: Divorce on grounds other than fornication does not give re-marriage rights to the *innocent* party. Being still bound by the first marriage she (he) commits adultery if, on the basis of such a divorce, she marries again. Matt. 5:32a, 32b, Matt. 19:9b. Luke 16:18.

Seventh: The man who marries the woman put away on grounds other than adultery, commits adultery. Matt. 5:32a, 32b; Matt. 19:9b; Luke 16:18

Eighth: The relations of a second marriage after illegitimate divorce are not a constant living in adultery, for (Deut. 24 and gospel passages — and see below).

Ninth: If one of the parties to an illegitimate divorce commits adultery by marrying again, the other party may and must ask the proper court (Church) to declare the marriage dissolved before God. Mark 10:11; Deut. 24.

Tenth: Since the first marriage is dissolved also before God, through the adultery (second marriage) of one party, the permanent relations of either party in a new marriage are not adultery. Deut. 24; Matt. 19:9; 5:32.

Eleventh: If they sincerely repent of their sins of divorce and re-marriage (the first party) then, since their new marriage is not a constant adultery, they need not and should not be excluded from the Church. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 81, 84, and 85.

Such is the teaching of Holy Writ. And we shall now proceed to show that the view heretofore held by many in our Church is not only in conflict with these Scriptural teachings, but is also very dangerous and even in plain conflict with other portions of Holy Writ.

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The first part of the charge given is — and to this charge we must now directly return after our study of Scripture — was to consider the practical application of the decisions of 1890 and 1908.

"The decision of 1890 is found in the Acts of that year, Art. 66, and 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."

We must earnestly advise against the re-affirmation of this decision of almost half a century ago. We mention first two minor objections.

(a) It is a decision lacking the slightest attempt at Scriptural proof.

(b) Not one in our midst really agrees with it. For it says, *without any qualification*, if he *marries* while his wife lives, he *cannot* be a member of the church. The most that anyone in our midst would want to affirm is: he cannot be a member, *as long as his wife lives*. But the decision is unqualified. If he *marries* while the wife lives, that closes the door. To re-affirm this decision would be to re-affirm what nobody in our midst believes.

However, there are more fundamental objections. The decision is:

(a) contrary to Scripture. The implication, as all will agree, is that the second marriage of the guilty party is a constant living in adultery. But Jesus teaches that the second marriage of a divorced person is adultery, *except* he (she) be put away for fornication. Then it is not adultery.

(b) It holds that there is no gospel for a certain class of sinners. If the guilty party marries again while his wife lives, that closes the door. There is no possibility of repentance and acceptance by the church. The *grace of God cannot reach him*. We consider this a terrible contradiction of the beautiful Scriptural teaching, "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18. Does not this Scriptural passage teach plainly that no man's sin can be so great that the grace of God cannot reach him?

(We shall enlarge on these objections and give others when we discuss the position of the Minority Report, 1934.)

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The decision of 1908 attempts a reasoned defense of the decision of 1890. It reads:

"Zulk een man kan geen lid der Gemeente zijn, omdat zijn overspel wel zijn beledigde 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 ander, 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 is, door een openbare belijdenis zich met de Kerk te verzoenen. De spits van de goddelijke ordinantie: Wie zijn vrouw verlaat anders dan om hoererij, 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 kon zijn, zou het karakter dragen van een instelling waar-door God's gebod krachteloos wordt gemaakt." Acts 1908, pp. 38, 39.

The objections mentioned against 1890 of course hold also here. In addition let it be said, first, that this reasoning of 1908 has already been adequately answered when we considered so-called objections to the Scriptural rule. See especially Objection IV above.

However, we must add one more word. First, with what Scriptural or moral right is it assumed that sinners of this particular class are very likely thoroughly hardened sinners, hypocrites, who first make all this sinful history "*met goddeloos opzet*" and then seek to fix it all up with a public confession? What right have we to judge the hearts, and to suggest that when sinners of *this* class seek the forgiving grace of God and the forgiveness and fellowship of the church that they very likely are not sincere? Suppose we assumed that in the case of other sins, how many sinners would we ever receive?

Secondly, suppose it were true that a man or woman sought consciously with evil premeditation, to misuse this rule of the Church, and suppose the consistory was convinced of this, no one would think of admitting them. But could they not repent *even of that sin*? How many sins are not committed with evil intent and later sincerely repented of?

Thirdly, the reasoning is: because someone might misuse this rule (of receiving such sinners, namely guilty parties re-married) therefor we should not have the rule. But then we cannot have the rule admitting *any* penitent sinner. For the rules admitting penitent drunkards, thieves, harlots, etc., can all be misused. In each case the sinner could say, I am going to make all this sinful history, and then get back into the Church by making confession.

They *could* do this. There is no limit to what men and woman can do, when living *in sin*. The church cannot control this nor has it the charge to control the lives of those not in its fold. And when it seeks to control the lives of sinners, living in sin, by refusing beforehand to admit them if they repent, it gets completely on the wrong track.

We must seek to curb sin by testifying against it, and by demanding sincere penitence and confession of those who err, *but never by excluding the penitent*. For it is the great message of the gospel, that where sin abounds in human life, grace does much more abound, so that no one who is sorry for his sins need fear that he will be rejected.

Finally, the contention that by admitting such parties we would make God's commandment of none effect is simply the result of confused reasoning. For the command is, do not be unfaithful to your marriage vows. The position that is attacked by 1908 is: admit those who have been unfaithful, even though they are remarried *if they repent*. Now we are told: this makes the commandment of none effect. In other words, if you admit a penitent sinner, you make the command against that sin of none effect. The way (*only* way) to make God's commands of effect is to say to all men: if you *do* commit that sin, you are out of the church forever.

And by this time, of course, you have arrived at the purest legalism: sin, and the Church cannot receive you. And legalism is at the bottom of the whole view defended in the decision of 1908. Which is but another way of saying that it denies the Gospel.

THE MINORITY REPORT

You will find this report on pages 259 to 345 of Agenda, 1934.

Before considering the conclusions of this report, we wish to make a remark on the authorities quoted by the author of this report in support of his position. Now, it may seem almost unbelievable, but none of these authorities (church decisions or prominent writers) really justify or corroborate the conclusions of this report.

Many, not all, support the main position. But not one allows for all the exceptions that the minority report admits. *They* state a position and adhere to it. The minority report defends a position in very emphatic and solemn

language and then *departs from it*. In this respect this report is an entirely new and strange contribution to the literature on this subject. At any rate many of Dr. Bouma's own authorities condemn the very position that is defended. If it be true, for instance, as Dr. Charles Hodge (quoted by Dr. Bouma) states that: "If a person be divorced on other than Scriptural grounds and marries again, such a person cannot consistently be received to the fellowship of the Church," then it is also true that Dr. Bouma is *inconsistent* in admitting such parties in his three exceptions. And Dr. Hodge, one of Dr. Bouma's own authorities, so declares. And so do most of the authorities he quotes.

Secondly, it is very interesting and challenging to note that Prof. S. C. Nettinga, also quoted by Dr. Bouma, tells us that there is the same difference of opinion in the Reformed Church of America on this question as in ours. In a word, the closer you get to our *own* Church, the more this appeal to authorities falls to the ground.

And when finally you seek support, insofar as this may be valid and necessary, in our own Church and Churches fully recognized by us, then practically all authorities are against the position of Dr. Bouma. The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have officially advised and declared against it. The committee report on this matter is signed by such illustrious names as J. H. Landwehr, A. Anema, H. Bavinck, H. Bouwman, F. W. Grosheide, J. Ridderbos, B. Van Schelven, and H. H. Kuypers.

The committee of South Africa advises against the position of Dr. Bouma. And again, the view of most of the prominent leaders in our Church is the very opposite of that of the Minority Report: men such as Prof. L. Berkhof, Prof. D. H. Kromminga, Prof. H. Schultze, Rev. W. P. Van Wyk, and Rev. H. Keegstra. (See Report on Divorce, Agenda 1934, pp. 229-252.)

And in a previous report, Prof. F. M. Ten Hoor also took the same position as these other leaders in our Church, in the Netherlands, and in South Africa. (Agenda 1932, p. 125.)

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However, let us turn to the *conclusions* of the report. We have first of all the main position. It is as follows:

"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."

Notice that we here return to a direct consideration, not of legitimate divorce, and the question of re-marriage rights for the guilty as in the case of 1890 and 1908, *but of illegitimate divorce and re-marriage after that.*

Now, if we consider that main position first of all, it strikes us at once that the *reason* why such parties must be excluded is not stated in so many words. Yet the Church must understand what the reason is. For exclusion from the Church of Christ is a serious matter. When the Church says to certain parties, *you may not enter the fold*, this is for them a tragedy of unparalleled magnitude. It is the most tragic word that could be spoken to them.

We must ask why? The real reason can be only this, that such parties are living in constant adultery. This is not plainly stated. But it is the only possible reason that can be advanced for the exclusion of these parties. And that reason is also suggested by the rule and by certain passages in the report.

The rule is: exclude them "so long as the present marriage union continues or the original marriage partner continues to live." In other words, the reason must be found in the *present marriage union*. That is wrong, as long as the original marriage partner lives. In other words, (and no other meaning is possible), it is adultery, continuous adultery, because the parties are still bound to their original mates. That is why the death of the latter opens the door of the Church. For then the adultery ceases.

Various passages in the report also suggest or demand this view of the *reason* why these parties must be excluded. Thus we read:

"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." p. 287.

And again on page 288:

"The real reason (why they are excluded) 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."

All this can mean only one thing, namely, that they are living in adultery, (and therefore no claim of repentance can be accepted by the Church).

So they let the Church understand what this proposal really means. It means that such parties are to be excluded from the Church, *because their marital relations are sin-*

ful, are adulterous. And therefore the whole question of penitence is out of order. They are living in sin.

Now this is, in our opinion, a basic position that is un-Scriptural, contrary to the gospel, and objectionable for many other reasons.

I. Our Scriptural objection to this main position can be stated very briefly, as it has already been given on previous pages. First, the implication of this advice is, that until death breaks one or other tie, such parties live in constant adultery, and *therefor* they cannot be received into the Church. This contradicts Deut. 24 (the first marriage is no more) and Matt. 5:32 and Matt. 19:9, (marrying another is adultery, except fornication enter in); and Mark 10:11 ("committeth adultery against her"); all of which teach plainly that when there is re-marriage after illegitimate divorce, the first marriage is broken, and the second marriage is not a constant living in sin. Therefor there is no ground for the exclusion of such parties till death breaks the tie. This is basically the Catholic view (death only breaks the tie).

(b) This advice closes the door to a certain type of sinners. It has absolutely no gospel for them. For it is idle, it is ecclesiastical cruelty and irony to say: yes we have a gospel also for you *just as soon as somebody dies*. The only gospel worth while is a gospel for today. *Today* if ye will harden not your heart. *Today* is the day of grace. *Today* men may die.

That other party may live ten, twenty, forty years. If it be called a gospel that holds open the door of grace *only if somebody dies*, we say it is a gospel (?) which would urge men to hope for the death of another; for then only can they be saved. Is this the kind of gospel that Jesus Christ our Savior died to bring to poor vile sinners? Must we have a gospel that means: the death of Christ is not sufficient, the death of some poor sinful little human must open the door for you? Is it not plain that with this philosophy we are completely off the gospel track?

(c) According to this view the Church of Jesus Christ is not true to its trust, for the first duty of the church toward sinners is to *call to repentance*. And only when that repentance is refused, only then may it exclude. But in this case *there is no call to repentance*. The church *dare not call to repentance*. It dare not say to such parties, repent; leave your sins; leave your present partners and return to your former mates.

And yet, because the member or members *do not do this*, because they continue in their present relations, they are excluded as adulterers. So, then, because they do not do *what they may not do*, and *what the church may not ask them*, they are excluded by the church of Christ.

Can you picture a more terrible travesty of the gospel, a more awful unpardonable state for poor sinners that may be seeking light and peace and forgiveness? If they do one thing, they sin; if they do the other thing, they sin. No matter what they do, they sin. If they stay with their present mates they sin. If they leave and return to their former mates they sin. The grace of God cannot reach them. There is no way of repentance. They are doomed, as those living constantly in sin, to a sure hell, *except some one die*.

And all this is defended by saying: it is not the fault of the Church that these parties cannot do what they should to show true penitence. We answer: this is not a *true* statement of this awful position. For no one dares to say, *publicly and officially and practically*, they *should* do this, (namely leave their present mates and return to the former.) The church does not say to them: you *cannot* but you *should*. It dare not say that. It may not say that.

Yet, because they do not do what the Church dare not and *may not* ask and what they *may* not do, they are excluded. Is it not plain that this is contrary to the gospel? Surely the Church can do and may do only one of two things. Either it must say, show your repentance by doing this, or if it dare not demand it, then it should not exclude men because it is not done.

And so we remark finally in this connection that, however true it may be that the Church did not get these people into their sad position, nevertheless, when that position is described as a position where the *grace of God cannot reach them*, then it is the philosophy of men that *imagines* that impossible position. But no sinner was ever in such a position.

For the gospel of Jesus Christ calls upon *all* men who hear the gospel to repent. And that means that for every sinner, there is always a *right* way that God wants us to follow. And if we follow it He will receive us.

(d) The Church would never dare to accept the logical consequence of this position, namely that such people if they die in their present state are lost. And yet we *must* say that, if his position is adopted.

Let there be no misunderstanding at this point. We do not mean to contend that the Church must say of all whom it excludes, that they are therefor outside of the Kingdom. We could exclude, for instance, because men are not agreed with our particular teaching on some point. All this is well understood by all.

But when the Church of Jesus Christ excludes men, as in this case, *because they are living constantly in a gross sin (adultery) then it must say, we exclude them from the Kingdom of God.* This is also the teaching of our Catechism, Q. 87: "Can they then not be saved who continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, do not turn to God? A. By no means; for the Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber or any such like, shall inherit the Kingdom of God."

And we cannot get away, and should not want to get away from this fundamental teaching of Scripture by calling attention to our human fallibility. Certainly the Church can make mistakes. But the question is: allowing for human fallibility, what does the Church of Jesus Christ *declare* concerning parties living in constant adultery? And then the Church may and can and must declare just one thing, namely that they, except they repent (not except someone die) are outside the Kingdom of heaven.

But who believes that all parties once illegitimately divorced are re-married, though they desire fellowship with the Church of Christ, are lost, (until somebody dies to save them)? Nobody. We have never yet heard that view defended. But if we dare not say that, what right have we still to contend that they are constantly living in gross sin and in an unrepentant state?

And this leads us to our final objection.

(e) This view, because we dare not accept its logical and Scriptural conclusion, robs the Church of its honor as being a divine institution with the power of the keys.

Christ said, "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven." And whatever difference of opinion there might be as to the meaning of these words in a Protestant Church, surely we are all agreed that they mean *one thing*. When the church binds, that is, holds men *bound to their sins*, then it must declare, you are bound in heaven. If it no longer dare to do this it surrenders its own honor as the Church of Christ speaking with His authority.

And that is precisely what the Christian Reformed Church is in danger of doing at the Synod of 1936. It may close the door to a certain class of sinners, as living in constant sin. And then it will mentally add: but this does *not* mean that they are lost, that they are outside the Kingdom. In other words, it will, or rather *would* say: what we bind on earth, is not bound in heaven. The Church, to keep itself pure(?) surrenders its own honor. It would declare that those too sinful for the Church may not be too sinful for holy heaven.

Let us be consistent. Do some really believe with their whole heart that such parties are constantly living in gross sin? Then do not hesitate. Let gross sin be gross sin, and let heaven be honored as being at least as holy and exclusive as the imperfect Church here below. If men truly believe that such parties are living in gross sin, then exclude them from the Kingdom of heaven. If you dare not do that, you cannot really believe that they are living in gross sin. You are following a theory that contradicts Scripture, and that leads to conclusions you dare not accept.

We must now, after discussing the main position of the Minority Report, turn our attention to the exceptions. They read as follows:

“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 re-married, can be proved to the satisfaction of the consistory to have been guiltless in the matter of divorce and whose re-marriage did not take place before the re-marriage of their marriage partner.
2. Persons concerning whom the consistory has reasonable assurance that at the time of their illegitimate divorce and subsequent re-marriage their moral consciousness was not so trained as to be aware of the evil involved in such illegitimate divorce and re-marriage as the Church views it.
3. Persons at one time illegitimately divorced and subsequently re-married 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.”

Before discussing the exceptions as such, permit us to remark that they should warn us that *in actual practice*, the minority report *opens* the door almost as wide as the position we advocate. It admits all sinners of this class (illegitimately divorced and re-married), who were not

trained in our Church, or in a similar moral atmosphere, and all who are received from our Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. And when we remember that, by virtue of the power of Christian training and public opinion, these cases of divorce and re-marriage are rare exceptions in our circles, and when you remember that they are very common *outside* of our circles, then it will be seen at once that the minority report admits almost as many sinners of this class as the other view.

In other words, those who favor the views of the minority report are deluding themselves if they think they are keeping the door closed by adopting its conclusions. For that report first stands on very high ground apparently. In the name of the Lord it would exclude these sinners. And then it admits most of them after all.

Let us now turn to the exceptions themselves.

Exception 1. We have no objection on the basis of *our* position, to the second part of Exception 1. Parties of this kind who re-married last are, of course, free from the bond of the first marriage. Therefor there is no reason why they should be excluded, since their second marriage is not a constant living in sin, but a legitimate marriage. What we do object to, of course, is the implication that the party that first re-married must be excluded "till somebody dies." And secondly, there is no Biblical basis for the addition, "who * * * can be proved to the satisfaction of the consistory to have been guiltless in the matter of the divorce." Let us understand well what this means. It means that the question whether parties of this kind (illegitimately divorced and last to re-marry) will be received at the Communion Table or rejected as unrepentant sinners, will be *decided absolutely by past sins or past innocence.*

We ask the most earnest attention of Synod for this phase of the Minority Report. For here it becomes abundantly plain how completely off the track it would lead us. Read Exception 1 carefully. It means but one thing. If you have two parties that each re-married last after illegitimate divorce, (two parties therefor whose present status is absolutely identical) then one is to be received, because he was innocent (in the past) of the divorce; and the other is to be rejected because he was guilty (in the past) of the divorce. Past guilt or innocence determines the question of admission into or exclusion from the Church of God; past guilt or innocence decides without the whole question being raised whether they are sorry for their past sins.

There is not even a charge of *present sin* against them, sin, of course, in the sense that it would demand discipline. They are not living in adultery. Therefor one party can be admitted, *if* he was innocent of the divorce. But the other party must be rejected *if* he was guilty of the divorce.

But what have we then? We have the strange doctrine that some *past sin* can exclude us from the Church of God, even though no one claims that it leads to present or constant sin; even though we should sincerely repent. All this matters not. The soul that has sinned must be excluded. And this is seriously proposed for adoption by the Church of Christ, which never has had and never will have any other condition for membership than repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot help but ask, how can such a rule be seriously proposed? How can the gospel idea be so completely lost sight of? It is very necessary that that question be asked, in view of the fact that a report that is essentially agreed with this Minority Report will be presented to the next Synod?

Now, then, the key to all these proposals which run counter to the gospel, is the basic (and basically false idea) that anyone who was guilty in some way of the breaking of the original marriage tie *must be held bound by that tie*. Because he tried to break it in the wrong way, he can never be free from it. Only death can free him.

To make plain what this means, let us take a typical case. A man is divorced by his wife on the ground of cruelty. He marries again. She has, even before this re-marriage of her husband, regretted the divorce, but no reconciliation was possible. Now the husband is re-married. She finally also re-marries.

Then she becomes a sinner before God. She feels the need of Christ. She asks admission into the Church. She is refused. Why? Because, according to this rule, she was guilty of the divorce. That one past sin closes the door. No repentance, no confession, no faith in Jesus can open the door. She must "be proved to the satisfaction of the consistory to have been guiltless in the matter of the divorce." If she was guilty, perhaps twenty years ago, she is out. And this is supposed to be the gospel of Jesus Christ. Past sins damn men regardless of their present attitude. Anyone who has *once* violated the marriage contract, can never again live in peace in any other marriage, until death releases him. That is the basic premise of the whole philos-

ophy. But it leads to a denial of the gospel. For the gospel means absolutely nothing, if it does not mean that God will forgive past sins, if we today repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Exception 2. Let us understand that in Exceptions 2 and 3 we find ourselves on altogether different ground. Here the question of who re-married first is not considered. These Exceptions apply to both parties, also therefor to the guilty (first re-married).

Exceptions 2 and 3 mean that also *the guilty party can in certain cases be admitted into the Church*. (It will be noticed at this point how little stability or consistency there is in this report. For Exception 1 denied admission even to some innocent (last re-married) parties. Exceptions 2 and 3 will grant admission even to many guilty parties (first to remarry).)

Now this phase of the report is perhaps the most objectionable of all. For if there is one thing that is plain from the report it is this that it stigmatizes those who have first remarried as living in sin. The guilty party is bound. He cannot free himself by his own adultery (second marriage).

But now, lo and behold, some of these parties who are living in sin, who cannot repent, are to be admitted to Holy Communion. *Unrepentant sinners are to be welcomed at God's table*. That is the new proposal before the Church.

And let no one suppose that this is an unfriendly misinterpretation of Exceptions 2 and 3. Not at all. The fact is, *we* (the authors of this report) do not believe that these parties are living in constant sin. We are not interpreting Exceptions 2 and 3 in the light of *our* view, but in the light of the Minority Report.

And the very cornerstone of that whole report is this, that the guilty party has not freed himself by the adultery of his second marriage. He is living in sin. He cannot meet the conditions of repentance. The sacredness of marriage demands his exclusion from the Church of Christ. Now, Exceptions 2 and 3 concern also this guilty party. He also is to be admitted, in certain cases, admitted though the whole report stigmatizes *him as living in sin*. So then, unrepentant sinners are to be received at Holy Communion, in direct conflict with our Confession. Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 82, 85, and 87.

And if still the objection persists: that *cannot be* the meaning, then we gladly agree that this is not the *inten-*

tion. But one thing is certain. These parties under 2 and 3 are to be admitted *as repentant or as unrepentant*. If as repentant, as not living in sin, then of course they are considered free from the first marriage (else the relations of the second marriage would be adultery). Then the whole report falls to the ground, for the cornerstone of the whole report is that they are not free.

Or, if the yare admitted as living in sin, then 2 and 3 propose, though unintentionally, a desecration of Holy Communion.

* * * * *

And now let us consider the reasons assigned for this strange proposal. The fundamental reason in both cases is this, that these parties, when committing the sins of divorce and re-marriage, were not aware of their sin. They lacked the proper moral training. Or they were encouraged in the wrong view by their own Churches (Netherlands church). So let us take that into consideration and make an exception for these people. Is it not essentially Christian to take into consideration the measure of knowledge one has, the measure of light one enjoys? Did not Jesus pray, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do"? Did not Paul receive mercy, because he "did it ignorantly in unbelief"?

So, then, we can on the one hand, declare very high and holy standards for marriage and divorce, and on the other hand make many exceptions and even admit those living in sin, for, we also must be merciful and sympathetic in our judgment of the sinner who sinned in ignorance. And then, even though the logic of it seems to be getting a little weak, we are still on sound Biblical ground.

To all this we answer no, in the most positive, emphatic manner. There is a fundamental fallacy here, which we trust the Church will see at once.

Certainly, we must judge very charitably those who sin in ignorance. We must be ready to forgive *especially them*. That is — and here is the point — we must be very ready to forgive them **past sins** which they committed in ignorance.

But, when they ask admission to the Church then we must assume that their eyes are opened, that they see and repent of their past sins. We must ask that they *turn* from their sins. Else we may not receive them.

And the reasoning of the Minority Report is as follows: because they began their sin (second marriage) in ignorance, they may now continue sinning (second marriage relations) with the blessing of the Church.

In other words, past *ignorance* justifies present sinning on the part of members of the Church of Christ. To state the proposition is, of course, to condemn it, without the need of further argument.

Let us be consistent. Are such parties living in sin, yes or no? If not, let us not proclaim principles that say *they are*. If they are, let us exclude them. If they are, let us not seek to cover their present sin by saying: they began in ignorance. Perhaps. But when their eyes are opened they must cease, must they not?

Exception 3. In addition to the fundamental objection already entered in a general way against these Exceptions, we wish to remark that this third Exception, in our opinion, does not preserve the honor of our Church as a separate organization, with its own responsibility to interpret the Word of God, and then consistently and courageously follow the light God gives it. True, we have sister-churches. And we seek to keep very close to them. But the way to strive after this close communion, in this particular case, is to earnestly heed the advice the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands have given us in this matter. If at all possible, we should follow that advice. Else we part company on a matter of grave import.

However, if we are fully convinced that their advice is contrary to the Word of God, then we must wholly reject it, and also reject those who have been erroneously admitted by these Churches. We must follow the light God *gives us*, regardless of the views of other churches. Then only are we true to our conscience. Then alone do we stand on our honor as a *church of Christ*. Then alone will we hold the respect of our sister-churches.

Let us not surrender our honor as a Church, and make a sorry mess of things in a practical way, by saying to people who are *in the same class as sinners*: if you are a member of our Church here in America, you are excluded as an unrepentant sinner; if you come to us from across the wave, you are welcome at the table of the Lord. Surely such a stand cannot find response in the conscience of our people.

Now it would be very natural to say at this point: let us then just forget about the exceptions and consistently maintain the first position without any exceptions whatsoever. From the point of view of logic and consistency this would no doubt be far preferable.

But, as we have seen, this position is contrary to Scripture and has no gospel for a certain class of sinners. No, just dropping the exceptions will not solve our problem. We do better to ask, *why is it that exceptions were considered necessary?*

That question is decidedly worthy of our serious attention and is the key to the proper solution of our problem. And it is a question that intrigues and challenges our attention.

Here is a report — the Minority Report of 1934 — which first states most emphatically that a certain fundamental position is necessary, to safeguard the sacredness of marriage. It comes down to this that a certain class of people must be excluded because they are living in sin, because they are unrepentant.

And then you meet the strange phenomenon that after all many of these people *are* to be admitted. But why this contradictory and impossible position that would admit those living in sin to the table of the Lord?

The answer is plain. That main position cannot and may not be carried out consistently in practice. It brings us into conflict with our sister-churches. It has no gospel for sinners. Some of our own mission workers have intimated that then they have no gospel for a considerable class whom they are seeking to lead to Christ.

And so exceptions must be made. And several exceptions.

But what have you then? You have a compromise that put the Church into this ridiculous position that it first says of a certain class of people, they are unrepentant, and then admits them to the table of the Lord. You have admitted that you do not dare to enforce your own position as a Church over against other Churches.

You start out with a very strict solemn declaration, that appeals to the conservative spirit of our people. You then admit exceptions that appeal to the gospel spirit of our people. But the sum total of it all is, that you contradict yourself; you have no position worth the name — you admit those whom you have first stigmatized as unrepentant sinners, and you admit almost as many as would be admitted if the other view were adopted.

Surely this cannot satisfy either our minds or our hearts. In a word — the exceptions and the contradictions they lead to, should not be forgotten, but should be heeded as a warning that we are *completely on the wrong track*.

They should be a warning that we must return to the teaching of Scripture, as interpreted by practically all our leaders, by the brethren in South Africa, and even officially by our sister-churches in the Netherlands.

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One very good way to do this is to study the report of the Committees on Pre-Advice of the last Synod. You will find that report on pages 142-144 of the Acts. To save space we do not reprint it here. But we believe the following remarks should be made.

1. This report was never given consideration at the last Synod. An able committee worked on it for two weeks, yet it was never given a hearing. Undoubtedly that is one reason it was given into our hands, that the Synod of 1936 might make up for the lack of the previous Synod.

2. It is a very splendid report. We do not say this merely because it agrees with the view defended in this report. We call it a splendid report because it so intelligently analyzes the various elements of our problem. It is a very neat, scholarly piece of work, that will help anyone who studies it to understand the problem, whatever his view may be.

3. It should be well remembered that the Synod gave this report into our hands to report on at Synod of 1936. Therefore it would be very incorrect, not to use a stronger term, to say that our Church is done with the position rejected at the last Synod. To begin with, the rejection was *far from decisive*. The vote was 43 to 25. Secondly, the Synod did not adopt any other view. And thirdly, it again gave that same view, in the form of the report of the Pre-advisory Committee, into the hands of the committee now reporting. In a word, the Synod still wants the opinion of a new committee on this view. And it therefore wants that view, that had twenty-five votes in its support at the last Synod, considered at the Synod of 1936.

4. We are in hearty accord with the general position and conclusions of this Pre-advisory Report. Insofar as there is any difference, this does not vitally affect the fundamental Scriptural position or practical stand.

We would remark, however, that there is, as is evident from this (our present) report, more *positive* Scriptural

proof in favor of the view defended, than the Pre-advisory Committee presents in its brief report. (The objections of one member of the Pre-advisory Committee to one point in the report (see Acts, 1934, pp. 144, 145), are sufficiently answered in the body of this (our) report.)

We have come to the close of our report proper. In conclusion, before stating our advice, it may be well that both positions that shall be presented to Synod be briefly summarized.

The following is, we believe, a fair summary of the view we oppose (there are certain elements, of course, on which all are agreed):

In the case of legitimate divorce (on the ground of fornication) the innocent party has the right to marry again. The guilty party is still in some way bound by that marriage tie, though the other party is free. Therefor if he marries during the life-time of his (her) original spouse, he cannot be a member of the Church, as long as that original partner lives, or the present marriage continues.

In the case of illegitimate divorce (on grounds other than adultery) the marriage is not broken before God. Therefor neither party is free to marry again.

Any act of contracting a marriage or re-marriage on the basis of that divorce is an act of adultery. That adultery releases the innocent party from his (her) marriage obligations. Second marriage on his (her) part is not sin, if she (he) was innocent of the divorce.

The guilty party, the party that first re-marries, remains bound, however. His (her) second marriage is a constant living in sin. Such parties cannot be received into the Church as long as the present marriage union continues or the original spouse lives. For they are living in sin, and cannot repent. However, in two exceptional cases these parties, living in sin, can be welcomed at the Holy Communion table.

We urgently advise the Synod, not only not to adopt this view, but to repudiate it as un-Scriptural, contrary to the universal call of repentance and offer of salvation, and in its two exceptions, a proposed desecration of Holy Communion.

To see how unacceptable this view is we do well to remind ourselves that the question we are studying is a practical question, a question in church-government. *Our consistories must be able and dare to work with it.*

Now, then, what do these two views come down to in practice? The view we oppose comes down to this, that the consistory will say to a certain class of sinners, when they seek admission: we are very sorry, but we cannot receive you, no matter how sincere or penitent you may be. Our minister called to you, "repent," and "whosoever will may come"; but now that you are here, we can do nothing for you. The only hope we can hold out to you is that somebody may die before you do. For the present, you have sinned and are living in sin, and can't repent, and you are out.

And the view defended in this report is, that we say also to this class of sinner: for you also the death of Christ is a sufficient covering for *all* your sins; if you repent and believe we will receive you.

Let us therefor once more briefly summarize our position. It is as follows:

The Christian ideal of marriage is the faithful union of one man and one woman.

However, just because marriage must be the faithful union of one man and one woman, fornication or unfaithfulness gives the innocent party the right to ask the state to sever the tie, and to ask that the Church also declare the tie broken before God and His Church. When the marriage is thus dissolved also in God's sight, it can no longer bind either party. Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32.

Re-marriage of the innocent party is not adultery. Matt. 19:9a. Nor is re-marriage of the guilty party adultery. Matt. 19:9b; Matt. 5:32a, 32b.

Therefor even the guilty party can, though re-married, be received into the Church, if he repents sincerely of his adultery.

However, divorce on any other ground but adultery, though it severs the legal tie, does not dissolve the bond before God. Therefor any marriage or re-marriage on the basis of such a divorce is an act of adultery. Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32.

But by this act of adultery the guilty party grievously wrongs the other party, and therefor gives her (him) the same right as would adultery before divorce, namely to ask the proper court to declare the marriage dissolved also before God. Mark 10:11 (he committed adultery against her). And since the tie broken by divorce and re-marriage cannot be restored (Deut. 24) both the innocent party and the Church must consider the first marriage null and void.

The result is, since the first marriage is no longer in force, that though both parties, and especially the first party to re-marry, have grievously sinned before God, neither is living in adultery in the second marriage. Deut. 24; Matt. 5:32; 19:9.

If therefor they repent of all their sins, the Word of God and the grace of God teach the Church to receive them into the fold, as it would any penitent sinner, according to the rule of Scripture, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isaiah 1:18; Heidelberg Catechism, Questions 81, 84, and 85.

We believe this is the Word of God. We believe that thus alone the purity of the gospel and the holiness of the sacrament will be maintained.

We therefore advise Synod to declare:

A. In the case of legitimate divorce (on the ground of fornication), the marriage is completely broken before God and His Church. Not only has the innocent party the right to re-marry, but the guilty party also, even if he is re-married; may not be excluded from the Church of God, if he sincerely repents of his adultery, since his second marriage is not adulterous, in view of the complete dissolution of the first.

B. In the case of illegitimate divorce and re-marriage, the first party to re-marry commits adultery. However, after the re-marriage of one of the parties, the first marriage is no longer valid. Therefor the second party to re-marry does not thereby commit any sin. If he repents of the illegitimate divorce, he can be received into the Church. And the party who first re-married, if he repents of the divorce and the adulterous act of re-marriage, may not be excluded, since his present marriage relations are not adultery, in view of the dissolution of the first marriage.

C. Synod declares that these decisions supersede any previous decisions that may be in conflict with them.

D. Synod instruct the consistories of the various churches to warn earnestly against the evil of easy divorce, and to receive no illegitimately divorced and re-married parties to the fold unless these give convincing evidence of sincere sorrow over their past sins, and an earnest desire henceforth to observe and preserve the sacredness of marriage.

The Committee,
Z. J. SHERDA,
G. HOEKSEMA.

REPORT XXIX.

REPORT OF THE SYNODICAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH AMERICA

DEAR BRETHREN OF THE SYNOD OF 1936:

YOUR Committee for the advancement of the religious interests of those in South America that are of the same Reformed faith and Dutch stock with us, has again much that is encouraging and hopeful to report.

In this great field, with its history of loyal struggle for the Reformed faith and the Calvinistic world view, a celebration was recently held of the 25th anniversary of the ordination of the Rev. A. C. Sonneveldt. This ordination, on Jan. 1, 1911, occurred about 22 years after the emigration from the Netherlands to Argentina in 1889; over 14 years after our correspondence with South America was begun by Rev. J. Wyngaarden in 1897; and 11 years after the organization of the congregation of Buenos Aires in 1900.

Both the congregations served by Rev. Sonneveldt, Buenos Aires and Chubut, contributed to make this occasion a time of significance, while other congregations showed marks of appreciation. Our Committee acknowledges, with thanks to God, the fine, hopeful, and thorough spirit in which the Rev. Sonneveldt has served the Lord, in the Gospel ministry, for a quarter of a century, and prays that God may also spare him for an abundant ministry in the future, since he is still in the prime of life and has "een onverwoestbaar optimisme."

One of the Elders of Buenos Aires, Mr. F. Bening, was included in the above celebration, because he has served as elder for 35 years, and as treasurer for many years. *It is significant that the design of his stamp (stempel) as treasurer is inscribed thus: "Matth. 16:18," reading, "And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."* At times he saw the congregation of Buenos Aires nearly conquered by the evil one, but the Lord built up and maintained this church until now. May it never become apostate, whatever trials there may be.

In general it can be said that our South America Churches are blessed with elders that can take the responsibilities of leadership, even at such times when practical duties grow numerous, in the churches. They have read sermons and conducted catechism classes and other meetings on many occasions. This applies also especially to Elder D. Zylstra, of Tres Arroyos, who has met many responsibilities in this now vacant church. In answer to an inquiry from our Committee, its Consistory sent our Committee a written request for a minister from the Chr. Ref. Church in N. A. This matter will therefore be brought before Synod. With full confidence and faith in God, this church goes forward in the work of the Lord. Among its recent immigrants is also one equipped to give some Christian instruction. This fine congregation, where nearly 200 people recently attended the services, in one Sunday, will need a minister than can use both the Dutch and especially the Spanish. The Committee would like to hear from ministers or candidates interested in this field, especially such as have a working knowledge of Spanish. We have one applicant.

Our own Rev. Wm. V. Muller, with his excellent knowledge of Dutch and his proficiency in Portuguese and Spanish, fits very well into the Classis of Buenos Aires to which he was loaned by the Midland Park Chr. Ref. church, his calling congregation. Midland Park generously undertook to pay the annual salary of \$600 for at least two years, until the present Synod, while Summer Street added another \$150 annually, as well as other gifts.

Out of the sum of \$809.91, extended to Rev. Muller, for traveling expenses, there remained an unused balance of \$145.21. It was decided, by the Committee, to add this \$145.21, as a bonus, to the salary of the first year of Rev. Muller. Whatever occasional gifts for Rev. Muller were sent to our treasurer were remitted to Rev. Muller, in addition to the salary promised by Midland Park.

Rev. Muller's letter of call mentions explicitly that he was loaned to Classis Buenos Aires, and, for the present, on behalf of the congregation of Carambehy, Brazil. Our Committee considered that it was practically expedient to loan a minister to a classis, rather than to an individual congregation, because the needs of other congregations in the Classis might then be met the more readily; and our Professor in Church Government, Dr. S. Volbeda, also considered this a better procedure than to loan a minister to a congregation. The congregation of Carambehy, Brazil,

has a neat church of which a picture has appeared in our church papers, while a new parsonage has arisen since the coming of Rev. and Mrs. Muller. Quarterly reports are received by the Committee from Rev. Muller, which all show that the work of the last Synod was blessed in giving instructions looking forward to sending out Mr. Muller, and that the sacrifices of the congregations supporting Rev. Muller do actually mean much for the extension of God's Kingdom. Especially the Eastern churches, from where Rev. and Mrs. Muller hailed, contributed heavily toward their traveling expenses. Besides these contributions, other gifts large and small, have been coming in remarkably well.

The President of our Committee, Dr. Henry Beets, who at no expense to the S. A. Fund visited South America, and attended the sessions of the classical meeting at Buenos Aires, was heartily welcomed and given an advisory vote. New courage animates the brethren in the various struggling congregations, in the work of the Lord.

All the churches of Classis were represented by the following delegates: Buenos Aires by Elders F. Bening and H. Hoogstra; Tres Arroyos by Elders D. Zylstra and P. Verkuyl; Chubut in Southern Argentina by the Rev. A. C. Sonneveldt and Elder W. Millenaar; Carambehy, Brazil, by the Rev. Wm. V. Muller. It will be seen that though Rev. Sonneveldt serves both Buenos Aires and Chubut, the latter is his calling church, at present. There are other mission stations.

Rev. A. C. Sonneveldt was chosen president of the Classis and the Rev. Wm. V. Muller, secretary. The minutes of this Classis, as published in "Kerkblad voor Zuid Amerika" of March, 1936, constitute one of the sources for further items in this Synodical report.

After the reading and approval of the minutes, the Classis decided to send a communication to Rev. J. Wyngaarden, expressing the hearty thanks of the churches, and asking Dr. Beets also to communicate this expression of appreciation orally. Thirty-nine years ago, the Rev. J. Wyngaarden undertook the work for the needy in S. A., from where newspaper reports of great need emanated, by writing a postal to "Any Hollander in Argentina"; he continued the correspondence until the present; served as treasurer of the funds for 37 years; kept the administrative costs down to less than one-third of one per cent for many years, so that ninety-nine and two-thirds per cent of the money collected then actually served South American

people; and in this work of church extension promoted an increasing interest, in S. A. and N. A. alike, by many articles and reports.

The Rev. Sonneveldt reported concerning the correspondence carried on with the Synodical Delegates in the Netherlands, and in North America, with reference to the question of transfer to the Chr. Ref. Churches of North America, these South American churches now belonging to the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. (On this score, your Committee could report nothing definite in 1934, cf. Acta 1934, page 256 ff.) After considerable discussion, the following was unanimously adopted. Classis Buenos Aires expresses the desire to remain with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. The grounds of an overture to this effect, from Carambehy, were adopted by the Classis. Some of the grounds of this decision are in substance the following: Immigration from the Netherlands makes it more advisable that such immigrants shall unite themselves with a Church that they have learned to know in the Fatherland than to unite with a Church that is largely unknown and that they will also not learn to know. Moreover, the language of the Chr. Ref. Church in N. A. is largely English in books and writings, Agenda and Acta. Furthermore, since members from the South American churches make occasional visits to the Netherlands, a more direct contact with the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands can be maintained.

Rev. Sonneveldt reported on the meeting of the double consistory of the congregations of Tres Arroyos and Buenos Aires, held Feb. 28, 1935, at Tres Arroyos. The Classis gave its complete approval of the action of this meeting, concerning the suspension of the minister of Tres Arroyos, on the ground adduced. Classis also expressed its agreement with the action of the Synodical delegates in N. A. with reference to this matter, according to their announcements in the church papers of the Chr. Ref. Church. Furthermore it was decided to send the brother a letter.

It was decided that the Rev. Muller shall make a visit to the colony of Iraty, in Brazil, and report on the matter, with permission to have the expenses of this trip taken out of their Classical fund.

The matter of church papers receives consideration. It was regarded as desirable to wait with a separate evangelistic paper in Spanish until this labor could be made more fruitful through personal work. It was decided to attempt

to introduce a Spanish department for children in "Kerkblad voor Zuid Amerika." The Classis recommends that consistories shall set aside a fixed amount, so that every family shall receive a copy of this church paper.

The interests of the different congregations were discussed also at this session of Classis Buenos Aires.

Concerning Tres Arroyos, the counsellor, Rev. Sonneveldt, reports that a request has been sent to the Synodical delegates in N. A., in order that a minister may be received from there. Dr. Beets advises that the Consistory of Tres Arroyos send a communication, in writing, to the delegates in N. A., promising a definite amount toward the salary of the minister.

Our Committee hopes to receive this communication before Synod convenes. Heretofore, Tres Arroyos met the equivalent of the expense for the house rent, thus supplying a rented parsonage, as well as a rented auditorium. At Tres Arroyos the next meeting of the Classis will be held, January, 1937.

Concerning Chubut, a Boer congregation having a church building of its own, hundreds of miles to the south of Buenos Aires, it was reported that this congregation is also much in need of a pastor, and the consistory has sent a request to the Reformed Church of South Africa, to receive if possible, a minister from this Church. It was decided by Classis Buenos Aires, at this session of February 8, 1936, that this matter would be brought to the notice of the South African Synod of March, 1936. The Reformed Church of South Africa has since decided to send a minister to serve this Chubut congregation; for six months, and to investigate conditions, with a view to the future.

It may be added here that the Synodical delegates of the Chr. Ref. Church of N. A. concur in the opinion that both Buenos Aires and Chubut are much in need of full-time ministers, while we at the same time recognize the excellent and manifold labors of the Rev. Sonneveldt, who has faithfully served both of these congregations for many years, though they are hundreds of miles apart, and who does much for "Kerkblad" besides.

Whoever goes to Chubut in Southern Argentina, will have to be able to use the Dutch and "Afrikaansch" languages, while some English and Spanish is also desirable in this field. There is also a neighboring congregation of South African Boers that is "Nederduitsch." Both congregations

are very widely scattered geographically. Ours includes a number of "spreek plekken," for a circuit rider.

With regard to Carambehy, Brazil, the report at the Classis Buenos Aires was to the effect that this congregation has at present no special needs. The congregation of Carambehy will apparently be largely Dutch in its language yet for years, while this congregation has received encouragement in various ways from the neighboring German pastor and his German people. Though Portuguese is the language of Brazil, our congregation here is far more Dutch than are our churches in Argentina, and according to Dr. Beets maintains a standard of fine Dutch, at that.

With reference to the congregation of Buenos Aires, the desirability of a church building of their own is considered. Rev. Sonneveldt reports that a gift of one thousand florins (gulden) is promised by the Batavian Petroleum Company, so that a fund of fully 17,000 pesos for the building of a church is now available, which (at 26 cents) would be approximately \$4,420.

Buenos Aires receives aid from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to the amount of 2,000 florins (gulden) annually for the salary of Rev. Sonneveldt. According to a letter from the treasurer of the Synodical Delegates of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, a balance of 1,792.09 florins, on the 17th of December, 1935, shows that this subsidy can happily be continued.

On the advice of Dr. Beets, it was decided to delegate the Rev. Sonneveldt to the Synods of North America and of the Netherlands, which meet, respectively, in June and August. The consistory of Carambehy will be asked to release Rev. Muller for a while to the churches of Argentina, in case Rev. Sonneveldt undertakes this journey.

It will interest Synod to learn that both, Tres Arroyos and Carambehy, are obtaining men that can give Christian Instruction. From both these congregations we expect, before Synod meets, to receive reports concerning what they can do towards the salaries of their ministers. These reports will have a bearing, in making up the budget, in consultation with the congregations of Midland Park and Summer Street, which now support the Rev. Wm. V. Muller.

The present status of our treasury is encouraging. Yet we should also prepare for some expansion, since immigration continues from the Netherlands.

The report of our Treasurer, the Rev. J. Wyngaarden, in brief is as follows: On Jan. 1, 1934, there was a balance

on hand of \$149.00. The receipts for 1934 were \$3,232.74. Total, \$3,381.74. The disbursements for 1934 were \$2,281.29. Balance forwarded Jan. 1, 1935, was \$1,100.45. The receipts for 1935, and for 1936 until March 31, being \$3,002.71, brought this amount up to \$4,103.16. The disbursements for 1935 and for 1936 till March 31, were \$977.27. The balance on hand March 31, 1936, was \$3,125.89. The books were audited to March 31, 1936, by Mr. Herbert Bouma, Accountant, who writes: "I hereby state that I have personally verified the funds in each account and find the total in agreement with the books of the Treasurer."

More detailed financial schedules are available to Synod.

It may be of value to note that to the present day the fund has had an economical administration at the hands of its first and present treasurer. His interest in this cause is unabated. Meanwhile, he is now over three score and ten, and resigns as treasurer, this resignation to go into effect with this Synod.

The Committee would remark that, if any expansion is desired in our denominational program, South America is worthy of consideration. For, among the Hollanders of South America, we are building for the future of sister churches that are and evidently will be Reformed in confession and Calvinistic in world and life view, and that by God's grace in this "neglected continent," can be a power for the extension of the Kingdom of God.

The Committee presents the following matters for the action of Synod:

1. Synod express its appreciation of the twenty-five years of faithful service, given by the Rev. A. C. Sonneveldt, as ordained minister, to the sister churches, in South America.

2. Synod express its appreciation to the Congregation of Midland Park for becoming responsible, during the past two years, for the salary of the Rev. Wm. V. Muller, whom it called as its representative in South America; and to Summer Street for aiding by means of an additional sum of \$150 per year; and to the Classes Hudson and Hackensack for the various ways in which these Classes have co-operated to open the way so that the Rev. Muller could be sent out.

3. Synod express its appreciation of the pioneer labors for South America of the Rev. J. Wyngaarden during practically forty years; and the Committee suggests that for this unremunerated labor of love Synod grant him, out of the South America Fund, the sum of \$200 or \$250, as a tangible token of appreciation, especially for having conducted the correspondence over 39 years and served as treasurer 37 years.

4. Synod instruct its South America Committee to take steps to fill the vacancy in the Tres Arroyos congregation, in response to the written request from its consistory to our churches.

5. Synod is requested to pass on the following announcement of its Committee, published in our church papers:

“ANNOUNCEMENT

The Synodical Committee for South America received the following communication, dated August 1, 1935, from Rev. B. Bruxvoort: ‘Now, brethren, I feel it my duty to save you a task that would be extremely painful not only to us but also for you and our whole Church, by resigning as minister of the Gospel.’

“The Committee, filled with regret because of the occasion for this step, acquiesces in Rev. B. Bruxvoort’s resignation as minister of the Gospel.

“At the same time the Committee has decided that, nevertheless, the charges remain pending till the following Synod, which has to decide, also according to the advice received, whether formal deposition is required.

“The Committee takes the stand that, from the date of the letter of resignation from office, our financial obligations toward Brother Bruxvoort cease.”

The “advice received,” above referred to, was given on June 3, 1935, by the Synodical Delegates ad Examina, the Rev. Z. J. Sherda, for Classis Grand Rapids East; the Rev. R. Veldman, for Classis Grand Rapids West; and the Rev. E. J. Krohne, for Classis Zeeland; together with a majority of the Synodical Committee, the Rev. I. Van Dellen and the Rev. W. P. Van Wyk, who were both in Grand Rapids at that time. The official documents are available to Synod. The above “announcement” was sent to Classis Buenos Aires, to the brother whose resignation it quotes, and to the Synodical Delegates for South America in the Netherlands.

6. Synod again appoint a Committee for South America, with mandate as heretofore.

Respectfully submitted,
Synodical Committee for South America,

HENRY BEETS, *Pres.*,

JACOB WYNGAARDEN, *Treas.*,

DAVID D. BONNEMA,

HARRY BLYSTRA,

MARTIN J. WYNGAARDEN, *Secy.*

REPORT XXX.

REPORT OF THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE FOR FIELDS, WORKERS, AND FUNDS

(As of April 15, 1936)

To the Synod of 1936.

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

THE wisdom of creating an Emergency Committee and Fund, as decided upon by the 1932 Synod, has become increasingly apparent. What our Church initiated in 1932 has just last year been undertaken by leaders in "de Gereformeerde Kerken" of the Netherlands (which denomination has no less than 80 candidates without charge). With gratitude to God we may record that at this time there is not one candidate in our Church without a field of labor, and that there are only nine of these workers that have not yet been ordained. God has indeed put to shame the fears so generally expressed four years ago.

Your Committee has found it a pleasure to discharge its duties during the past biennium. The finest harmony has marked our little group; we have enjoyed splendid cooperation from classical Home Mission committees; and churches as well as individuals have been generous in their support of the Emergency Fund. All the moneys that have come in have been used for the sole purpose of the support of needy fields and candidates. Not one cent was spent for overhead. The policy of our Committee, pursued in the 1932-'34 biennium, that its members voluntarily defrayed all expenses (stamps, stationery, mimeographing) has been continued also during the past two years.

THE FIELDS

As stated in our 1934 report (Acts 1934, pp. 210-220), at that time sixteen fields and their candidates were enjoying support from the Emergency Fund. Of these sixteen, two fields (Grangeville, Ida., and Imlay City, Mich.) very soon after Synod assured us that they could now get

along without further aid from our fund. Three others of these sixteen have during the past two years been at one time, but are not now, on our list, owing to the fact that they have lost the services of their candidate.

Since last Synod 16 new fields were added to our list. Two of these no longer have their candidate today, so that the total number of fields on our list for support at present (April 15, 1936) is 24. They are the following: Battle Creek, Mich.; Bejou, Minn.; Coster, Ia.; Dearborn, Mich.; Delavan, Wis.; DeMotte, Ind.; Eagle Butte (Pleasant Valley), S. D.; Flint, Mich.; Hanley Mission (Jenison); Hollandale, Minn.; Lansing, Mich.; Milwood (Kalamazoo, Mich.); Momence, Ill.; Newton, Ia.; Ogilvie, Minn.; Otsego, Mich.; Parchment, Mich.; Rock Rapids, Ia.; Sumas, Wash.; Sunnyside, Wash.; Terra Ceia, N. Car.; Tracy, Ia.; Vona, Colo.; Woodville Mission (Fremont). (*Note:* Fields not now enjoying support but on the list part of the time during 1934-36: Arlene, Mich.; Estelline, S. D.; Grundy Center—Holland, Ia.; Gun Lake—Bowen Mills—Hopkinsburg, Mich.; Hazen Street Mission (Burton Heights); and Martin, S. D.)

As for the distribution of these 24 fields, it is worth noting that they are scattered over ten different states of the Union and over the territory of 11 or 12 of the fifteen classes of our Church.

THE ALLOWANCES

The support which these fields enjoy ranges from \$100. to \$300. per year. One receives \$100. Three receive \$180. One receives \$200. Seventeen receive \$240. And two receive \$300. This means that our fund at the present rate disburses a total of \$460. per month, or \$5520. per year.

Besides the regular support to these 24 fields, two other items are included in our disbursements. In the case of a few candidates a limited sum was allowed for travelling expenses incurred by them to reach their field. And in addition to this your Committee felt an extra allowance should be voted those candidates whose income during 1935 was judged to have been inadequate. Seven were given an extra allowance of \$50. and six an allowance ranging from \$75. to \$200. The last-named sum was allowed in one case and cannot be called excessive, when one considers that its beneficiary (married and without a manse) had received during 1935 a net income of about \$420. These extra allowances, it may be added, made the

lowest actual income during 1935 for anyone of the 24 men, unmarried: \$580. and, married: \$600.

RESULTS

The spiritual stimulus which the Emergency work has given to the development of a number of small but promising fields in our Church is becoming increasingly apparent. Practically all these fields report growth. Some of them are located in strategic centers and have, humanly speaking, a fine prospect for increase. The spirit which in many of these small places had been lagging because of financial and, in some cases, other depression, has been greatly revived with the arrival of a consecrated worker whose engagement was made possible in part by the Emergency aid.

As to definite indications of an upward trend in many of these fields and a strengthening of morale and courage, we may point to the number of candidates ordained in these fields after they had first been engaged as stated supplies, as also to the increase in salary which many of these fields have promised their candidate (or candidate-minister) for the current year. As to the first point, the following is of interest. The total number of candidates who have at any time since 1932 enjoyed Emergency support is 33. Leaving out one (no longer in our denomination, but teaching elsewhere), of the 32 who today enjoy or in the past have received aid from our Fund, four began their work as ordained men, being called at once by their church; nine are still candidates serving as stated supplies; and no less than 19 began their labors as candidates, but have since been ordained.

As to the improvement in the salaries promised, it is worth noting that the average salary of our 16 beneficiaries in 1934 was \$675. per year, whereas the average promised the 24 present beneficiaries of our Fund amounts to \$860. for the current year. Although this is only the promised salary, and the possibility that this amount cannot be paid because of inability of either classis or congregation must not be overlooked, we do believe that the increase in these promised sums shows a decidedly upward trend.

As to growth, it can be said that one church reported a gain of 7 families since the candidate began his labors there; another, a gain of 10 families; another, 3 families; another, 6 families; another, 2 families; another, 5 fami-

lies; and still another, no less than 14 families. We have definite indications justifying the conclusion that in almost all these fields there is also apparent a deeper, spiritual growth.

CO-OPERATION

We have carried on our work in close co-operation with the Home Mission Committees of the Classes in which the fields concerned were located. At no time have we assumed that the Emergency Committee is anything except an aid, and that of a temporary nature by reason of an emergency. Supervision over and responsibility for the labors of our beneficiaries has been left entirely to the existing ecclesiastical bodies: consistory and classis. In only one exceptional case (due to circumstances inherent in the field) have we as a Committee for a while had the supervision over and responsibility for the work of a candidate supported from our Fund.

Once and again the question was presented to your Committee whether it would not be possible for needy fields desiring to call not a candidate, but a regularly ordained minister, to enjoy support from the Emergency Fund. However, in harmony with the explicit mandate of Synod (Acts 1932, pp. 173-174) your Committee has consistently pursued the policy to extend aid only to fields engaging the services of a candidate. It need hardly be added (though some churches apparently were not clear on this) that this aid is not withdrawn when such a candidate should be called, ordained, and installed as the minister of his flock. Only one exception has occurred to the rule that only fields calling (or, engaging) a candidate can enjoy Emergency support, and that exception by reason of the special circumstances was only an apparent, not a real one.

PROSPECTS

As for the future of this work, it can be said that about a half dozen fields, which as yet do not have a worker, have tentatively been promised support, and that almost all the present fields will be in need of continued support for some years to come. Your Committee has, of course, made it clear that its mandate does not go beyond the next meeting of Synod, so that all promises are made contingent upon the continuation of this work by Synod

in some form or other. We are of the opinion that possibly four of the fields at present enjoying support may in the near future be sufficiently advanced to do without it.

ADVICE

The last point of our synodical mandate as given in 1932 specifies as part of our task to advise Synod "as to the future mode of procedure." We can say that our advice on this score is contained in the Home Mission Methods Report unanimously adopted by the committee appointed by the 1934 Synod for that purpose, and found in Agenda 1936, Part I, pp. 238-273. The proposals there made which bear more directly on the Emergency Fund are to be found on pp. 251-253 and 271.

It need hardly be said that our Committee, all of whose members were appointed by the 1934 Synod to serve on this Home Mission Methods Committee, is in wholehearted agreement with the analysis of the situation there offered and the proposals there made. We feel that the time has come for our Church to take a real forward step in the organization of our Home Mission work and believe that the whole cause of church extension, including the work carried on these four years by the Emergency Committee, can best be carried forward and placed on a permanent basis by following the advice contained in the Home Mission Methods Report. In this way the Emergency work and the Emergency Fund can be carried forward and given a permanent place in our church extension set-up, and the Emergency Committee can be discharged.

If for some reason Synod should not be prepared to take this step in 1936, it is hardly necessary to call Synod's attention to the fact that the work conducted by the Emergency Committee since 1932 will have to be carried forward in some form or other because of the continued need of the churches and the candidates (or, candidate-ministers) involved.

In closing we crave God's blessing upon the Home Mission cause, the fields and workers supported by the Emergency Fund, and upon Synod in its deliberations and decisions anent this important branch of Kingdom work in its forthcoming sessions.

Humbly submitted,

The Emergency Committee,

H. J. KUIPER, *President*,

CLARENCE BOUMA, *Secretary*.

WILLIAM STUART, *Treasurer*.

NOTE: The financial statement of our Treasurer is appended to this report. We may possibly add that Mr. Frank Vandenberg of the Commercial Department of the Grand Rapids Christian High School has audited the books and performed this service free of charge.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE EMERGENCY FUND
1934-1936

Balance, June 7, 1934.....	\$ 1,892.94	
Receipts, June 7, 1934 to June 1, 1935.....	\$6,090.61	
Receipts, June 1, 1935 to April 11, 1936.....	4,579.30	10,669.91
		<hr/>
		\$12,562.85
Disbursements, June 7, 1934 to June 1, 1935..	\$4,448.91	
Disbursements, June 1, 1935 to May 15, 1936..	5,940.00	10,388.91
		<hr/>
		\$ 2,173.94
Cash impounded in Grand Rapids Savings Bank.....		1,202.92
		<hr/>
Available Balance		\$ 971.02

**DISBURSEMENTS TO CHURCHES, STATIONS, AND
CANDIDATES**

Arlene, Mich.	\$ 380.00	M. Keuning
Battle Creek, Mich.	280.00	John O. Schuring
Bejou, Minn.	80.00	W. K. Reinsma
Coster, Ia.	360.00	R. Wezeman
Dearborn, Mich.	225.00	N. Wassenaar
Delavan, Wis.	510.00	J. P. Smith
DeMotte, Ind.	460.00	W. Haverkamp
Eagle Butte, S. D.	445.00	H. Schripsema
(Pleasant Valley Church)		
Estelline, S. D.	60.00	E. Visser
Flint, Mich.	520.00	J. E. Meeter and H. Radius
Grundy Center—		
Holland, Ia.	150.00	Donald Drost
Gun Lake—Bowen Mills		
& Hopkinsburg	545.00	P. Hondert and Students
Hanley Mission (Jenison)	475.00	J. E. Brink
Hazen St. Mission (Bur-		
ton Heights Church)	100.00	J. Pott
Hollandale, Minn.	540.00	Theo. P. Verhulst
Lansing, Mich.	80.00	G. R. Youngs
Martin, S. D.	170.00	M. Huizenga
Milwood (Kalamazoo,		
Mich.)	460.00	J. H. Schaal
Momence, Ill.	390.00	R. O. DeGroot
Newton, Ia.	280.00	George Vander Kooi
Ogilvie, Minn.	460.00	P. Dahm
Otsego, Mich.	525.00	R. O. DeGroot and F. Huizenga
Parchment, Mich.	410.00	Abel Poel
Rock Rapids, Ia.	200.00	R. Heynen
Sumas, Wash.	140.00	George Stob
Sunnyside, Wash.	480.00	A. Bakker
Terra Ceia, N. Car.	175.00	Charles Greenfield
Tracy, Ia.	425.00	J. Vander Meer
Vona, Colo.	490.00	M. Faber
Woodville Mission		
(Fremont)	430.00	F. Huizinga and D. Drost
Travelling Exp.		
Cand. Yff	100.00	
Travelling Exp.		
Cand. Faber	30.00	
Robes for Program	12.25	
Check Tax	1.66	
Total	\$10,388.91	

W. STUART. Treas.

REPORT XXXI.

EMERITUS FUND COMMITTEE

*To the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches,
Convened in Grand Rapids, Mich., June, 1936.*

DEAR BRETHREN:

I. The MATERIAL that was before the Synod of 1934 in connection with the Emeritus Fund reorganization is the following:

(1) "Report V, From Committee on Emeritus Fund," page 61, *Agenda 1934*, Part I. The report reads:

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE ON EMERITUS FUND

To the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church convening in Grand Rapids, Michigan, June, 1934.

DEAR BRETHREN:—

Your Committee in re Emeritus Fund, see Synodical Acts 1932, Art. 9-a, b, c, page 53, hereby submits its report as follows:

The committee is thankful that Synod in 1932 adopted much of its reports, especially the fundamental principle involved, namely, "The support of the Emeriti Ministers, their widows and orphans, founded upon the Word of God and prescribed in Art. 13 C. O., is not a matter of Charity, but it is the right of the parties named and the duty of the church concerned." (Acts 1932, Art. 3, Par. 4, Page 49.)

With this principle established and adopted, any committee working on this problem in the future has a definite foundation to build upon. Also the fact that Synod adopted in principle the differentiation within the Emeritus Fund of a sustentation and a Relief Fund (Acts 1932, Art. 73, Par. 4, Page 51) will be quite a help.

The committee recognized the honor bestowed upon it by its re-appointment in 1932. We also take note of the Synod's decision that until a new set of rules are adopted, the policy and practice now in vogue will be continued and in case the funds do not permit payment of full allowance, the needs of the recipient shall be taken into consideration and distribution made accordingly, because the needs of one may be greater than those of others. (Acts 1932, last Par., Page 52, and First Par., Page 53.)

Our first committee meeting was held in turbulent times and in an atmosphere of uncertainty and distress. We were further greatly shocked by the news that one of our committee members had died suddenly, and that another member was operated upon and would be unable to meet with us for some time to come.

The mandate to the committee found in Acts 1932, Page 53, Art. 9-a, b, c, was carefully studied. Said mandate is as follows:

"a. To enlighten our people in reference to the principles upon which the support of the Emeriti, with their widows and orphans, is based, and in reference to the application of these principles (cf. point 2 above):

"b. To recognize the possibility suggested by the Minority Report, cf. Agenda, Part I, top of p. 65; namely, that churches may care for their Emeriti partly by the amplitude of the salary paid them during active service, and hence also the possibility that a certain percentage of the Minister's salary be devoted from year to year to this Fund.

"c. To make further study of the method by which the money for this Fund can be raised, realizing that there are many objections for the proposed sliding scale, and yet realizing also that there might be a better method of raising the necessary funds than the one we have at present."

After due thought and consideration, it was the unanimous opinion of the committee that under the general conditions which prevail at the present time, it would not be the part of wisdom to carry out the instructions during this period of upheaval and depression. Likewise, we feel it impossible to form definite plans for the future when it is unknown what the general conditions will be after stabilization has been accomplished.

We therefore advise Synod to discharge the committee from further consideration of the matter, and to appoint another committee when times have improved, preferably other persons who may have ideas not previously presented. This committee can then work upon the basis which has been established.

Humbly submitted,

JOHN DE HAAN, JR., *President*
GEORGE OTTENHOFF, *Secretary*
JOHN DOLFIN
CLARENCE DE VRIES
H. R. GEZON
JOHN HEKMAN
A. H. RINGELBERG

(2) An Overture from Classis HACKENSACK (Agenda, 1934, Part II, page xv and xvi). It reads:

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.)

(3) An Overture from Classis ILLINOIS (Agenda, 1934, Part II, page xvii). It reads:

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 emerituated 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 emerituated 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.)

(4) The following Overture from Classis MUSKEGON (Agenda, 1934, Part II, page xviii):

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 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.)

(5) An Overture from Classis OSTFRIESLAND (Agenda 1934, Part II, page xxi). It reads:

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.)

(6) A Belated Overture from Classis ZEELAND, *Acta*, 1934, p. 62, which reads:

Classis overtures the Synod of 1934:

1. Not to adopt the advice of the Committee in re the Emeritus Fund (Agenda Part I, pp. 61, 62) to postpone action in re the administration of this fund, but to take some definite action. *Grounds*:

- a. Due to the present economic conditions and the burden our people must carry, some changes in the administration of this fund are imperative, therefore some action should be taken.
- b. The present arrangement is very unpopular with our people and calls for a change.

2. That the Synod declare the Emeritus Fund to be a Relief Fund only, the funds to be administered only in case of actual need and according to the needs, after the needs have been definitely investigated and established.

"Grounds:

- a. It is doubtful, in our estimation, whether Scripture demands that the Church support the emeriti ministers, widows, and orphans who are able to support themselves.
- b. Article 13 of the Church Order requires that the Church shall provide "honorably for them in their need." This we take to mean that only those in need shall be provided for.
- c. A declaration by the Synod of this character, and the administration of this fund according to this plan, will in our estimation remove one of the most serious objections to this fund."

(7) The Synod of 1934 appointed the following "Committee on Church Order and Emeriti Matters: Rev. H. Keegstra, R. J. Bos, and K. W. Fortuin; Elders M. A. Postmus, J. Ten Harmsel, J. Sturing, and L. Moes. Adviser: Dr. S. Volbeda." (Cf. Acts, 1934, page 12, V.)

After study of the preceding matters the committee reported to the 1934 Synod as follows:

"Your committee has carefully studied the report and the overtures. We are convinced that some definite method for the raising of funds for this cause ought to be adopted soon. However, we hesitate to recommend the adoption of either of the plans of Muskegon or Ostfriesland as these would include at least a partial repudiation of the principle adopted in 1932. The same can most emphatically be said of the overture of Classis Zeeland. If the standpoint of 1932 in whole or in part is to be repudiated, your committee feels this requires more consideration than your present committee can give to it. Two Classes, Hackensack and Illinois, also warn against hasty adoption of a new plan.

"Hence we recommend the following:

1. That the report of the Committee on the Emeritus Fund be received as information.

2. That the present committee or a new committee be appointed and instructed to carry out the mandate of 1932.
3. That they be especially urged to begin immediately that part of the work given them in 1932: 'to enlighten our people in reference to the principles upon which the support of our Emeriti . . . is based.'
4. That all the above named overtures be referred to them for study and consideration.
5. That the rule adopted in 1932, Acts, p. 52, section 8, be continued as long as there are not sufficient funds to pay the full allowances.
6. That Synod urge all consistories to do all in their power to raise the assessments, or at least part of them in order that there may be no real want in the homes of those who have faithfully served the Church and can now no longer do so."

II. ACTION OF THE 1934 SYNOD.

A. The preceding recommendations of the committee of Preadvice were "*Laid on the table.*" The following action was taken:

It is moved and carried to appoint a special Committee to consider the Emeritus problem—this Committee to report before the close of Synod.

The following Committee is appointed: Dr. W. Bode, Revs. L. Veltkamp and J. C. Schaap, Elders A. J. Wibalda, P. De Leeuw, J. Ten Harmsel, and G. Otten. (Cf. Art. 161, p. 162.)

B. This Special Preadvisory Committee reported at the 1934 Synod as follows: (Acts 1934, pp. 162 to 166)

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

In the hands of your Comm. was placed the advice of the Preadvisory Comm. on Emeritus matters, and it was instructed to consider in connection with it the Emeritus problem and report before the close of Synod.

Your Comm. has carefully studied the material placed in its hands and especially what the previous Synod has adopted in this matter as found in Acts 1932, pp. 51 ff.

It finds that these synodical rulings adopted in principle the differentiation between two departments in the Emeritus fund, designated as *Sustentation* and *Relief* funds.

Your Comm. now begs to make the following recommendations:

I. Your Comm recommends that Synod now organize the *Sustentation* department of the Emeritus fund as follows:

A. This sustentation shall be granted to all present Emeriti and widows (who have seen service in the manse) irrespective of age or years of service. And henceforth to those who support this fund (see III), and not to those who will not contribute to this fund. Owing to the present need it is suggested that until further notice, those who do not actually need this sustentation should not accept it.

B. This sustentation shall be \$200.00 annually.

C. Only those who serve and remain in our denomination in good standing shall be eligible to it.

Ground: This is in harmony with the principle of differentiation between two departments in the Emeritus Fund, designated as Sustentation and Relief funds. Acts 1932, p. 51.

II. Your Comm. recommends, that in addition to sustentation, relief shall be given in actual need. Said relief shall be as follows:

A. Emeriti ministers shall receive an amount not to exceed \$500.00 per year.

B. Surviving widows (who have seen service in the manse) shall receive an amount not to exceed \$200.00 per year.

C. An extra allowance (if needed) of \$100.00 for one child and \$50.00 for each additional child shall be given for the support of minors under 18 years of age, providing that the whole amount received shall not exceed \$850.00 per family.

D. In exceptional cases of protracted illness, etc., extra help may be given if found necessary by the Emeritus Board. *Grounds:*

1. All of our ministers and their dependents can not be sufficiently supplied by sustentation if the amount does not exceed \$200.00 per year.
2. This relief is in harmony with the principle adopted, Acts 1932, p. 51.

III. Your Comm. recommends that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus fund according to a fixed scale.

Your Comm. calls the attention of Synod to what is found in Acts 1932, p. 53, under 9, b: "The Comm. is charged to recognize the possibility that churches may care for their Emeriti partly by the amplitude of the salary paid them during active service and hence also the possibility that a certain per cent of the minister's salary be devoted from year to year to this fund."

In considering this matter we find two overtures before us: One may be called the Muskegon Plan, the other the Ostfriesland Plan.

The Muskegon Plan in brief is as follows: The clergy of our Church should deposit 5 per cent of their salary over \$800.00 in the Emeritus Fund. Those receiving only \$800.00 should deposit \$5.00 a year.

On the basis of an estimate average salary of \$1,300.00 a year, this plan, if adopted, would bring an annual contribution of \$1,300.00 average salary less \$800.00 exemption, saving \$500.00 for each minister, times 256 (the number of ministers recorded in the Yearbook) at 5 per cent or \$6,400.00.

The Ostfriesland Plan places the clergy in three classes, which correspond to the number of years of service and may well be classified as: Class A (those who have served from 1 to 10 years); Class B (those who have served from 11-25 years inclusive); Class C (those who have served over 25 years).

According to this plan Class A is to pay 3 per cent of their salary; Class B, 2 per cent; Class C, 1 per cent. Now we find approximately 116 ministers in Class A; some 92 in Class B; and some 48 in Class C.

In figuring these, too, on the basis of \$1,300.00 a year, we have:

116 times \$1,300.00 times 3 per cent or \$4,524.00 (Class A)

92 times \$1,300.00 times 2 per cent or \$2,392.00 (Class B)

48 times \$1,300.00 times 1 per cent or \$ 624.00 (Class C)

Approximate annual income of \$7,540.00.

Grounds in favor of these plans are, that either one of them:

- a. Will add substantially to the Emeriti fund;
- b. Will help to silence criticism;
- c. Will create a new sympathy for the cause;
- d. Is in harmony with the declaration made by the Synod of 1932 in the charge to its committee (Acts 1932, p. 53, under 9, 6):
"To recognize the possibility that a certain percentage of the minister's salary be devoted from year to year to this fund."
Your Comm. advises Synod to adopt the latter plan.

Grounds:

1. It is not in conflict with the declaration made by Synod of 1932.
2. It will bring the largest contribution to the Emeritus fund.
3. It makes possible a fairer equitable division among the ministers.

IV. Your Comm. wishes to make the following recommendations for the execution of this plan:

A. That the Emeritus Board shall have control over and regulate this fund.

B. That blanks be drawn up by the Emeritus Board, to be sent to the ministers, who should contribute to this fund, if the plan is adopted. And also application blanks to be submitted to those who wish to apply for relief.

C. That all contributions shall be deposited into the Emeritus Fund.

D. That percentage contributed shall be based on actual salary received, plus auto allowance.

E. That contributions by the clergy towards this fund shall begin July 31, 1934, and be paid in monthly payments.

F. That special regulations shall be made by the Emeritus Board for ministers who cannot pay the required percentage.

V. Your Comm. *recommends* that if this plan is adopted by Synod, the assessment for the Emeritus fund be reduced to \$1.50 per family.

Ground: 23,561 families (in our denomination) times \$1.50 is \$35,341.50, plus \$7,540.00 (contribution of clergy): \$42,881.50.

VI. Your Comm. *recommends*, that all rulings hitherto made by Synod, which are in conflict with these proposals, shall be abrogated.

C. *Final Action of Synod.* On page 166 of the 1934 Acts of Synod we read of the final action of the Synod in the following words:

"After considerable discussion of the recommendations in the above report, from which it appears that it will be impossible in the limited time at Synod's disposal to work out a satisfactory plan, Synod *decides* as follows:

1. To adopt the principle expressed in the third recommendation of the above Report, namely, that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus Fund according to a fixed scale.
2. To appoint a Committee to make a thorough study of the plan outlined in the above report, as well as those in the overtures bearing on the subject, found in the Agenda, Part II, and to prepare a complete plan for the re-organization of the Emeritus Fund . . . this Committee to report to the Synod of 1936. (Cf. Art. 169)."

Article 169 referred to is the appointment of our present committee as follows: "No. 27. Committee on Proposed Plan for Emeritus Fund: Rev. L. Veltkamp, Rev. J. De Haan, Jr., Dr. Wm. Bode, Rev. A. Dusseljee, Rev. S. Fopma, Mr. H. R. Gezon, Mr. George Ottenhof, Mr. E. W. Hoogsteen."

III. MANDATE TO OUR COMMITTEE.

A. From the foregoing it appears that the mandate to our Committee includes *three things*:

1. A Study of the plan devised by the Special Committee of Preadvice of the Synod of 1934;
2. a study of the plans "in the overtures bearing on this subject, found in the Agenda, Part II;
3. and a preparation of "a complete plan for the re-organization of the Emeritus Fund."

B. In connection with number 1 of our mandate (Cf. III, A, 1, above) Synod (1934) decided "to adopt the principle that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus Fund according to a fixed scale."

IV. CONSIDERATIONS.

A. ACTUARIES OR INSURANCE COMPANIES.

1. *Two Overtures.* Two of the overtures placed in our hands (those of Cl. Hackensack and Illinois) request 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" (Cl. Ill.).

2. *The Rev. J. J. Hiemenga.*

a. In *The Banner* of March 22, 1935, the Rev. Hiemenga presented a second request to our ministers for the date and year of their birth. He states that he requested the information "to study for their interest the possibility of an assured annual income at the time of their retirement." Response was not very gratifying.

b. Your committee corresponded with Rev. Hiemenga who informed us (8/22/35) that he had "dropped the matter." He was kind enough to write us his views and to also enclose the correspondence he had from the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund of Philadelphia.

3. *Data.*

a. *Obtained.* Your committee placed notices in four issues of *The Banner* in an effort to get the necessary data

from our ministers upon which actuaries might work. After considerable delay, we obtained the desired information from all except approximately 100 of our ministers. The *dies natalis* of some of these 100 was obtained through other channels. Finally, some of these dates had to be conjectured.

b. *Arranged.* The data was chronologically arranged on 5 typewritten sheets and sent to two actuaries, viz., The Presbyterian Ministers' Fund and the New York Life Insurance Co. (Note: The names of our ministers, widows, etc., were not mentioned to the insurance companies. Figures were used to designate each one.)

4. *Replies.*

a. *Prospectus.* Replies from both actuaries were received (Jan. 1936 and March 1936) after they had spent considerable time on the matter. Each of the replies is in the nature of a prospectus, one of two pages, the other of more than four. Each company states that to work out our problem in detail (which they are willing to do) would be "a tremendous undertaking," (N. Y. Life, p. 2); would "be more than a thousand hours' computation work," (Pres. Min. Fund, p. 3). The president of the Pres. Min. Fund offered to meet with your committee if we deemed it to be advisable.

b. *Definite Retirement Age and Percentage.*

The Pres. Min. Fund states (2/8/36) that they are "convinced that we can meet your needs in a satisfactory way and with profit to you." We suggested to them that they endeavor (among other things) to work out a plan for us without definite retirement age. We did this because the Synod of 1932, Acts, p. 52, adopted "that the Church should adhere to the rule in Art. 13 C. O. without stating anything definite as to age or years of service. . . . Your advisory Comm. thinks that no such specific times should be stipulated," i. e. such as "age of 65, or 35 years of service as the time when a minister may retire." We had also mentioned the suggestion of the plan of Ostfriesland and the "Special Comm. of Preadvice, Synod 1934, that Class A, 1 to 10 years' service pay 3% of their salary; Class B, 11 to 25 years, 2%; and Class C, 26 years and above, 1%. They reply in part:

"First you suggested that a plan be worked up without a definite retirement age. This is rather unusual in pension work, because while most pension plans do not require that a man retire when he

reaches a specified age, such pension plans invariably are predicated on a proposition that at a certain age payments to the Fund by or on account of the member will cease. If he did not wish his pension income to begin at that time, it would be possible to adjust it to begin at some future date, but usually after retirement age is reached, no further payments are made by the member. I can appreciate your desire to have this point as flexible as possible, but as I see the proposition, it would be necessary to figure on definite benefits at a specified age, adjusting these benefits upwards or downwards if retirement occurs after or prior to the date originally set. * * * * The second problem which causes considerable difficulty is the suggestion that ministers who have served from 1 to 10 years should pay 3% with a decrease to 2% for those 11 to 25, and a decrease to 1% for those who have served over 26 years. The effect of this, of course, is to make the younger men pay three times as much as the older men, and while any individual who would subsequently enter your plan would pay 3% and then 2% and then 1% which is roughly an average of 2% because of the larger percentage paid in the earlier years, it would be necessary to have a very carefully worked out salary scale which ministers on the average would receive in order to estimate what pension would be available to any minister at retirement. * * * * We do want you to know that we have devoted a great deal of time to the consideration of your problem, and that we considered very carefully the proposals of no definite retirement age and that the younger men pay more than the older men. Neither of these ideas appear to be feasible as we feel that the computations must be made on the basis of a specific retirement age, . . . * * * * I believe it is possible for the Fund to meet your problem provided we can agree on the following points: First the benefit which will meet your needs; Secondly, a tentative retirement age (adjustments being made in the future for retirement at a different age), and: Three, the payment of definite premiums which will be the cost of providing the benefits and will be based upon no premiums being due the Fund after the tentative retirement age is reached. These things appear to us to be essential to a contract under which you will know definitely what you will receive, and under which we will be assured of receiving a premium necessary if we assume average mortality and minimum expenses to meet our obligations. We shall be glad to have your reactions."

5. *Our Reactions.*

a. We received the replies from the Insurance companies too late to give them detailed study. It may be that we have not been able to fully appreciate all that is presented to us in them.

b. *Present Emeriti and Widows.* From the study we have been able to give to the replies, it appears to us that what Insurance companies are able to offer us for our present Emeriti, etc., is prohibitive because of the large amount of money that would have to be raised at once. They suggest single premium annuities for our present Emeriti and widows, and these annuities are costly. As a basis of calculation and not as a reflection of true averages the N. Y. Life Ins. Co. presents the following figures:

"EMERITUS

Average age 70 — 81 members

To secure \$10 per mo. would require a single premium of \$ 1,560.78
 To secure \$50 per mo. would require a single premium of 7,803.90
 \$7,803.90 times 81 members equals a total premium of..... 241,920.90

WIDOWS

Average age 70 — 38 members

To secure \$10 per mo. would require single premium of \$ 1,715.58
 To secure \$50 per mo. would require single premium of 8,577.90
 \$8,577.90 times 38 members equals a total premium of..... 341,960.20"

c. *Active Ministers.* The material that we received in connection with our active ministry may be of more interest. The following excerpts are also approximations of costs.

(1) From the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund, letter March 1, 1935, we quote the following:

"Annual Premium, Retirement Income \$50.00 per Month at age 65 with Optional Cash Surrender Value at age 65 of \$6,775

Age 25	\$ 92.52	Age 45	\$251.70
Age 35	144.80	Age 55	581.83

After these figures are given, the following elucidation is presented:

"In the event of death before age 65 there would be returned to the beneficiary all premiums paid in with compound interest at the rate of 2% per annum. The same benefit could be allowed as a cash surrender value before age 65. In addition, the above premium would undoubtedly make it possible for a company to pay certain excess interest dividends if interest earnings continued at present rates. Moreover, if interest earnings continued at present rates until policies became payable as annuities, it should be possible to pay during the first ten years after age 65, that is, during the period income is guaranteed whether or not the minister be living, additional interest dividends. The above quotations are not premiums on policies presently issued by the Fund but are given to you to give an idea of the approximate cost of issuing such a contract. We presume that you would have the minister pay part of the cost and, accordingly, would want some sort of a death benefit provision in the event of his death before age 65. That is the reason for the suggestion of returning all premiums with compound interest at 2%."

(2) From the N. Y. Life Ins. Co. letter of Jan. 18, 1936, we quote the following which, you will notice, extends the retirement age to 70 years and not to 65 years as the Pres. Min. Fund does in its example cited above.

"ACTIVE MEMBERS

Average age 45 — 267 members.

"The annual Premium Retirement Annuity is sold in units of \$100.00. To secure approximately \$50.00 per month at age 70 would require the purchase of 2 units or \$200.00 per year per member. The guaranteed monthly payment at age 70, based on an average age of

45, is \$26.00 per unit or \$52.12 per two units. 267 members times \$200.00 per year equals \$53,400 — total amount to be paid annually for 267 members. As to the beneficiary in each case, I am not exactly sure at this writing. I am inclined to think there may be some legal points right here that would require to be taken up with the Home Office. However, this is merely incidental at this writing. Please keep in mind each policy would be a separate and distinct contract. I believe it should be understood at the outset that no minister shall start receiving his income until he arrives at the age of 70, but should he find it necessary to retire at an earlier age, he could only expect to receive the guaranteed income at the actual age of his retirement. These various amounts will all be stipulated in the policy. It seems to me that the individual ministers would appreciate their annuity all the more were they to contribute a certain percentage to the cost of same, this percentage to be based upon his salary."

d. We did not dare request the actuaries to engage in more detailed work for us without a more specific mandate from the Synod. We have merely had suggestions contained in two classical overtures. It may not be amiss for some rather permanent committee, such as the Emeritus Board, to continue to study this phase of the matter. If the Synod desires further work in this connection, it should adopt a definite resolution for some committee to carry out. If this future support of future Emeriti could be placed upon a definite, business-like basis in connection with, let us say, the Presbyterian Ministers' Fund, then the matter for the future of the entire Emeritus Fund would be solved to that extent.

B. OVERTURES: MUSKEGON, OSTFRIESLAND, ZEELAND, AND PLAN OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF PRE-ADVICE OF THE SYNOD OF 1934 AS CONSIDERED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMITTEES Revs. A. Dusselje, S. Fopma, J. De Haan, Jr., and Mr. H. R. Gezon and Mr. Geo. Ottenhof.

1. *Remarks:*

a. (We are sorry to have to inform Synod that your comm. could not agree on the considerations of the material under this, point B, of our report. Rather than to submit two entirely distinctive reports, we have incorporated our differences in one report. These differences are found in the present, point B, of the majority of the comm., and in the following, point C, of the minority. The other parts of our report are the unanimous opinion of the entire comm.)

b. The essential parts of the Muskegon and Ostfriesland Overtures are included in the Plan of the Special Comm. of Preadvice. In fact the Plan of the Special

Comm. is the outgrowth of the other two plans of Muskegon and Ostfriesland. They may well be considered at the same time.

2. *The First Committee of Pre-Advice of the Synod of 1934.*

a. *Its constituency.* The comm. was composed of the following members: Revs. Keegstra, R. J. Bos, and K. W. Fortuin; Elders: M. A. Postmus, J. Ten Harmsel, J. Sturing, and L. Moes. Dr. S. Volbeda was the adviser.

b. *Sentiments.* This committee stated in part:

"We hesitate to recommend the adoption of either of the plans of Muskegon or Ostfriesland as these would include at least a partial repudiation of the principle adopted in 1932. The same can most emphatically be said of the overture of Classis Zeeland. If the standpoint of 1932 in whole or in part is to be repudiated, your committee feels this requires more consideration than your present committee can give to it."

c. *Our Agreement.* The majority of our present committee agrees with the sentiments expressed by this Pre-advisory Committee of the 1934 Synod. We most strongly urge Synod not to repudiate the standpoint of 1932, either in whole or in part. The further we deviate from the principle of 1932 the more difficulty we will encounter with our Emeritus Fund. Allow us to elucidate.

3. *History Surrounding Action of 1932.*

a. *Occasion.* At the Synod of 1930, Classis Zeeland overtured Synod as follows:

"De Synode benoeme eene Commissie om te onderzoeken of er niet een meer bevredigende methode gevonden kan worden voor de ondersteuning van emeriti redikanten en predikants weduwen en weezen."

Two grounds were cited. The Committee of Preadvice at the Synod of 1930 presented two reports, a majority and a minority. Synod adopted the minority report, which reads:

"We would advise Synod to act according to the proposal of Classis Zeeland, and we would further advise that at least a majority of the Comm. to be appointed be Elders or former Elders with business ability. *Grounds:* There is considerable difference of opinion concerning the principle on which support is granted from this Fund. This difference of opinion exists not only among the laity but among the ministers and leaders as well. Some consider the principle to be practically the same as a pension, while others consider it to be a providing in the needs of the incapacitated ministers, their widows and orphans to the extent that they are not able to provide for themselves. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, where the conception of the underlying principle is so divergent, that the practical application of such principle shall also vary greatly. It is therefore very urgent

that the advice of Classis Zeeland be carried out so that this whole matter be studied and a complete report with recommendations be presented to our next Synod, so that all of our people will have a clear conception concerning this matter and that in consequence of the same we may come to a more happy and satisfactory execution of the principles which we shall adopt."

b. *Principle Adopted.*

The Comm. was appointed. The recommendation of the "principle" part of its report was adopted by the Synod of 1932 in the following language:

"Synod declare in reference to the principle upon which the support of Emeriti and their dependents rests, that the recommendation of the Majority report, found in Agenda I, p. 55, *is alone in harmony with Articles 12 and 13 C. O. and with God's Word* * * * (we underscore.) The recommendation of the Comm. as found on page 55 reads as follows: The support of the Emeriti Ministers, their widows and orphans, founded upon the Word of God and prescribed in Art. 13, C. O., is not a matter of charity, but it is the right of the parties named and the duty of the churches concerned."

The Comm. had been led to this recommendation in the light of its study of the "principles upon which the support of Emeriti, with their widows and orphans, is based." (Agenda, 1932, Part I, pp. 36-55.) The problem that Synod had placed before the comm. was in part:

"There is considerable difference of opinion concerning the principle on which support is granted from this Fund. This difference of opinion exists not only among the laity but among the ministers and leaders as well. Some consider the principle to be practically the same as a pension, while others consider it to be a providing in the needs of the incapacitated ministers, their widows and orphans to the extent that they are not able to provide for themselves. It is, therefore, not to be wondered at, where the conception of the underlying principle is so divergent, that the practical application of such principle shall also vary greatly . . ." (Acta 1930, Art. 83, VII (3), and Agenda, 1932, Part I, p. 33).

The Comm. had answered the problem rather fully; had done so on a basis of Scripture and our Church Order; had given the historic Reformed interpretation of "need," as used in our Church Order, Art. 13 (Cf. Agenda 1932, Part I, pp. 46-48); and had explained that the support of our Emeriti, etc., is continued salary in view of life service and "is practically the same as a pension." (Agenda 1932, Part I, p. 49.)

The 1932 Synod also took the following action, Acts, p. 51, No. 4:

"Synod adopt, in principle, the Majority's differentiation, within the Emeritus Fund, of a Sustentation Fund and a Relief Fund. On p. 59 the report says: 'The application of the principle evolved from the Holy Scriptures 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, irrespective of the means which these ministers may or may not possess in themselves. However, realizing that this full application of the principle may awaken an unwarranted antipathy against the principle itself, and that it might lead to the assuming of a burden by the churches which might prove too heavy to bear, your Comm. believes that a plan should be adopted by which all disabled and retired ministers and their dependents should be taken care of in a way that shall answer the above-mentioned question (namely, to what extent or in what amount should our emeriti ministers, their widows and orphans be supported?) as much as possible to the mutual satisfaction of the churches and their emeritated ministers."

"On the basis of these practical considerations, the Report suggests a differentiation between two departments of the Emeritus fund, further designated on p. 61 as *Sustentation* and *Relief* funds. *Adopted.*"

Again the principle is stressed as evolved from Scripture "that all ministers and their dependents should be fully taken care of by the churches. . . ." This is the duty of the churches. And Synod is committed to this principle.

The differentiation between Sustentation and Relief is explained. It is NOT, as some would seem to force into it, that Sustentation is pension and Relief is something different. They are both "practically the same as pension." They are evolved from the one and the same principle which Synod says ". . . is alone in harmony with Articles 12 and 13 C. O., and with God's Word." (Acts, 1932, p. 49, No. 3.) The differentiation is made, as stated on p. 51 of the Acts of 1932, on a basis of cited, practical considerations. The one might be in greater need of his pension than the other. Limiting the Sustentation part of the pension to a definite amount would allow the Relief part of the pension more funds.

The Synod of 1932, pp. 51, 52, also took the following action:

"5. Synod declare that *relief* or *aid* (from the Relief Fund) be granted only in case of need, which cannot be met from the applicant's own resources. This is in line with the suggestion of the Majority Report, noted above, p. 59, and in harmony with the words found in the Minority Report, on p. 68, 'if the need be established and it is ascertained that the applicant cannot supply it himself.' *Adopted.*"

And on page 52:

"Your comm. advises Synod to rule that, in case the funds do not permit payment of the full allowance, the needs of the recipient shall be taken into consideration and distribution made accordingly, because the needs of one may be greater than those of others. This rule shall go into effect immediately. *Adopted.*"

4. *Special Committee of Pre-advice, Synod 1934.* The material of this comm. may be found on pages 162-166 of the 1934 Acta. This, the Synod charged us to study. We cannot see our way clear to recommend the essence of this plan. It suggests the organization of the "Sustentation department of the Emeritus Fund." It flagrantly violates the principle adopted by the Synod of 1932 which is found in Acts, p. 49, No. 3. As an instance we cite from Acts 1934, p. 163, A.

"This sustentation shall be granted to all present Emeriti and widows. . . . And henceforth to those who support this fund (see III), and not to those who will not contribute to this fund . . . those who do not actually need this sustentation should not accept it."

This surely violates the principle adopted in 1932 that "is alone in harmony with Articles 12 and 13 C. O., and with God's Word," page 49. Notice also p. 51:

"The application of the principle evolved from the Holy Scriptures requires that all ministers and their dependents should be fully taken care of by the churches . . ."

This plan rather subtly transfers what is a duty of the churches to the willingness of the ministers to contribute to the fund. Support from the Fund is made contingent, not on the churches performing their duty, but on the action of the clergy in paying into the Fund according to a fixed scale of percentage of their salary, plus auto allowance.

It is true that this Special Comm. calls attention to Acts 1932, p. 53, under 9, b: (Cf. Acts 1934, p. 164). The Comm. that was appointed by the 1932 Synod is charged "to recognize the possibility suggested by the Minority Report, Cf. Agenda, Part I, top of p. 65; namely, that churches may care for their Emeriti partly by the amplitude of the salary paid them during active service, and hence also the possibility that a certain percentage of the Minister's salary be devoted from year to year to this Fund." But the comm. uses this *request*, viz., to recognize the *possibility* as a *ground* for its recommendation (III, p. 164) "that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus Fund according to a fixed scale." Some of our present comm. have served on the Emer. Fund Comm. since the 1930 Synod. We did, before and after 1932, recognize the possibility that churches *may* care for their Emeriti partly by the *amplitude* of the salary and the possibility that a certain percentage of the minister's salary be devoted from year to

year to this Fund." (We underscore.) But, in view of: *the fundamental principle adopted in 1932 in connection with the duty of the churches; the economic conditions through which we are passing; as a result, the paucity of the average minister's salary; we did not feel it the part of wisdom to endeavor to suggest that method of the churches caring for their Emeriti which the words "amplitude of the salary" indicate to us.* We endeavored to report this in a general way to the 1934 Synod, cf. Agenda, Part I, p. 62. But, even aside from this, in view of the fact that the minister's salary is fully "earned" by him, the thrust of the suggestion "to recognize the possibility," etc., seems, under the present circumstances, to rather weaken the conception of the fundamental principle adopted in 1932.

The Synod of 1934, p. 166, decided, without any grounds being stated: "to adopt the principle (sic! Comm.) expressed in the third recommendation of the above Report, namely that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus Fund according to a fixed scale." Under the circumstances, without anything additional, this expression of the Synod is surely in violation of its avowed, 1932, fundamental principle, which "is alone in harmony with Arts. 12 and 13 C. O., and with God's Word."

If the fundamental standpoint, adopted by the churches in 1932, is to be repudiated in whole or in part, it should not be done in an involved action, in an indirect way. It should be done on a basis of the implication of Art. 46 C. O. and Art. 31 C. O. Art. 46 reads:

"Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decisions of previous Synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary."

Art. 31 reads in part:

"... and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a General Synod."

If the action of the church in 1932 is alone in harmony with the Word of God and our Church Order, then the repudiation of it, in whole or in part is a serious matter and should be supported with positive grounds from Scripture and the Church Order.

The majority group of our Comm. feels that the Synod would do well to rescind the decisions which have been

mentioned as conflicting with the fundamental principle of 1932 and to let the entire matter of the Emer. Fund agitation rest for the present with the exception of our Resolutions which are to follow under point V. Grounds: (1) The fundamental principle itself which was adopted after a rather thorough study of the principles of the Word of God and the Church Order. (2) Art. 46 of the C. O., already cited. (3) Art. 31 C. O., already cited. (4) Funds are now being disbursed to Emeriti according to need which is being investigated thru the Emer. Board by means of an exhaustive "Questionnaire." Cf. Acts 1932, p. 51, No. 5, and p. 52, last paragraph, and Emeritus Board Questionnaire.

If the Synod does not desire to rescind the actions indicated, then we would suggest that a motion be adopted to table them indefinitely and let the entire matter of the Emer. Fund agitation rest for the present to give opportunity to carry out the program of education mentioned under the Resolutions to follow, cf. V.

5. *Overture Classis Zeeland.* This overture may be considered as answered in the foregoing. We agree with the first comm. of Preadvice of the 1934 Synod when it says that "the same can most emphatically be said of the overture of Classis Zeeland," namely that it "would include at least a partial repudiation of the principle adopted in 1932." Furthermore there is no need of action such as Zeeland requests in number 2 of its overture. Funds at the present time are being disbursed according to need.

C. THE MINORITY VIEW as presented by Dr. Wm. Bode, Rev. L. Veltkamp and Mr. E. W. Hoogsteen.

The minority of the Comm. feels that the action of Synod, Acts 1934, p. 166, in re clergy assessments, is not a repudiation of the action of Synod, Acts 1932, p. 51; 4, but rather a sanctioning of the principle advocated as a possibility in 1932. We base our contention on the following:

1. Synod 1932 adopted the differentiation in the Emeritus Fund as Sustentation and Relief.

2. Synod of 1932 (Acts 1932, p. 53; 9; b) instructed the committee which was to draft a new set of rules for Emeritated Ministers.—

"... to recognize the possibility suggested by the minority report, Cf. Agenda, Part I, top of p. 65: namely that churches may care for their Emeriti partly by the amplitude of the salary paid them during

active service and hence also the possibility that a certain percentage of the Ministers' salary be devoted from year to year to this Fund."

Due to the foregoing difference of opinion in our committee, it could not present a plan to Synod for ministers to pay into and receive from the Fund.

If Synod desires a plan according to which the ministers shall pay into and the Emeriti to draw from this Fund, then the minority committee advises Synod to give mandate to the Emeritus Board to draw up such plan.

V. RESOLUTIONS.

(REMARK: it should be understood that the following resolutions are from our entire committee. The matters in which we presented different views are under "B" and "C" under IV.)

A. Synod charge the Emeritus Board to enlighten our people in reference to the principles upon which the support of our Emeriti, their widows and orphans is based. This to be done through brochures and our church papers. Synod should set aside an appropriation for it if necessary. This enlightenment should include such matters as those presented to the Synod of 1932 in the Principle Part of the Report, Agenda 1932, Part I, pp. 36-55.

B. Synod decide that the rule adopted in 1932, Acts p. 52, section 8, be continued as long as there are not sufficient funds to pay the full allowances. It reads:

"In case the funds do not permit payment of the full allowances, the needs of the recipient shall be taken into consideration and distribution made accordingly, because the needs of one may be greater than those of others. This rule shall go into effect immediately."

C. Synod urge all of our consistories to do all in their power to meet the assessments to the Emer. Fund and thus discharge our obligation to those who have faithfully served our churches and can now no longer do so.

Humbly Submitted,

L. VELTKAMP, *Pres.*,
J. DE HAAN, JR., *Secy.*,
WM. BODE,
A. DUSSELJEE,
S. FOPMA,
H. R. GEZON,
GEO. OTTENHOF,
E. W. HOOGSTEEN.

REPORT XXXII.

REPORT "HANDOPENING"

(NOTE OF S. C. OF SYNOD. While this report was addressed to the Classis of California, but is to be laid before Synod anyway, we deemed it wise to print it. — H. BEETS.)

To Classis California.

ESTEEMED BRETHREN:

Your committee appointed to study "handopening" submits the following report:

There is great confusion among us as to what "handopening," as we have it, really means. The Synod of Dordrecht, 1893, Heyns, Stuart and Hoeksema, and others say it has reference to the financial side of the calling of a minister, being intended to ascertain whether the calling church is able to sustain the minister in a manner as required by God's Word. Others maintain that it is a means of determining whether conditions in a local church are such that it may call, and whether, f. i., the calling church has fully paid the salary of the former pastor. When the matter of "handopening" came up at our Synod of 1902, that Synod refused to define the expression. Yet, despite this confusion as to its significance, we still continue the custom of "handopening vragen." Fortunately the expression has not been translated into English, although it is often considered to mean the request for permission to call.

Historically it is a phrase which reflects the relationship between the Dutch State Church and the government. In the Dutch Reformation of the 16th century the government confiscated the possessions of the Roman Catholic church, considered these as really belonging to the Reformed churches, but instead of giving these churches possession of such confiscated properties, the government retained possession of them, and acted as the custodian of these properties. Out of the income of these possessions the government paid the salaries of the Reformed ministers and gave the Reformed Churches other financial aid. In return for these favors the government asked acknowledgement of its supervision over the churches, which meant among other things, that in a vacancy a church must ask the government for permission to call, which included the request for salary.

It is self-evident that when a Church does not stand in the same relationship to the government as described above, the expression loses its significance, and the practice of "handopening vragen" should have been automatically terminated. In our Church, therefore, there is no room for it. A vacant church does not apply to the government for permission to call nor for the pastor's salary. Nor have conditions so changed that the local church now stands in the same relationship to the Classis, that the State Reformed Church in the Netherlands sustains to the government.

Christ Himself authorized His Church — every church — to call a minister, in order that the spiritual welfare of its members may be promoted by the regular ministry of the gospel and sacraments. The church has not only the right to call, but is in duty bound to do so. And it would be out of place for a local church to ask Classis for permission to do its duty. In case a congregation should desire to remain vacant indefinitely Classis might have to tell them: "You must call," but it can not grant any church a permission to call, because each church already has that authority.

Nor is it necessary to retain this antiquated custom in order that the calling of a minister may be done under the supervision of Classis. It is true that such supervision is necessary, but our Church Order makes other, yet ample provision for that in Articles 4 and 5, which speak of the advice of Classis or of the Counselor in regard to the calling of a minister, and his consistorial credentials are approved by Classis or by its committee. Supervision is also exercised by Classis in the circular questioning according to Art. 41, and by Church-visitation, provided for in Art. 44. But our Church Order does not provide for "handopening." It does not even mention this illegitimate child of faulty conceptions and evil relationships.

There is good reason for the Church Order to be silent on "handopening." Our Reformed fathers tolerated the patronizing attitude of the government, but realized that "handopening" did not fit in in the presbyterian form of church government. The civil government has no voice in the calling of a minister. And Classis has not the jurisdiction to grant or deny permission to call. Its only jurisdiction over a local church, as described by the Church Order, consists of and is exercised in — cases of appeal — matters that could not be finished in a consistory — matters of general import.

And as to the financial side of "handopening" your committee adduces the following considerations: Granting financial aid to local churches is not the rule, but the exception among us. And each Classis makes its own provisions for giving such aid. That matter is seldom mentioned when "handopening" is asked. Nor does anyone conceive of "handopening" as an action of Classis whereby it guarantees the payment of the salaries of all its pastors, and assumes the responsibility to pay such salaries in case congregations should become delinquent in the matter. And in church visitation the matter of supervision of the salary of a minister is taken care of. In case a pastor does not receive the full amount of his salary he has the right of appeal.

Finally, as to the question whether request for permission to call should not be continued in order that Classis may investigate whether ethical or spiritual conditions in a local church warrant the calling of a minister, your committee submits — that such investigation has heretofore never been made — that a congregation, finding itself in turmoil is in greater need of a minister than a church in which peace and harmony prevails — and that the counselor or the church visitors may be able to remove deplorable conditions. So in this matter, too, we do not need "handopening," nor a substitute for it.

In view of the foregoing considerations, and in view of the fact that the matter of "handopenings-vragen" is significant not only for our Classis but for our entire denomination, your committee advises Classis:

- I. To bring these considerations to the attention of our next Synod.
- II. To overture Synod to terminate the practice of "handopening."

Reasons:

- (1) The Church Order does not mention it;
- (2) It is un-Reformed;
- (3) Changed conditions eliminate it;
- (4) It is not necessary, and serves no good purpose.

Respectfully submitted,

Your Committee,
H. J. DE VRIES,
M. M. SCHANS.

DEPUTATI SYNODI

Primi

Secundi

Classis California

J. De Jonge.....	Minister	J. De Jong.....	Minister
M. M. Schans.....	M	R. J. Frens.....	M
Rev. J. C. Bolt.....	Elder	P. L. Van Dyken.....	Elder
John Schans	E	D. Hoek	E

Classis Grand Rapids East

D. D. Bonnema.....	Minister	A. J. Rus.....	Minister
H. J. Kuiper.....	M	W. Hendriksen	M
H. J. Steigenga.....	Elder	B. J. Bennink.....	Elder
E. C. Goldsword.....	E	J. Kuizema	E

Classis Grand Rapids West

H. Baker	Minister	J. De Haan, Jr.....	Minister
Dr. Y. P. De Jong.....	M	R. Veldman	M
Dr. George Broodman.....	Elder	Prof. J. G. Vanden Bosch.....	Elder
C. Van Anandel.....	E	C. Smith	E

Classis Hackensack

Dr. J. T. Hoogstra.....	Minister	J. Van Bruggen.....	Minister
J. M. Vande Kieft.....	M	M. Botbyl	M
John Boer	Elder	J. Memmelaar	Elder
Richard Meyer	E	Thom. Thiessen	E

Classis Holland

N. J. Monsma.....	Minister	H. Blystra	Minister
D. Zwier	M	Dr. R. J. Danhof.....	M
A. Peters	Elder	Dr. G. Heyns.....	Elder
A. De Groot.....	E	A. Plantinga	E

Classis Hudson

J. Cupido	Minister	P. Holwerda	Minister
E. Van Halsema.....	M	H. Bouma	M
J. Stelpstra	Elder	Y. Brouwer	Elder
C. Greydanus	E	J. Wiegers	E

Classis Illinois

G. Hoeksema	Minister	R. H. Hooker.....	Minister
Dr. H. Kuiper.....	M	B. H. Spalink.....	M
Dr. W. H. Rutgers.....	M	A. Bliëk	M
J. C. Dekker.....	Elder	G. Ottenhoff	Elder
A. Meeter	E	H. Klunder	E
W. Stob	E	J. H. Postema.....	E

Classis Muskegon

L. J. Lamberts.....	Minister	Dr. J. H. Bruinocge.....	Minister
S. G. Brondsema.....	M	S. P. Eldersveld.....	M
Dr. W. Geerlings.....	Elder	H. Ten Hoor.....	Elder
J. A. Bolt.....	E	A. Postma	E

Classis Orange City

J. Ehlers	Minister	M. J. Vanderwerp.....	Minister
H. Moes	M	Dr. R. Bronkema.....	M
J. R. Van Dyke.....	M	J. G. Vande Lune.....	M
J. Overbeek	Elder	A. Steensma	Elder
D. Waanders	E	A. Docter	E
W. Greenfield	E	J. Postma	E

Classis Ostfriesland

A. Koning	Minister	J. Schuurmann	Minister
D. H. Plesscher.....	M	K. Tebben	M
B. H. Lindeman.....	Elder	H. M. Tjepkes.....	Elder
F. Alberts	E	H. Folkerts	E

Classis Pacific

K. De Waal Malefyt.....	Minister	D. Hollebeek	Minister
A. H. Bratt.....	M	W. Groen	M
S. Staal	Elder	C. Buizer	Elder
A. Witte	E	P. C. Warmenhoven.....	E

Classis Pella

M. Monsma	Minister	F. De Jong.....	Minister
I. Van Dellen.....	M	J. Griffioen	M
J. D. Pikaart (?).....	M	D. H. Walters.....	M
H. Cuperus	Elder	D. De Wit.....	Elder
G. Roose	E	M. J. Byleveld.....	E
J. Blom (?).....	E	S. Vander Wiel.....	E

Classis Sioux Center

A. Wassink	Minister	J. Betten	Minister
J. H. Geerlings	M	L. Verduin	M
W. Bierma	Elder	G. Van 't Hul	Elder
Wm. De Boer	E	P. W. Groen	E

Classis Wisconsin

E. B. Pekelder	Minister	J. J. Holwerda	Minister
C. R. Veenstra	M	J. P. Smith	M
T. Ribbens	Elder	A. Vanderlaan	Elder
F. A. Voskuil	E	J. Wondergem	E

Classis Zeeland

W. Kok	Minister	J. Geels	Minister
A. Jabaay	M	H. Dykhouse	M
N. Frankena	Elder	W. Vander Wal	Elder
Ben Smit	E	F. Langeland	E

AGENDA

Part II

Overtures

I. CALVIN SEMINARY AND COLLEGE MATTERS, ETC.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REPORT; REPORTS ON SEM. COURSE, EVANGELISTIC WORK, BIBLE SCHOOL FOR LAYWORKERS

1. The Dennis Avenue Consistory requests Synod to increase to COST PRICE the tuition at Calvin College for those students who are not members of the Christian Reformed denomination or who are not subjects of our various missions.

At the present time, there are 400 students at Calvin College of which number 99, or 25 per cent, do not belong to the Chr. Ref. Church.

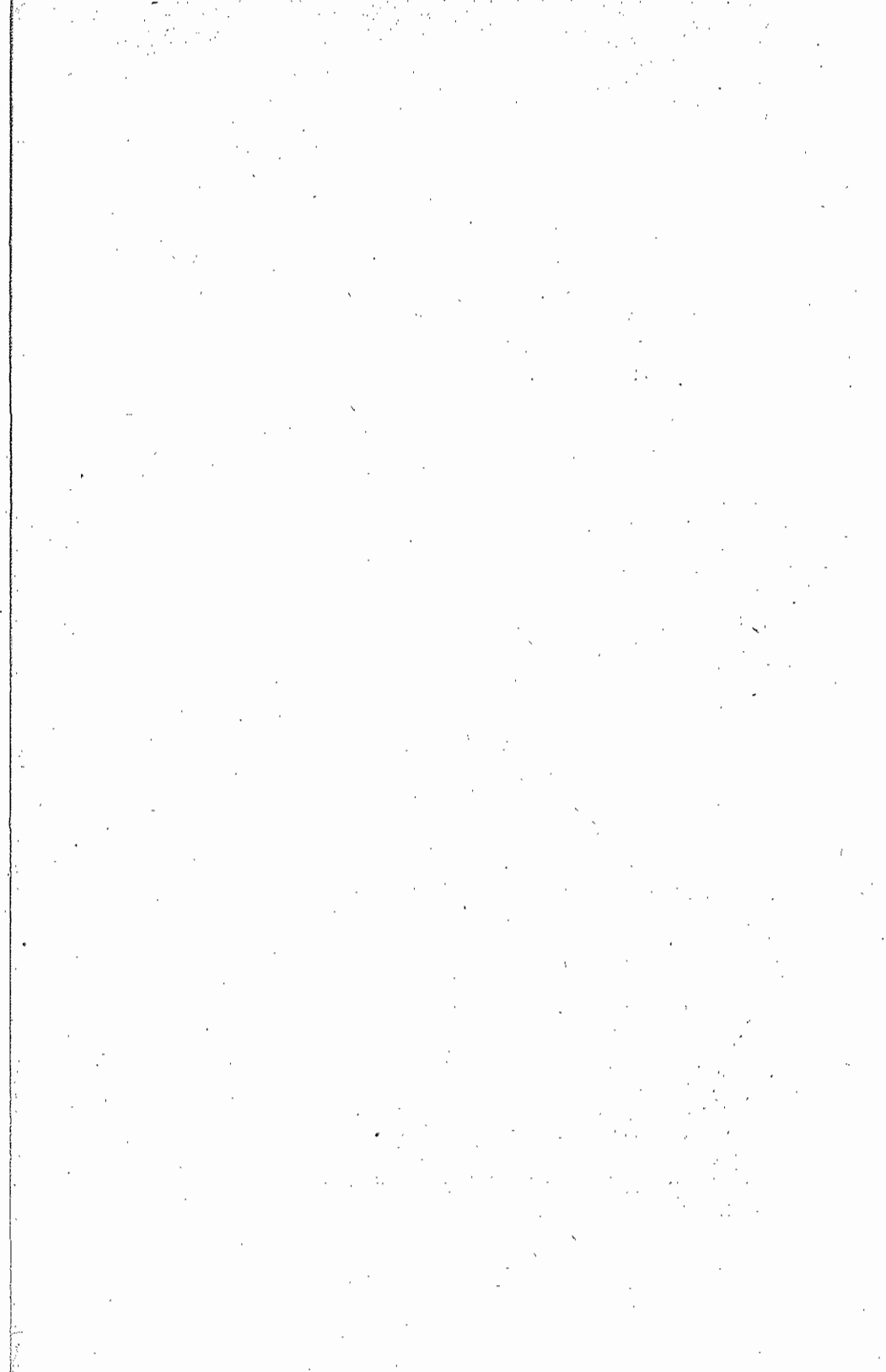
Reason for our request: It is more equitable to the members of our denomination, if those who are not members of said denomination are at least required to pay the Cost Price.

(Consistory Dennis Ave.)

2. Classis overtures Synod to kindly consider the matter of so-called "outsiders," i. e., students who attend our Calvin College coming from circles outside of our denomination, and eliminate all those who come from non-evangelical or non-orthodox homes. *Grounds:*

- 1) We believe that this is becoming more and more a very serious problem which requires the prayerful attention as well as a decision on the part of Synod.
- 2) It cannot be denied that the atmosphere brought about by these "outsiders" may be positively damaging for our own young people, and the example set by them may influence our own young people. For example, Synod's stand in re Amusements. We are not able to control the outsiders and yet they set an example.

(Classis Wisconsin.)



3a. Synod suggest to our High Schools and Academies to introduce courses in Dutch and stimulate interest in the Holland language.

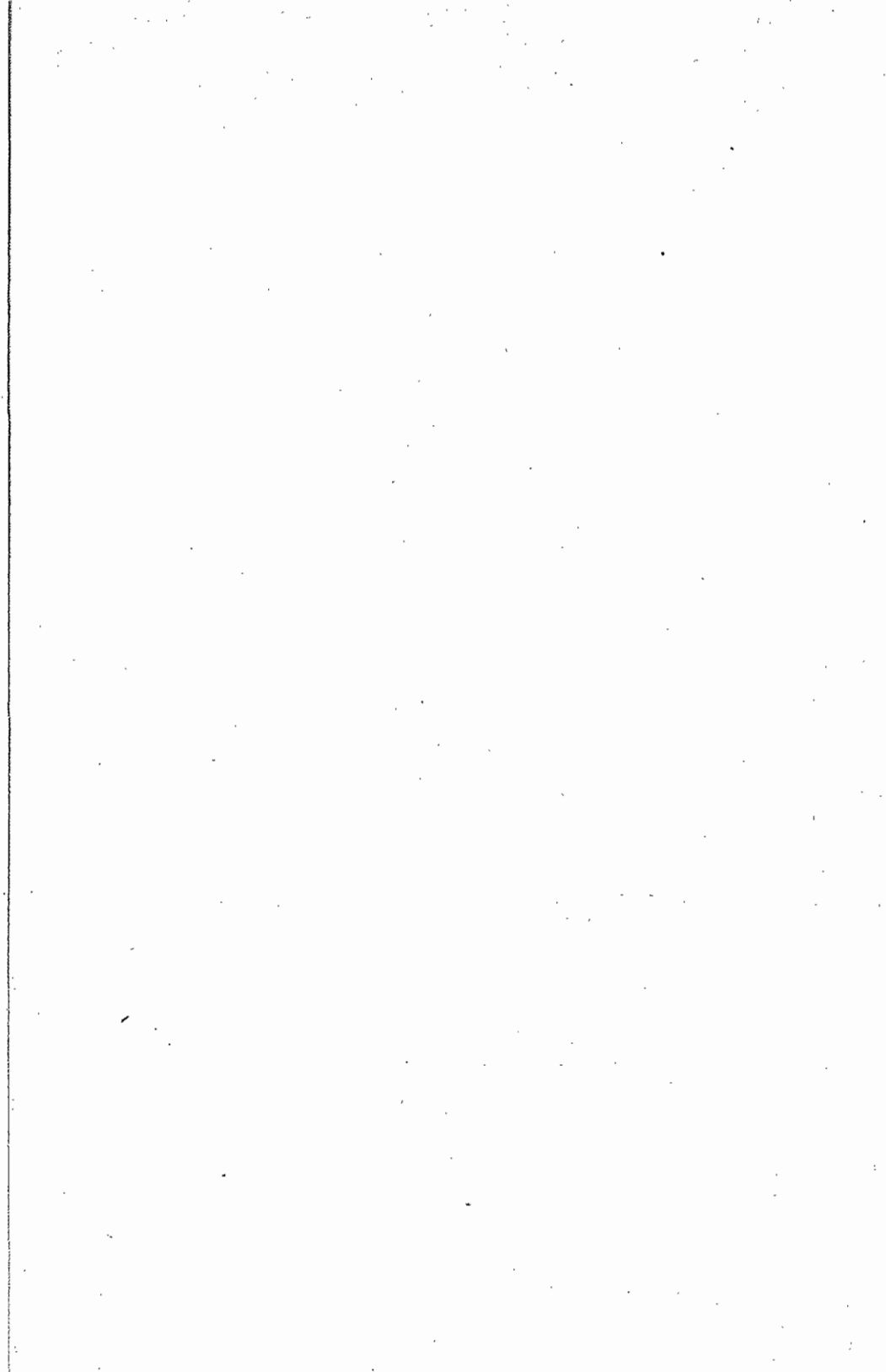
(Classis Grand Rapids East.)

3b. "To the Consistory of the Neland Avenue Chr. Ref. Church,

DEAR BRETHREN:

During the last few years the number of students at Calvin College who are not members of the Christian Reformed Church has increased remarkably. We understand the ratio is now approximately 25% of the total, or one hundred "outside" students and three hundred who are members of our churches. The opinion of many, including the undersigned, is that this percentage is too high and it would not be of interest to our churches to encourage this trend of proportion of "outside" students. On the other hand, measures should be taken to discourage the coming of more "outsiders." Reasons for this attitude are especially the following:

- a. The influence of many "outside" students upon the other students would not be for the desired Christian Reformed denominational loyalty.
- b. Some who come from families which are not of Reformed or Orthodox circles and others who do not believe in the Biblical truths and Standards of our churches may have an undesirable influence upon their class-mates and fellow-students.
- c. It encourages courtships of our own students with young folks who do not stand for the faith of the fathers.
- d. The activities of the college are, undoubtedly, influenced by "outside students" as, for instance, in inter-collegiate literary and athletic contests, public programs and daily conduct of the students.
- e. The present rate of tuition is not fair to members of our churches who maintain the college and will certainly cause resentment, especially in communities of our churches outside of Michigan. Most non-Christian Reformed students are from Grand Rapids and vicinity on account of inexpensive rates and convenience.



We believe the following proposals would be helpful in improving this situation:

- 1) Increase the tuition for all new students, who are not members of the Christian Reformed churches, to cost price.
- 2) A strict checking up of all students as to their attitude towards God, the Bible and living the Christian life.

We trust that your esteemed body will sincerely consider these grievances and recommendations and take the proper steps regarding same.

Our prayer is that the Lord may guide you in this as well as in other important matters, and that Calvin College maintain its high standards. If the Consistory advises that this communication should be sent directly to the Curatorium, we will gladly do so, but our opinion is that the proper procedure is through our Consistory.

Respectfully yours,

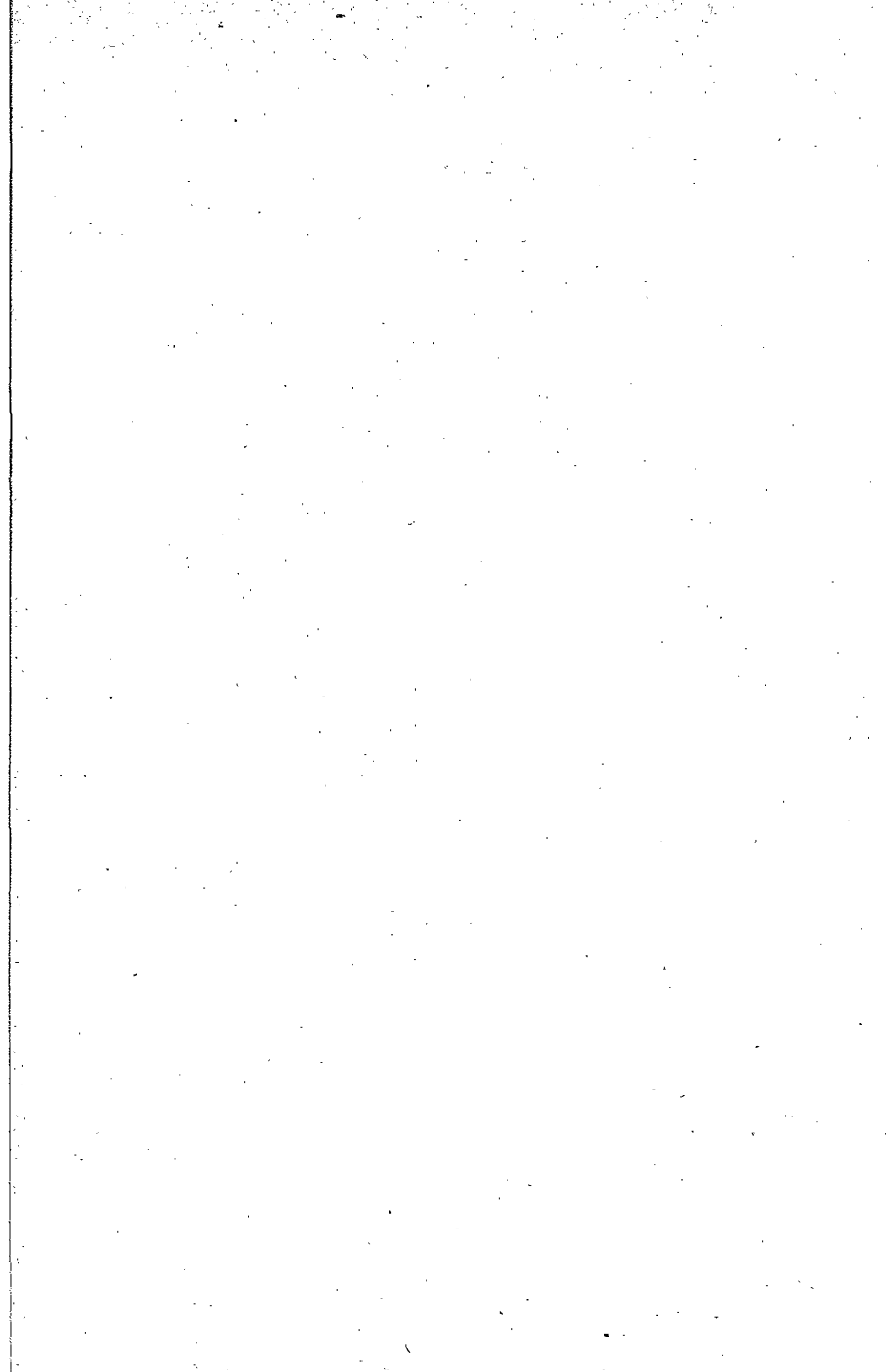
(Signed) HENRY HEKMAN,

(Signed) JACOB D. MULDER."

The Consistory can support the opinion expressed in this letter and wishes to make it an overture to Synod with the following understanding: That the financial and the moral side of the matter be kept strictly separate. It will not do to use an increase in tuitions as a means to exclude undesirable students. We believe and propose:

- 1) That only such "outside" students be admitted who belong to an orthodox church and are orthodox in their beliefs and can furnish a testimonial of good Christian character.
- 2) That such "outside" students as are admitted shall pay cost price. It is not fair that students belonging to our own churches, which are bringing up their annual assessments for College and Seminary, should pay as much as "outsiders" who do not contribute.

(Consistory Neland Avenue.)



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; EMERGENCY
COMM. REPORT; MISSION ORDER REPORTS;
see Agenda, Part I

4. Classis California presents the following budget for home mission work during the years 1937 and 1938:

Salaries for three missionaries at \$1,300.00.....	\$3,900.00
Auto allowance for three missionaries at \$100.00.....	300.00
House rent for Rev. J. De Jonge at \$35.00 per month.....	420.00
House rent for Rev. H. J. De Vries at \$40.00 per month.....	480.00
Total for yearly work in California.....	\$5,100.00
To be brought up by Classis (472 families at \$2.00 per fam.)	944.00
To be requested from the General Fund.....	\$4,156.00
(Classis California.)	

5. Classis Orange City overtures Synod to again authorize the General Home Mission Committee to grant the subsidy to be requested by the Home Mission Committee of Classis Orange City for Rev. B. Vanden Brink at Sibley, to the amount of \$600.00 per year, which shall be paid in this case as a *preferred allowance*.

The Synod of 1934 took similar action in this special case. See Acts of Synod 1934, pages 52, 53, II; Report of General Home Mission Committee, 3.

(Classis Orange City.)

6a. AID FOR HOME MISSION WORK. Classis asks the General Home Mission Board for support to the extent of \$2,900.00 annually, in order to adequately undertake the work under its supervision. (The Classical Delegate to the Mission Board can supply the needed information.)

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

6b. Classis overtures Synod to continue the Emergency Committee for another two years. *Grounds:*

- 1) The Committee has been instrumental in raising funds that have been used in the extension of God's Kingdom; to discontinue the Committee would curtail this work of advancement.



- 2) Not all the churches which receive assistance from the funds gathered by the Committee are able to do without the financial assistance given. Not to give help would seriously cripple many of the small churches or would throw them on the classical funds now already taxed to capacity.
- 3) There are still a few candidates without fields of labor and more will be added to the list with the graduation of the present Senior Class. If help were discontinued, surely, humanly speaking, these men would not find a field of labor for a long time to come.
- 4) Although conditions in general may be better in a material sense, the emergency in our Church, for which the Committee was created, has by no means been passed.

(Classis Grand Rapids West.)

7. Voor het houden harer classicale vergaderingen verzoekt Classis Pacific om finantieele steun, ten bedrage van 35c per huisgezin, instede van 50c als voorheen.

(Classis Pacific.)

8. Classis overtures Synod to consider the possibility of resuming mission work among the Hollanders in Utah, especially in Ogden. *Grounds:*

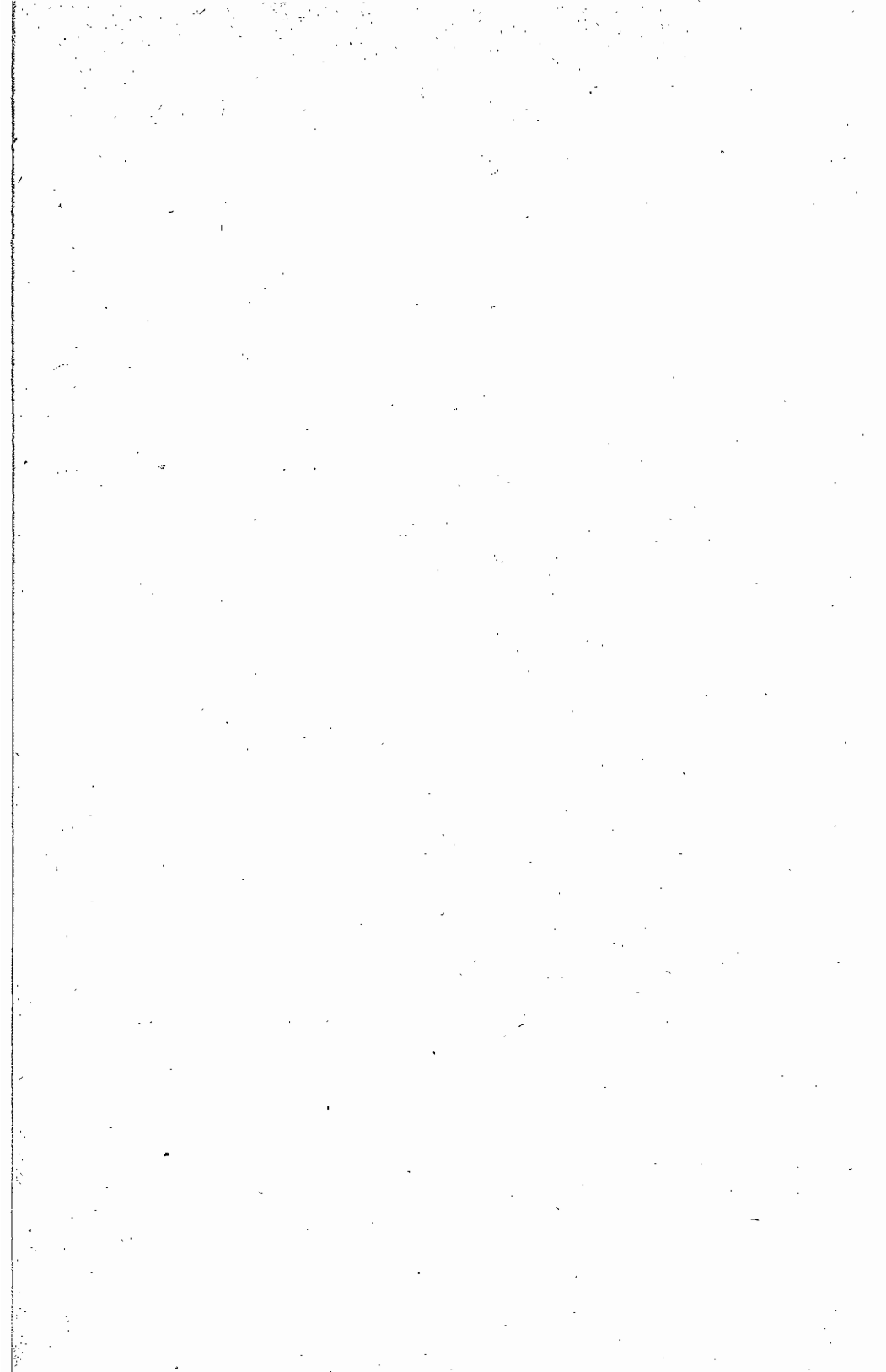
- 1) There are hundreds of Dutch families there, which originally came from the Reformed Church in the Netherlands and who, according to reports, have become dissatisfied with the Mormon religion.
- 2) The fact that although the work is very difficult, there seems to have been no good reason for giving up the work that was being done there.
- 3) There is a field and we have the workers.

(Classis California.)

9. Classis Orange City wishes to express itself as opposed to the proposals of the Synodical Committee on Home Mission Methods (see synodical Agenda 1936, p. 267 ff.), and overtures Synod to reject them in so far as they propose to place the administration of Home Mission Work in the hands of a General Synodical Committee.

Grounds:

- 1) A central committee will be less able than local

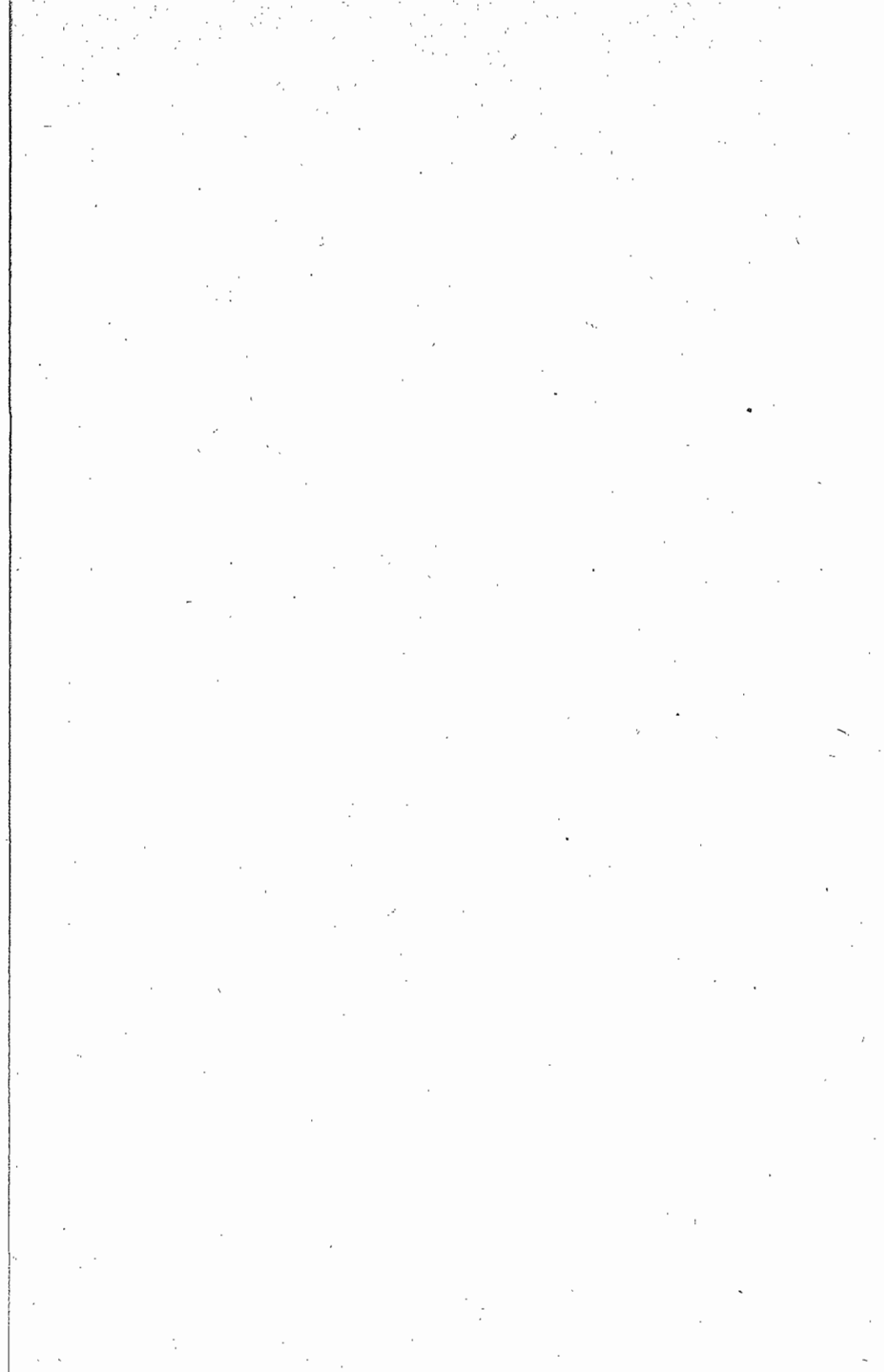


Classical committees to comprehend and appreciate the circumstances of the local mission work, and will consequently not be able always to take sufficient interest.

- 2) Centralized work means work distant from the people upon whose support it depends and will consequently lessen the desire to give for the cause.
- 3) Classical committees will soon feel themselves superfluous if they have no authority save to advise as proposed in Art. 3 of the New Order, since their influence will be reduced almost to insignificance.
- 4) A Central Board, composed of one delegate from each Classis would be an unwieldy, uninformed and sympathetic Board in comparison with our own Classical Home Mission Committees.
- 5) The admitted necessity of "permanence," Art. 4, New Order, p. 268, in the membership of the General Committee leads toward "Boardism" and autocracy. This danger is not so great under the present arrangement.
- 6) The authority to be vested in the Executive Committee gives an undue amount of weight of influence to a few men. The work of the General Committee and Synod will be largely controlled by the Executive Committee. Control should remain with the Classes as much as possible.
- 7) Classis objects particularly to the proposal that the General Committee shall *determine* on an equitable basis when and to what extent a congregation is entitled to support from the subsidy fund, since nobody is better able than Classis to determine the needs of a congregation.
- 8) The proposed power of the General Committee to make adjustments between Synods is objectionable. Adjustments should be made by the Classical Committee which is best able to understand the situation.

(Classis Orange City.)

10. Classis Pella overtures Synod not to adopt the Home Mission Order proposed by the Synodical Committee on Home Mission Methods.



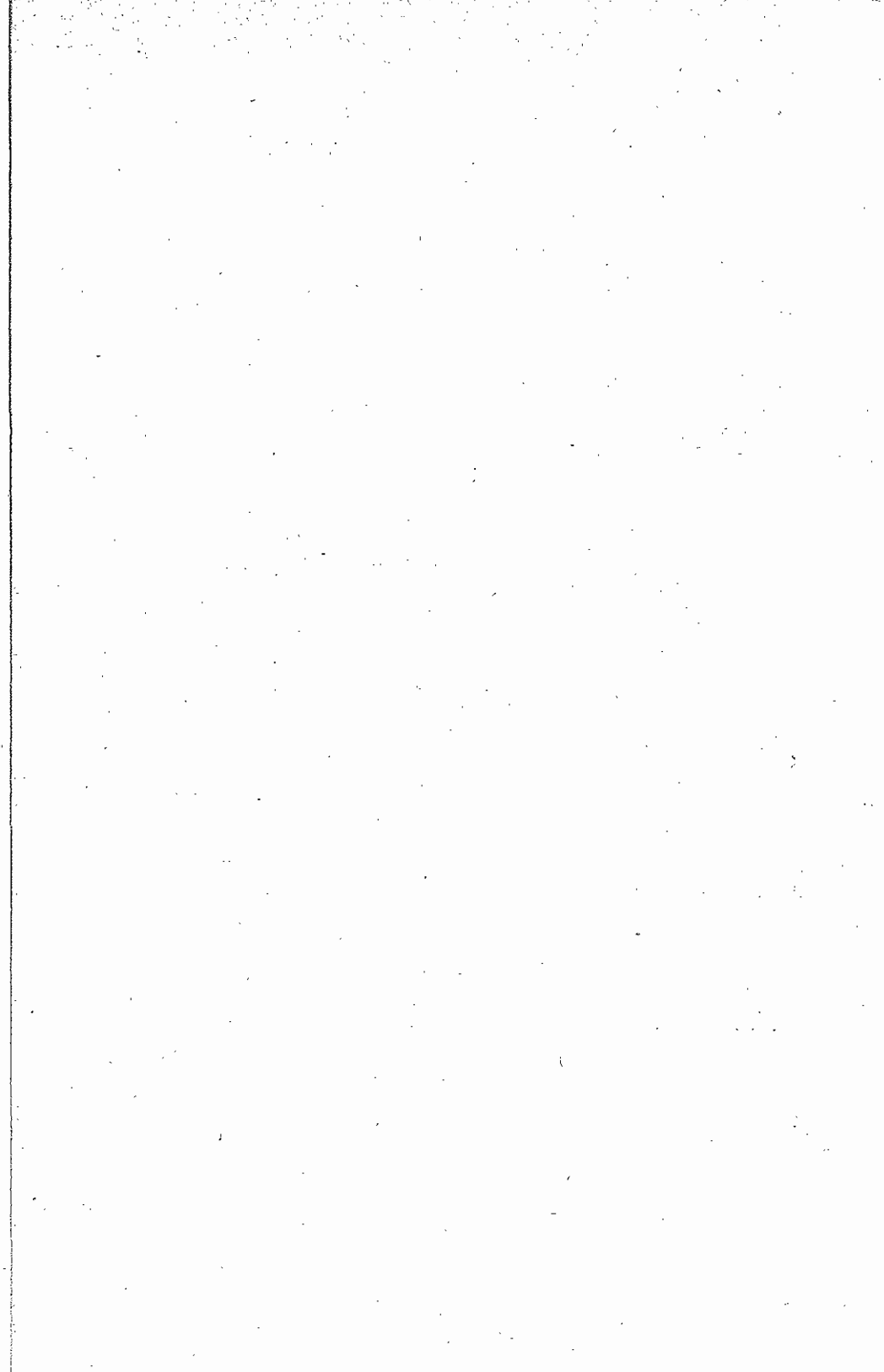
Grounds:

- 1) The proposing of this Order is plainly beyond the Committee's mandate, which is, simply: "to make a study of the question how the gains and improvements that may have accrued from the emergency type of activity may be utilized and permanently conserved for the good of the Home Mission methods of our Church." (Acts 1934, p. 24, Art. 45.)

- 2) It embraces a radical departure from recently reiterated principles and practices of missions.

The principle to which our Church stands committed in this respect is that mission work shall be conducted by the church — by which may be understood the local congregation, Classis or Synod as circumstances may demand — and not by a committee. The proposed order requires that a Board, and that will virtually mean the Executive Committee of that Board, shall control the work. Even though one might dispute the principle that mission work must proceed from a local consistory, there cannot be any doubt that according to the Scriptures this task has been entrusted to the *Church*, and not to a committee. The issue is not one of a local consistory vs. the Synod, but of the Church vs. a committee.

- 3) The desired improvement in home mission methods can be secured without radical changes. If home missionaries are held to their original charge, namely: to open up new fields, there will be little danger that promising fields will be passed by or will be "overmanned." Home missionaries should never be pastors in regular established congregations, but "scouts" to look up fields and gather in the scattered. Surely, that work can be accomplished far better under the supervision of a Classis than under that of a Board far removed. A defect in our home mission activity has been and still is that too many home missionaries are virtually doing the work of a regular pastor. The suggestion of the committee to employ a stated supply where the home missionary has opened a field is a very good one, we feel. We should work in that direction.
- 4) The old method, when properly employed, has proved to be quite effective. Cf. the fruitful labors of the Rev. J. R. Brink. The statement that there is a



growing apathy to Home Mission work is not so easily proved. Nor need it be ascribed to old methods employed. It surely is not the case with Classis Pella. The fact that years ago new churches were organized at a more rapid rate proves nothing. That was due to immigration, and was a comparatively easy matter of gathering together interested families. There is, we feel, more interest in real home mission activity now than in years gone by.

- 5) The proposed Mission Order creates new problems, no less real than those it is supposed to correct. Not only will it mean that Home Missions will be conducted virtually by the Executive Committee of a Board and not by the ecclesiastical bodies charged therewith; but the proposed Mission Order also tends to interfere with the rights and duties of these bodies in their particular localities. Thus friction rather than harmony will be enhanced.

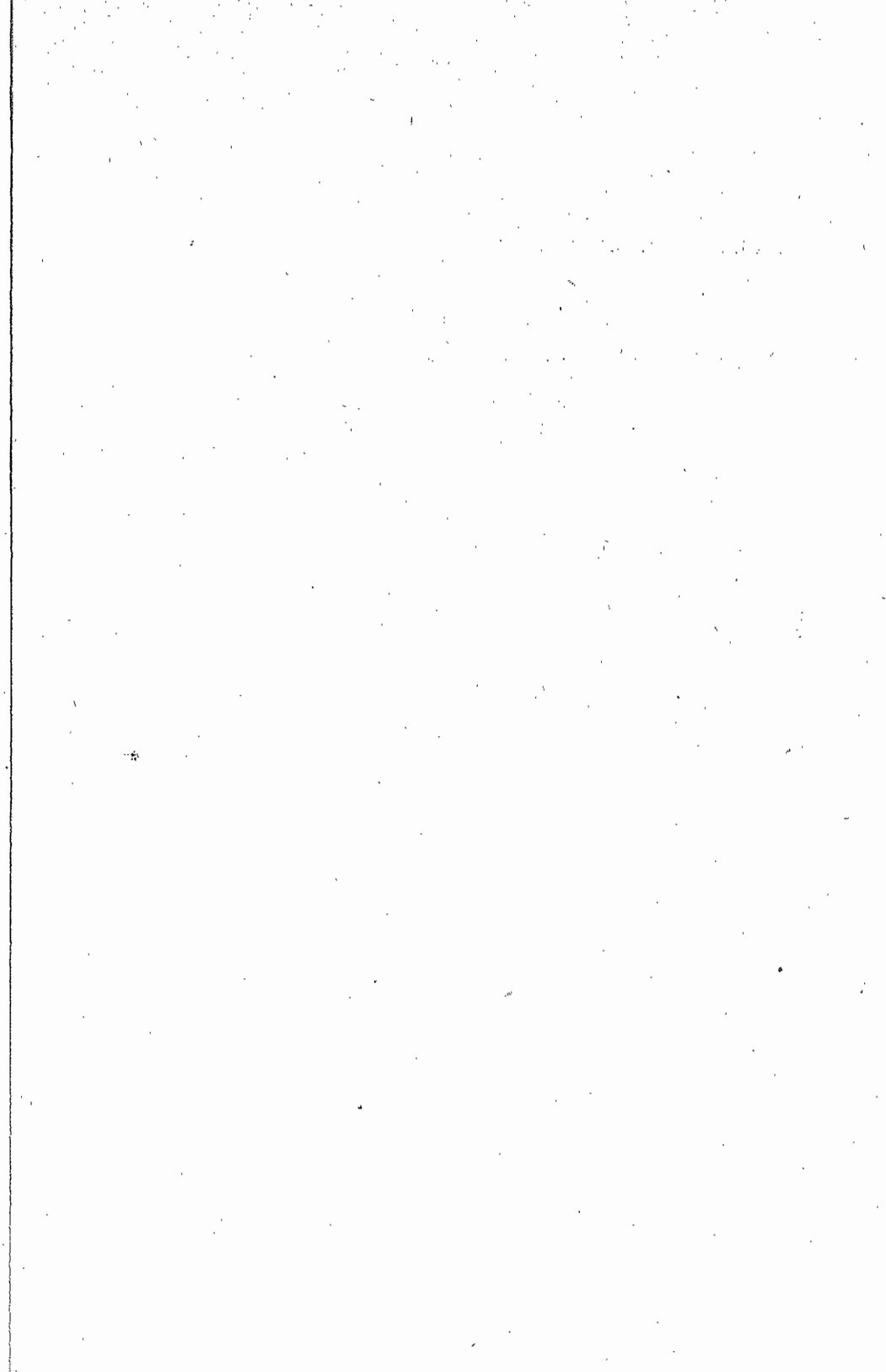
Classis Pella does not mean herewith to condemn all that is contained in the report of the Committee. It feels that there are some good suggestions which should be followed up. Particularly that pertaining to the separation of the Home Missions and Subsidy Funds. It is also very desirous that the ideal that our home missionaries be such in reality shall be attained. A regular pastor or stated supply should take the place of the missionary as soon as reasonably possible.

(Classis Pella.)

11. Overture of Lucas, Mich., consistory in re new Mission Order.

Synod take cognizance of the synodical decisions on missions which are not contained in the Concept Mission Order, and embody such as are relevant, and declare no longer binding such as are not relevant or not desired. (Intent of overture is to obtain best possible form and accuracy in publishing mission rules.) *Grounds:*

- 1) There is a real disadvantage in having mission rules of like nature scattered some in a Mission Order, some in Church Order publications, and some almost forgotten in various portions of the Acta.
- 2) In adopting a new Mission Order based upon a definite principle it will help to prevent misunderstanding if Synod state which former rules are thereby rejected.



THE SYNODICAL DECISIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:

1. OFFICIAL NAME OF BOARD:

The official name of the Mission Board is "Christian Reformed Board of Missions," Acts 1926, Art. 42, pp. 41, 42. Cf. Art. X of Concept M. O. In Art. IX name is correct.

2. CONSTITUENCY OF BOARD; TERM OF OFFICE; EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

This Board is composed of one representative of each Classis, elected by the Classis, and approved by Synod, and three delegates at large to be elected by Synod out of a nomination of six presented by the Mission Board, unless Synod desires to add nominees; the delegates at large shall also serve as members of the Executive Committee (Acts 1930, Art. 94, p. 106). The Board chooses from their own number an Executive Committee, which attends to urgent matters (Acts 1914, Art. 52, p. 41). The Director of Missions is ex-officio member of the Board (Acts 1920, p. 84). (Cf. Art. IX of Concept Mission Order.)

3. MISSIONARIES AT BOARD MEETINGS:

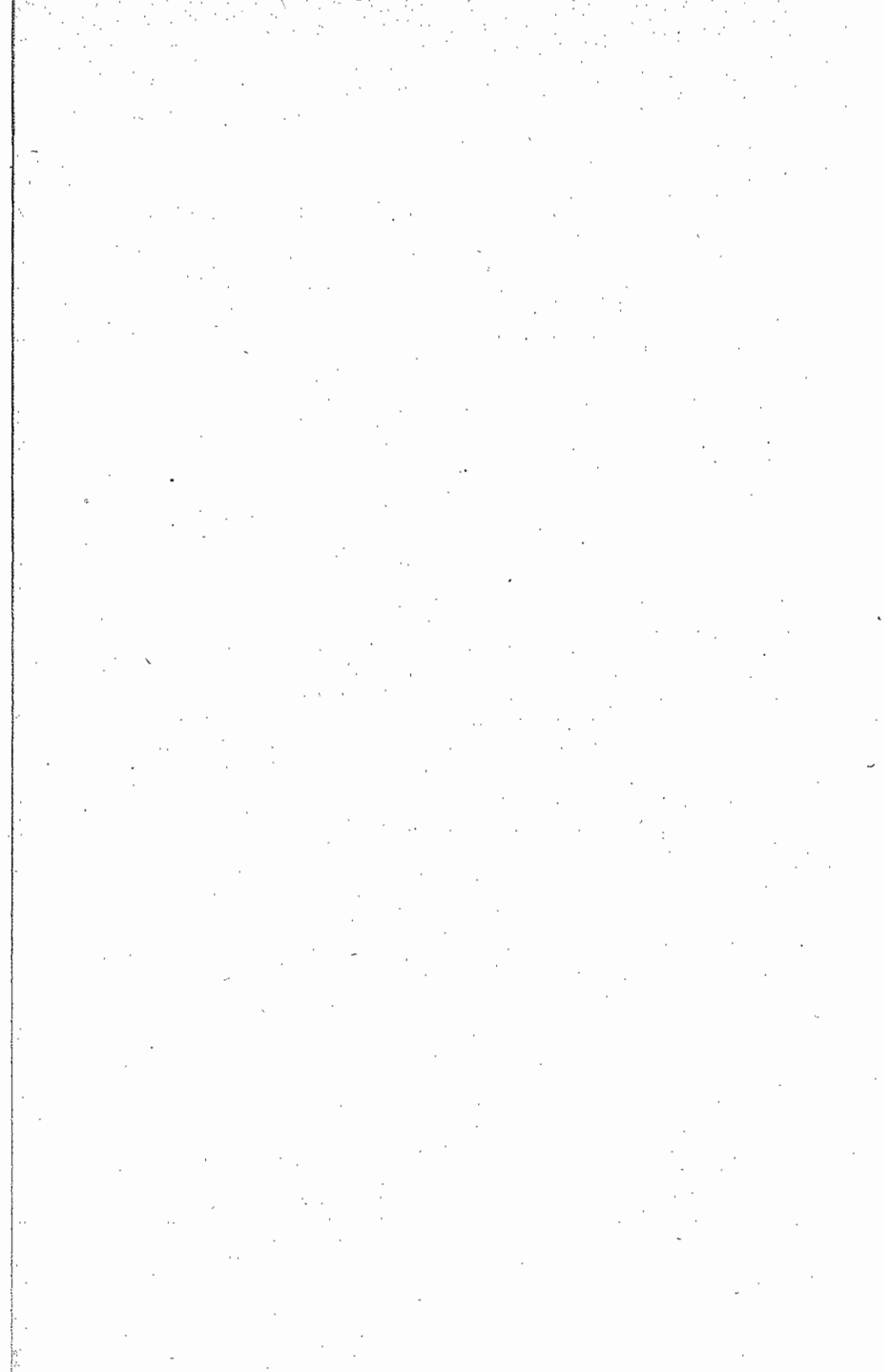
A representative from the Indian field shall be available at the time of the Board meeting, for advice on Indian Mission matters, in harmony with the rule with respect to the China missionaries happening to be in this country at the time of the Board meeting (Acts 1932, Art. 80, p. 57).

4. CALLED AND SENT BY ONE CHURCH OR A GROUP OF CHURCHES:

The calling and sending of missionary ministers is the task of a local church. If, however, the circumstances demand it, the calling and sending is to be done by a combination of churches, in a manner to be determined by these churches themselves and in compliance with synodical and classical decisions (Acts 1912, Art. 20, p. 12). Cf. Concept Mission Order.

5. ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF ORDAINED INDIAN MISSIONARIES: (Art. IV)

Our missionaries in our Indian mission field, though they must remain officially connected with the sending church, as members must belong to an organized church on the mission field, and as such are eligible for the office of elder or deacon (Acts 1918, Art. 52, pp. 57, 58). Cf. Concept Mission Order, Art. 13.



6. ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF ORDAINED CHINESE MISSIONARIES:

Our Chinese missionaries have the same status as all our ministers, being officially pastors of *the churches* which called and sent them (Acts 1930, Art. 111, pp. 144, 145).

Our Chinese missionaries shall retain both their membership and their office as minister in the church sending them to China (Acts 1926, Art. 42, p. 41).

The ordained missionaries in China are permitted to accept associate membership in the Chinese Church as long as that is necessary for the development of that Church and such membership is desired by the Chinese Church. In this way the sacraments can be properly administered in the Chinese Church during the time that it has no ordained men of its own (Acts 1926, Art. 42, p. 41).

7. ECCLESIASTICAL POSITION OF UNORDAINED MISSIONARIES:

The employment of lay workers shall be with the consent and under the supervision of the Synodical Delegates, and with the understanding that their ecclesiastical status rests solely in the mandate which they received from the sending church or churches (Acts 1914, Art. 52, pp. 41, 42).

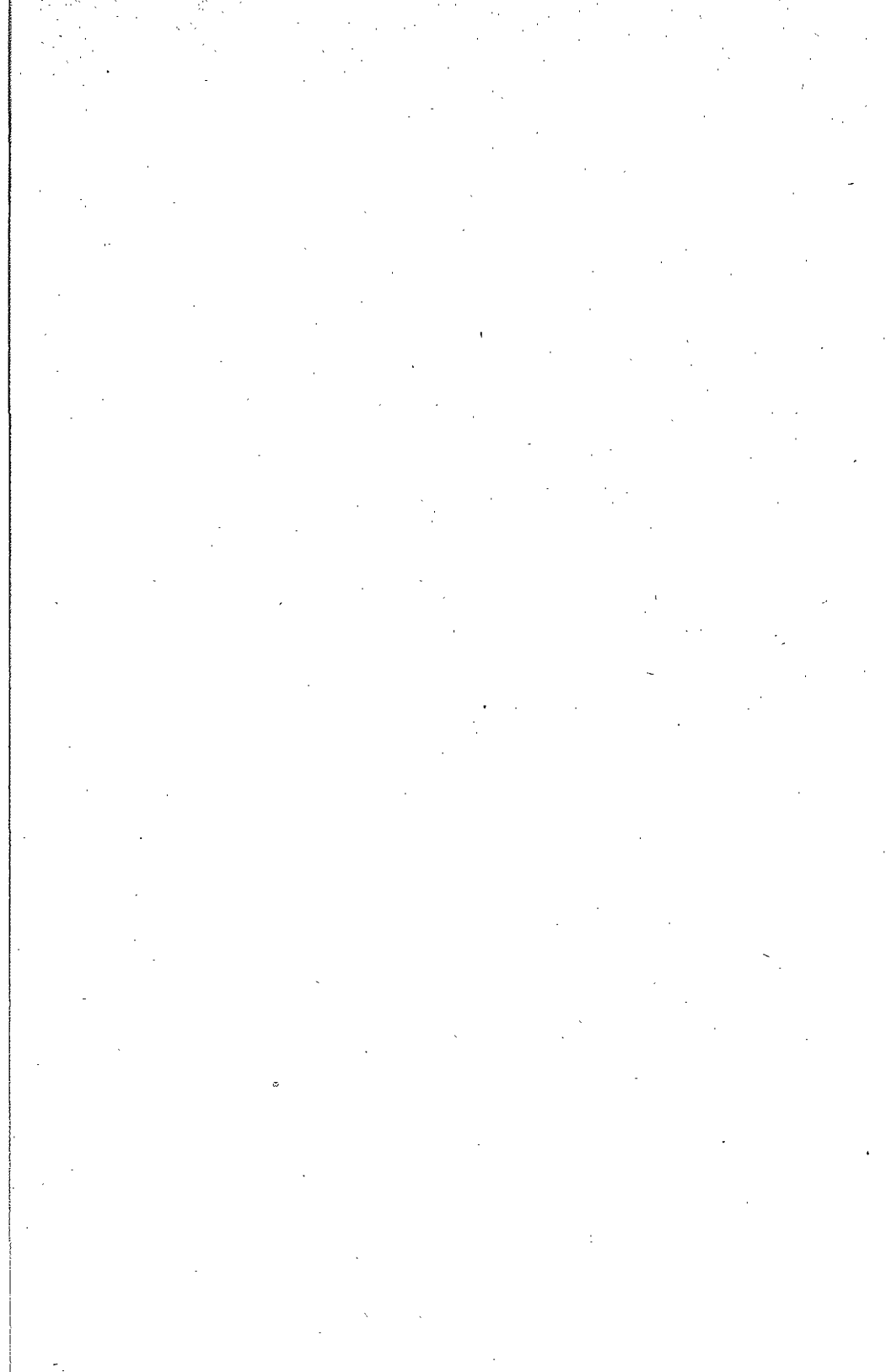
Unless the Board of Missions specifies differently each unordained missionary will have his or her own status in the mission, co-ordinate with the ordained missionaries (Acts 1926, Art. 42, pp. 41, 42).

8. ADVISORY OR DECISIVE VOTE OF UNORDAINED CHINESE MISSIONARIES:

In matters dealing directly with church organization, doctrine, discipline, and with the administration of the sacraments, unordained missionaries in China have an advisory vote but no decisive voice; in matters of general missionary administration, the disbursements of funds, the preparation of reports, and all matters not specifically ecclesiastical, unordained missionaries have a decisive as well as advisory voice in the Mission (Acts 1926, Art. 42, pp. 41, 42).

9. PENSIONING OF UNORDAINED MISSIONARIES AND DEPENDENTS:

Unordained missionaries on our mission fields, who were in health at the time of their acceptance and who through no fault of their own, become unfit to labor longer, and the widows and orphans of those who die, receive pension. The



Church or its delegates determine the time of unfitness for labor, who receive pension, and how much pension is to be received. The wife of a deceased lay-worker receives pension as long as she remains a widow, and the children till the eighteenth year. The payments, to be made quarterly, are to be taken out of the General Mission Fund (Acts 1920, Art. 25, pp. 22, 23). Cf. Concept Mission Order, Art. XVIII.

10. WHERE INDIAN CONVERTS BELONG:

All converts, baptized on the field, shall be members of the Rehoboth congregation until such time as another church or churches shall be instituted to which they should respectively belong, because nearer to them (Acts 1920, Art. 21, p. 17). Cf. Concept Mission Order, Art. V.

11. LANGUAGE STUDY COMPULSORY:

Language study is compulsory for our missionaries in Foreign and Indian fields (Acts 1920, Art. 21, p. 18).

12. ADDRESSES OF MISSION SECRETARY:

Remuneration for addresses within the circle of our own churches are to be turned over by the Secretary into the General Fund (Acts 1920, Art. 54, p. 84).

(Consistory, Lucas, Mich.)

12. Classis requests Synod that more detailed reports be given 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, educational allowances, etc.

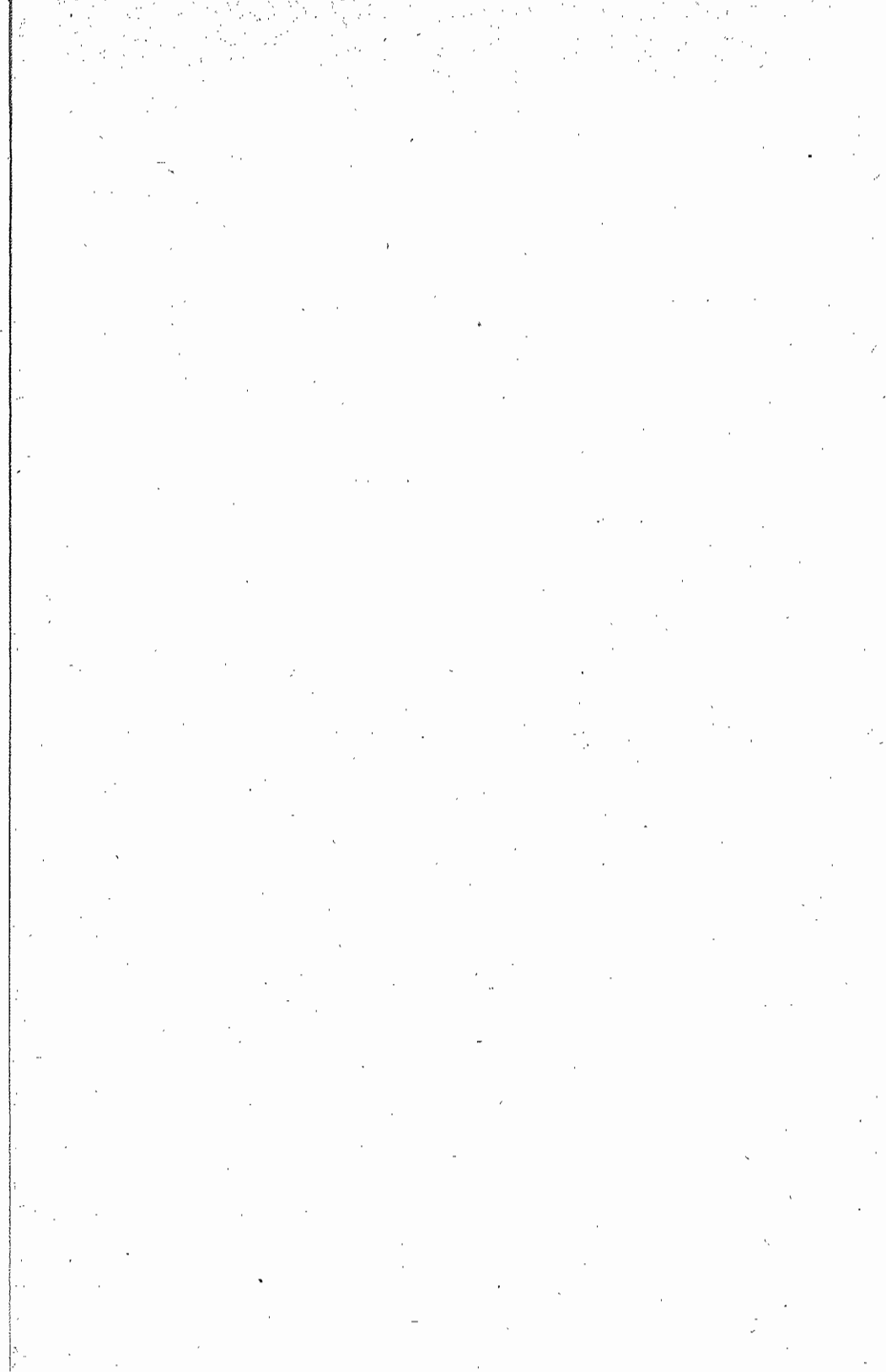
(Classis Grand Rapids East.)

III. PUBLICATION AND LITURGICAL MATTERS

REPORT PUBLICATION COMM.; S. S. LESSON REPORT;
PSALTER-HYMNAL REPORT; COMMUNICATION,
ART. 36, CONFESSION; INDEX SYNODICAL
RESOLUTIONS

13. Classis requests Synod to decide to place our "Compendium of the Christian Religion" in future editions of the New Psalter Hymnal. *Reasons:*

- a. The Compendium is a splendid brief statement of the fundamental doctrines of God's Word.



- b. It was found in our old Psalter, and it was used with appreciation.
- c. It is not found in the first editions of the New Psalter Hymnal.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

14. Classis requests Synod to publish a pocket edition of the New Psalter Hymnal at a price lower than the price of the present edition. *Grounds:*

- a. The present edition is rather large for children and others to be carried to and from church.
- b. The book-dealers were able to sell the pocket edition of the old Psalter at a price lower than the price of the large edition.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

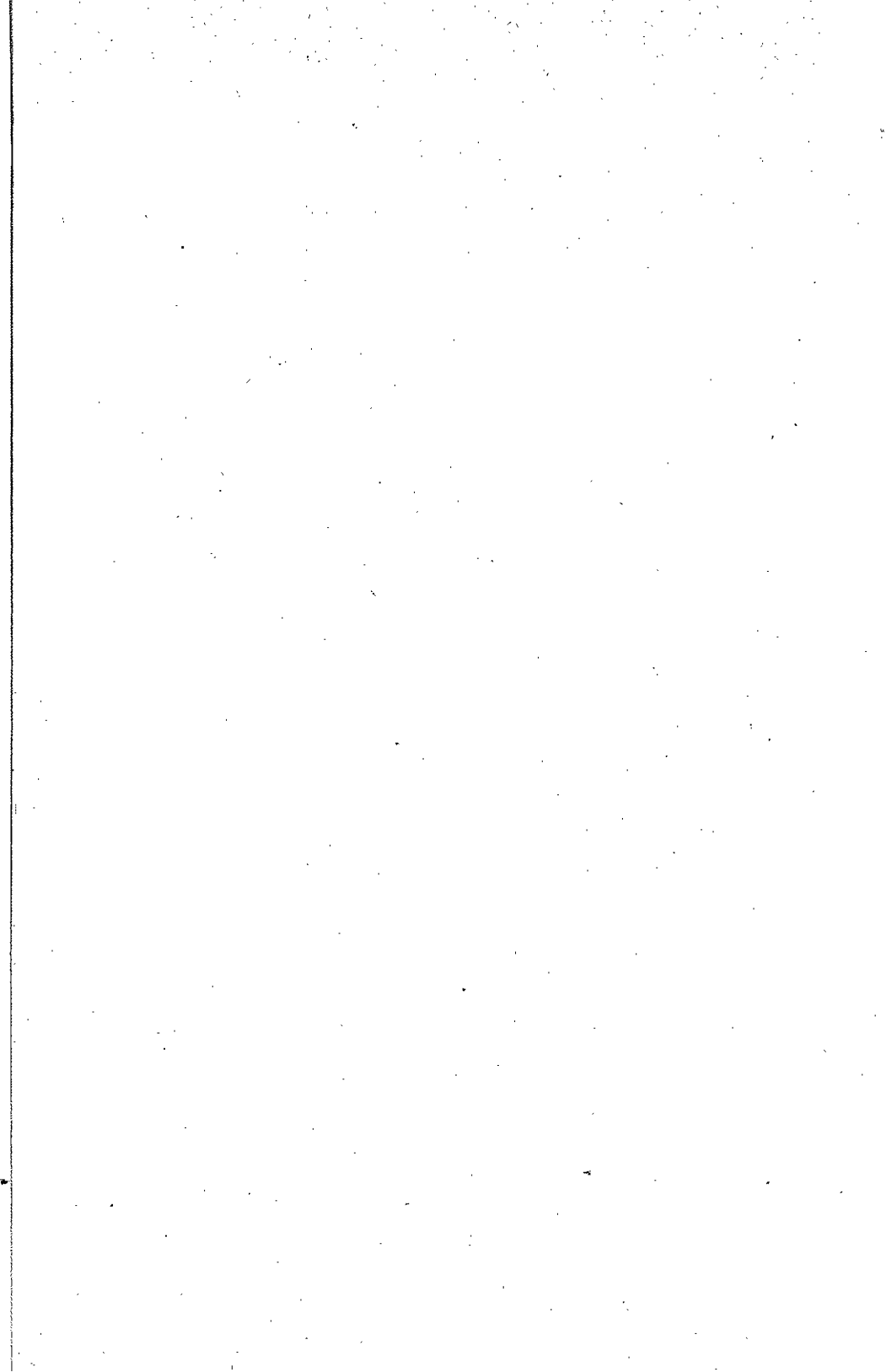
15. Classis overtures Synod to order a pocket edition of our Psalter Hymnal printed. *Grounds:*

- 1) There are many who prefer to use their own Psalter Hymnal, and it is easier for them to carry a pocket size.
- 2) There is at least one congregation which has discontinued the custom of providing members with Psalter Hymnals: (a) Because of the abuse of the books left in the pews; (b) Because it would bring the Psalter Hymnals into the homes.
- 3) For the reason stated under 1) there are many, especially the young people, who desire a pocket size edition of the Psalter Hymnal.

(Classis Zeeland.)

16. Classis Wisconsin overtures Synod to make the necessary regulations so that its own Publication Board and Publishing House can edit and publish our own Sunday School paper(s). *Grounds:*

- 1) The Sunday School is becoming an ever stronger and more influential organization in our denominational life and up to this present time has had little, if any, denominational guidance.
- 2) We are convinced that the time has come for this step. Many Sunday Schools have expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the International Sunday school lessons. Synod should express itself definitely



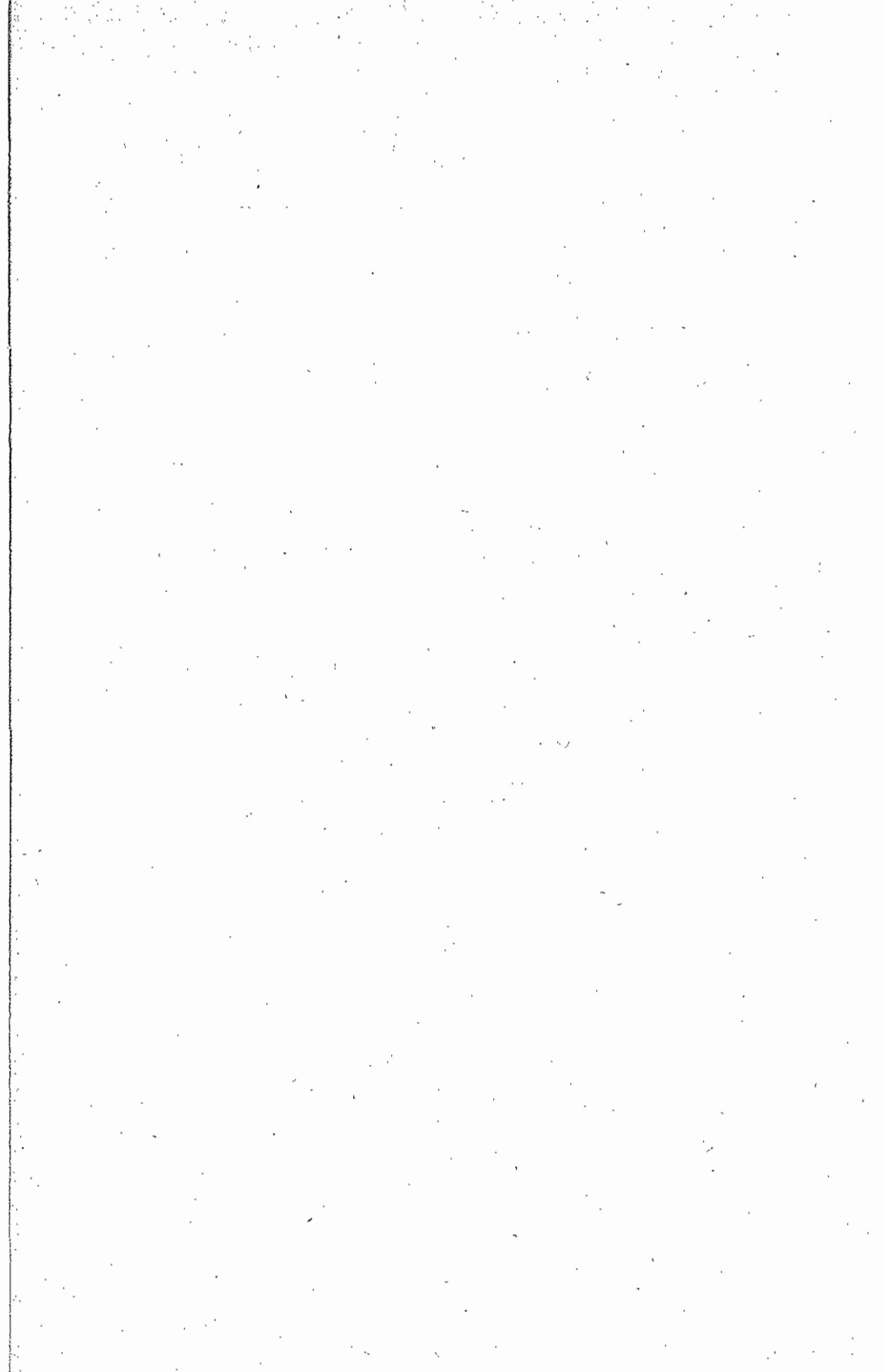
on this matter, or determine what the majority of Sunday schools prefer, and then strive towards a desired unity in our group by editing and publishing a Sunday school paper(s) that bear the stamp of Synodical approval.

- 3) We are convinced that the publication of Sunday school paper(s) should be in the hands of our own denominational Boards. At the present time Synod has no control over the publications employed by our teachers and pupils. Just recently a second group began to publish a new Sunday school paper and there is nothing that can restrain other groups from publishing its own paper(s). Eventually this may lead to an introduction of unsuitable material and even erroneous views.
- 4) Such Sunday school paper(s) would be our own denominational publication(s).
 - a. Synod could elect its own Editor and Assistants.
 - b. Synod would have a much larger field to choose from.
- 5) We believe that our Publication House is able to take care of the printing of such Sunday school paper(s). At the present time we are publishing our own Church papers (*De Wachter* and *The Banner*), our annual Year Book. The very best that money could buy would be used to improve the paper(s) and any profits would benefit our own denomination.

(Classis Wisconsin.)

17. The Consistory of the Summer Street Christian Reformed church of Passaic, N. J., overtures Synod to permit the congregations to use the form for Communion in two parts, viz., that part pertaining to the self-examination to be used at the preparatory service, and the second part, dealing with the proper observance, to be read at the Communion service, with the understanding that the introductory paragraph, dealing with the institution of the Lord's Supper, shall be read at both services. *Reasons:*

- 1) This is in harmony with our custom of having a preparatory service on the Sunday preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper. On Communion Sunday we should be prepared to partake and it is illogical at that time to explain again how to prepare.



- 2) The reading of the first part is a beautiful introduction to the preparatory sermon.
- 3) The Communion service, preaching and sacrament, takes more time than the usual service. There is danger that our beautiful form will not receive the attention it deserves, if read in its entirety. If divided, as suggested, there will be less haste in the reading, and, undoubtedly, more serious attention on the part of the congregation; thus it will be conducive to a more helpful observance of the Lord's Supper, and true piety.

(Consistory Summer St.)

18. Classis Pella overtures Synod of 1936 to appoint a committee for the purpose of drafting a revision of our present Compendium of the Heidelberg Catechism, charging said committee to alter the construction and language of the present Compendium wherever advisable, avoiding, however, all unnecessary changes, but not neglecting to incorporate in the proposed revision a brief exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer; charging said committee in the second place, to add supplementary questions and answers on the doctrinal tenets vital today, not stressed or explicitly mentioned in the Catechism and its Compendium.

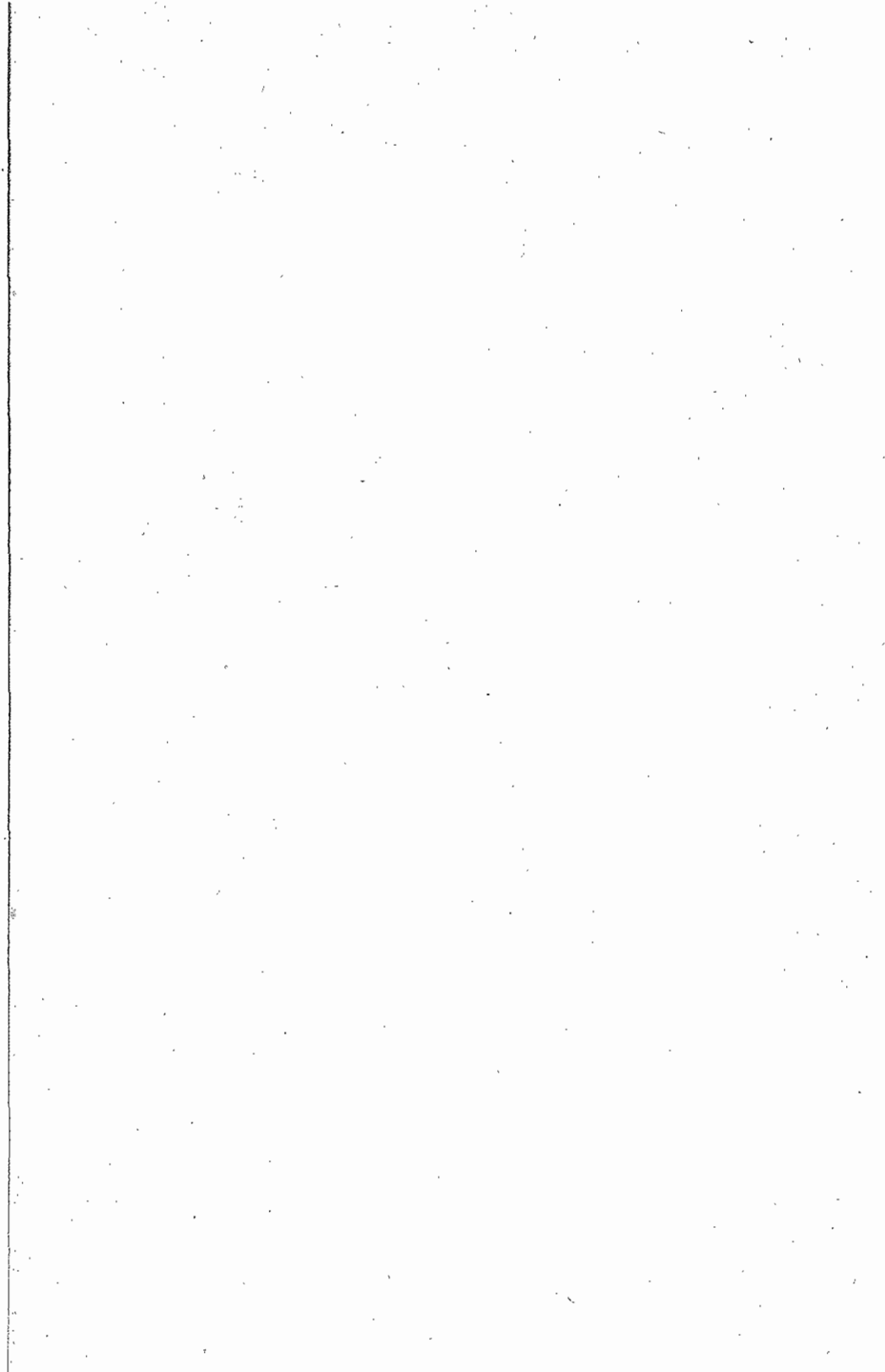
Motivation and Explanation.

Classis Pella believes that our churches should have a young people's text on Reformed Doctrine which has synodical approval, and which is up-to-date in every way. That will make for safety, uniformity and efficiency.

The Compendium commonly used in our churches was originally written in 1608, and is today consequently lacking in more than one respect. Some sections are needlessly long and involved. Furthermore, we should have a Compendium written in plain present-day English.

As to the supplementary questions and answers suggested, we feel that a new redaction of the Compendium should include a few questions and answers touching common present-day errors. These questions and answers preferably to be appended to the regular lesson material wherever occasion may demand, in a distinct type to differentiate them from the Compendium proper.

(Classis Pella.)



19. Classis also suggests that in case the proposed revision is made and recommended by Synod, said Compendium be printed in the next edition of our Psalter-Hymnal.

(Classis Pella.)

20. Classis California overtures Synod that all our churches, if at all possible, celebrate the Lord's Death on the same Sunday. *Ground:*

The idea of the unity in communion is thereby more fully brought out.

(Classis California.)

21. We hereby request Classis to petition Synod as follows: "Whereas Synod has in the recently approved Form for the Administration of Baptism expressed preference for the Revised Version's rendering of Matthew 28:19 ("into the name" for "in the name") and,

Whereas there are Consistories and ministers among us who hold that the rendering of this phrase as the Authorized Version and the Staten Vertaling have it is preferable,

Therefore we request Synod to declare that such as have a serious preference for the rendering of the Authorized Version shall not be molested for following that Version in the administration of Baptism."

(Consistory of Corsica.)

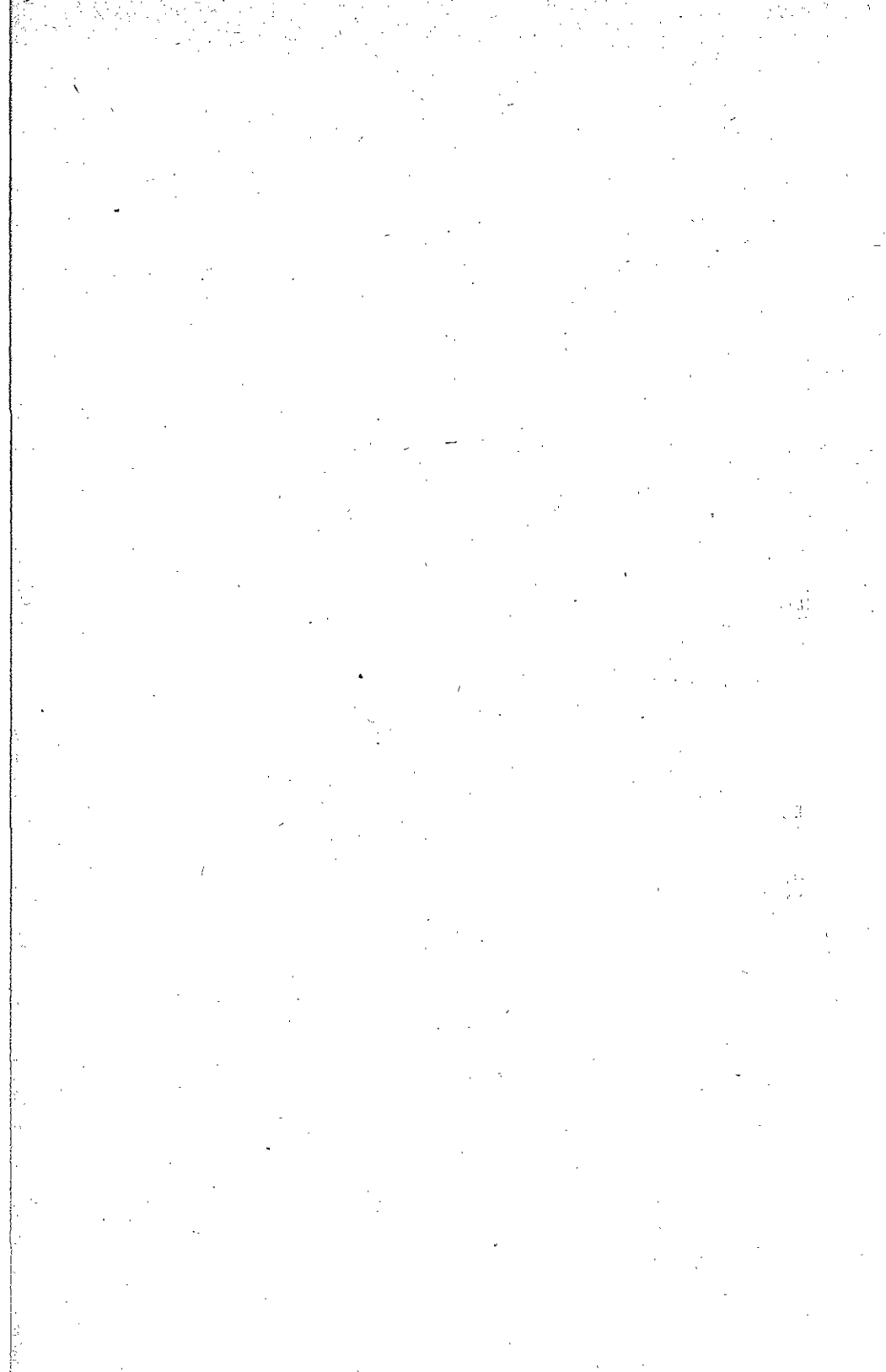
Classis Sioux Center rejected to send this. The Consistory asked that they send it. This was consented to.—J. H. Geerlings, S. C.

IV. CHURCH ORDER, EMERITI MATTERS, ETC.

EMERITUS BOARD REPORT; EMERITI FUND COMM. REPORT;
COMMITTEE ON DIVORCE REPORTS; REPORT ON
"SCHOOLS"; REPORT "HANDOPENING";
REPORT ON SYNODICAL DELEGATION

22. Classis California endorses the request of Mrs. N. Hoekenga that her present allowance from the Emeritus Fund — \$600.00 — be continued for the next two years. This request came to Classis with the endorsement of the consistory of Alameda.

Classis California also endorses the request of Mrs. M. Stuart for continued support from the Emeritus Fund and that her allowance be raised, if possible, from \$400.00



to \$600.00 because of continued illness in the family. This request came to Classis with the endorsement of the consistories of Alameda and Hanford.

Classis, finally, endorses the request of Mrs. Flora Groen for continued support from the Emeritus Fund to the sum of \$500.00 and that, if possible, the original sum of \$600.00 be allowed. This request came to Classis with the approval of the Consistory of Los Angeles.

(Classis California.)

23. Classis Grand Rapids East recommends the following for aid from the Emeritus Fund:

Mrs. J. Haveman	\$700.00	Mrs. P. Yff	\$500.00
Mrs. N. Gelderloos	800.00	Mrs. E. Breen	500.00
Rev. Van Loo	600.00	Mrs. J. Vissia	400.00
Rev. J. B. Hoekstra	700.00	Mrs. Wm. Kuipers	800.00
Rev. L. Ypma	600.00	Rev. M. Borduain	650.00
Rev. P. W. De Jonge	800.00	Rev. B. H. Einink	800.00
Rev. G. Westenberg	700.00	Rev. W. Van Korlaar	800.00
Rev. P. Jonker, Sr.	550.00	Mrs. R. Vande Kieft	400.00
Mrs. P. Van Vliet	400.00	Mrs. B. Zwaagman	500.00
Mrs. M. Vander Heide	500.00	Mrs. J. B. Jonkman	400.00
Mrs. M. J. Bosma	400.00	Mrs. N. Fokkema	700.00

(Classis Grand Rapids East.)

24a. The Consistory of the Third Christian Reformed church of Paterson, N. J., recommends the Rev. J. A. Westervelt to the Emeritus Fund for the sum of \$800.00 per annum. Classis approved this recommendation.

(Classis Hackensack.)

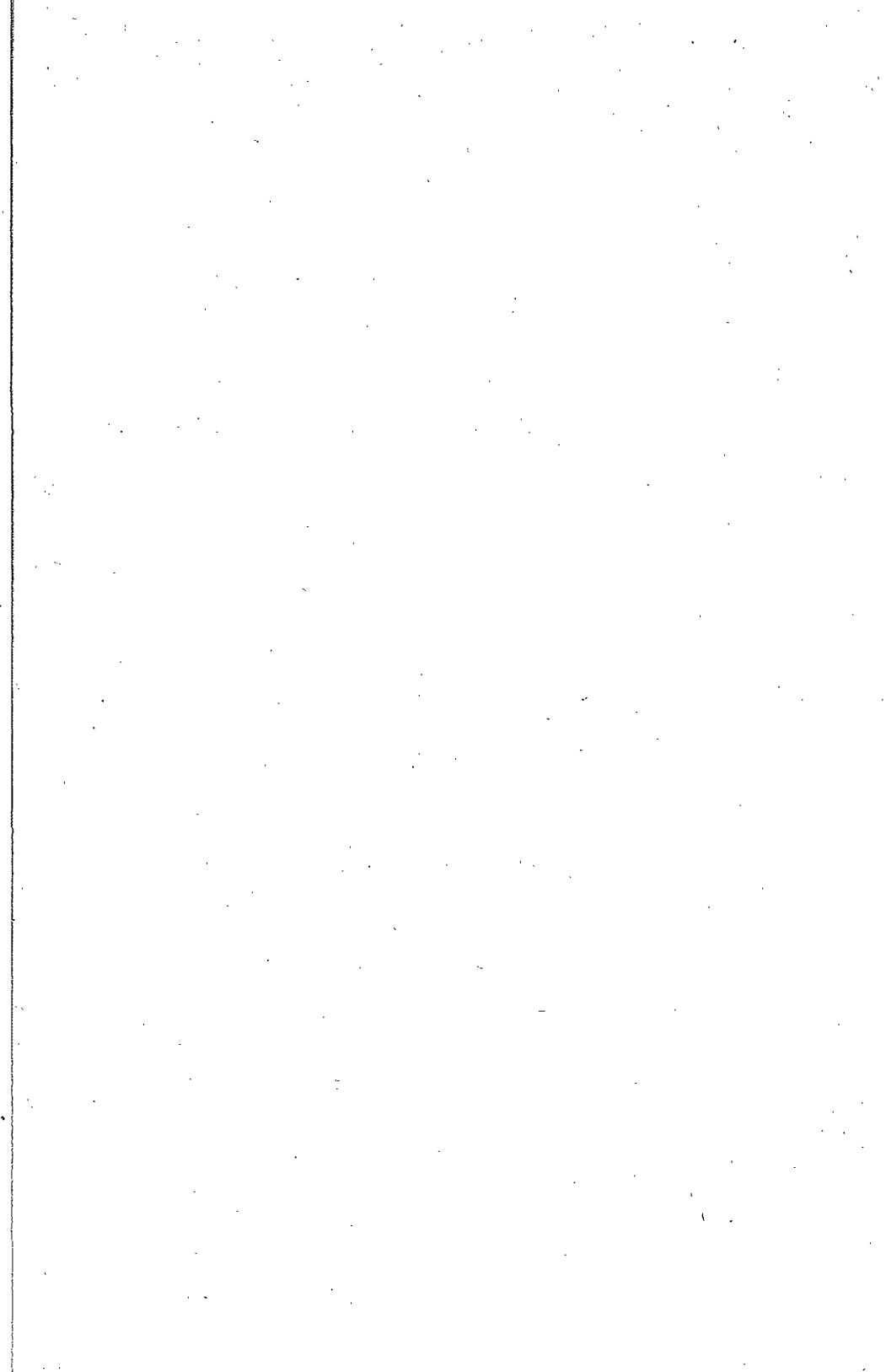
24b. Alpine Avenue requests the approval of the request of Rev. J. Timmerman that his annuity of \$600.00 from the Emeritus Fund be continued, and to forward this to Synod. Classis so decides.

Third Kalamazoo requests Classis to recommend Rev. J. Keizer to the Emeritus Fund for continued support to the extent of \$600.00. Classis so decides.

Lagrange Avenue begs Classis to recommend Mrs. Effie Weidenaar to Synod for the amount of \$631.00, from the Emeritus Fund. After hearing the delegates Classis decides to do so.

The request for continued support of Rev. J. Wyngaarden to the extent of his present allowance from the Emeritus Fund is on the agenda for the May 12 session of Classis West. The request comes from the consistories of Walker and Eastmanville.

(Classis Grand Rapids West.)



25. Northside, Passaic, informed Classis that Rev. J. R. Rozendal would need \$650 and Mrs. S. S. Vander Heide \$600.

Rochester stated that Mrs. Tempel would need \$450.

Midland Park requested \$200 for Mrs. J. L. Van Tielen, in case she should need it.

The Second Church, Paterson, informed Classis that Mrs. P. Steen would need \$600.

After receiving the necessary information in each case, Classis approved of these requests, and recommends the above mentioned beneficiaries to the Synod for these amounts.

(Classis Hudson.)

26. Classis Holland, upon request of Harderwyk's Consistory, recommends Rev. T. Vander Ark for honorable emeritation. *Grounds:*

1) Declining years.

2) Some physical defects such as foot trouble and his being somewhat impaired in hearing.

(Classis Holland.)

27. Classis Holland decided to recommend the following to the Emeritus Fund for support with the amount stipulated for each person or persons involved:

a. Rev. W. Kole.....	\$600.00 per year
b. Rev. J. A. Gerritsen.....	600.00 per year
c. Rev. K. Poppen.....	800.00 per year
d. Mrs. J. Robbert.....	500.00 per year
e. Mrs. H. M. Vander Ploeg.....	450.00 per year
f. Mrs. A. Keizer.....	400.00 per year
g. Mrs. H. Tuls.....	600.00 per year

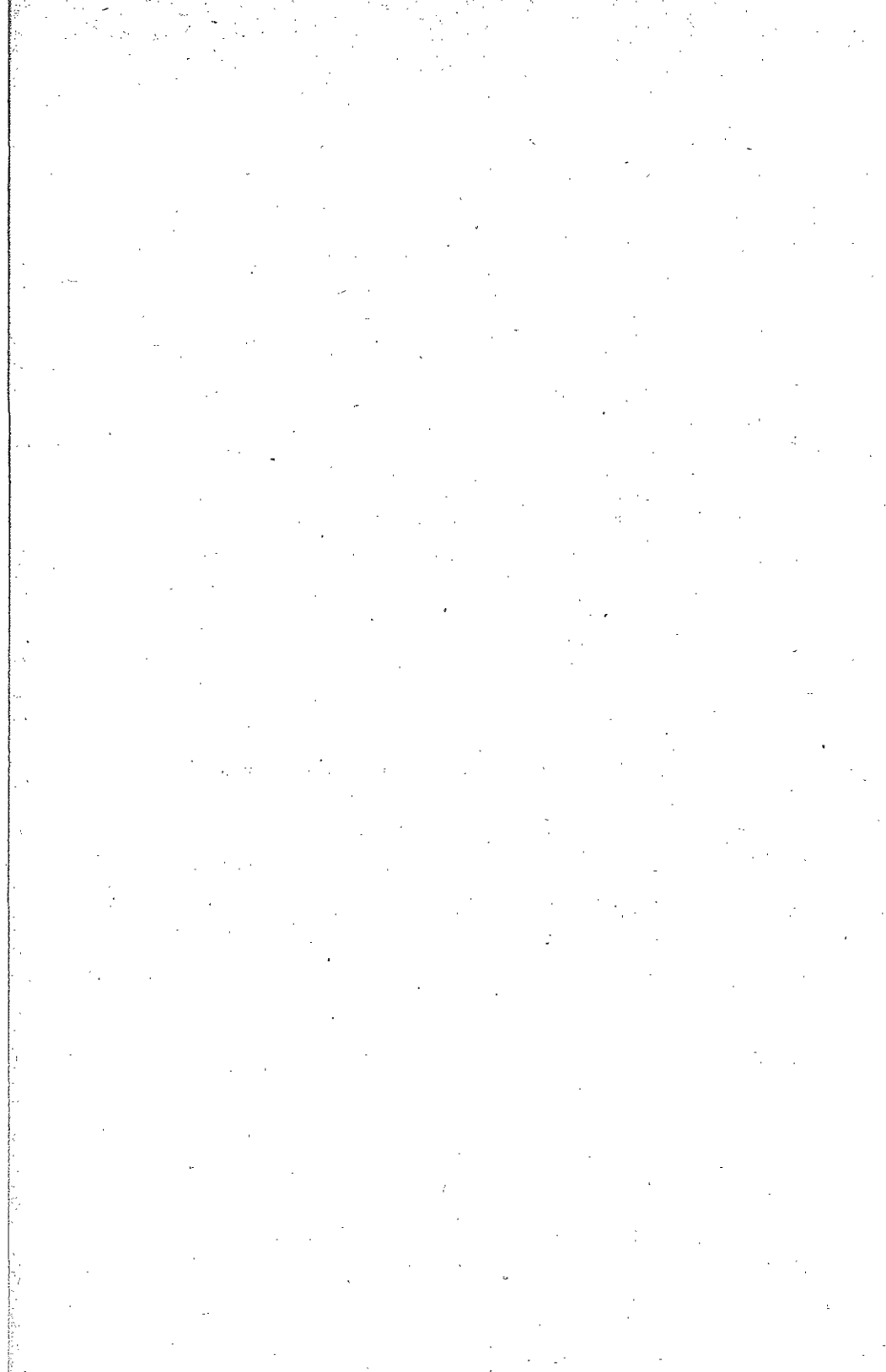
(Classis Holland.)

28. Rev. Rottier recommended to the Emeritus Fund for \$800.00 support annually. Other cases will be considered at the May Classis.

(Classis Illinois.)

29. Classis Muskegon supports the recommendation to Synod of First Fremont that the Emeritus Fund Committee pay the Rev. H. Ahuis \$600.00 per annum for the next two years.

Classis Muskegon approves the recommendation to Synod of Bethany that Mrs. J. L. Heeres, widow of the late



Rev. J. L. Heeres, be supported out of the Emeritus Fund to the extent of \$200.00 per annum for the next two years.
(Classis Muskegon.)

30. Classis recommends the following Emeriti to receive aid in the amounts indicated:

1. Rev. J. J. Dyk for \$1,000.00 upon recommendation of Orange City II.
2. Mrs N. Fokkens for \$800.00 upon recommendation of Ochevedan.
3. Rev. J. Gulker for \$600.00 upon recommendation of Edgerton
4. Mrs. J. H. Schultz for \$200.00 upon recommendation of Edgerton and Middelburg
5. Mrs A. W. Meyer for \$150.00 upon recommendation of Pease
6. Mrs. A. B. Voss for \$1,000.00 upon recommendation of Hospers
7. Mrs. H. J. Heynen for \$500.00 upon recommendation of Orange City I
8. Rev. F. Schuurman for \$800.00 upon recommendation of Orange City I
9. Mrs. M. Vander Heide for \$400.00 upon recommendation of Hospers
10. Rev L. Ypma for \$600.00 upon recommendation of Sioux Center II

(Classis Orange City.)

31. Honorable emeritation was granted the Rev. D. J. Meyer of Woden, Iowa, at the meeting of Classis held September 25-26, 1934. Honorable emeritation was also granted the Rev. G. Westenberg, Parkersburg, Iowa, at the meeting of Classis held September 24-25, 1935. (The particulars have been sent to the Emeritus Board.)

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

32. De Classis verzoekt bestendiging der steun uit de Emeritus Kas for Mrs. Hatty Brink, Mrs. E. Breen, en Ds. M. Borduin.

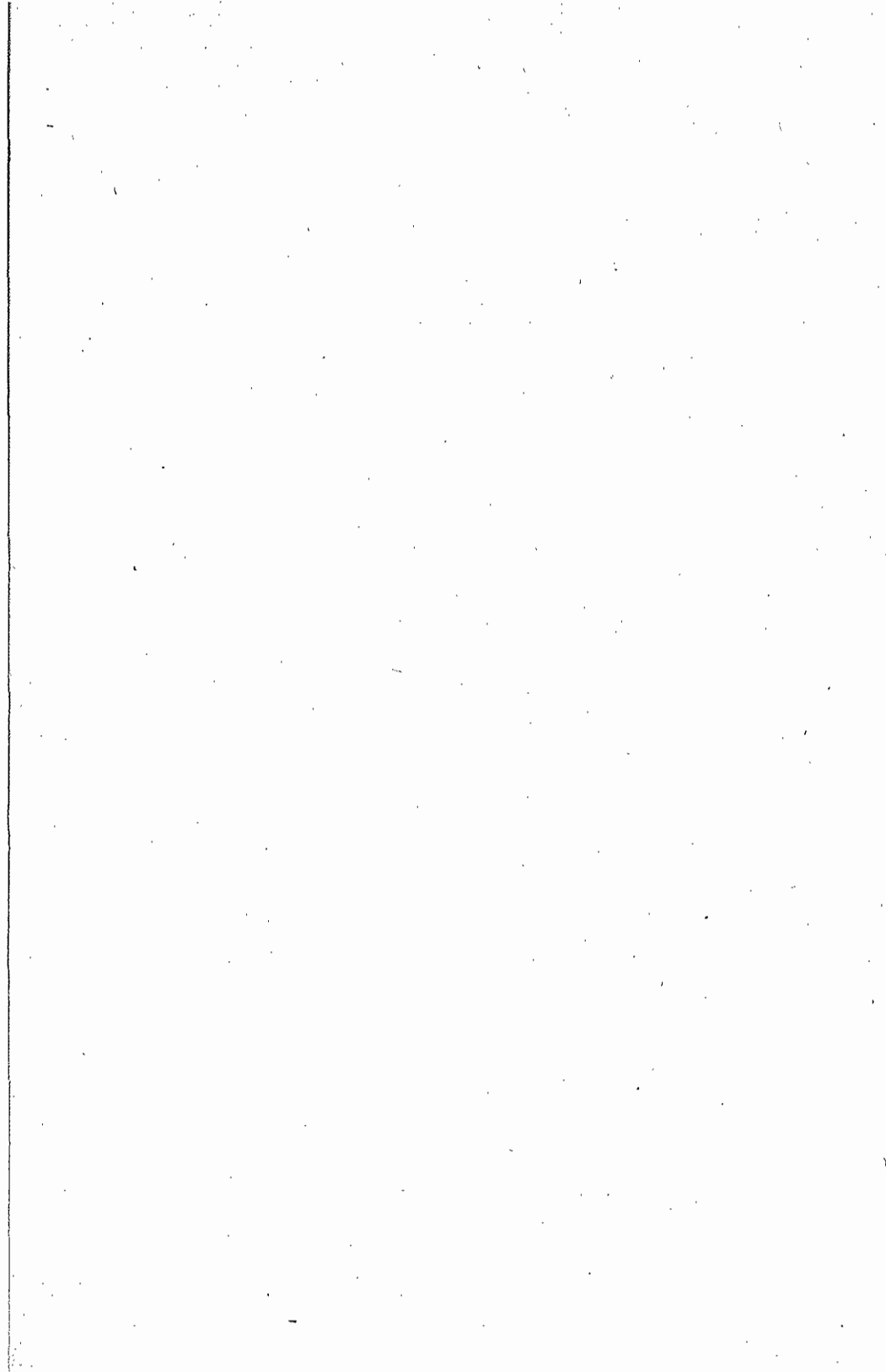
Zij verzoekt de goedkeuring der Synode voor de emeriteering van Ds. A. Guikema.

Gronden: Gevorderde leeftijd en een overvloed van jeugdige arbeiders.

(Classis Pacific.)

33. Classis Wisconsin endorsed the requests of Mrs. A. W. Meyer for \$150 aid from the Emeritus Fund, and of Mrs. H. J. Haarsma for \$600 aid from the Emeritus Fund.

(Classis Wisconsin.)



34. Classis decided to send this overture without declaring thereby that we give adhesion to the argument at every step.

Consistory of Corsica petitions Classis to overture Synod to define the terms "Protest" and "Appeal" (as they are current in our ecclesiastical parlance) distinguishing between them. *Reasons:*

It appears that these terms, although they have, as we believe, definitely different and distinctive connotation, are used without careful discrimination in our ecclesiastical assemblies and records, to the detriment of the good order in the Church of Christ.

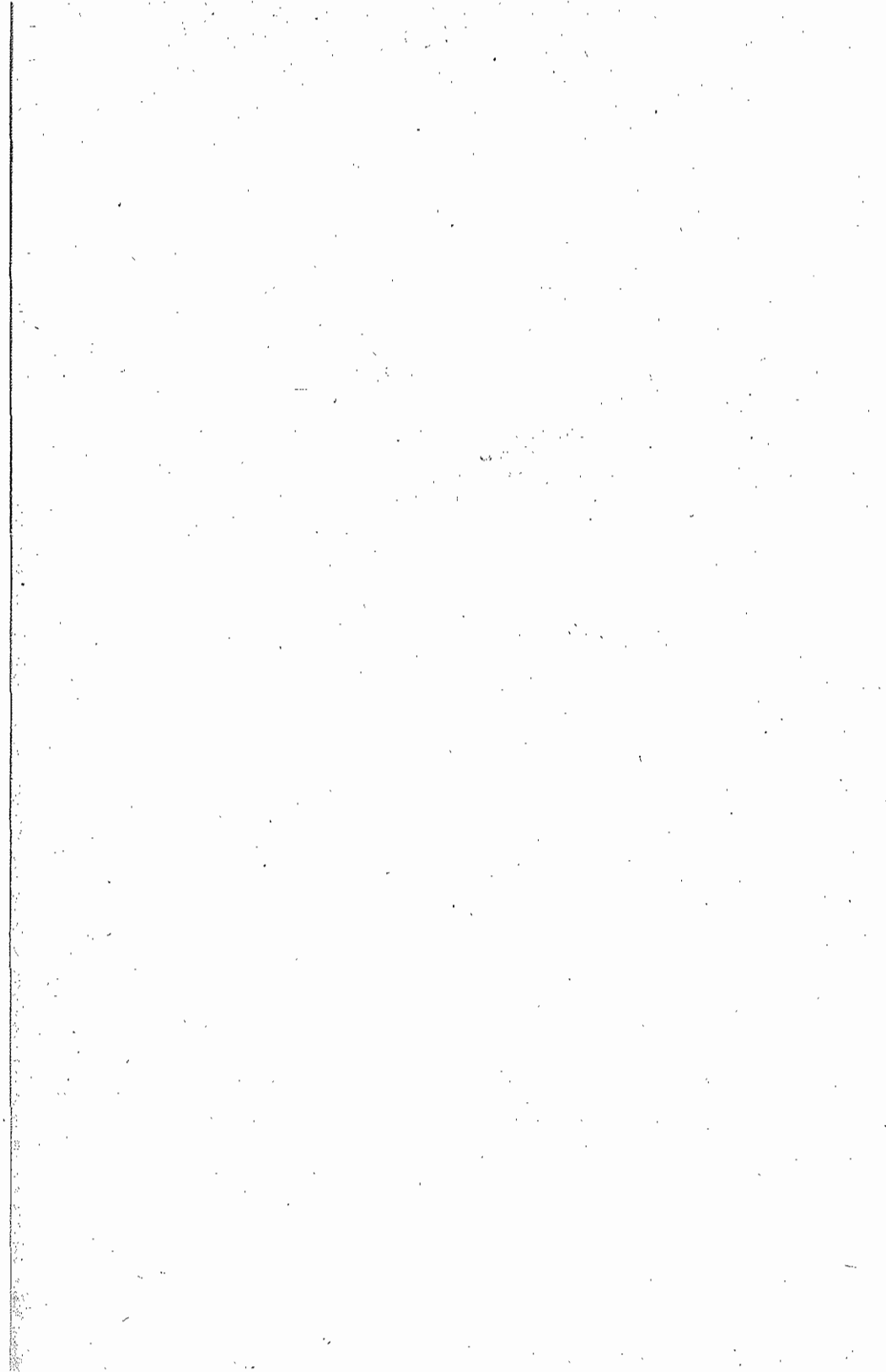
ARGUMENT

(1) *"These terms have definitely different and distinct connotation."* To illustrate:

- a. The function of *protesting* is exclusively the function of the governing element in Christ's Church, i. e., the office-bearing element. *Appealing* is rightly the function of the governed element.
- b. The function of *protesting* implies competency to adjudicate; the function of *appealing* implies incompetency in judicial function.
- c. A *protest* does not imply a change of venue; an *appeal* does.

(2) *"Yet they are used without careful discrimination in our ecclesiastical assemblies and records."* To illustrate we refer to a few examples in our latest Synodical Acta, although the examples might be supplemented from almost any of the Classical Minutes. We indicate the following examples:

- a. All the complaints heard by our Synod of 1934 are entered in the index of the Acta under "protests"; nothing is entered as an "appeal."
- b. Page 86 (bottom) speaks of certain appellants as appealing from the "actions and decisions of Classis Holland and the Consistory of Graafschap." It is evident that one cannot appeal from the *actions* of any judicatory.
- c. We are informed on page 86 (bottom) that a Mrs. R. H. has protested. The above definitions accepted (as we think they must) it is impossible for any *woman* to protest, our judicatories being constituted as they now are.

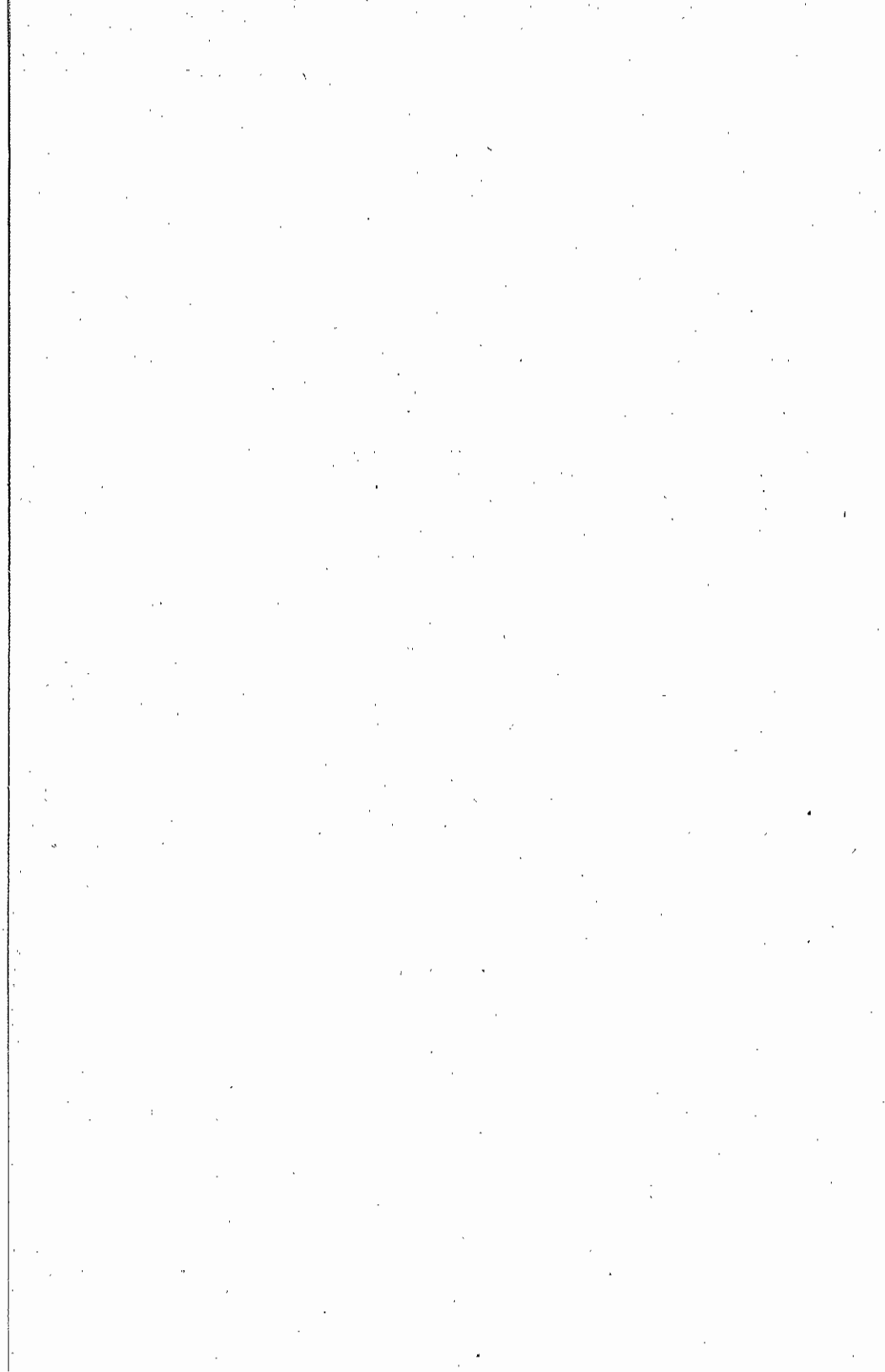


- d. It appears that the "Sevenfold Appeal" (page 86 ff.) was in reality not an appeal at all. Notice that its burden is not to impugn specified decisions, the "sine qua non" of an appeal.
- e. On page 117 (top) we read of complaints of lay-members called "protests." We even read of a "protest" issuing from a non-personal source!

(3) *"To the detriment of the good order in the Church of Christ."* For example:

- a. It can be shown (foregoing definitions accepted) that our major assemblies treat material which is not competent. Complaints originating with lay-members are competent at our major assemblies only when they impugn a specified decision of a minor assembly (We hope it is not presumptuous to say that the whole "Ensing Case" referred to on p. 86 ff. of our latest Synodical Acta was by this token incompetent when offered at our Synod.)
- b. Article 31 of our Church Order assigns the right of appeal to persons complaining that they have been wronged by a decision of a minor assembly. Our careless use of terms is making this Article mean, in the mind of many, that if one is dissatisfied with his Consistory he can protest to Classis and Synod, which is an entirely different matter. There are cases on record of a Classis treating such a "protest" in the absence of any Consistorial decision at all, not to speak of an impugned decision!
- c. To assign to a non-office-bearing member the right to protest is to assert that he has judicial power, competency to adjudicate. That we hold to be an assertion fraught with grave danger. It is true, there is a difference of opinion among Reformed writers as to whether the judicial power exercised by a Consistory has at any time and in any sense ever resided with the membership of the Church. It is neither here nor there to argue this point in this connection; for a "protesting" lay-member implies a judicial competency apart from Consistory, yes, usually in contradiction to it.

(Consistory Corsica.)



35. The Consistory of the First Christian Reformed Church of Englewood would like to bring the following matter to the attention of your honorable body to submit for your deliberation:

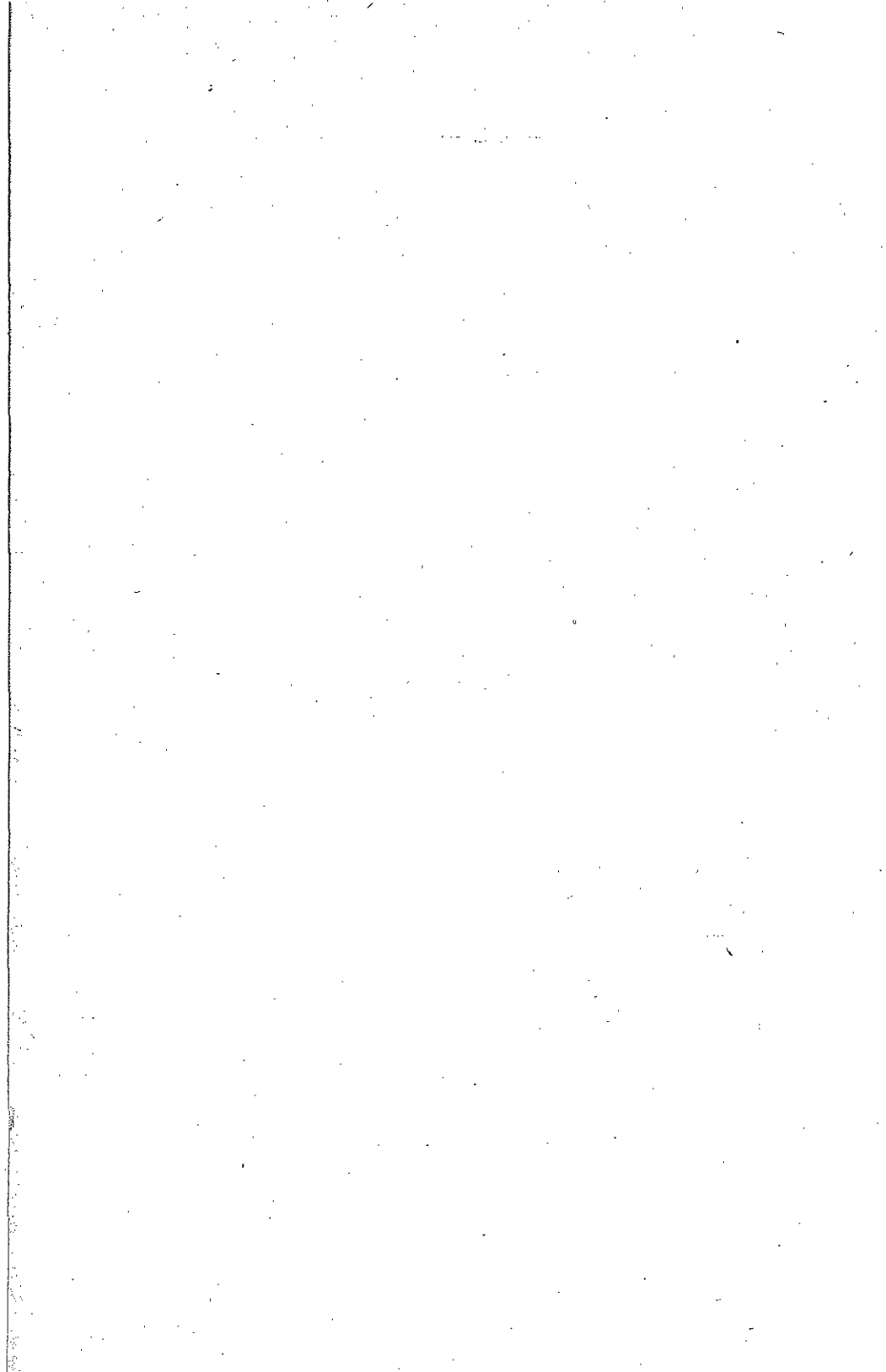
I. How to proceed with discipline in the case of members of the Christian Reformed Church who have deviated from our doctrinal position to the extent that they cannot be admitted to the Lord's Supper, but whose manner of life is otherwise blameless. The Consistory, together with Classis Illinois, has unanimously decided that a member of our church who denies the validity of water baptism for the Church of the New Testament dispensation can not be admitted to the table of the Lord.

II. However, whether such a member can in due course be ex-communicated with our Form of Ex-communication and whether the language, to-wit: "... the great sin and grievous offense given by our fellow-member, ... recover himself out of the snare of the devil, who has taken him captive at his will, ... that by this corrupt and as yet incurable member we may not put the whole body of the Church in danger, ... and that God's Name may not be blasphemed, ... that he is to be counted as a Gentile and a publican," may be applied to such a one, while he himself may profess to be a Christian, about that is the widest divergence of opinion.

III. There is at present, according to our Church polity, no way to get rid of such members except by way of ex-communication with our adopted Form.

IV. Therefore we petition Synod to consider this problem and enlighten our churches. *Grounds:*

- 1) It concerns a concrete case.
 - 2) We have reasons to believe that the problem is not merely a local one.
 - 3) To continue a member under silent censure for a period of years without advancing is anomalous to say the least.
 - 4) A synodical pronouncement on this matter will deepen the consciousness in our Church that discipline, covering doctrinal issues, means something and applies to our membership as well as to officers.
- (Consistory First Chr. Ref. Church of Englewood.)



36. Classis Wisconsin overtures Synod to decide in cases of appeal and protest; the proper manner of procedure shall be: that a copy of the appeal or protest, forwarded to the major assembly, shall be sent to that body, and only to that body, from whose decision appeal or against which protest is made. *Grounds:*

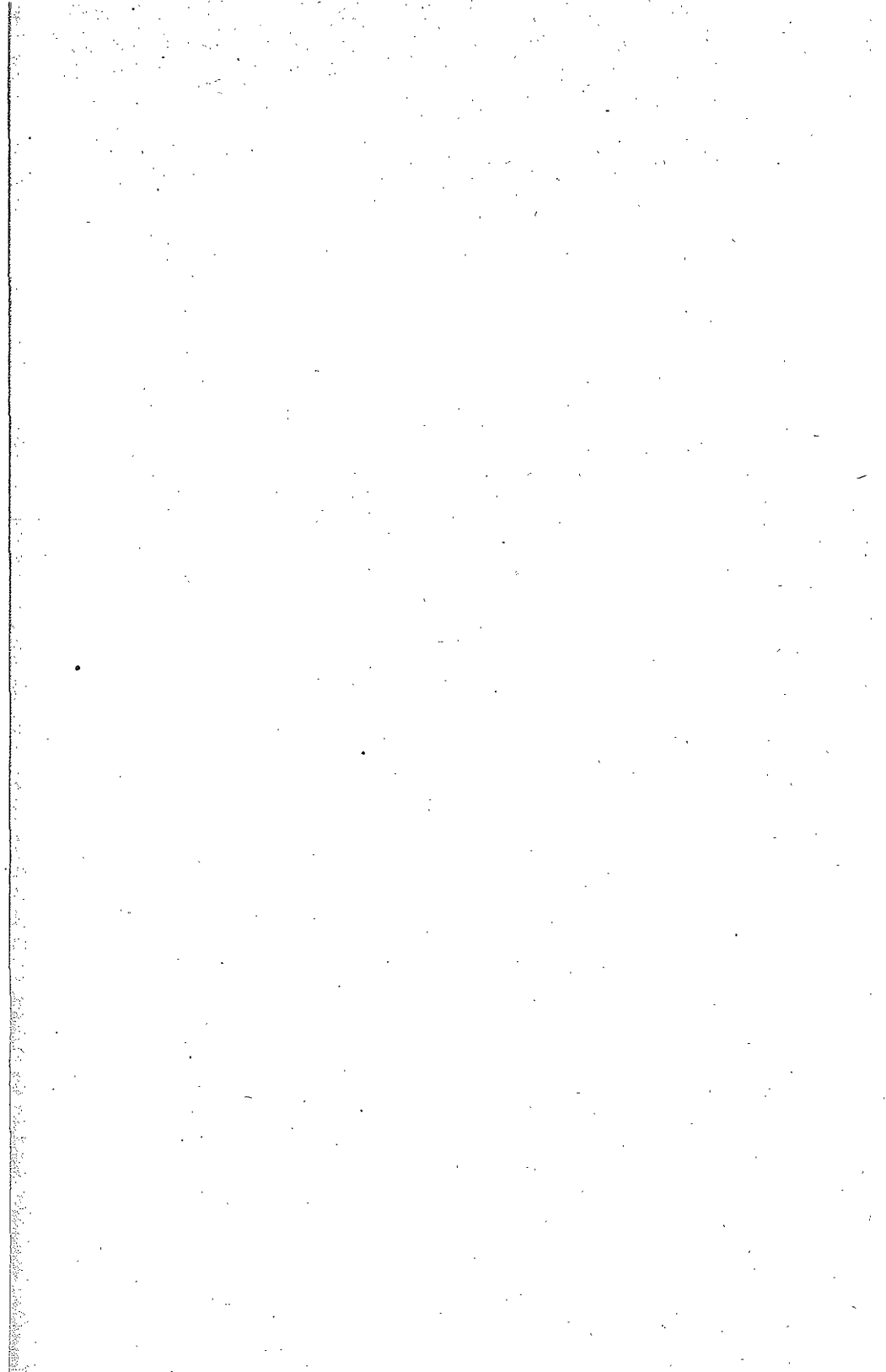
- 1) There is no specific regulation in the Church Order governing the manner to be pursued in such cases.
- 2) Present-day practice among us is diverging in opposite directions, so that
 - a. There are some who reason on the ground of silence of Church Order on this point, that it is not necessary to send a copy of the document, forwarded to the major assembly, to that body against whose decision appeal or against whose action protest is made.
 - b. There are others who believe that it is proper that not only the body from whose decision appeal or against whose acts protest is made should receive a copy of the document presented to the major assembly, but also other bodies who have little or no interest in the particular matter.

(Classis Wisconsin.)

37. Classis Pella desires to inform Synod that serious conscientious objections have been presented to Classis against the decision of Synod of 1918 regarding members under discipline who resign their membership to escape censure and ex-communication.

The decision reads as follows:

“De Synode, overwegende dat het zich onttrekken aan de discipline, waaronder men zich vrijwilliglijk gesteld heeft, en het verbreken van de gemeenschap met de Kerk, waartoe men behoort, om reden die den toets van Gods Woord niet kunnen doorstaan, een niet licht te achten zonde is; en dat wel degenen die zulks doen, ernstig en aanhoudend geboden moeten worden; van hun dwaalweg terug te komen, en niet spoedig moeten losgelaten worden; maar ook, dat ten slotte toch altijd zoowel als het zich voegen bij de Kerk als instituut als het blijven daarbij, kerkrechtelijk, aan de vrijheid van ieder persoonlijk moet verblijven, *oordeelt* dat iemand geen object kan zijn van de kerkelijke tucht, als hij volhardt in de opzegging van zijn lidmaatschap.” (Acta 1918, Art. 53.)



Against this ruling the following objections have been raised especially:

— Synod has given no grounds from Scripture or Confession to sustain its decision of 1918.

— We become members of God's Church by an act of God, (cf. Acts 2:41, 47; 5:14; Eph. 1:5, 6; Confession, Art. 32; Catechism, L. D. 21, 27) and not by a free act of man.

— The present decision of Synod paralyzes the work of the Consistory in the exercise of discipline, and it gives the member a certain right which tends to nullify the authority of Christ and to profane the holiness of the Church.

Classis Pella does not share these objections, but we do feel that it might be wise and necessary for Synod to elucidate and substantiate the ruling of 1918, so that present conscientious objections may possibly be removed. Classis also feels that some Consistories have perhaps been too hasty in accepting resignations for membership, for reasons of ease, particularly when the party or parties concerned are "troublesome." We believe that a word of warning on this score would not be amiss.

We would further suggest that Synod advise our churches as to the announcement which Consistories should make when a member persistently breaks the tie that binds him to the Congregation. Said announcements, it seems to us, should stress the grievousness of the sin of resigning one's relation to the Church, particularly to escape discipline, and it should solemnly warn against this evil.

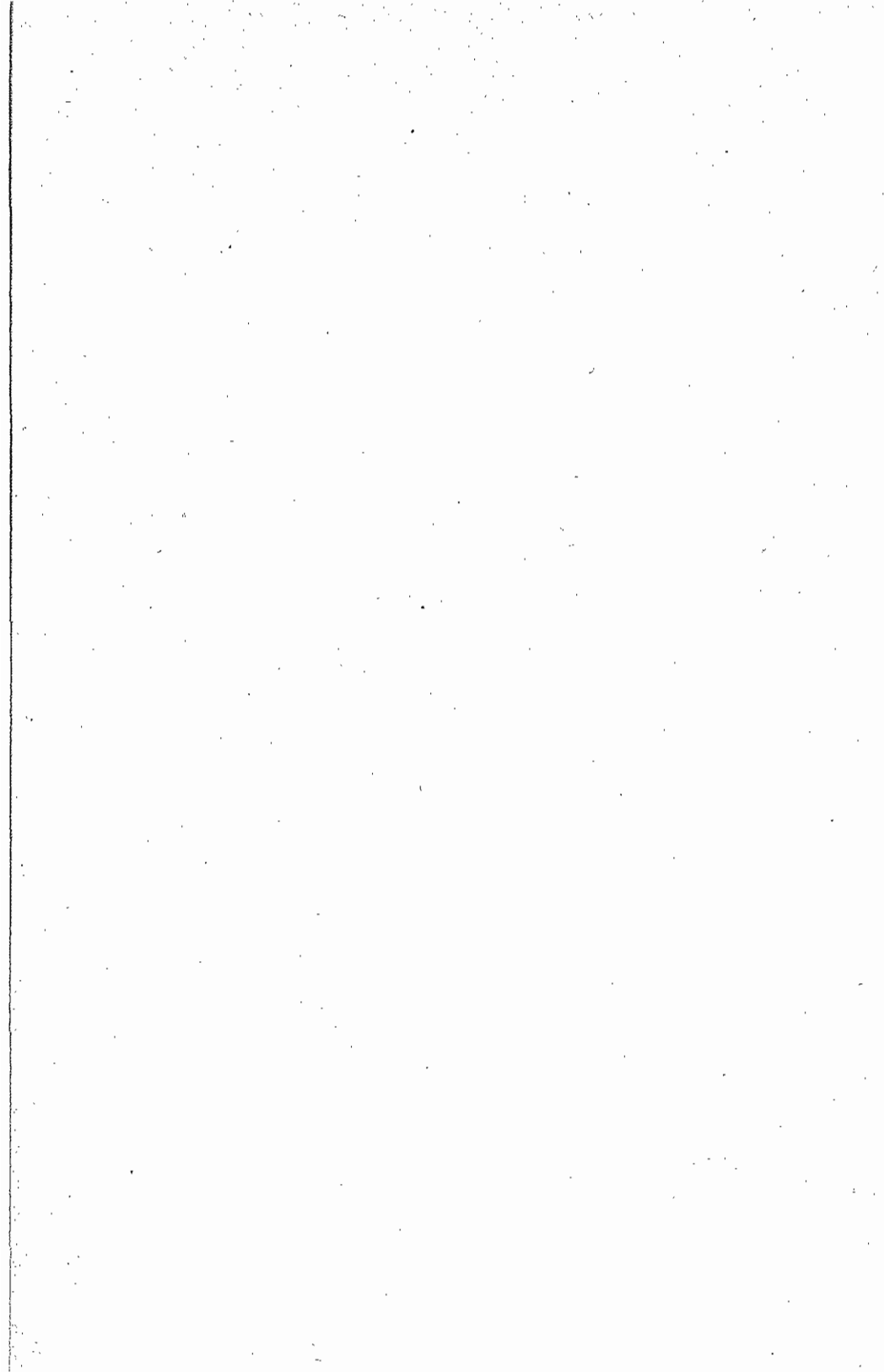
(Classis Pella.)

38. NUMBER OF DELEGATES TO THE SYNOD OF 1936: Classis has taken the following decision at its meeting held September 25-26, 1934: "Classis decides to send only four delegates to the next Synod provided the majority of Classes concur."

(Question: How will Classis receive the information what the other Classes have done? Classis should know before its spring session, March, 1936.)

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

39. Classis Pella urges Synod of 1936 to come to a definite and permanent decision regarding the number of delegates each Classis is to send to Synod, inasmuch as irregularity and uncertainty in this respect are unpleasant and detrimental. We fear that inasmuch as the committee



concerned brings up the matter of increasing the number of Classes, the matter of reaching a definite ruling as to the number of delegates may be side-tracked and postponed.

(Classis Pella.)

40. The May Classis will also consider the advisability of sending four delegates to Synod instead of six if at that time a majority of the Classes favor sending four.
(Classis Illinois.)

41. De Classis besloot, om door te zenden naar de Synode, de volgende instructie van Lynden I:

“De Synode ga niet over tot de verandering van Art. 50 K. O.” *Gronden:*

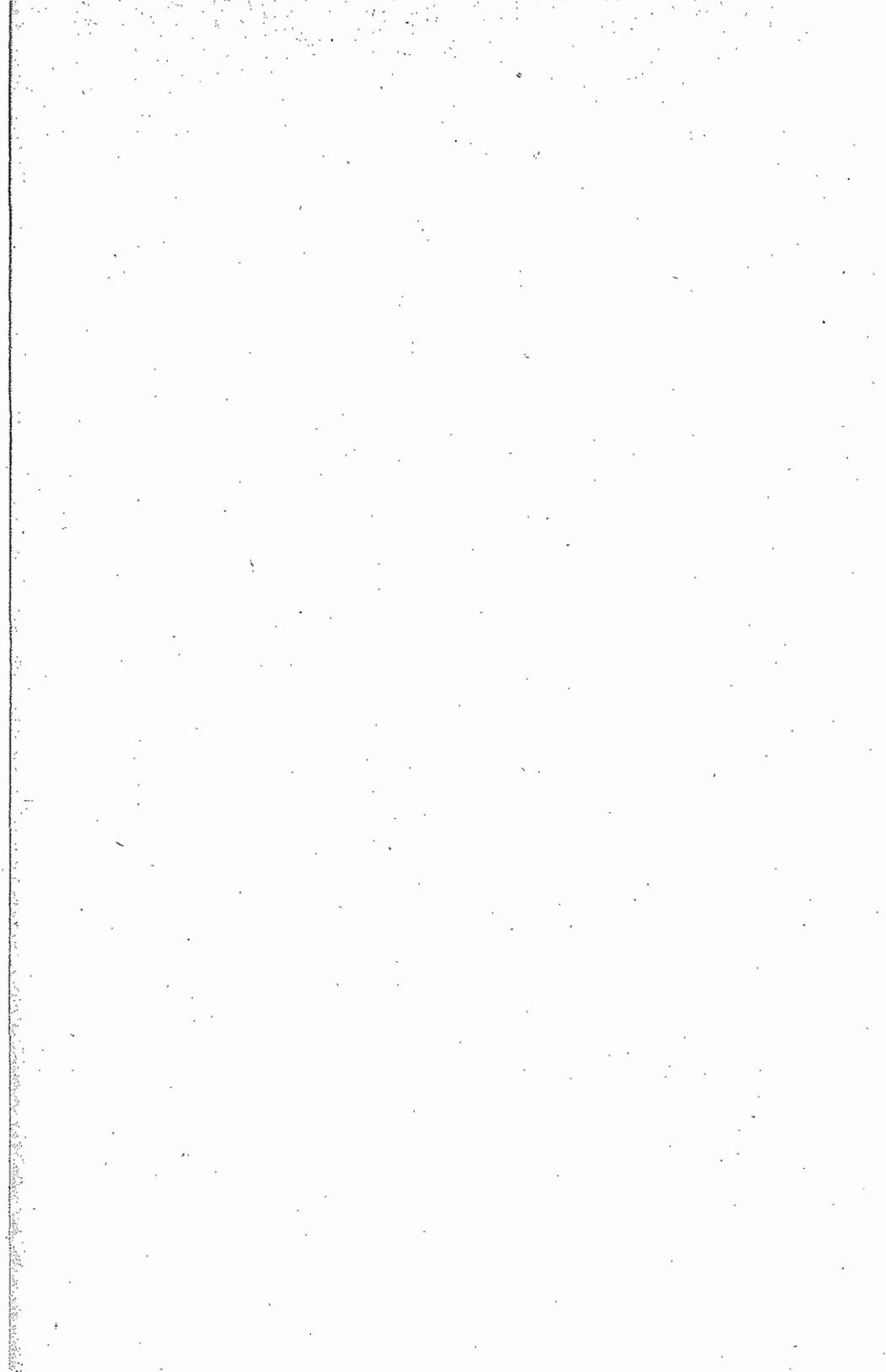
- 1) Op de Synoden van 1926 en 1932 is daarover voldoende uitspraak gedaan.
- 2) De kerken hebben in 1934 bewezen, dat finantieele bezuiniging mogelijk is, zonder verandering van Art. 50 K. O.
- 3) De verst gelegen Classes zijn al zoo ver van het centrum van ons kerkelijk leven verwijderd, dat eene vermindering van afgevaardigden eer een schadelijke dan profijtelijke uitwerking zal hebben.
- 4) Het profijt der kerken staat hooger, dan met een verminderd aantal afgevaardigden beter te kunnen werken ter Synode.

(Classis Pacific.)

42. Classis Orange City hecht hare adhaesie aan het advies van de Commissie van Preadvies in re Synodale afvaardiging (zie Rapport in *De Wachter* van 4 Maart, 1936, p. 151) — Dat de Synode enkele overgrootte Classes adviseere de samenstelling hunner Classes zoo te wijzigen, dat er zoodoende een paar meer Classes gevormd worden. *Gronden:*

- 1) Omdat het verschil in aantal gemeenten te groot is.
- 2) Wijl wij dan kunnen komen tot oplossing van het afvaardigings-probleem en toch in de zuivere lijn blijven.

De Synode wijzige dan ook Art. 50 K. O. in die voege dat “*Van drie Dienaren en drie Ouderlingen*” veranderd wor-



de en leze: "Tot deze zullen twee Dienaren en twee Ouderlingen afgevaardigd worden."

Grond: Als het aantal Classes grooter wordt dan zullen vier afgevaardigden van elke Classis voldoende zijn.
(Classis Orange City.)

43. De Classis verzoekt de Synode uit te spreken dat verwacht wordt dat voortaan naar besluit zal afgevaardigd worden.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

44. De Classis adviseert de Synode voortaan elk jaar te vergaderen, in plaats van elke twee jaren.

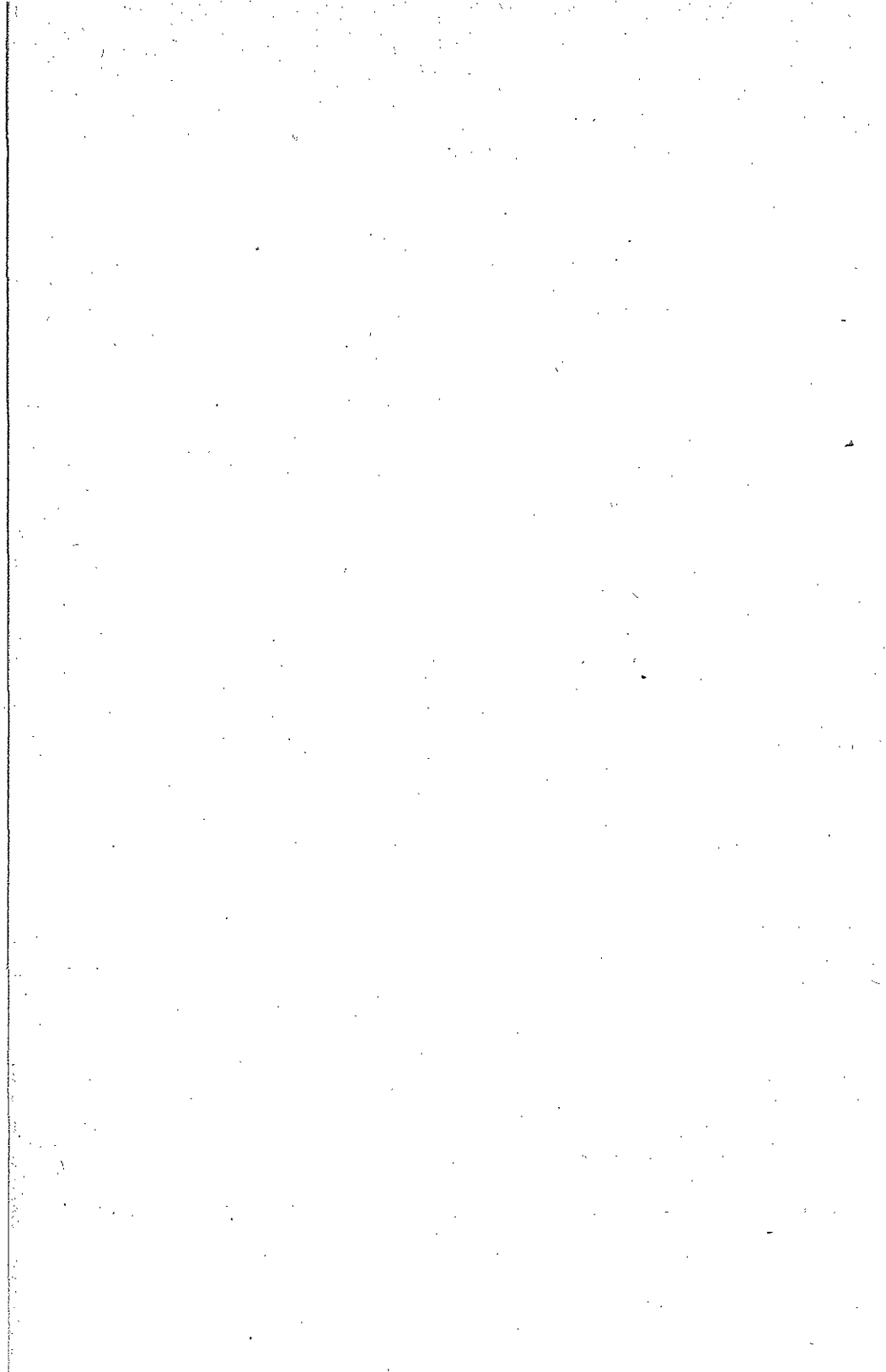
Gronden:

- a. De hoeveelheid werk die telkens ter synodale tafel verschijnt is van zulk een groot omvang, dat vele zaken niet de aandacht ontvangen die ze moesten ontvangen.
- b. In zaken zooals protesten en bezwaarschriften, is de tijd tusschen de eene Synode en de andere meermalen te lang. Vaak tot groote schade van de zaken of de personen die er bij betrekken zijn. Tevens komen er andere zaken voor waarin veel aan commissies of boards moet overgelaten worden hetwelk door de Synode zelf kon behartigd worden.
- c. Onder den tegenwoordigen regel is de duur der synodale vergadering te lang voor de afgevaardigden. Niet alleen dat sommigen niet afgevaardigd kunnen worden en anderen maar zeer bezwaarlijk zoo lang van huis kunnen, maar ook wordt op zulke langdurige vergaderingen tegen het einde niet meer met de vereischte belangstelling en bezieling gewerkt.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

45. Synod state that the rule relative the baptized-member-system, Acts 1902, Art. 128, p. 66, is no more obligatory. (The intent of this overture is to obtain permission to leave this obsolete rule out of future Church Orders.) The rule reads:

"At every classical meeting investigation shall be made whether the various churches are laboring to execute the decision of Synod 1898, Art. 94, p. 76, in order that the so-called baptized-member-system may be abolished."



Grounds:

- 1) The intent of this decision, viz., to abolish the custom of permitting infant baptism if neither of the parents are full members, has been attained long ago.
- 2) The synodical ruling, that at least one of the parents must be full member (Acts 1902, Art. 128, p. 65), makes the above rule unnecessary.
- 3) The retention of rules that are obsolete and are no longer complied with does more harm than good.
(Consistory of Lucas.)

46. Classis Sioux Center calls the attention of Synod to an overture which this Classis in 1934 presented in re Baptism of adopted children. This overture was printed on pages 21 and 22 of the Acts of 1934. It was referred to the committee in re Baptism of adopted children, see Acts 1934, p. 22. This committee, however, has evidently overlooked this overture, at least, in the three reports rendered by its members nothing is said about it.

Classis requests that this overture be taken up now.

(Classis Sioux Center.)

V. ARREARAGES

47. In re arrearages of Calvin College and Seminary Fund and Emeritus Fund, Classis Illinois informs Synod as follows:

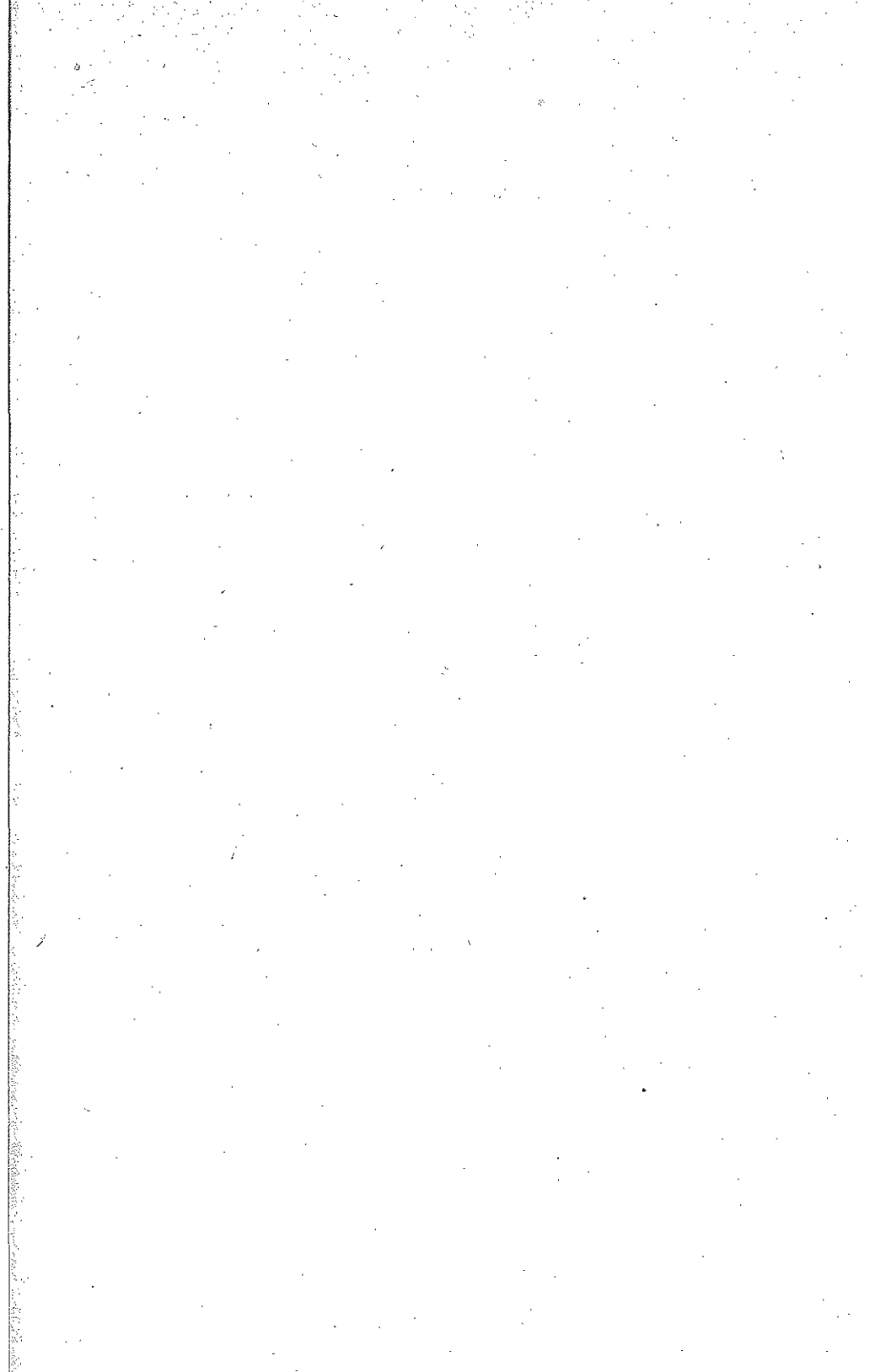
- 1) We are at present unable to give definite advice in regard to each and all the congregations in arrears.
- 2) We do not deem it wise at this time to speak of cancellations, because
 - a. only one congregation suggested it;
 - b. several speak of making up arrearages as soon as possible;
 - c. other Classes are not following this method, f. i. Muskegon.

(Classis Illinois.)

48. Classis accepted the following advice of its committee on arrearages:

"That Classis recommend to the next Synod that the arrearages of Calvin College and Seminary be cancelled, but that the arrearages in the Emeritus assessment be paid up."

(Classis Pacific.)



49. Regarding responsibility of Classes for debts to Synod.

Classis Zeeland hereby notifies the Synod of its agreement with the following overture from Classis Holland:

That Synod annul its present rule which holds a Classis responsible for the arrearages of Synodical assessments of congregations within its boundaries. *Grounds:*

- 1) This rule is based upon a wrong conception of the Church. Our congregations are not subdivisions of a centralized body, but local autonomous manifestations of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- 2) It is unjust to expect congregations which are diligently laboring for the payment of their assessments also to pay for the assessments of other congregations.
- 3) At all times, but especially in times of economic stress, it creates discouragement in those who are striving to square their Synodical obligations.

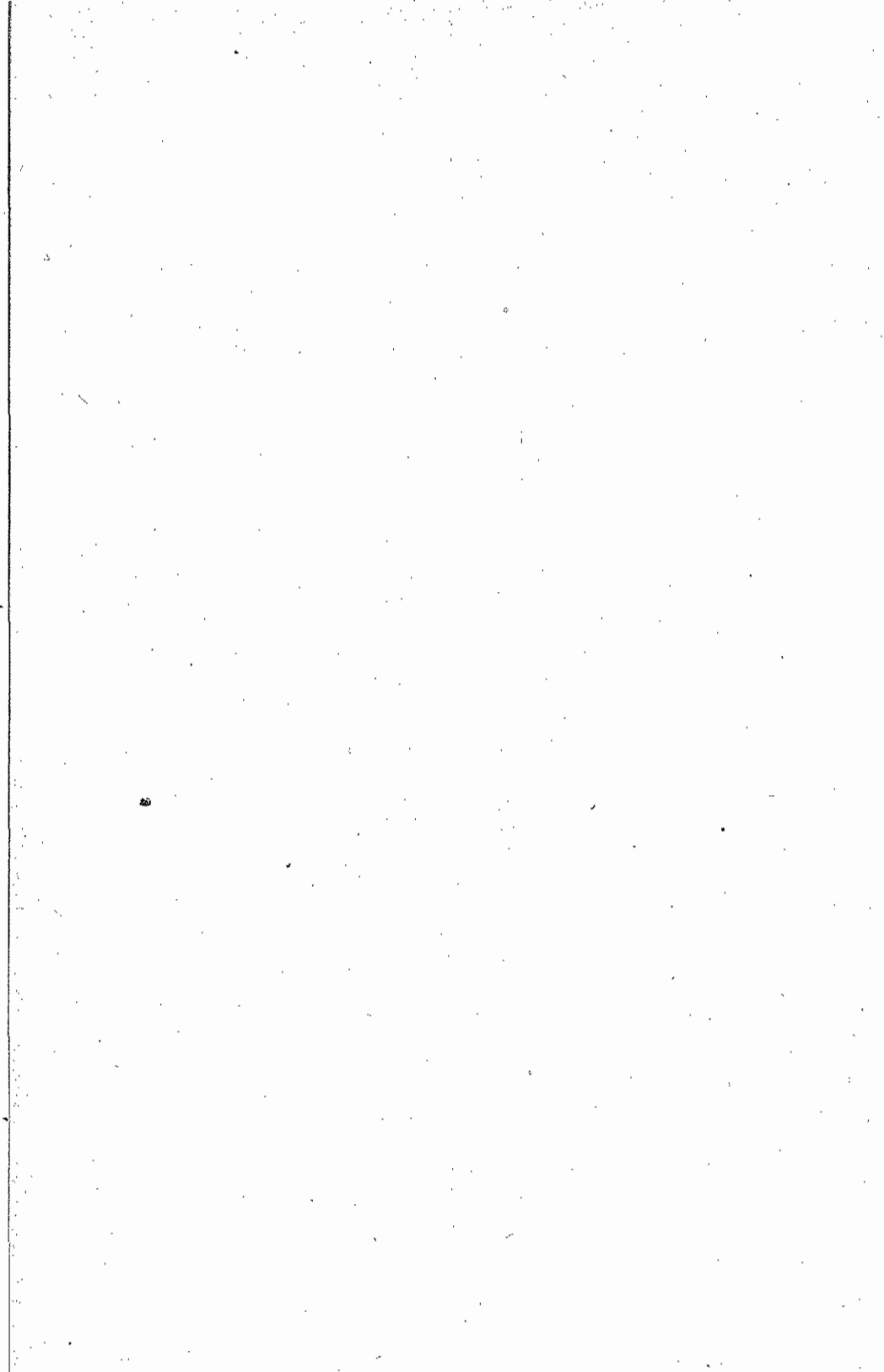
(Classis Zeeland.)

50. Report of Committee on Arrearages of *Classis Wisconsin* to Classis Wisconsin.

Your Committee on Arrearages, having received a mandate from the previous Classis, in accordance with a decision of the Synod of 1934, to investigate the financial ability of all congregations which are in arrears in Synodical assessments (not apportionments or quotas) after carefully considering the replies received from the various consistories, in answer to the questionnaire sent out by the committee, and taking into consideration the offerings given in the past and the present circumstances of the individual congregation concerned, wishes to report the following:

The consistory of Alto informed the committee that the congregation was unable to ever make up any payments on their arrearages. Their arrearage amounts to \$472.40. After discussing the Alto case and considering the history of the congregation, the committee decided to recommend Classis to excuse Alto from said arrearages.

The consistory of Baldwin proposes to bring before the congregation at its Fall meeting to pay 50% of their arrearage during a period of 5 years. Their arrearage is \$621.68. The committee therefore recommends Classis to wait in the case of Baldwin until after the congregational meeting.



The consistory of Birnamwood asks to have their arrearage cancelled because they have done all they possibly could. Their arrearage is \$138.98. Considering their circumstances and what they have done in the past, the committee recommends Classis to cancel Birnamwood's arrearage.

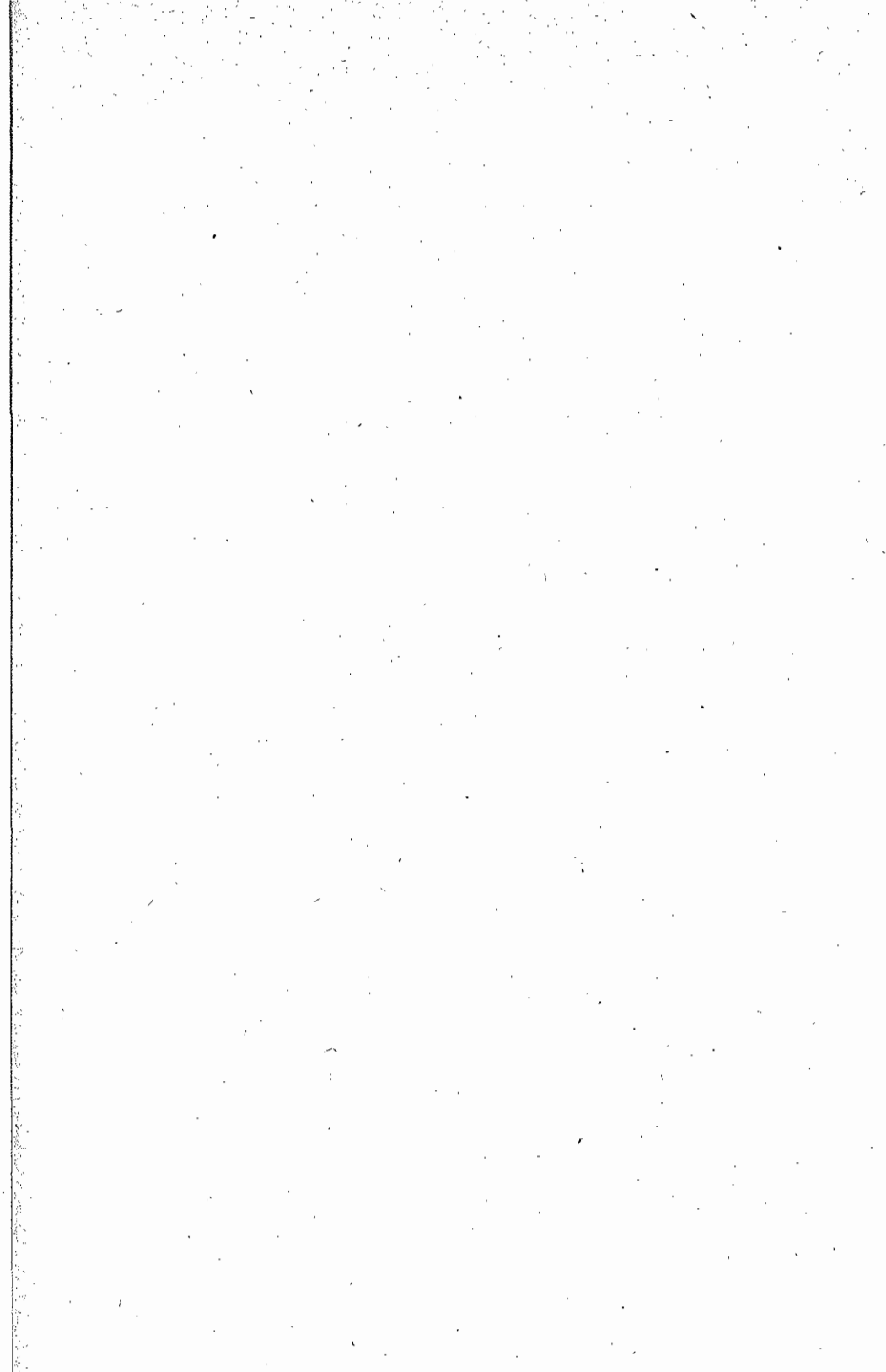
The consistory of Delavan informed the committee it is simply impossible for their congregation to pay anything towards their arrearage, which amounts to \$162.88. Considering the history and circumstances of the congregation, the committee recommends Classis excuse Delavan from this arrearage.

The consistory of Kenosha considers it unwise to press the matter of arrearages at this time. Their congregation is making a determined effort to meet their past and present obligations by means of special offerings. Their arrearage is \$761.75. The committee recommends Classis not to excuse Kenosha from said arrearages but to accept their own proposal.

The consistory of Oostburg did not give an answer as to the disposal of or meeting its arrearage which amounts to only \$119.50. In view of what the congregation has done in the past, the committee recommends Classis to leave this matter to the discretion of the consistory involved.

The consistory of Racine proposes to settle for \$100.00. Their arrearage is \$311.25. The committee recommends Classis to accept their proposal, but since their budgets in the past did not call for the full amount of the assessments, according to the number of families, urges them to propose the full amount hereafter in making up their budget.

The consistory of Randolph informed the committee that the congregation had done all it could in the past, and considering the conditions there should be no question of arrearages. Their arrearage amounts to \$546.97. The committee decided that the Church Visitation discuss this matter with the Randolph consistory and recommend that they pay about one-half of their arrearage, giving them a period of five years to do so. The Church Visitors after discussing this matter with the consistory involved reported to the committee that the consistory claims they have met all their financial obligations on a pro-rata basis and feel they should not be obliged to make up any arrearages, otherwise they would have to do the same with all arrearages. In spite of the consistory's objections to the plan proposed by the



committee, the committee, nevertheless, recommends Classis that Randolph pay one-half of their arrearage, giving them a period of 5 years to do so.

The consistory of Sheboygan informed the committee of its decision to urge all the congregations to pay at least half of their arrearages. The arrearage of the Sheboygan congregation is \$1,212.56. The committee recommends Classis, that, considering the financial circumstances of the congregation and what they have done in the past, to leave it to the discretion of their consistory.

The consistory of Vesper requests cancellation of their arrearage, which amounts to \$131.61. The committee, considering their circumstances, recommends Classis to cancel said arrearage, but to advise the consistory to introduce a better financial system.

The consistory of Waupun informed the committee that their congregation has done its utmost during the depression years and kept their arrearage to a minimum. Their arrearage is \$121.47. The committee recommends Classis that in view of what Waupun has done in the past, the question of arrearage be left to the discretion of their consistory.

(Comm., Classis Wisconsin.)

P. S. Baldwin's congregation accepted to pay one-half of their arrearage.

This report, with all its recommendations, was accepted by the Classis and it was decided to have this report sent to Synod with the "recommendatie dat de Synode ook alzoo besluite."—Classis Wisconsin.

51. Classis Pella overtures your assembly as follows:
Whereas:

- 1) Nine of the fifteen churches of Classis Pella are in arrears in the payment of their Synodical assessments, and
- 2) All of these churches are or have been working under specially trying conditions, without the church and within,
- 3) Even though these conditions may vary in the different churches as to details, and even though it must be admitted that some of our churches have been more conscientious about the assessments than others, nevertheless in no case do we believe the arrearages have been caused by a definite shirking of duty,



- 4) Each one of these congregations has paid part of each year's assessments, and therefore has put forth an effort to pay, so that the arrearage does not equal the total assessment obligation,
- 5) Classis has made a study of the conditions obtaining in each individual church, and has come to the conclusion that insistence on the payment of the arrearage would mean: impossible burdens on most of the churches, neglected church property, marked inequality in ministers' salaries, and a disheartened people,
- 6) Each church is aiming to meet Synod's new assessments,

Therefore,

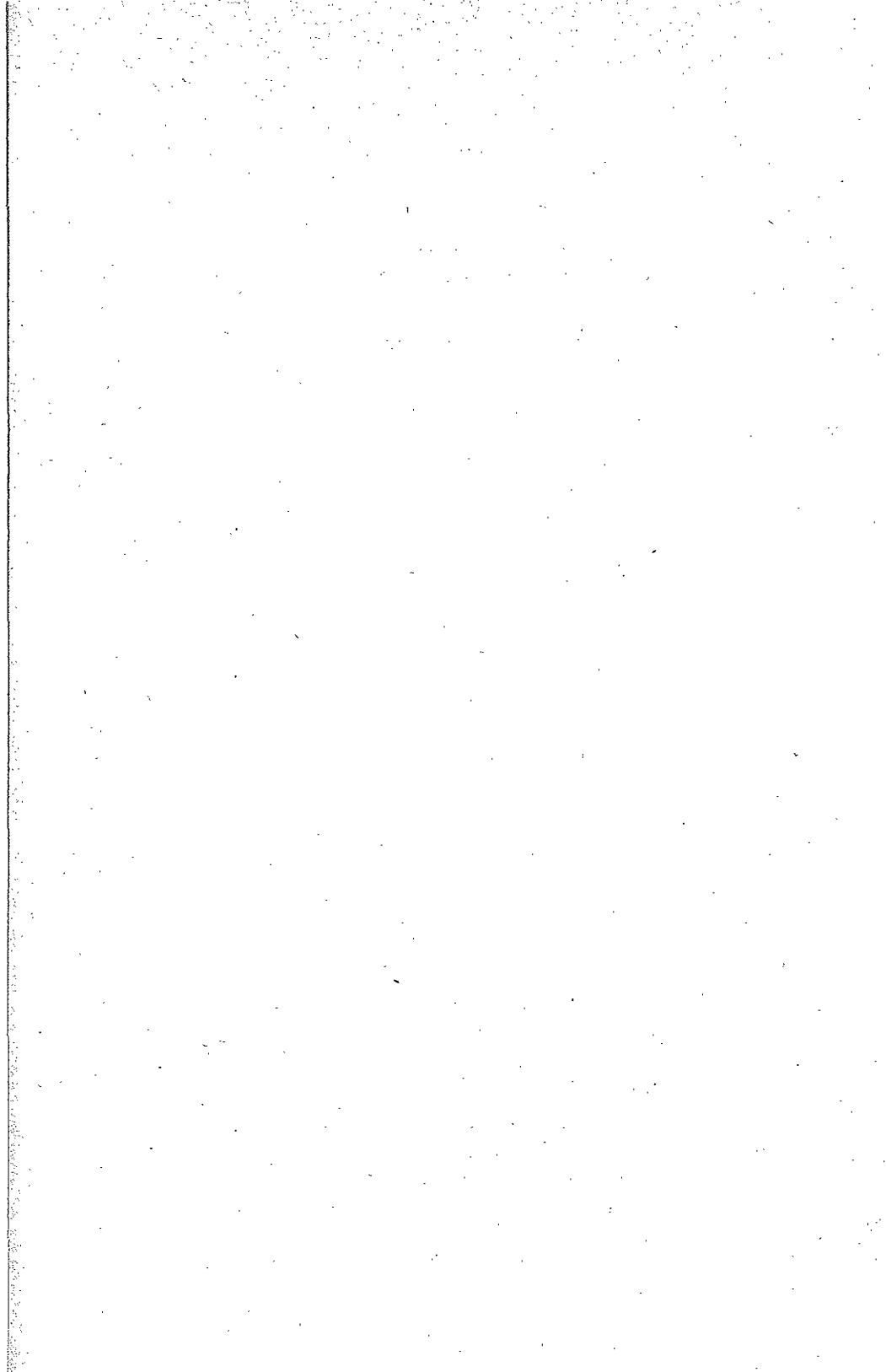
Classis Pella petitions Synod to cancel the arrearages of its nine churches which are now in arrears. That this cancellation shall affect the arrearages on the assessments prior to January 1, 1935. The nine churches are: Denver, Leighton, Oskaloosa, Otley, Pella II, Prairie City, Rotterdam, Sully, and Tracy. (Classis Pella.)

52. Regarding Synodical Assessments:

A — Calvin College and Seminary:

I. Classis overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for Calvin College and Seminary, up to and including December 31, 1934, insofar as they have not been paid since, be reduced to 33⅓% of the amount due on the aforesaid date. *Grounds:*

- a. To collect the full amount of these arrearages will be impossible, since in the majority of cases the reason for arrearages lies not in unwillingness but, because of heavy congregational obligations, or local financial situations pertaining to Christian education, etc., in inability to pay.
- b. During the past "depression years" Calvin College and Seminary, in order to meet its financial obligations had to borrow moneys. It would be fair to Calvin College and Seminary if these loans could be repaid from arrearages.
- c. If 33⅓% of all arrearages due Calvin College and Seminary are paid, all indebtedness incurred by this institution during the depression years on account of insufficient payment of Synodical assessments, can be paid in full. (Classis Holland.)



Should Synod concur in the recommendations of Classis, Classis further overtures Synod:

- a. That, in order to keep these arrearage-accounts from being confused with new accounts dating from January 1, 1935, the treasurer of Calvin College and Seminary and the treasurers of all interested Classes be instructed to set up on their books separate arrearage-accounts of all congregations to which this matter pertains. The debit side of these accounts are to show all arrearages as of December 31, 1934 (as reduced by Synod).
- b. That congregations in arrears on these assessments be urgently requested to settle these reduced accounts before January 1, 1939.

(Classis Holland.)

Synodical Expenses:

I. Classis overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for Synodical expenses, up to and including December 31, 1934, insofar as they have not been paid since, be reduced to 50% of amount due on aforesaid date. *Grounds:*

- a. The amount due this fund is not very large and will therefore not work hardship upon the congregations which are in arrears in this fund.
- b. A payment of 50% of the arrearages will amply provide this fund with moneys to meet all obligations.

II. Classis overtures Synod that the recommendations given under A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

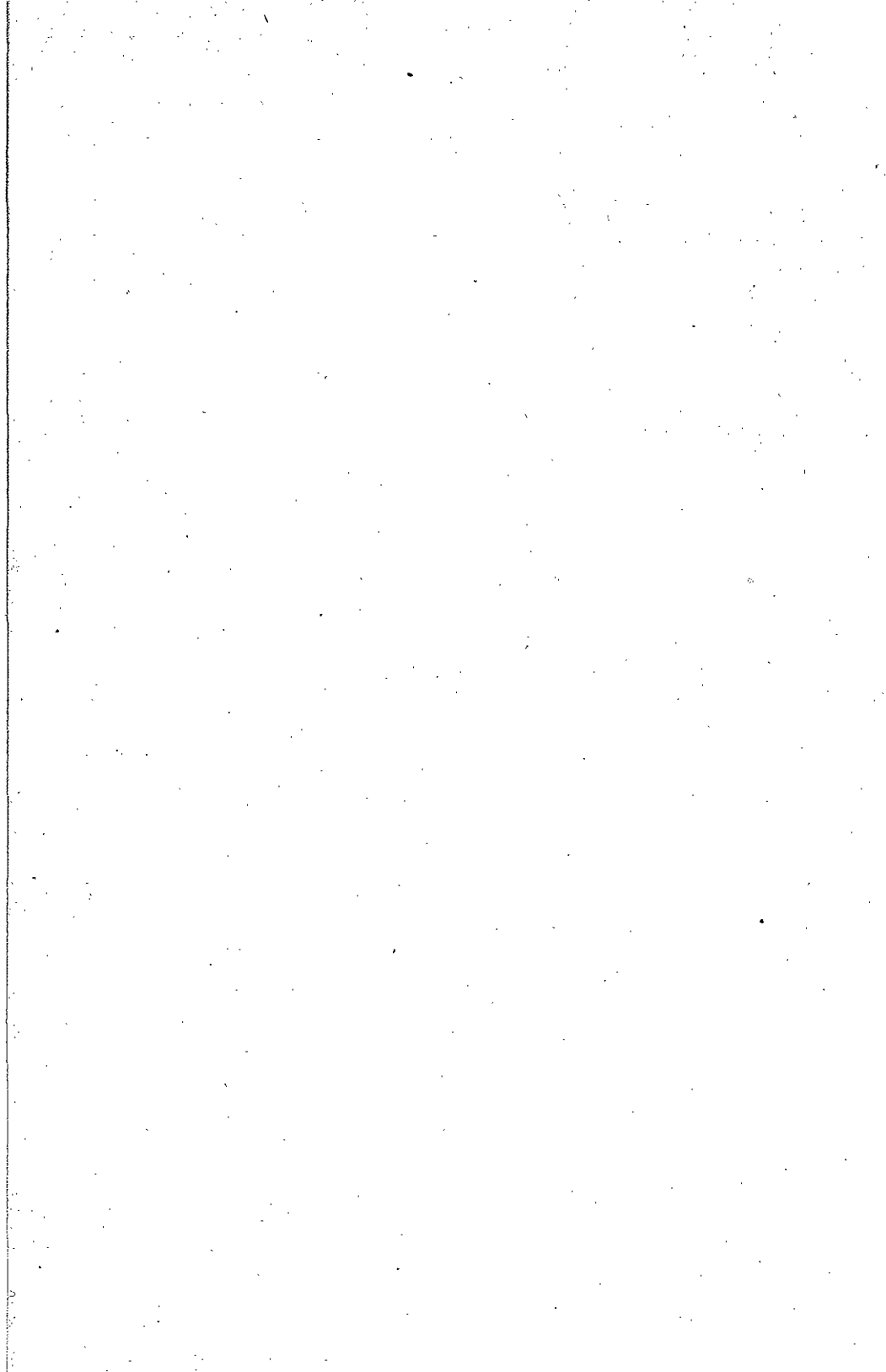
Emeritus Fund:

I. Classis overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for the Emeritus Fund, up to and including December 31, 1934, insofar as they have not been paid since, be reduced to 25%. *Ground:*

Although this fund has not incurred any debts, and has paid its beneficiaries on a pro-rata basis; and was able to pay 92½% of its obligations during 1934 and 100% during 1935, it ought to receive at least 25% of the arrearages due it, in order to strengthen its financial condition.

Classis overtures Synod that the recommendations given under A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)



53. Regarding Synodical Quotas:

Classis Holland has also gone into the matter of Synodical Quotas. Although these quotas have not the binding character of assessments, they, nevertheless, carry moral obligations which are often overlooked or forgotten. With this fact in mind, we venture to submit to Synod advice regarding arrearages in the various quotas.

General Home Missions:

Classis advises Synod earnestly to request all congregations, insofar as they are in arrears in the Synodical quota for this fund, to assume 25% of their arrearages as of December 31, 1934, unless paid since that date. *Grounds:*

- a. This fund has been more or less overlooked in the so-called depression years and, as the result thereof, that the important labor of Church extension work has been greatly handicapped.
- b. This fund has had greater difficulty in meeting its financial obligations toward its workers than any other synodical fund.

Classis suggests that the advice given under I—A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

54. Indian and China Missions:

Classis advises Synod earnestly to request all congregations within its borders, insofar as they are in arrears in the Synodical quota for this fund, to assume 20% of their arrearages as of December 31, 1934 (unless paid since that date). *Grounds:*

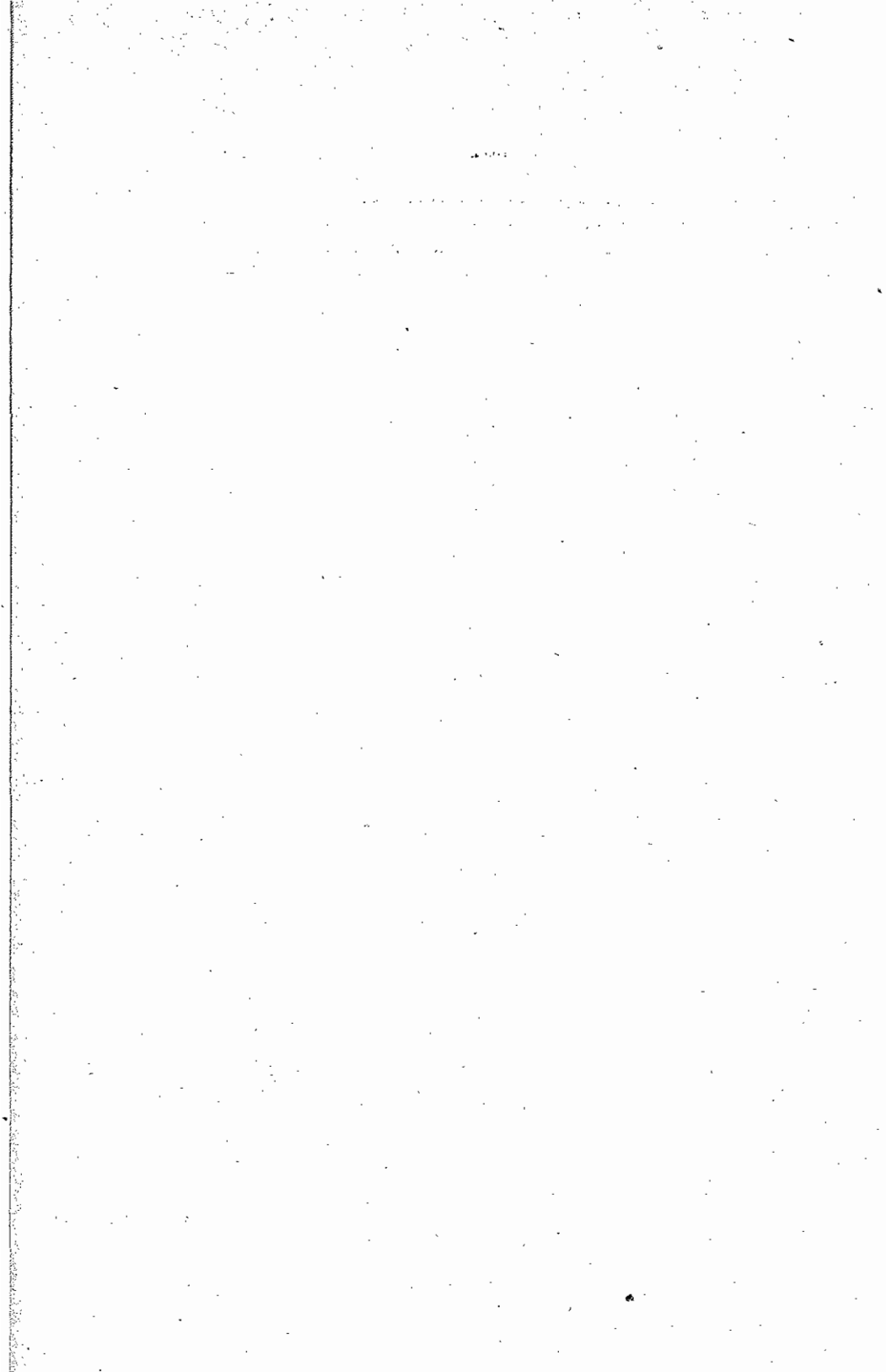
- a. This fund has not received sufficient moneys to carry on the work in both fields: New Mexico and China. The newly-acquired field abandoned by the Presbyterian churches, has also added to its expenses.
- b. If 20% of the December 31, 1934, arrearages are paid by our congregations, we shall be enabled to place this work on a much-needed better footing.

Classis suggests that the advice given under I—A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

55. Jewish Missions:

Classis Holland advises Synod earnestly to request all congregations within its borders, insofar as they are in arrears in the Synodical quota for this fund, to assume



25% of their arrearages as of December 31, 1934 (unless paid since that time). *Grounds:*

- a. The labors of this Mission have been greatly curtailed during the last years on account of lack of funds.
- b. If 25% of the arrearages are assumed by all the churches, this work can again be placed on such a footing that the needed additional workers can be employed.
- c. Even if only a few Classes should assume 25% of their arrearages, it would be of great assistance to this Mission.

Classis suggests that the advice given under I—A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

56. Church Help:

Classis advises Synod earnestly to request all congregations, insofar as they are in arrears in the Synodical quota for this fund, to assume 20% of their arrearages as of December 31, 1934 (unless paid since that date).

Grounds:

- a. This fund is very closely allied with the work of Home Missions or Church extension work and needs the hearty support of all our churches.
- b. This fund has not been able to take care of the requests which came to it and received its approval.

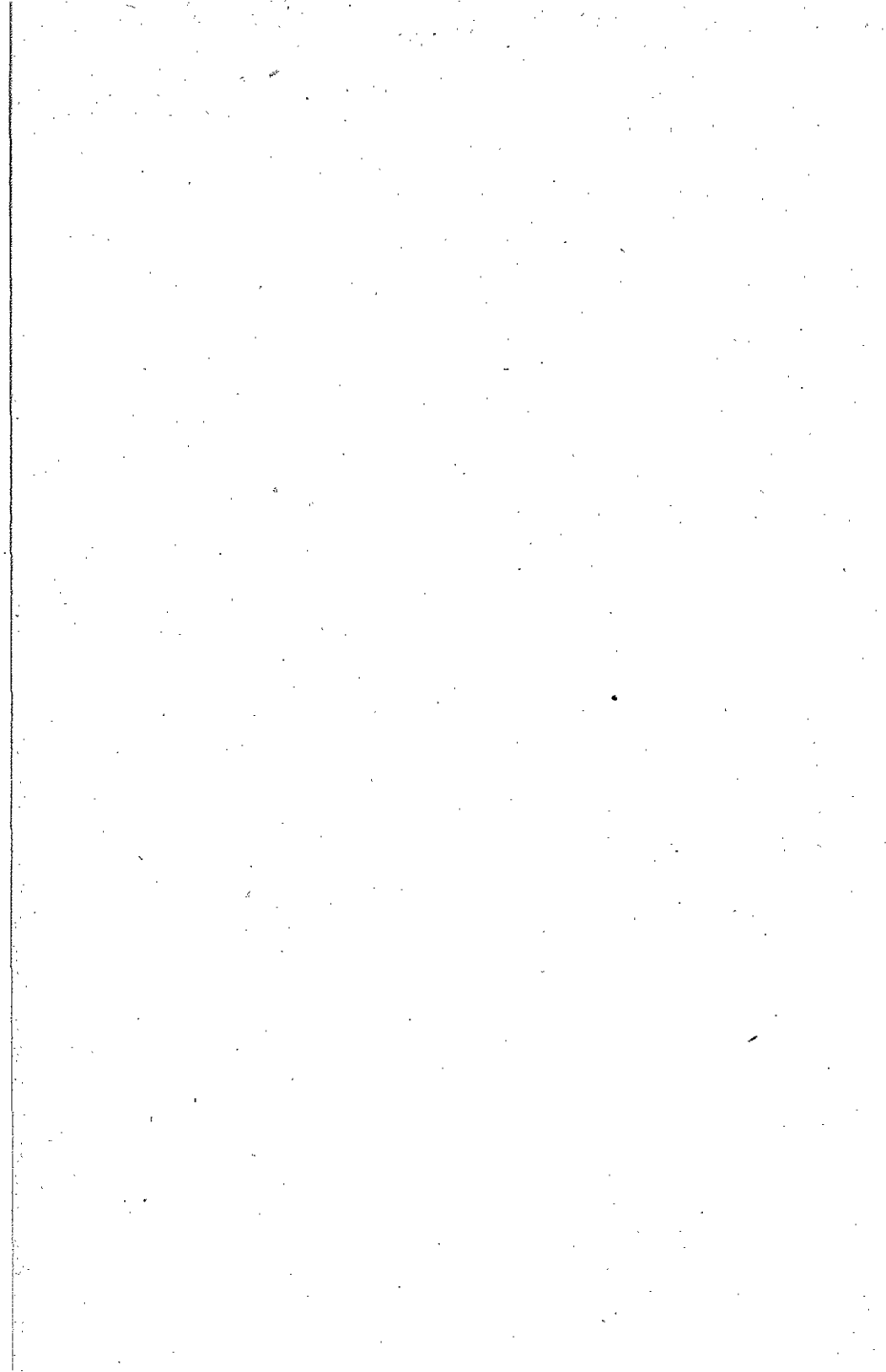
Classis suggests that the advice given under I—A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

57. South America Fund:

Although the arrearages in this fund are not large and the amount needed is comparatively small, we ought also to arrive at a balancing of this account. Hence we advise Synod to request all congregations within its borders, insofar as they are in arrears in the Synodical quota for this fund, to assume 33⅓% of their arrearages as of December 31, 1934 (unless paid since that date). *Grounds:*

- a. We have obligated ourselves to support the work in South America to the extent of 15c per family per year and ought to contribute this amount insofar as we are able.



- b. The possibility of greater financial obligations in the future in regard to this work.

Classis suggests that the advice given under I—A—II, a and b, shall also apply to this fund.

(Classis Holland.)

58. Classis Holland overtures Synod:

To annul its present rule or accepted practice which holds a Classis responsible for the arrearages of Synodical assessments of congregations within its boundaries.

Grounds:

- a. This rule is based upon a wrong conception of the Church. Our congregations are not subdivisions of a centralized body, but local autonomous manifestations of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- b. It is unjust to expect congregations which are diligently laboring for the payment of their assessments, also to pay for the assessments of other congregations.
- c. At all times, but especially in times of economic stress, it creates discouragement in those who are striving to square their Synodical obligations.

(Classis Holland.)

59. Overture of Classis Hudson in regard to arrearages: Classis recommends to Synod that, in case the actual deficit of the two Synodical Funds is only a limited percentage of the sums outstanding by the various churches, the churches be held responsible for the same percentage of their present arrearages."

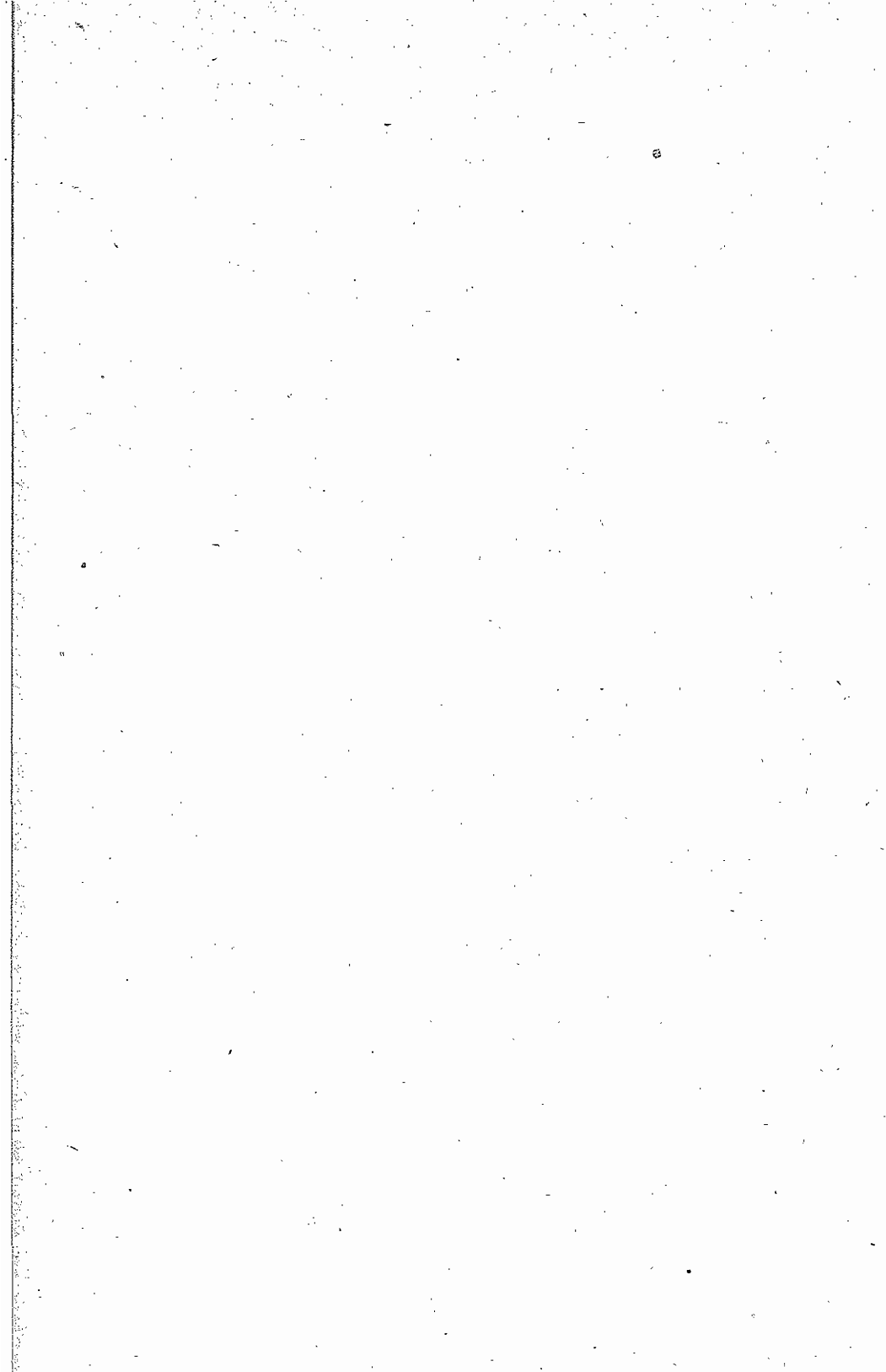
(Classis Hudson.)

60. *In re Arrearages.*

I. Regarding Assessments for Calvin College and Seminary.

A. Classis Zeeland overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for Calvin College and Seminary, up to and including December 31, 1934, insofar as they have not been paid since, be reduced to one-third of the amount due on the aforesaid date. *Grounds:*

- 1) To collect the full amount of these arrearages will be impossible, since in the majority of cases the reason for arrearages lies not in unwillingness, but — because of heavy congregational obligations, or local



financial situations pertaining to Christian education, etc. — in inability to pay.

- 2) If one-third of all these arrearages due Calvin College and Seminary are paid, most of the indebtedness incurred by these institutions during the depression years on account of insufficient payment of Synodical assessments can be paid.

B. That, if the above be adopted, congregations in arrears on these assessments be urgently requested to settle these reduced accounts before Jan. 1, 1939.

II. Regarding assessments for the Emeritus Fund.

A. Classis Zeeland overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for the Emeritus Fund, up to and including Dec. 31, 1934, insofar as they have not been paid since, be reduced to one-tenth of the arrearages due it. *Ground:*

This Fund has not incurred any debts; and was able to pay 92½% of its obligations during 1934, and 100% during 1935. Yet it ought to receive 10% of the arrearages due it in order to strengthen its financial condition.

B. That the suggestion under Point I, B, shall also apply to this Fund.

(Classis Zeeland.)

61. I. Regarding Synodical Expenses.

A. Classis Zeeland overtures Synod that arrearages on assessments for Synodical expenses be paid in full. *Grounds:*

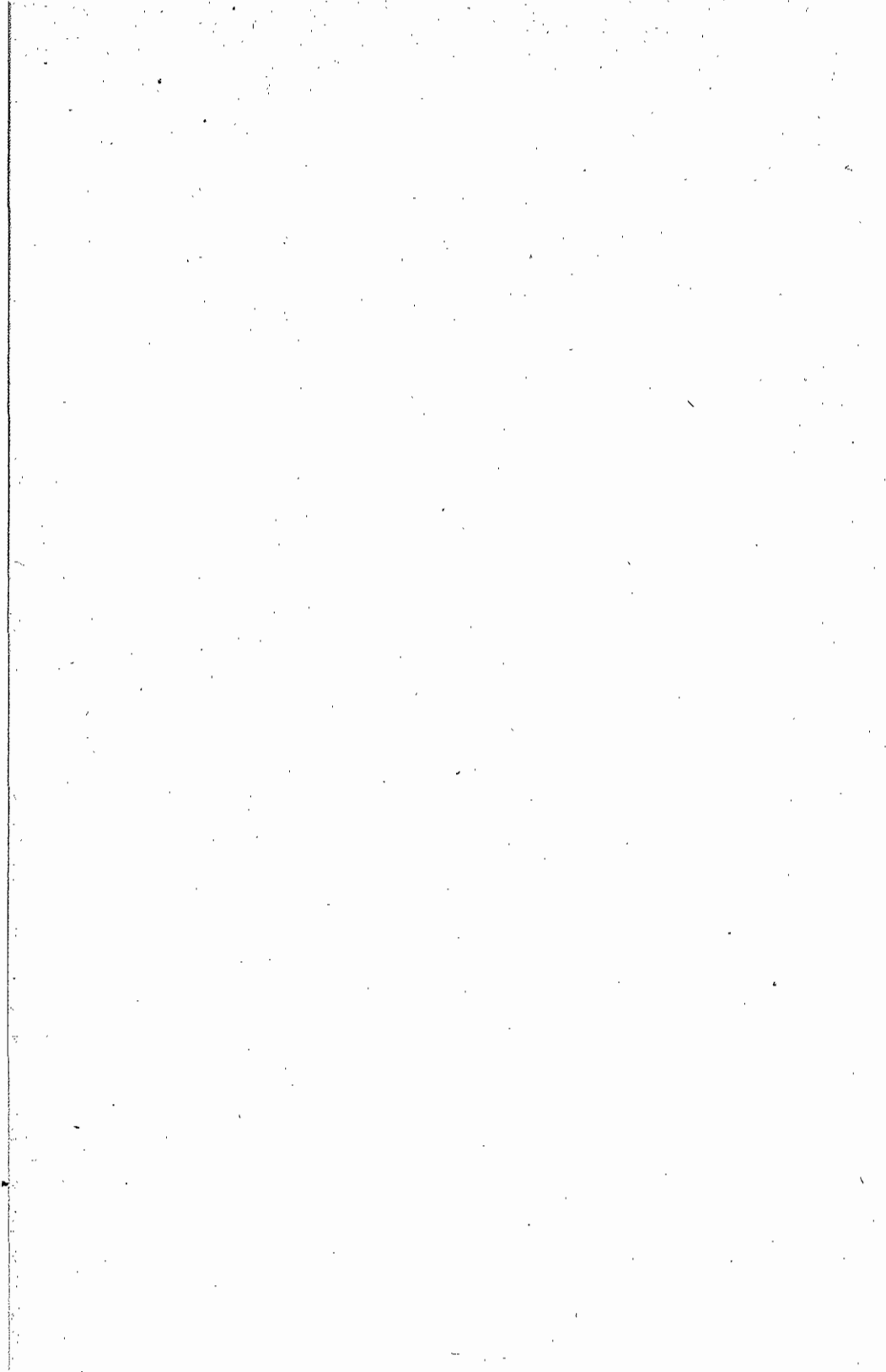
- 1) The amount due to this fund is not very large.
- 2) A great majority of our churches have already paid in full. (Ten of the 14 churches in Classis Zeeland have paid in full.)

B. That the suggestion under Point I, B, shall also apply to this fund.

II. Regarding arrearages of subsidized churches.

Classis Zeeland overtures Synod to exempt our two subsidized churches, North Blendon and Rusk, from the above rulings, and that all arrearages to the Synodical assessments up to Dec. 31, 1934, pertaining to these congregations be cancelled. *Grounds:*

- 1) These churches are subsidized and need the continual help of the Classis.



- 2) They could not pay their assessments in 1935. Requiring them to pay also the reduced assessments would pile up their debt to such an extent as to completely discourage them to attempt the payment of future assessments.
- 3) To spread their reduced assessments over the various congregations of our Classis would be unfair to these churches, who have done already as much as they could to pay their own assessments.

(Classis Zeeland.)

62. In accordance with the decision of the Synod of 1934, Classis Grand Rapids East has appointed a committee to investigate the arrears of some of churches resorting under this Classis. The committee has rendered its report in the meeting of Classis of Sept. 18, 1935. The Classis hereby advises Synod the following in connection with the information which the Classis obtained through its committee. Information is enclosed.

Classis advises cancellation of the arrearages of the following churches:

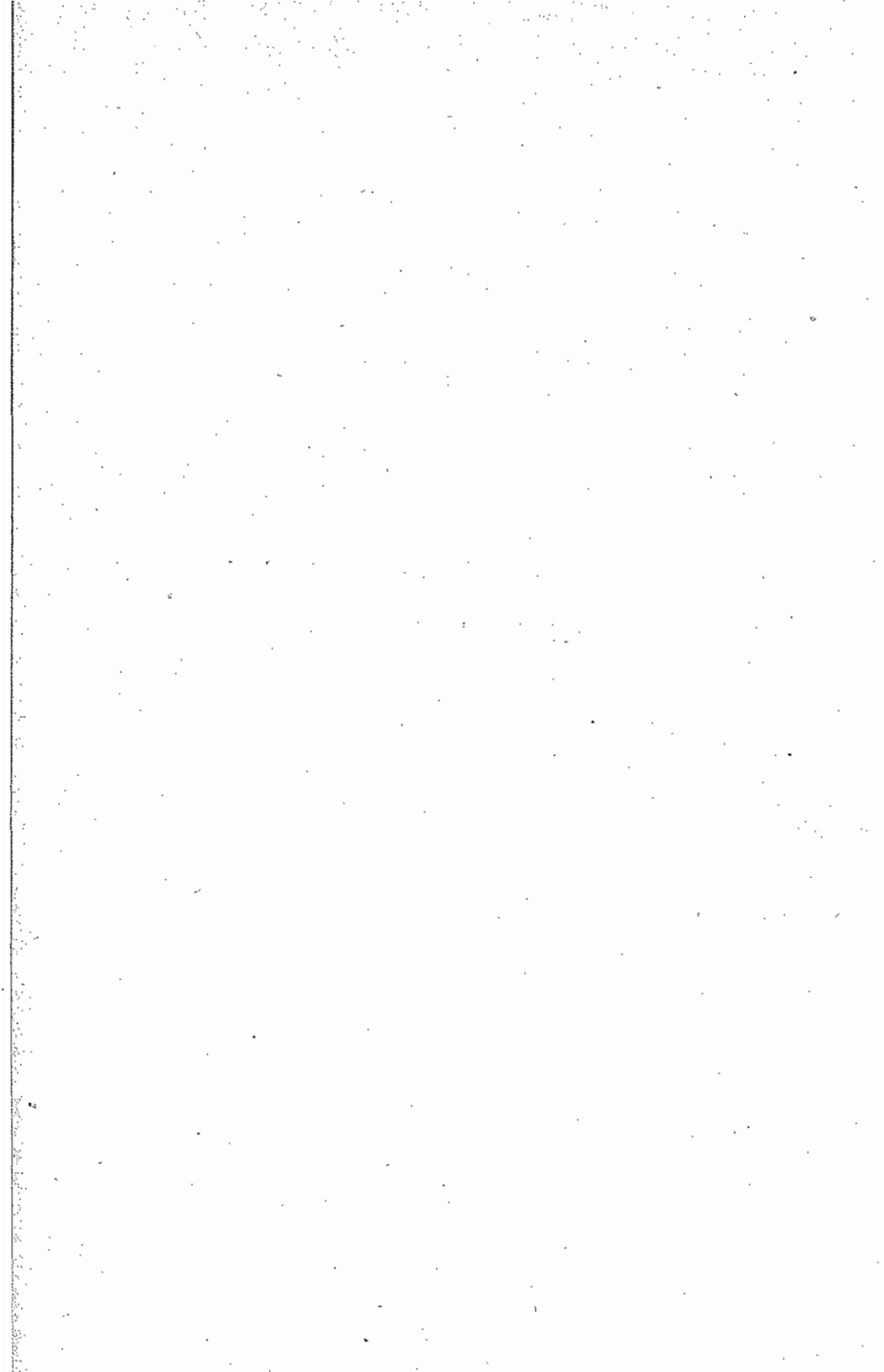
1. *Chatham* is a poor mission church. It seems doubtful, unless conditions there change for the better, that this little, struggling congregation will even be able in the next few years to pay its assessments. There is certainly no use to keep its unpaid balances on the book from year to year.

2. *East Leonard* has such an enormous property debt that complete cancellation of her arrearages is the only logical thing to do.

3. *East Martin*. In respect to this church we have reasons to believe that there is something wrong with the financial system and that the membership has not contributed to the extent of its ability. Even in more prosperous times this church did not bring up its full quota. This church is so hopelessly in arrears that it is not reasonable to expect that it will ever be able to pay up. Classis therefore advises complete cancellation with the understanding, however, that the consistory be urged to do its utmost from now on to meet its synodical assessments.

With respect to the other churches that are in arrears which request cancellation the Classis would say the following:

1. The questionnaires show that all those churches had to operate on a greatly reduced income. That they give



evidence of having economized as much as possible in their local expenses. That as the income for their general budget decreased, their contributions for the poor increased.

Further does the Classis call the attention of Synod to the fact that those churches in better years paid their assessments in full, and that again in the year 1934 their contributions for the two funds concerned increased remarkably, giving evidence of a real desire and effort to meet these obligations. Now all this seems clearly to indicate that it was neither carelessness nor unwillingness but inability that caused them to fall behind in their payments during the depression. It seems therefore that it would be proper to cancel the unpaid balances entirely.

2. The question that confronts the Synod, however, is whether this course is possible. The two funds concerned, notwithstanding the exercise of the strictest economy, may have incurred debts. And those debts must be paid. Who is to pay them?

To burden with this debt the churches which have paid up their assessments does not seem fair, and no doubt an effort along this line would meet with resentment on the part of those churches who have with great sacrifice succeeded in meeting their obligations.

It seems to Classis that the only course left open is to charge this debt to the churches that are in arrears, because after all it was, without any fault of their own, on account of not paying their assessments that the debt was incurred.

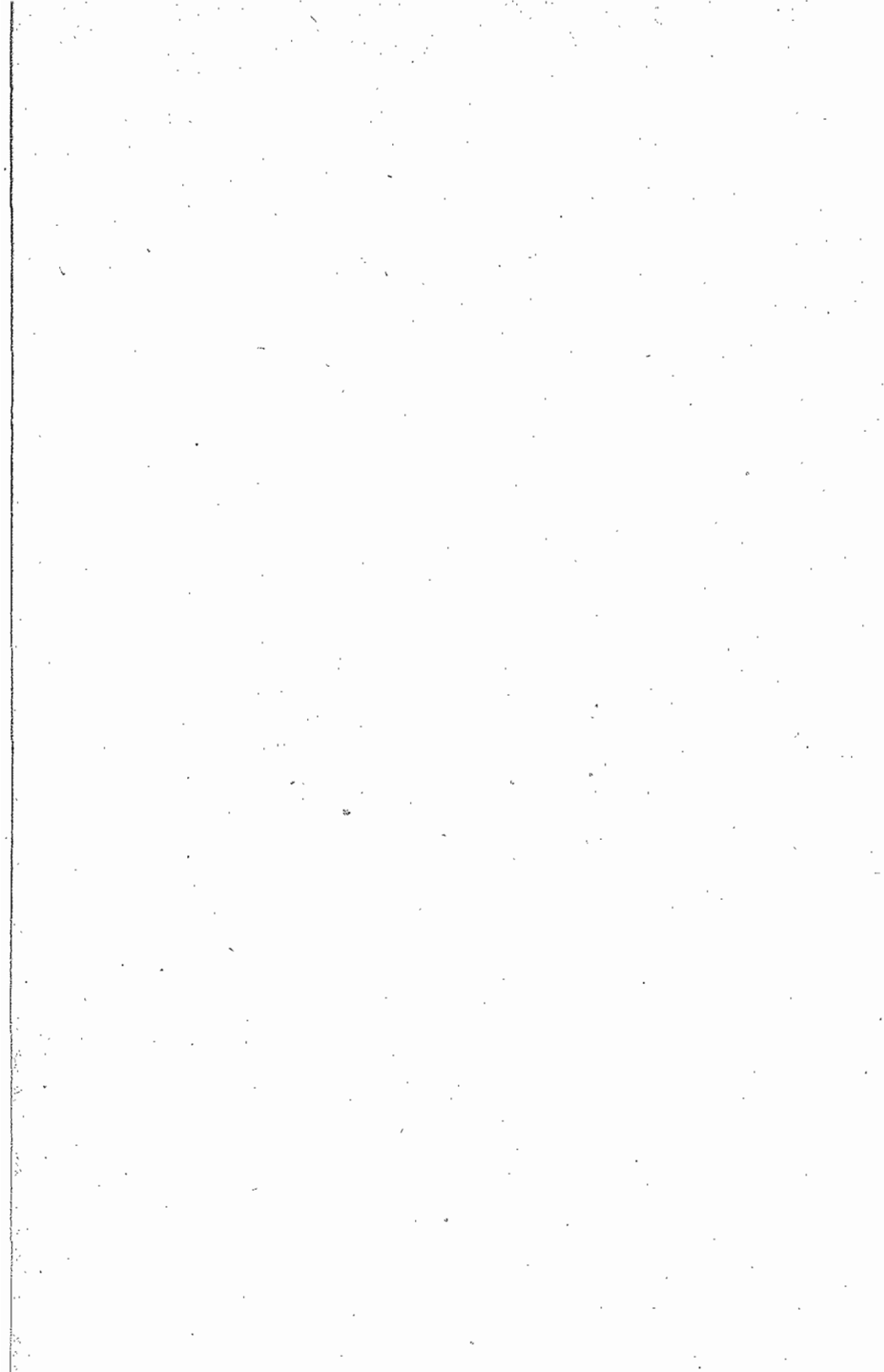
Classis advises therefore the following:

That each of the churches in arrears be held responsible for its proportionate share of the actual debts incurred by the two funds concerned. And that, if the amount of those debts be considerable, to spread payment over a sufficient number of years so as to make the burden as light as possible.

This method of coping with this problem will appeal to the churches as reasonable and just, and will not weaken but rather strengthen in the churches the sense of responsibility in the matter of synodical assessments.

The other churches are: Byron Center, Creston, Kelloggsville, Moline, Oakdale Park, Plainfield, Portland, Ne-land Ave., Coldbrook, Dennis Ave., Eastern Ave., East Paris, and Fuller Ave.

(Classis Grand Rapids East.)



63. IN RE ARREARAGES OF SYNODICAL ASSESSMENTS. Classis herewith submits the requests of the various Consistories in regard to Synodical Assessment Arrearages, recommending that the request be granted.

Ackley.....	Complete Cancellation of all Arrearages
Austinville.....	" " " "
Bunde.....	" " " "
College Church.....	" " " "
Coster.....	" " " "
Emden.....	" " " "
Holland.....	" " " "
Kanawha	With the agreement to give \$25 to Calvin College and Seminary and \$25 to the Emeritus Fund, the request is for complete cancellation of all remaining arrearages.
Lincoln Center.....	Complete Cancellation of all Arrearages
Mountain Lake.....	" " " "
Ostfriesland.....	" " " "
Parkersburg.....	" " " "
Ridott.....	" " " "
First Wellsburg.....	" " " "
Second Wellsburg....	" " " "
Wright.....	" " " "

(Classis Ostfriesland.)

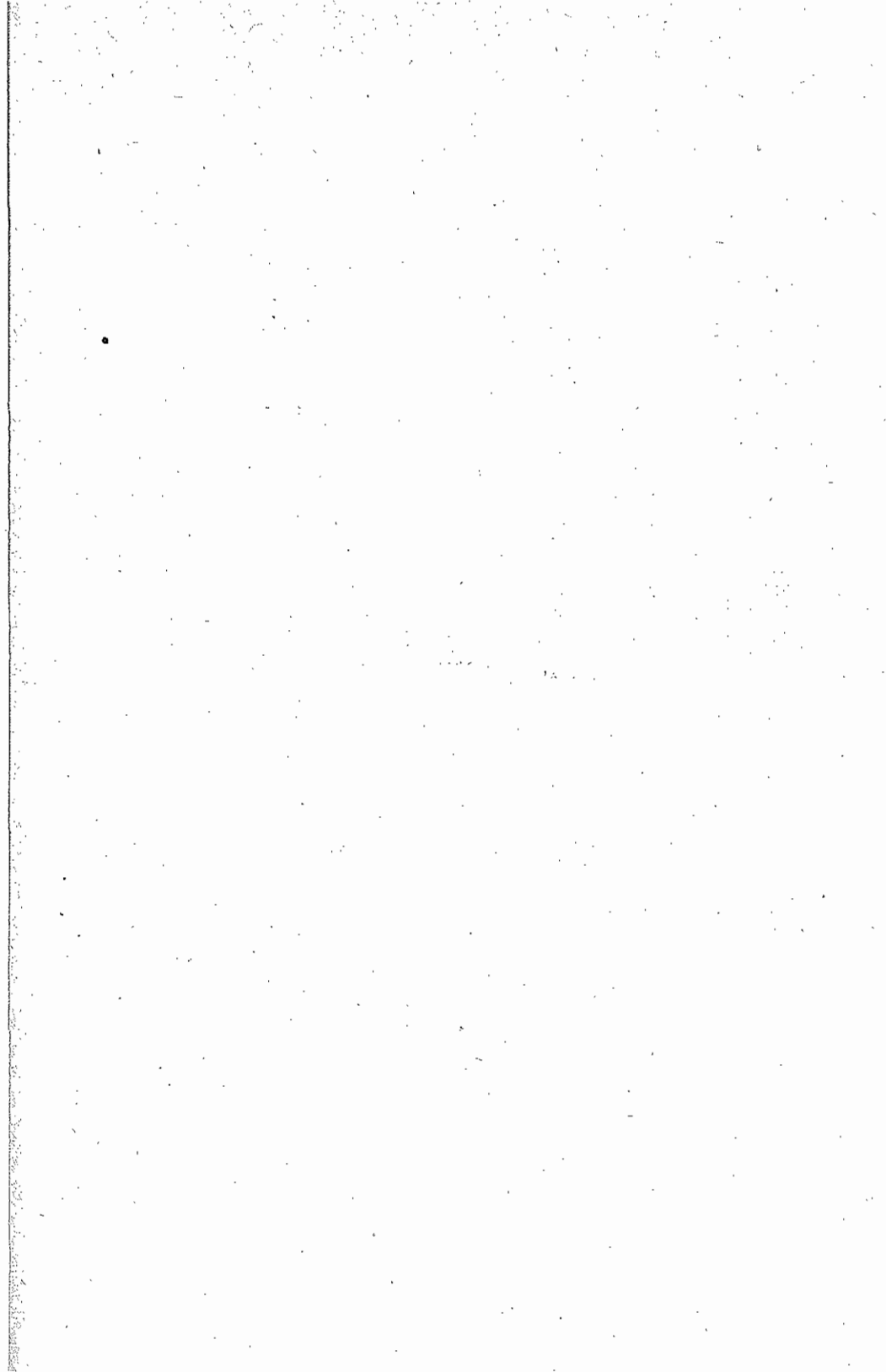
64. Overture in re method of assessing the churches. Taking the position that in an important phase of our Church life, our practice is not warranted by Scripture, the Consistory of Lucas *overtures Synod to investigate (possibly through a Committee) whether the method of assessing the churches according to the number of families is fully in harmony with Scriptural precept or example.*

Grounds:

(1) With the basic rule of Scripture relative giving, viz., that we should give as the Lord has prospered us financially, the present method is in disagreement, for the number of families is not a reliable guide for determining the financial strength of a congregation.

A Consistory, *demanding* that the heads of families pay budget according to the number of children, would pursue a course not more strange than the present assessment method. Compare Deut. 16:10, 17; Acts 11:29; I Cor. 16:2; and also the many texts on tithing.

(2) If the smaller and poorer churches must continue to bear the present assessment burden, these churches have



a right to expect, that upon request as now, the agreement of the method with Scripture will be pointed out at least.

It is indeed a burden to many a church to obtain for the School a sum which is all the way from about two to five times as much as in the more prosperous years 1910-1920. It is unprofitable for the good name of a church when its old assessment dues are repeatedly made known in Classical reports. And it is an undesirable situation, if of the total amount that a church can give to outside causes, an unduly large percentage "must" go to any one cause. If all this must continue, let it be shown at least that this procedure is scriptural.

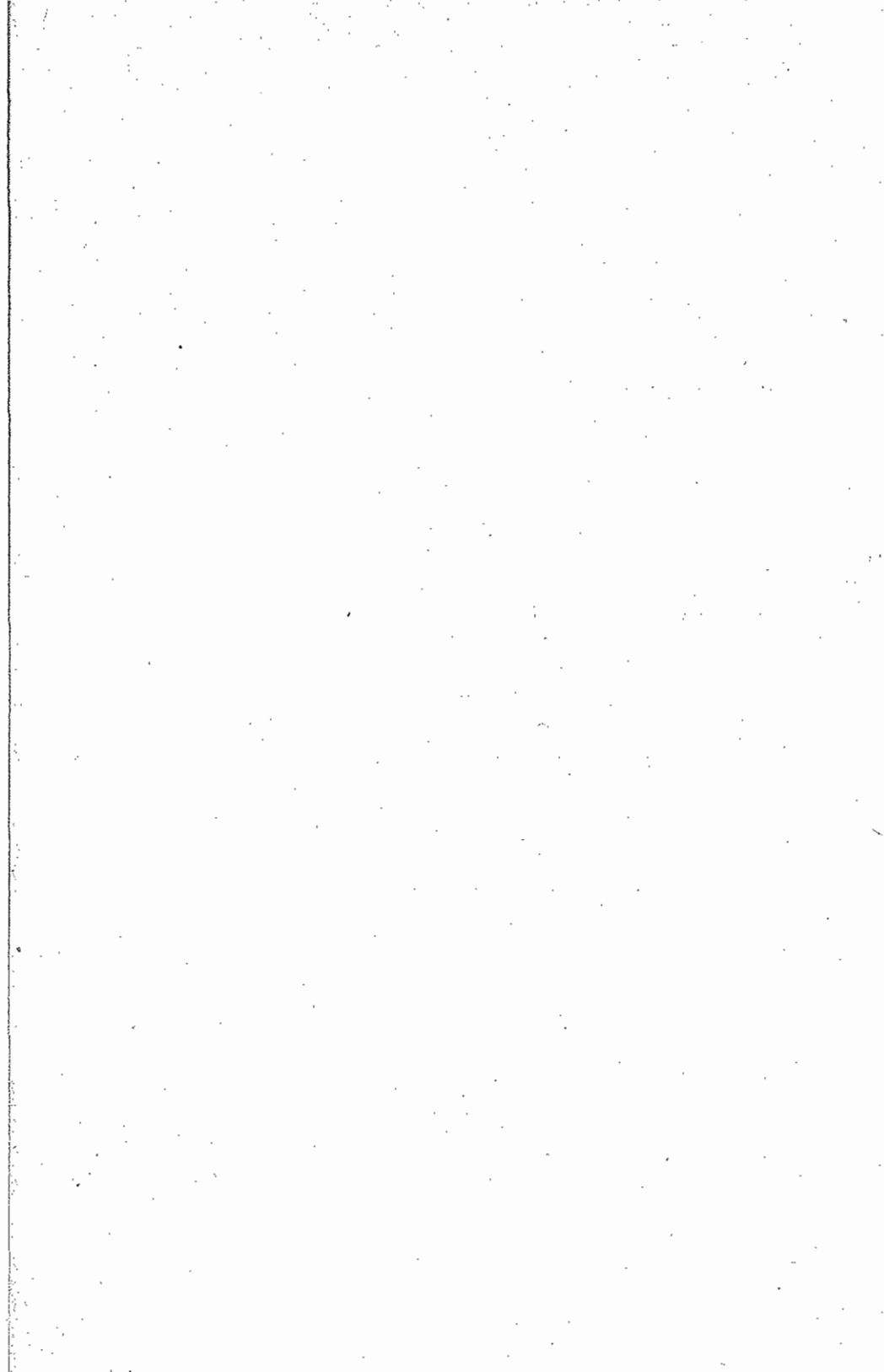
(3) A study of *all* the Acta of our Synods reveals that our present assessment method has *never* been subjected to investigation in the light of Scripture, nor to a thorough study of any kind. It is high time that a phase of our Church life so important as our assessment method, which repeatedly has been objected to and protested against as the Acta reveal, and which also now occasions much unrest in the churches, be subjected to study in the light of Scripture. Our School, which is deserving of even more whole-hearted appreciation than it receives, need not fear such investigation, for the methods of maintaining it, can be ultimately profitable to the school only if they be scriptural. The school now suffers from a method which is provocative of resentment.

(4) The present great arrearage of the churches, which alone to Calvin College and Seminary amounted on Jan. 1, 1936, to the huge sum of \$145,410, and which is not attributable to the depression alone, suggests that a fundamental study of the assessment problem is desirable and timely. Cancellation alone will not solve the problem permanently.
(Consistory of Lucas.)

65. De Classis stelt aan de Synode voor een commissie te benoemen om de wenschelijkheid en de uitvoerbaarheid in te denken en aan de volgende Synode te rapporteeren van de synodale aanslagen per huisgezin in de kleinere gemeenten iets minder te maken dan in de grootere. *Reden:*

De lasten voor gemeentelijk onderhoud zijn per huisgezin in de kleinere in den regel zwaarder dan in de grootere. Tot evenredigheid dienen dus de synodale lasten per huisgezin in die kleinere gemeenten iets lichter te zijn.

(Classis Sioux Center.)



66. Classis California has, in compliance with the Synodical decision respecting arrearages, investigated the conditions of all its congregations, who were in arrearage. We are happy to report that the majority of our congregations are paid up in full. Some have promised to reduce their arrearages by substantial amounts. A few have put forth heroic efforts in order to keep their arrearage as low as possible. Classis has declared itself as being satisfied with these efforts and to ask Synod to consider the indebtedness of Classis California as being wiped out when the promised amounts shall have been paid.

The total arrearage of California in the Calvin College and Seminary Fund amounted to \$1,362.01, in the Emeritus Fund \$796.82, and for Synodical costs \$95.10. These arrearages cover the years 1932-1935 inclusive. As far as we know our Classis has no previous arrearages in these funds. Pledges made by various delinquent congregations to reduce these arrearages amount to \$1,200.00 approximately. Our Classical Treasurer is to apply these pledges pro-rata to the funds named, as the money shall come in.

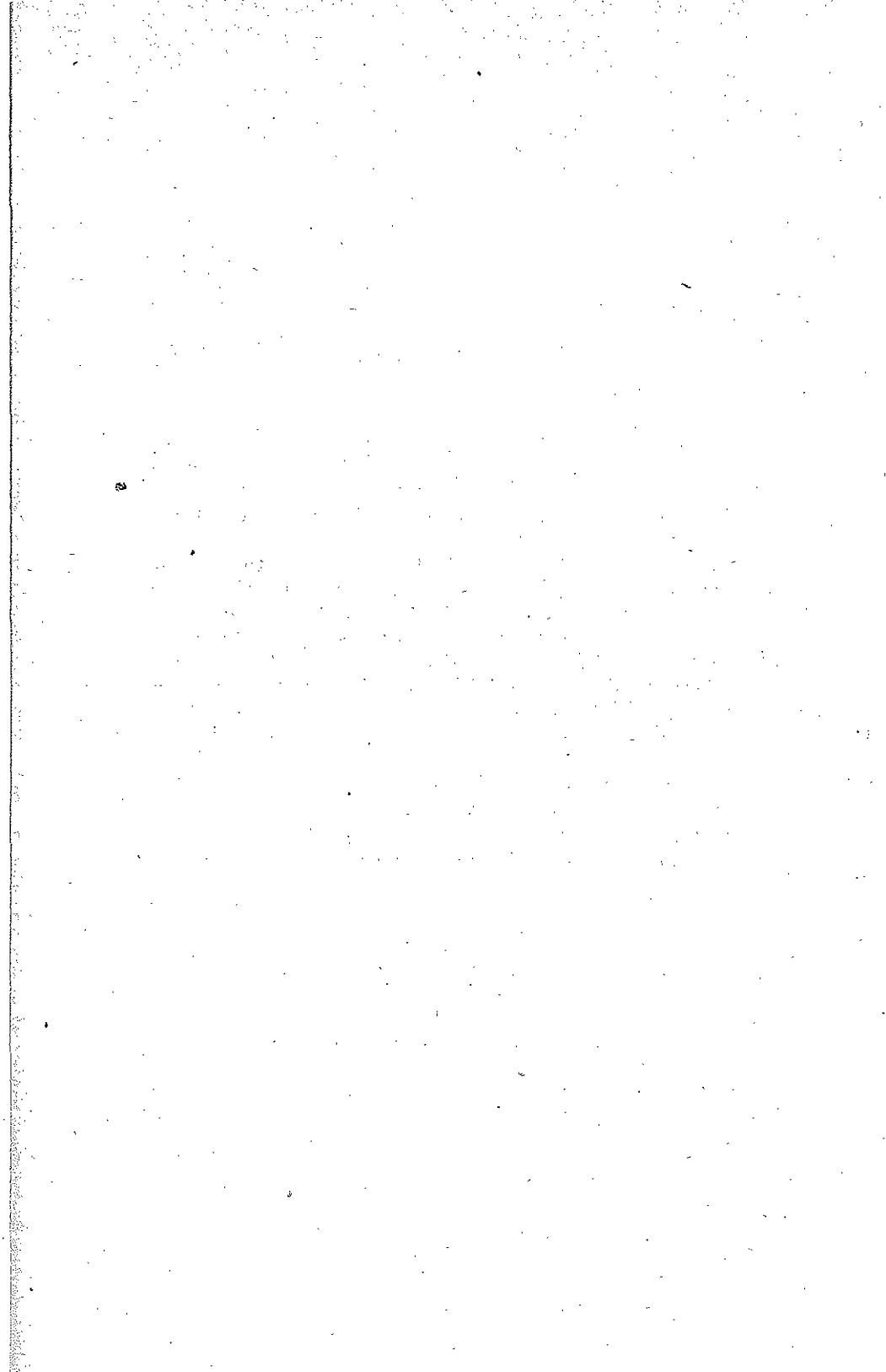
Classis California is convinced that our congregations, having contributed their quotas in full, or having paid the amounts promised to reduce their arrearages, have put forth their best efforts in the matter. We therefore overture Synod to wipe out the remaining total indebtedness to the above funds, in the total sum of \$1,200.00, approximately, to be wiped out. Classis will do its utmost to see to it that in the future the various assessments and quotas will be paid in full, if at all possible.

(Classis California.)

67. In regard to cancellation of arrearages Classis Muskegon has decided as follows:

- 1) Classis Muskegon notifies Synod that it does not favor wholesale cancellations of arrearages at this time, but that the churches in arrears be given a number of years for payment in consultation with the Classis in which they reside.
- 2) If, however, cancellations are to be made, in whole or in part, the congregations of Classis Muskegon should share in such cancellation.

(Classis Muskegon.)



68. Overture in re Arrearages.

In regard to the arrearages which the various congregations have in the funds: Calvin Seminary and College and Emeritus, Classis Orange City advises against both total and partial cancellation.

In regard to both there are serious objections.

- A. 1) Against total cancellation can be objected that certain congregations have paid their assessments in full, and it would probably be unfair to release others.
- 2) It is difficult to determine whether some congregations which have not paid their assessments were unable to do so.
- B. In regard to partial cancellation the same objections obtain.
- C. The third possibility would be to leave it to the discretion of the congregations to pay as much of the arrearages as possible. This would create confusion.
- D. Classis Orange City has made a thorough study of the matter of arrearages and has tried to find a way which would be fair and just to all concerned, and yet a way which removes all objections.

Therefore Classis offers the following proposals and overtures Synod to adopt them:

- 1) That Synod begin its next calendar year with a clean slate.
- 2) But the present arrearages to be paid up, wherever possible, by the individual congregations at the rate of 5% per annum.

Such an arrangement would give encouragement as far as future total payment of assessments is concerned, and the old debt would no longer rest upon the congregations as a heavy burden.

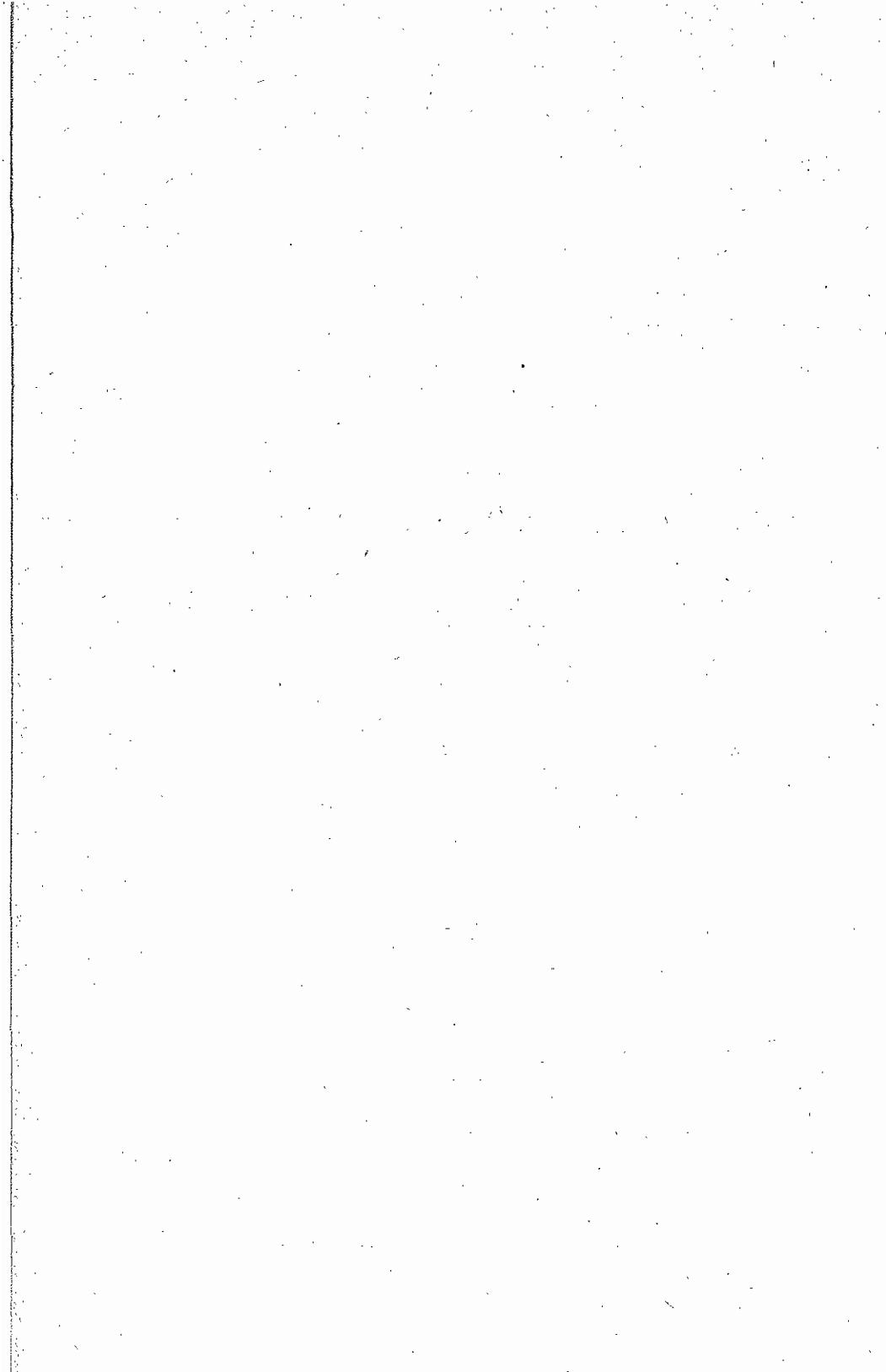
(Classis Orange City.)

VI. DIVORCE MATTERS

SEE ARTICLES ON SUBJECT IN AGENDA, PARTS I AND II

69. Peter L. Van Dyken, member of our church in Ripon, Calif.,

I. Overtures Synod to repudiate the *stand* taken by the Synod of 1908 and affirmed by the Synod of 1934 in regard to:



- a. The guilty party in a divorce on biblical grounds, if re-married during lifetime of first mate,
- b. Persons divorced on non-biblical grounds and subsequently re-married during life of former mate.

The stand taken by the Synods of 1908 and 1934 does not admit any of the above named persons into the membership of the Church, though they profess to repent sincerely from their sins.

The above named stand is both erroneous and unscriptural.

II. Further overtures Synod to repudiate the *false ground* upon which the above named stand is based.

III. Further overtures Synod to repudiate the *false conclusions* derived partly from the erroneous ground and partly from a misconception and malconstruction of the working of sin and grace in the human heart. *Grounds:*

The Synod of 1908 in Art. 54, Part X, middle of page 39 of the Acts of that Synod defines its stand concerning this matter in the following words:

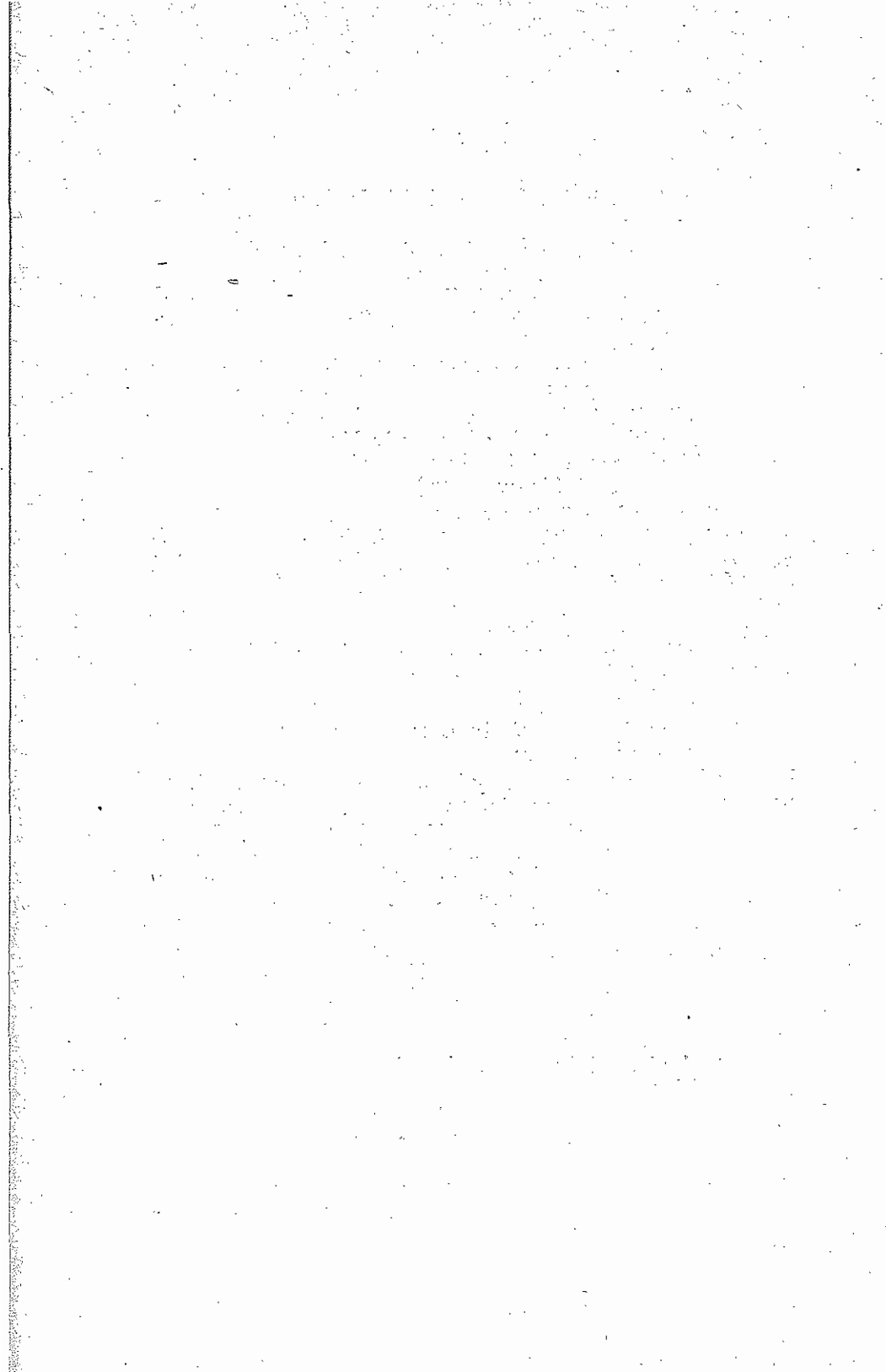
"In the case where a woman has obtained a legal divorce from her husband because of his committing adultery, said woman is thereby freed from the bond of marriage before God and man, but not so the husband. Before God he remains bound to this woman. If this man contracts another marriage during life-time of his first wife he cannot become a member of the Church." (translation mine.)

This stand is entirely inconsistent.

The legal divorce, justified by the sin of the husband, has effectually cut the tie for one party, therefore also for the other. The bond of marriage can never remain with only one of the parties to said marriage. Either both are bound by it or neither one. The legal divorce has therefore *effectually* freed both parties, though not beyond repair as long as both remain unmarried. If one of them marries again, the former tie is *irrevocably* cut. However, the sinning husband is thereby not freed from his guilt.

As a basis for the above named inconsistent stand the Synod of 1908 quotes the following: *"This man remained bound to his first wife before God and his second marriage is therefore a continuous living in adultery."* (translation mine.)

If this basis were sound and scriptural the stand of the



Church as the logical outcome of this basis would be correct. But:

Whereas the former marriage tie has been effectually dissolved for both parties by the legal divorce, the sinning husband, though guilty before God, is not any more bound before God by any marital tie to his first wife, whom he has wronged.

Whenever second marriage is legally obtained it must be considered an established marriage before God and man, not sinful in itself, though begun in adultery. This is in full accord with the words of Jesus in Matt. 19 and other places. (Further grounds for the above statement are found in the latter part of this overture.)

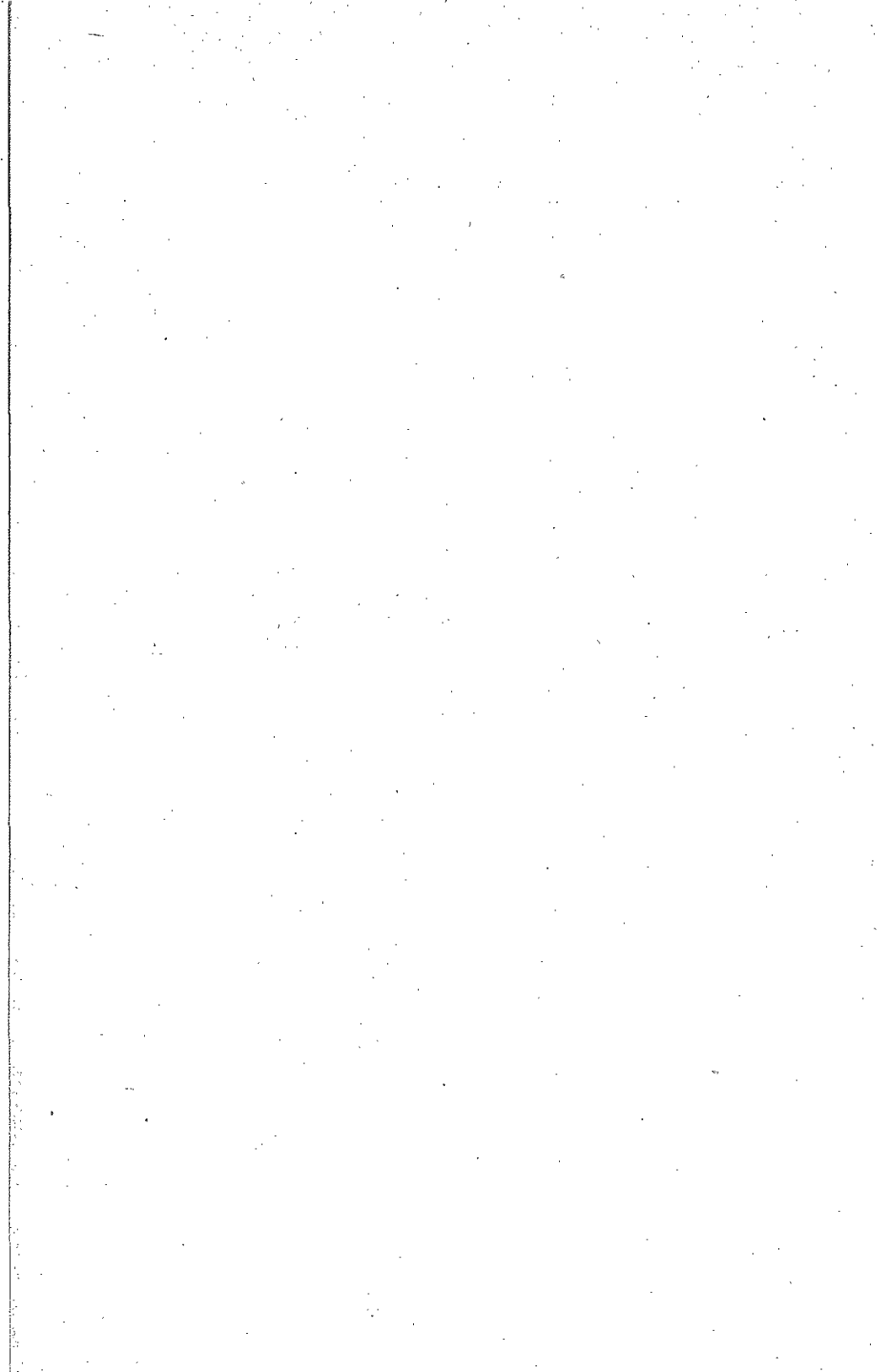
The Synod of 1908 finally comes to the following false conclusion: "*Were this not so (that is, if a second marriage were not a continuous living in adultery) then the way would be open for any one to free himself of his lawful wife by committing adultery and to marry another and yet remain in peace with the Church. For he could reconcile himself to the Church by public confession after these sinful pre-meditated acts of adultery and second marriage.*" (translation mine.)

This conclusion is entirely perverted and unscriptural on the following grounds:

a. His committing adultery in order to free himself from his wife does *not* automatically sever the marriage. This can only be done by the innocent party by obtaining a legal divorce but is nowhere commanded. If a divorce was not sued for and obtained his avowed sinful purpose of marrying another would be frustrated.

b. The whole reasoning of the above mentioned synodical conclusion is based on the assumption of insincere repentance and sinful calculation. No one has ever wilfully committed a sin with the avowed intention in the back of his mind to *repent heartily* of that sin at a future season. *True repentance never looms in the background of contemplated sin.* Said conclusion is therefore an utter impossibility.

c. The sin of one person and his subsequent repentance and forgiveness has never led any one else into committing the same sins. Neither has true repentance of prevailing sin ever furnished a license for the penitent to repeat the same sin nor for any one else to commit such sin. *God's*



much more abounding grace has never caused an increase in prevailing sin.

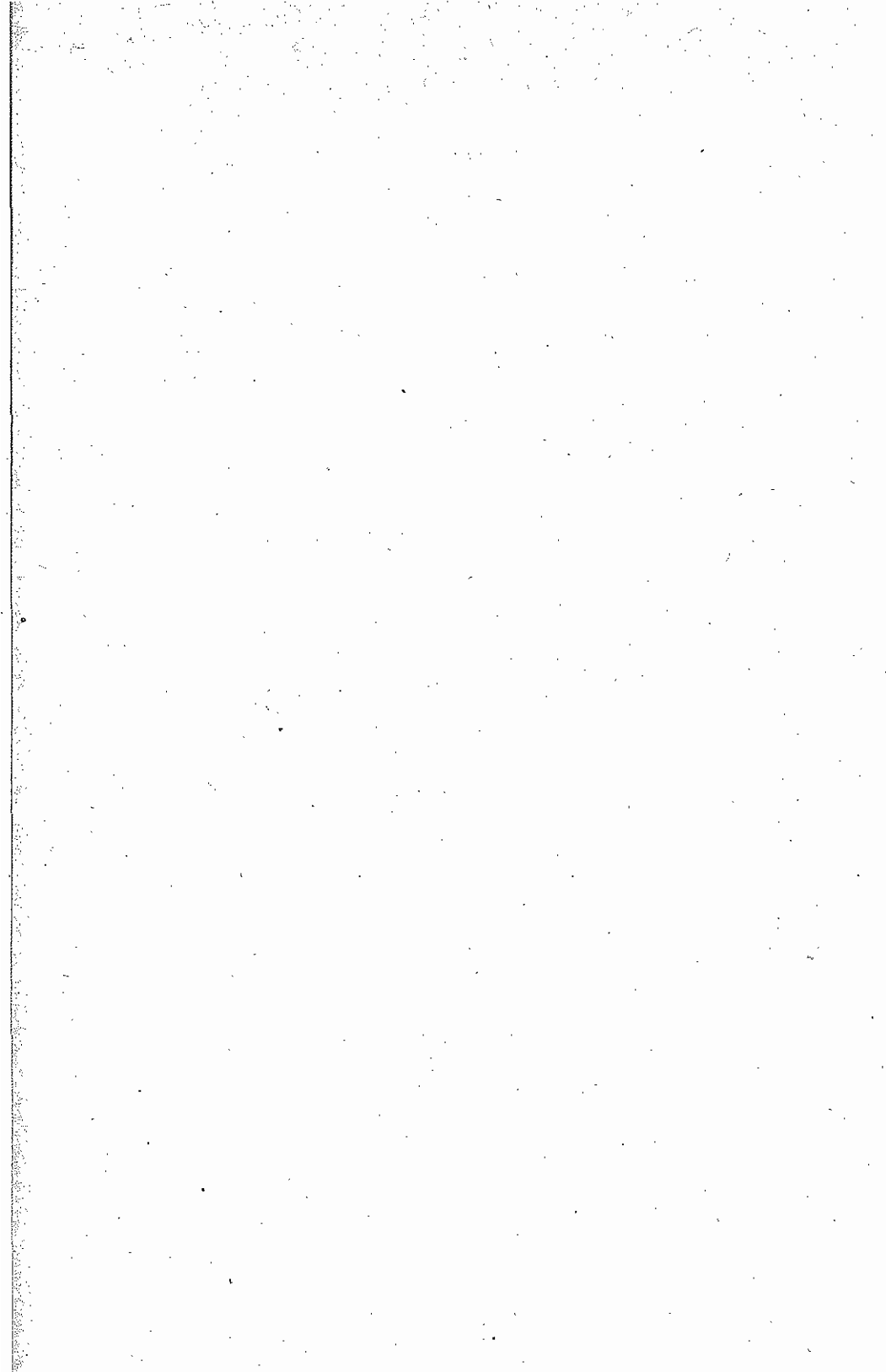
d. The acceptance into the Church of a repentant sinner of the above named type does not disannul any of God's ordinances or institutions. On the contrary, it establishes them. In demanding public confessions of the sin of adultery (or unbiblical divorce) and of second marriage and in admonishing to live henceforth holily in the sacred bond of marriage the Church establishes and strengthens God's ordinances and causes them to be respected.

e. We may never base our reasoning on the assumption of insincere repentance. Seeing that the entire Church consists of repentant sinners, true humility and the love for God and our fellow-man demands that when a sinner comes to repentance (no matter what was his sin) and confesses his sin and his faith in Christ as his Savior, his repentance and confession must be taken as *sincere*, until it proves afterward not to have been so.

f. If a second marriage is a continuous living in adultery, the Church *must* demand that said marriage be again legally dissolved, after which one or both parties, as the case might be, could then become members of the Church as individuals. This would, however, cause them to repent the very sin of which they had been guilty in the first place, (as in unbiblical divorce) of which sin they had repented and which they would confess. There is nowhere any grounds in Scripture for demanding such dissolution. Neither could a legal divorce be obtained from the civil authority, there being no ground upon which to plead.

g. The exclusion from the Church of a sinner of the above named type sets bounds to the mercy and grace of God. If there is no place in the Church for such a sinner because of his continuous living in a grievous sin, we thereby exclude him from the kingdom of heaven. The statement that he *can* be accepted after the death of his first wife makes his eternal state dependent on circumstance and not on the blood of Christ only. Today he is considered a lost sinner — tomorrow (after death of first mate) he is saved by grace.

(Although the case of the guilty party in a biblical divorce if re-married and that of a party re-married after unbiblical divorce are not identical, the attitude of the Church is alike in both cases. Both are considered to be living in continuous adultery.)



In view of the above described erroneous and untenable position and attitude of the Church, we (or I) overture the Synod of 1936 to adopt the following:

Persons, legally divorced from their marriage partner, irrespective of the cause, can enjoy the full rights and privileges of membership in the Church of God if they sincerely repent of and confess their sins. If not re-married, they must be admonished to be reconciled to each other and be legally re-instated in the holy bond of matrimony, henceforth to live holily therein. In case second marriage has been contracted, the last legally contracted marriage must be considered binding to the exclusion of former marriage ties, inasmuch as a legal divorce has effectually "put asunder that which God had joined together." *Grounds:*

The institution of marriage is a divine ordinance given for the civil and social life of man on earth;

It belongs in the sphere of the natural life and of common grace and is being governed by the laws of the State as God's ordained minister and authority in that sphere of life.

The State is responsible and accountable to God for the way it performs its duties of consummating and dissolving marriage ties (not accountable to the Church).

The State should perform those duties according to God's revealed will, which in many cases is not done.

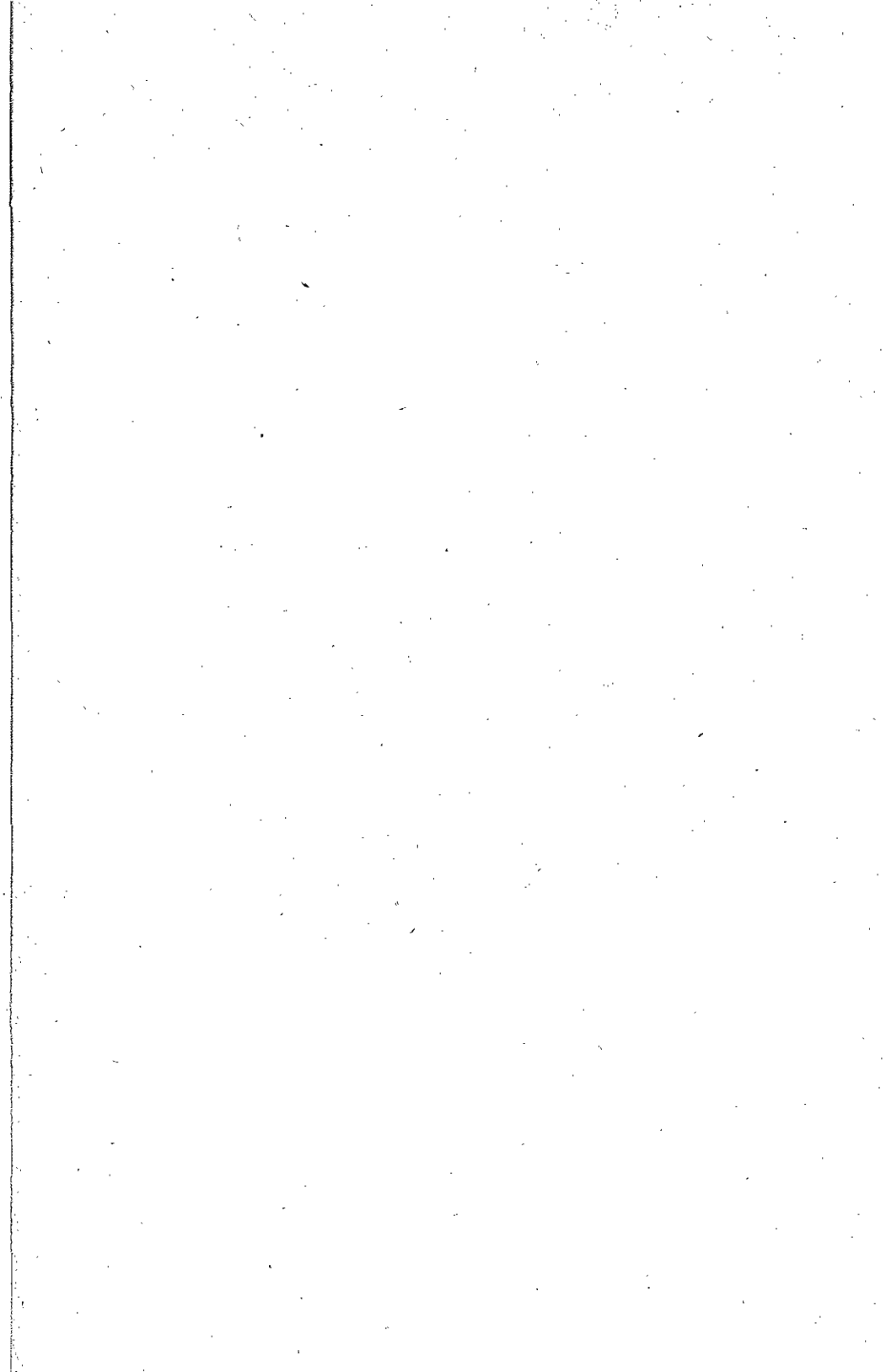
Though by actions which are contrary to God's will the State becomes guilty before God, yet *He causes the decisions of the State to stand* because its power to act in the matter of matrimony God himself has ordained.

That God acquiesces in and considers the decisions of the State in other matters as binding is clearly shown by the example of Pilate condemning Jesus to death.

Whereas the consummation of the marriage tie as well as the dissolution of the same are in the legitimate province of the State, the Church must recognize the authority of the State and must abide by what has been legally performed by the State in its own sphere.

The Church has no right to disregard what has been legally performed by the State. It has no right to encroach upon the territory of the State by demanding that the second marriage bond be again legally dissolved. Both State and Church have rights of sovereignty in their own sphere.

Therefore sinners of the above mentioned type who have repented of their sin or sins and will confess the same can be with joy admitted as members of the Church and must



be allowed to remain in whatever legal state they are living at the time they present themselves for admittance with the exception that persons divorced and not again married must be admonished to reconcile and renew legal marital relations.

The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins. And the acceptance of any repentant sinner never makes void any of God's ordinances, but it establishes them. Neither does it justify any of the sins which a penitent may have committed.

(Peter L. Van Dyken.)

The following Explanatory Note was sent later:

EXPLANATORY NOTE TO ABOVE OVERTURE

In the quotation from the Acts of the Synod of 1908 on page 1 of the Overture, it would have been more correct to say: "If this man should have contracted another marriage during lifetime of his first wife," etc.

It also must be understood (though not mentioned in the Acts of Synod 1908) that this man after his second marriage had come to repent of his sin of adultery and of second marriage, and had subsequently sought to become a member of the Church.

An unrepentant sinner can never be accepted.

In naming this stand of the Church inconsistent (also on page 1 of Overture) the sentence: "The legal divorce has therefore effectually freed both parties," means that for both parties alike the bond of marriage has ceased to exist before God and man. But though legally they are both also free to marry another man or woman, morally they have *not* such equal rights. Only the innocent party has that right, according to Scripture.

However, in my overture, I am not trying to prove the right of re-marriage of any party. But in it I deal with the problem of those who have sinfully secured a divorce and sinfully contracted a new marriage, and who upon conviction by the Holy Spirit of their sinful deeds, are willing to confess both their sins of divorce and second marriage.

And I have tried to prove that penitent sinners of that type must be admitted in the Church with joy, accepting their present married state as valid and binding. Since the married state in itself is not contrary to God's law, but conform to it, the Church cannot demand separation. The sinful part of that marriage they would confess, which is as much as the Church can ask.

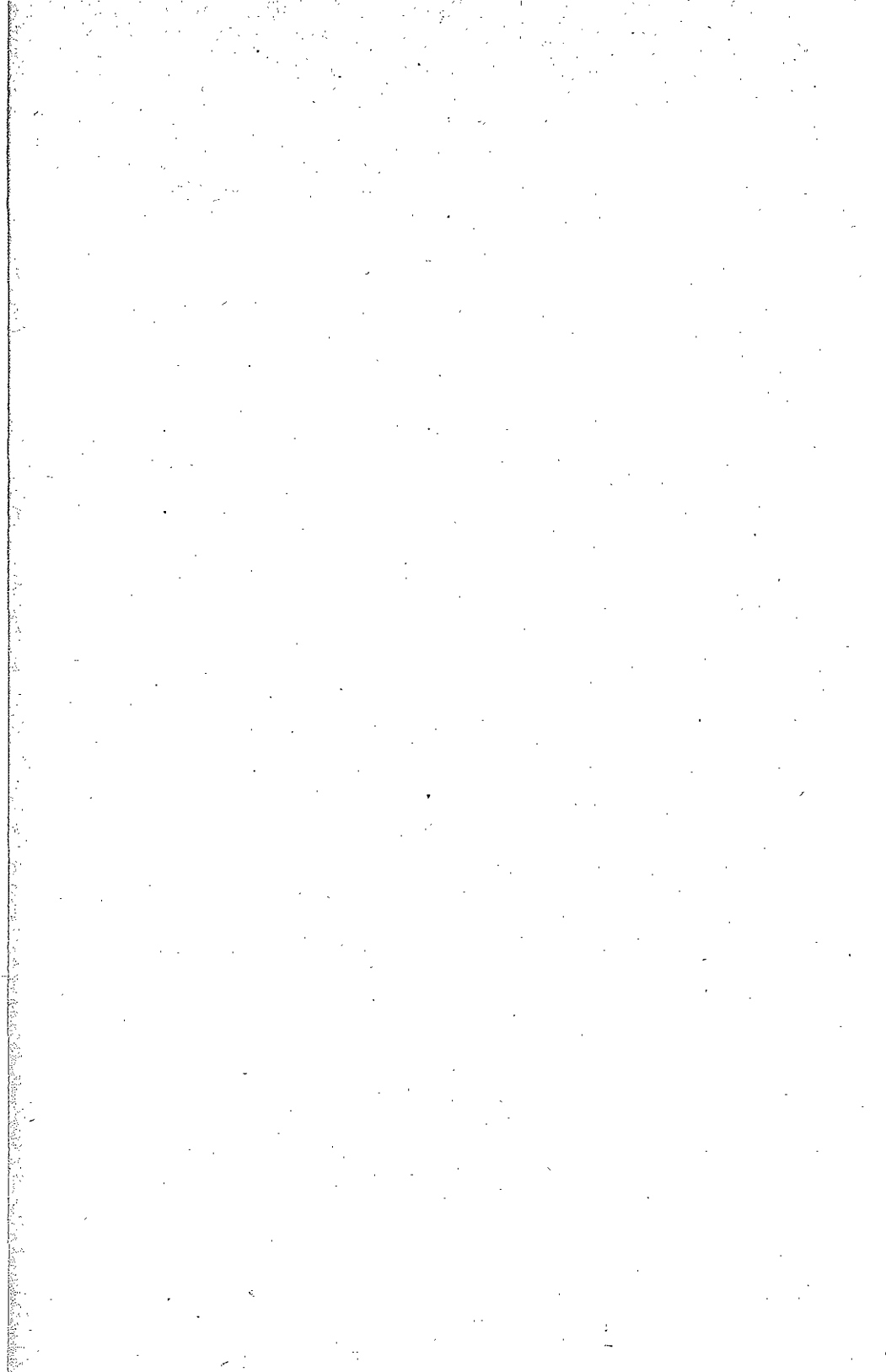
As God forgave David's sin and yet visited his sin upon him, so the Church must accept all penitent sinners, leaving the visiting of their sin unto God, Who only has that right.

Respectfully submitted,

Ripon, Calif.

PETER L. VAN DYKEN.

70. Classis Orange City decided to send through to Synod the overture of Rev. H. Moes without expressing itself on the matter and without adopting it.



Classis is of the opinion that there are points in this overture of Rev. H. Moes in re the Divorce Question which Synod might well consider.

OVERTURE IN RE DIVORCE, BY REV. H. MOES

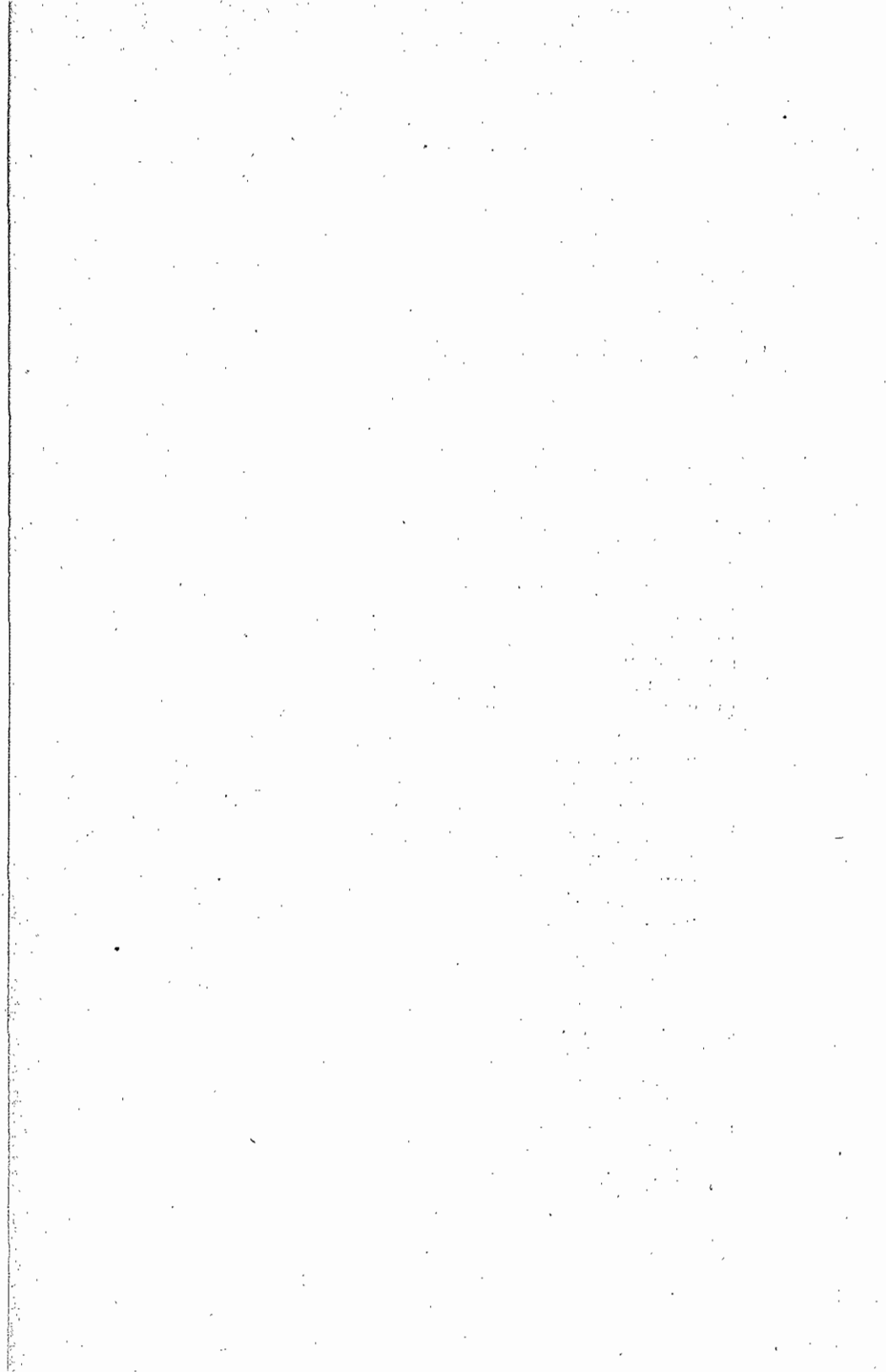
The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1936 is hereby overtured to consider and adopt the following resolution regarding the membership in our churches of persons who have been divorced on unscriptural grounds or have been the cause of legitimate divorce and who have later been re-married to a second spouse.

A. Synod expresses itself as being in agreement with the views and doctrines which have been set forth in the Bouma-Hendriksen report of the Advisory Committee on Divorce (Agenda 1936, pp. 46-96).

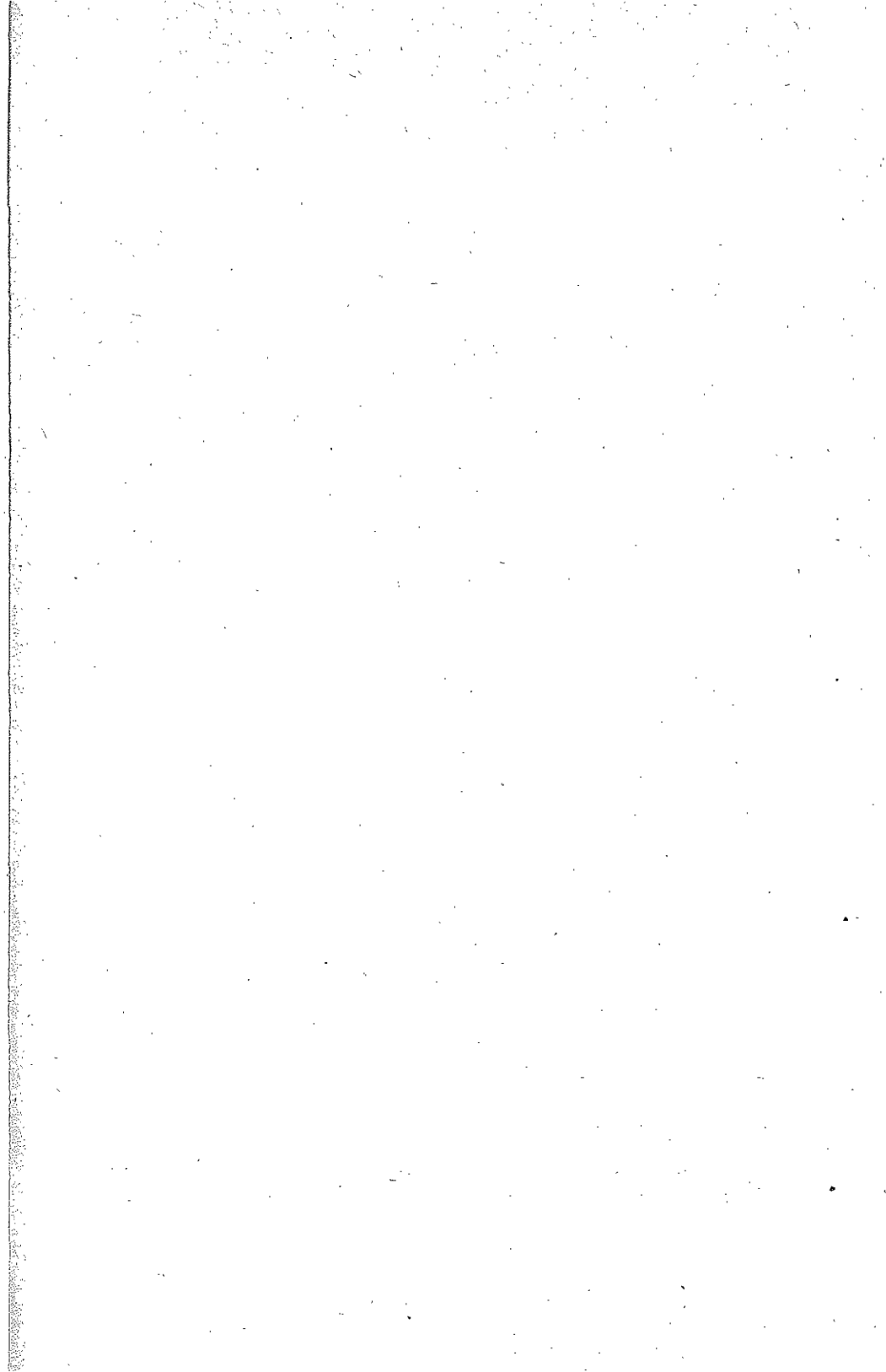
B. Synod, nevertheless, decides not to act according to the advice given in the above main report, but to reject A, 1 and 2, and embody B, 1 and 2 in the following decision:

A person who has broken the bond of wedlock by plain adultery, or by being the first to re-marry a second spouse after divorce on unscriptural grounds or a person, who in the opinion of the consistory, has not done what might be reasonably expected to prevent such unscriptural divorce, and later re-married shall be subject to the discipline of the Church, unless such person shows a hearty repentance, confesses the sin of the act of adultery and of the present marriage, and solemnly promises to return to the first spouse as soon as possible. *Grounds:*

- a. It is not stating the whole truth of the matter to say that such a person is living in continuous adultery.
- b. The Church does not feel convinced that she may require of such persons the dissolutions of their present marriage.
- c. There may be situations where the return to the first spouse is impossible, though the person is repentant and desirous to return.
- d. If the Church is justified in reckoning with the spiritual darkness in which certain persons were at the time of their sin — as is proposed in the Bouma-Hendriksen report (Agenda 1936, I, p. 95) — she must also consider the fact that ignorance is not the only form of spiritual darkness.



- e. In the case of other commandments we take into account the inability of a person to undo his sin. A thief is living in his sin as long as he has not returned what he has stolen, but may be admitted to the Lord's Supper, if unable to undo his sin, if the consistory is convinced that he is sincerely repentant and desires to make restitution as soon as possible.
- f. The reason why continuance in sin is a just ground for church discipline is that it is clear evidence that the sinner has not truly repented. But when the sin *cannot* be discontinued on account of irremediable circumstances, then the continuance cannot be taken as evidence of insincere repentance and hence can no longer be a ground for censure.
- g. If the Church is convinced of the sincerity of a person's repentance, she cannot hold that excommunication is a shutting out of the Kingdom of God, as the Heidelberg Catechism states, Question and Answer 85.
- h. The objection that the decision herein taken would open the door to an increase in the divorce evil, since a person might plan to obtain divorce and marry another and be re-admitted upon confession, may be answered by the following:
 - 1) Unless we can be sure that ex-communication implies exclusion from the Kingdom of God, it will not act as a deterrent at all. Such excommunication does not bind the conscience.
 - 2) Unless in a given case the Church is convinced that excommunication means exclusion from the Kingdom of God, she exceeds her Christ-given authority if she does use excommunication as a deterrent. She must in rule in obedience to the will of Christ.
 - 3) A person, who is deterred only by the threat of excommunication, is still guilty in the sight of God. His obedience is only external.
 - 4) It may be seriously questioned whether government by threat of excommunication does not impart to church discipline an unwarranted and unscriptural punitive quality.
 - 5) The required promise to return to the first spouse, if and when it may be possible, will not easily be made unless the person's repentance is sincere, and if, when return becomes possible, the promise



is broken — the person would again be subject to discipline.

- i. Seeing that Deut. 24:1-4 forbids the return (in Israel) of an illegitimately divorced and re-married wife to her former husband, it is difficult to see that in the New Testament God should insist upon such return to such an extent that he would require ex-communication even when such return is impossible.
- j. A person, who is willing for God's sake to undo his sin as soon as possible, has in his heart broken with it.

(Rev. H. Moes.)

VII. VARIA

BIRTH CONTROL REPORT, Agenda, p. 45

- 71.** Classis California overtures Synod not to drop but to continue the study of birth control. *Ground:* The importance of the matter.

(Classis California.)

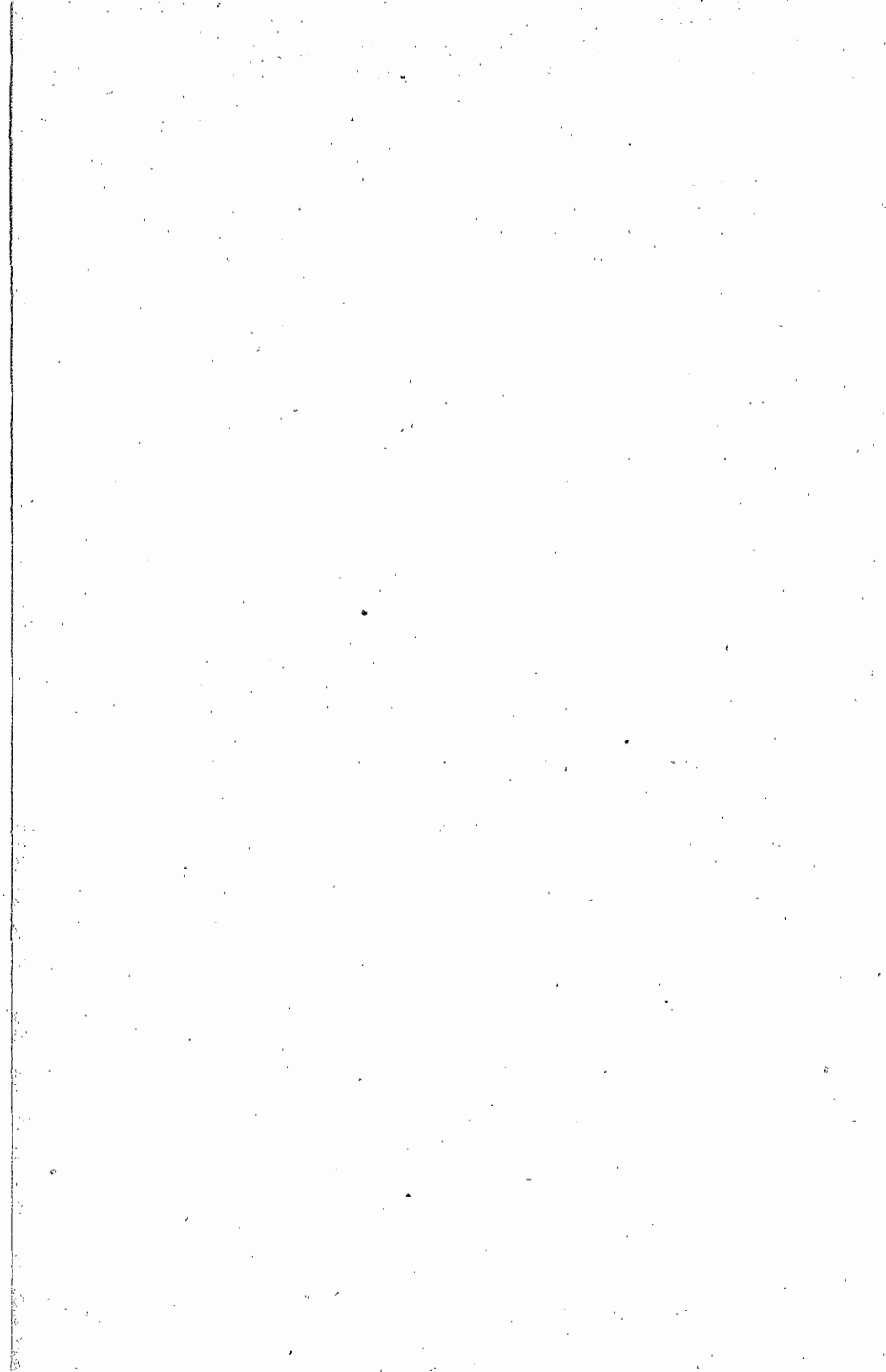
- 72.** Classis requests and urges Synod to appoint a committee to study the matter of Birth Control and prepare a testimony which may serve as a warning to those married people who may be living in secret sin; and as a guide to others who are genuinely concerned to know the Lord's will in this matter but are groping for light.

It is not the opinion of Classis that Synod should legislate on this matter but give a testimony. Classis suggests to Synod that a few of our Christian physicians be asked to serve on this committee.

Classis also suggests that in seeking information on Birth Control clinics, Synod's committee should pay special attention to the activities of those who serve as agents for city and county clinics among families dependent on community relief.

(Classis Grand Rapids East.)

- 73.** Van Classis Wisconsin: Overwegende dat de zaak attesten met aanmerkingen behoort tot het terrein der gezamenlijke kerken in een en hetzelfde kerkverband en dat de Synode ook dienaangaande een besluit passeerde, zoo stelt de Kerkeraad van X de Classis voor om de volgende instructie op te zenden naar de e. k. Synode:



Classis Wisconsin verzoekt de Synode om eene commissie te willen benoemen om studie te maken, historisch en kerkrechtelijk, van Art. 64 der Alg. Bep. en de volgende Synode met een welomschreven advies te dienen. *Gronden:*

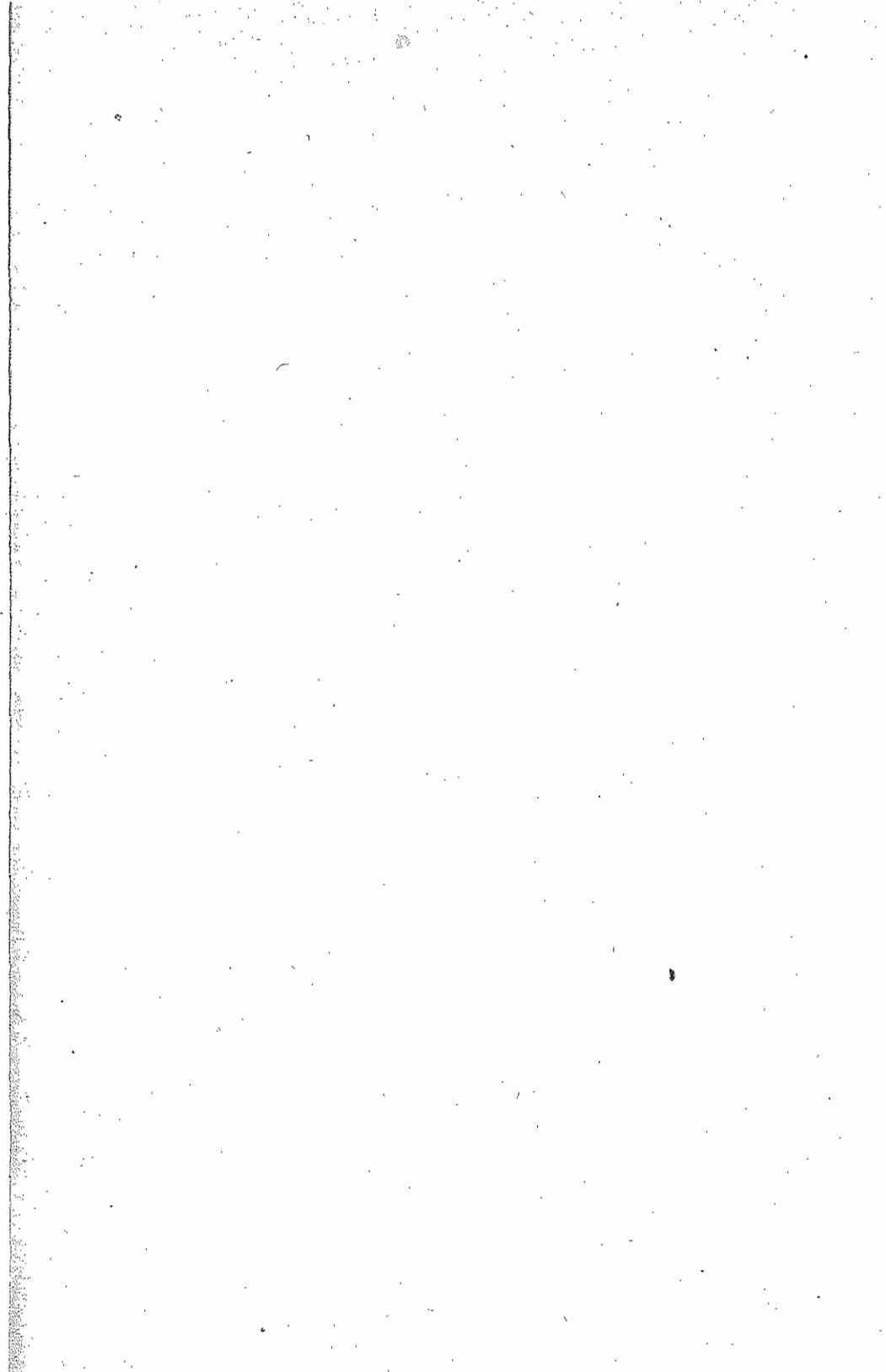
- a. Uit concrete gevallen in het midden der Classis is het gebleken dat er dienaangaande twee zeer uiteenlopende beschouwingen bestaan waardoor wrijving tusschen locale kerken onvermijdelijk wordt,
- b. De zaak zelve behoort tot het terrein der kerken in het gemeen, is niet classicaal maar synodaal, en
- c. Het is overtuigend gebleken dat deze bepaling blijkbaar vatbaar is voor meer dan een opvatting en verklaring, hetgeen niet is tot stichting der kerken onderling en schadelijk voor het kerkverband.

Classis Wisconsin besloot deze instructie door te zenden.
(Classis Wisconsin.)

74. Classis Wisconsin overtures Synod to appoint a committee to study the problem of mixed marriages and to advise the following Synod what steps might be taken to combat this evil. *Grounds:*

- 1) The increase of this evil in our circles.
 - 2) The welfare of our Church would be benefited thereby.
- (Classis Wisconsin.)

75. Classis Pella of the Christian Reformed Church, meeting at Pella, Iowa, March 31, 1936, after due consideration of our present *Rules for Church Visitation*, felt persuaded that these rules should be altered and amended in such a way that greater stress should be placed on the important elements enumerated in Art. 44 of our Church Order, to-wit, taking "heed whether the Minister and the Consistory faithfully perform the duties of their office, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, through Word and deed, the upbuilding of the congregation, in particular of the youth, to the end that they may in time fraternally admonish those who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto peace, upbuilding, and greatest profit of the Churches."

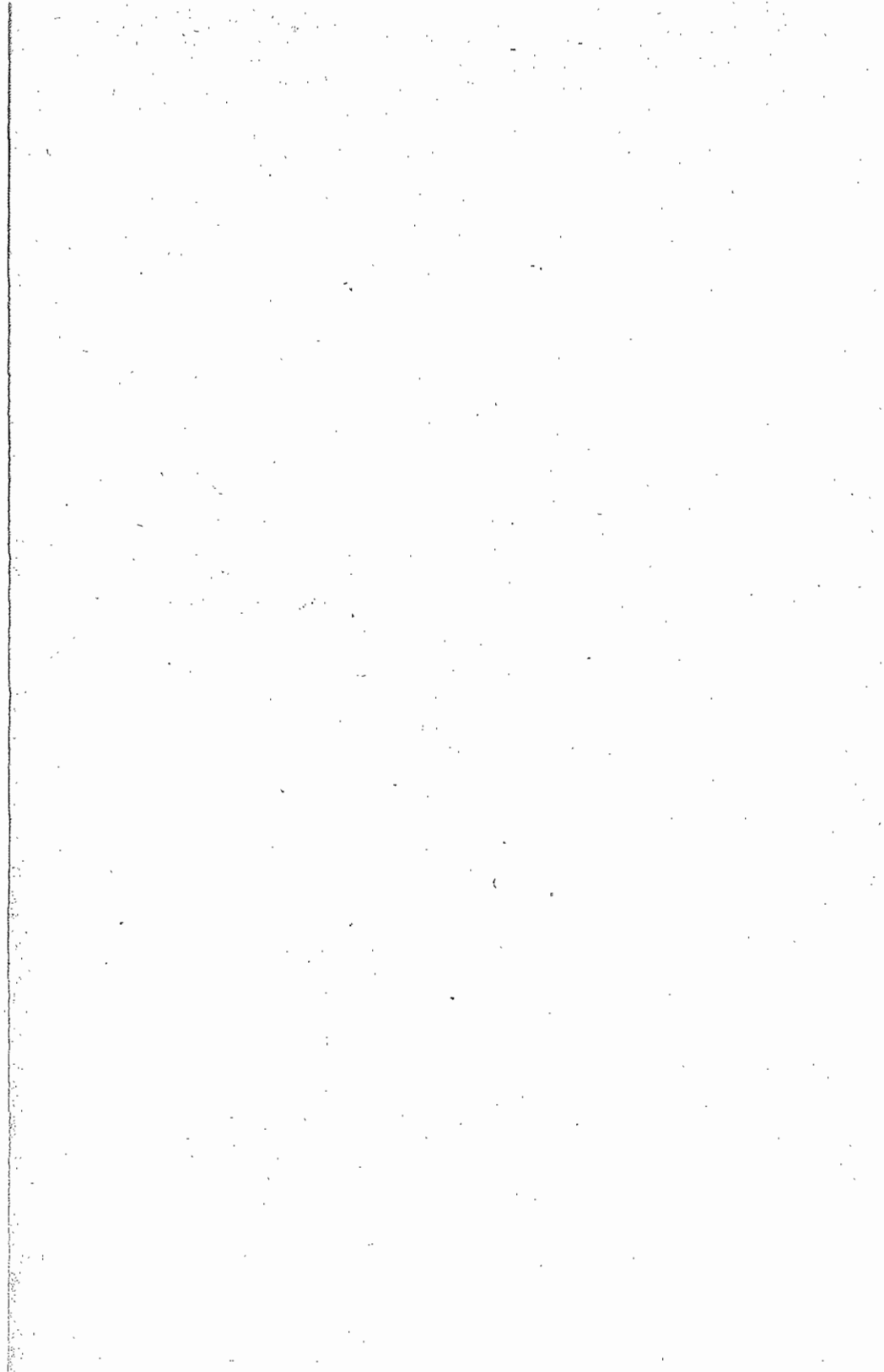


Furthermore, Classis Pella feels that the rules might well stress the duty of Visitors to use their own judgment constantly as they conduct their visit, and that the Visitors should endeavor to make each visit distinctive, according to conditions and needs of each individual church visited.

We have much praise for the excellent work of the Synod of 1922, (the Synod at which the present reading of the Rules was approved) but we believe that the actual use of these Rules during a number of years has revealed to us certain weaknesses. To a couple of these weaknesses we have just referred. Another weakness, in our humble estimation, is the fact that the present Rules give a list of questions, as these are to be asked word for word. This has led to undesirable uniformity and mechanization of this important work, so that many have begun to look upon it as a needless and fruitless repetition, which, if it must be done, might just as well be carried on through the mails by means of a questionnaire. We believe that the material of the questions included in the Rules should *merely be indicated*, so that Visitors must use their own judgment constantly, and will have to frame their own questions. That will promote individualization.

Then there are also matters of import which are not included in the present guide, but which should be there in our estimation. Such as concern the correct method of administering the Word of God, over against the popular but dangerous topical-sermon methods; the Consistory's activity toward worldly amusements; loyal promotion of Christian Day School instruction, and vigilance regarding Christian Schools.

Furthermore, as far as the introductory stipulations are concerned, we believe that rule 6, which reads as follows: "At the meeting one of the Visitors functions as president, and the other as clerk. The visitors record their findings and doings in a book for reference at future visitations, to be retained in the archives of Classis." We believe that this rule should be altered in such a fashion, that the Visitors are not made to be present and clerk of the Consistory meeting which they attend, but merely, president and clerk of the committee which meets with the Consistory concerned. Unless under special circumstances the Consistory concerned desires the other arrangement. The present provision fits in well with Churches holding the Episcopal form of government, but not with those holding the Reformed system.



The second provision of rule 6, we believe, should be stricken. It will be very seldom that Church Visitors will feel compelled to record more than their report to Classis contains. And the work of entering on secret record each visit for future reference is a task far greater than the actual results will ever warrant. Besides, there will be less need of this provision still, if Classis will only do as Article 44 stipulates, i. e., choose Visitors, not at random, but from amongst those that are outstanding, taking in consideration age, experience, and practical wisdom.

Classis Pella therefore overtures Synod of 1936 to alter and amend our present Rules for Church Visitation in such a way that these may:

- 1) stress the essential charge of Church Visitors;
- 2) stress the obligation on the part of Church Visitors to use their own judgment in conducting their work, and to individualize their task for every church;
- 3) merely *indicate* matters to be discussed and investigated;
- 4) be up-to-date.

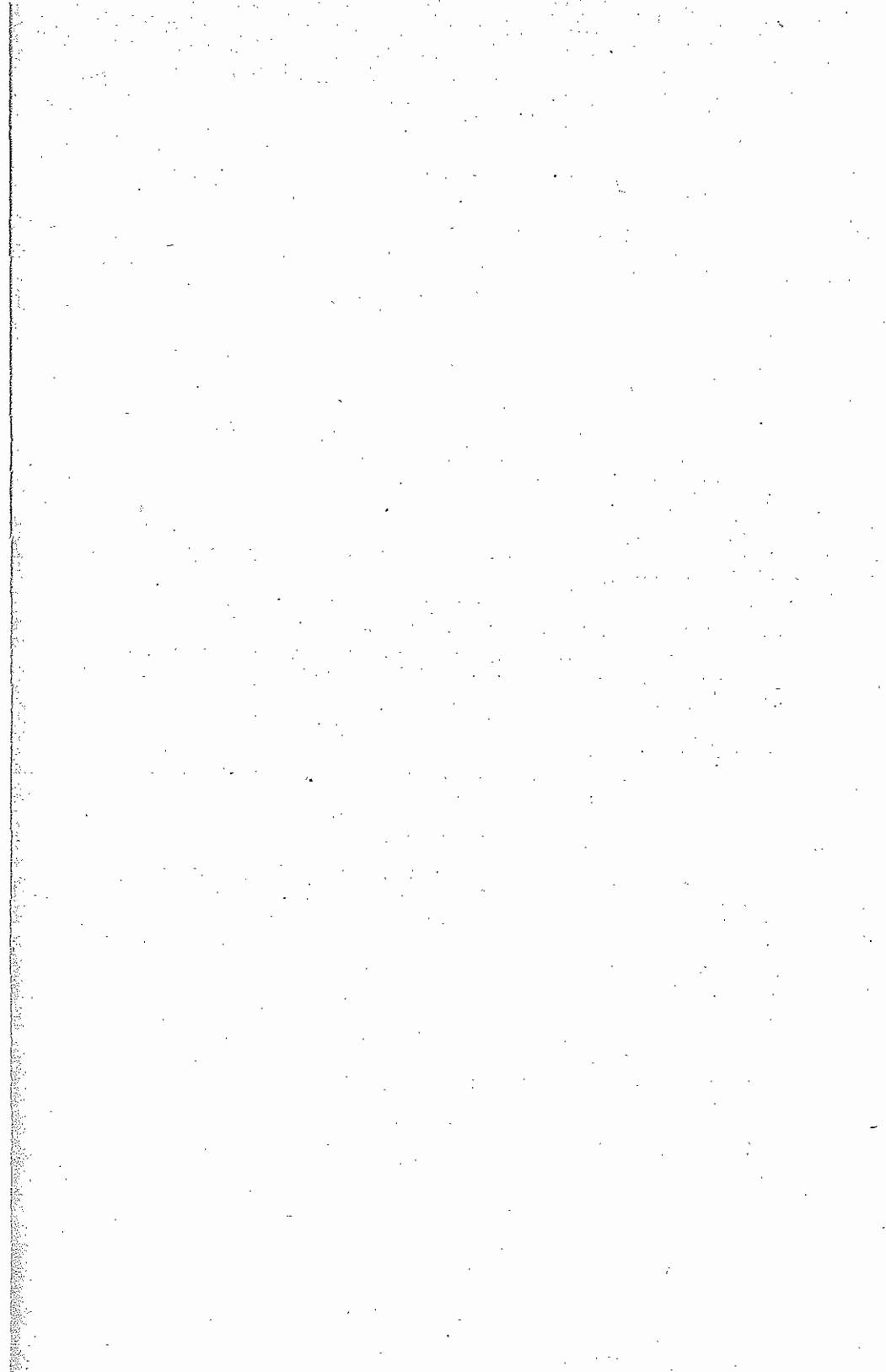
In the second place Classis Pella overtures Synod in this connection, to urge faithful adherence to the stipulations of Article 44, Church Order, upon all our Classes. That is to say, we petition Synod to urge all Classes:

- 1) to choose Visitors from among those Ministers who by reason of their *age, experience and wisdom* are most outstanding. (cf. Latin original: "minimum binos, aetate, experientia, et prudentia maxime conspicuos.)
- 2) to appoint Church Visitors once a year, and to charge these to visit the churches at least once a year, if at all possible;
- 3) to appoint more than one set of Church Visitors only if a Classis is overly large, or when distances are great, in order that the churches may be served by their best talents.

In order that all the members of Synod may know just what we have in mind, and perhaps to facilitate matters, we append herewith a suggestive revision of the rules under consideration.

RULES FOR CHURCH VISITORS

The Visitation which, according to Article 44 of the Church Order, the churches are to observe, in order to pro-



ceed properly, calls for the observance of the following particulars:

(1) Every Classis shall appoint from its midst at least two Ministers as Visitors, and an equal number of alternates.

(2) At least one week prior to their coming the Visitors shall notify the Consistory of the day and hour of their visit.

(3) On the intervening Sunday the approaching visitation shall be publicly announced to the Congregation.

(4) All members of the Consistory shall give diligence to be present at the meeting arranged for the visitation. Every member that remains absent shall acquaint the meeting with the reason for his absence. If one-half of the members are absent, the visitation cannot take place.

(5) The Consistory shall see to it that all the record books of the church are brought to the meeting for inspection by the Visitors.

(6) At the meeting one of the Visitors functions as president of the committee, and the other as clerk.

(7) If abnormal conditions in a church make it desirable, the Visitors shall repeat their call as soon and as often as is necessary.

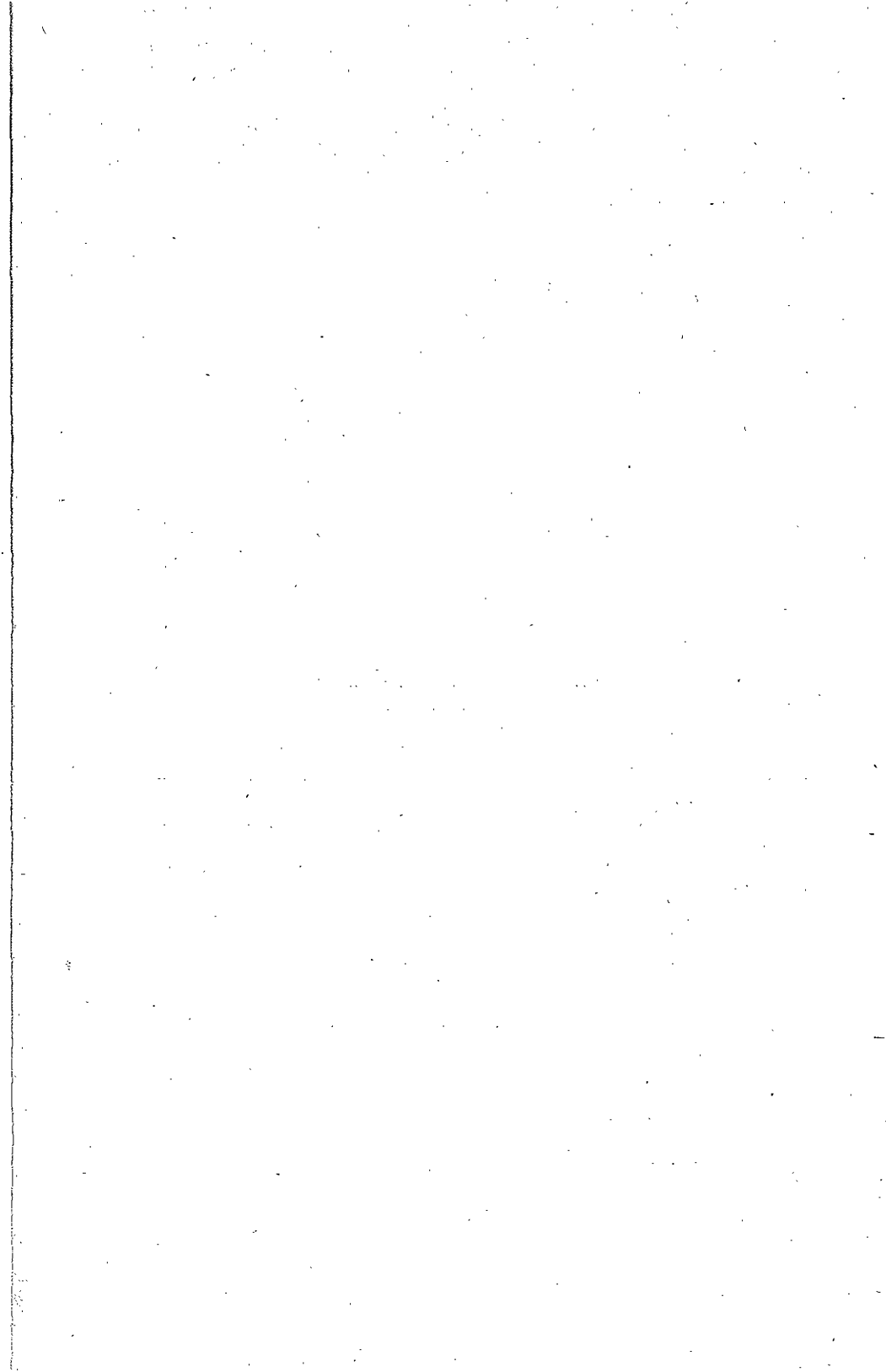
(8) After all the churches have been visited, the Visitors shall, with all necessary discretion, prepare a report of their findings and doings, and present the same at the next meeting of Classis.

Guide for Visitors

In keeping with the stipulations of Article 44 the Visitors shall take heed *whether all the members of the Consistory are faithful in the performance of the duties of their office; whether they are sound in doctrine; whether they observe the rulings of our Church Order; whether they promote to their best ability the welfare of the Congregation, especially that of the youth.* The Visitors shall admonish the negligent and advise and assist the Churches where and whenever necessary.

In the execution of their task the visitors shall use their own discretion. Making inquiry and extending advice as the condition of each particular church seems to require.

However, to promote due regularity, Visitors shall not neglect to confer with all Consistories, at each regular visit, regarding the following matters:



—Due regularity as to preaching services held each Lord's Day.

—Catechism preaching as stipulated in Art. 38, C. O.

—Expository preaching vs. topical-method discourses.

—Type of sermons read at reading services.

—Regularity in the observance of the Lord's Supper, and the preaching of preparatory and applicatory sermons. (cf. Articles 62 and 63, C. O., and Synod 1912, Art. 72, 9.)

—Catechetical instruction: Instructors, methods, length of season, supervision, etc.

—Observance of the Church Order in all things. (Elections, Subscription to Forms of Unity, Consistory Meetings, Mutual Censure, Confirmation of Marriage in the presence of Christ's Church. (cf. Art. 70, C. O., etc.)

—Faithfulness regarding Church discipline, according to the Word of God and the Church Order, Articles 71-80.

—Vigilance and loyalty regarding Lodgeism or secretism. (cf. Synod 1867, Art. 15.)

—Vigilance regarding the evil of worldly-mindedness and observance of the decisions of Synod 1928, Art. 69.

—Due visitation of the sick and afflicted, of the unfaithful and wayward by Consistory-members.

—Due regularity in Home-visitation work.

—Spiritual condition of the church.

—Diligence pertaining to Kingdom extension.

—Due regularity pertaining to collections agreed upon by Classis and Synod.

—Promotion of Christian Day School instruction according to Art. 21, C. O.

—Supervision over Christian Schools and teachers as to doctrine and conduct.

—Supervision of the societies within the Congregation, including the Sunday School.

—Proper administration of funds and care for legal papers, incorporation papers, archives, etc.

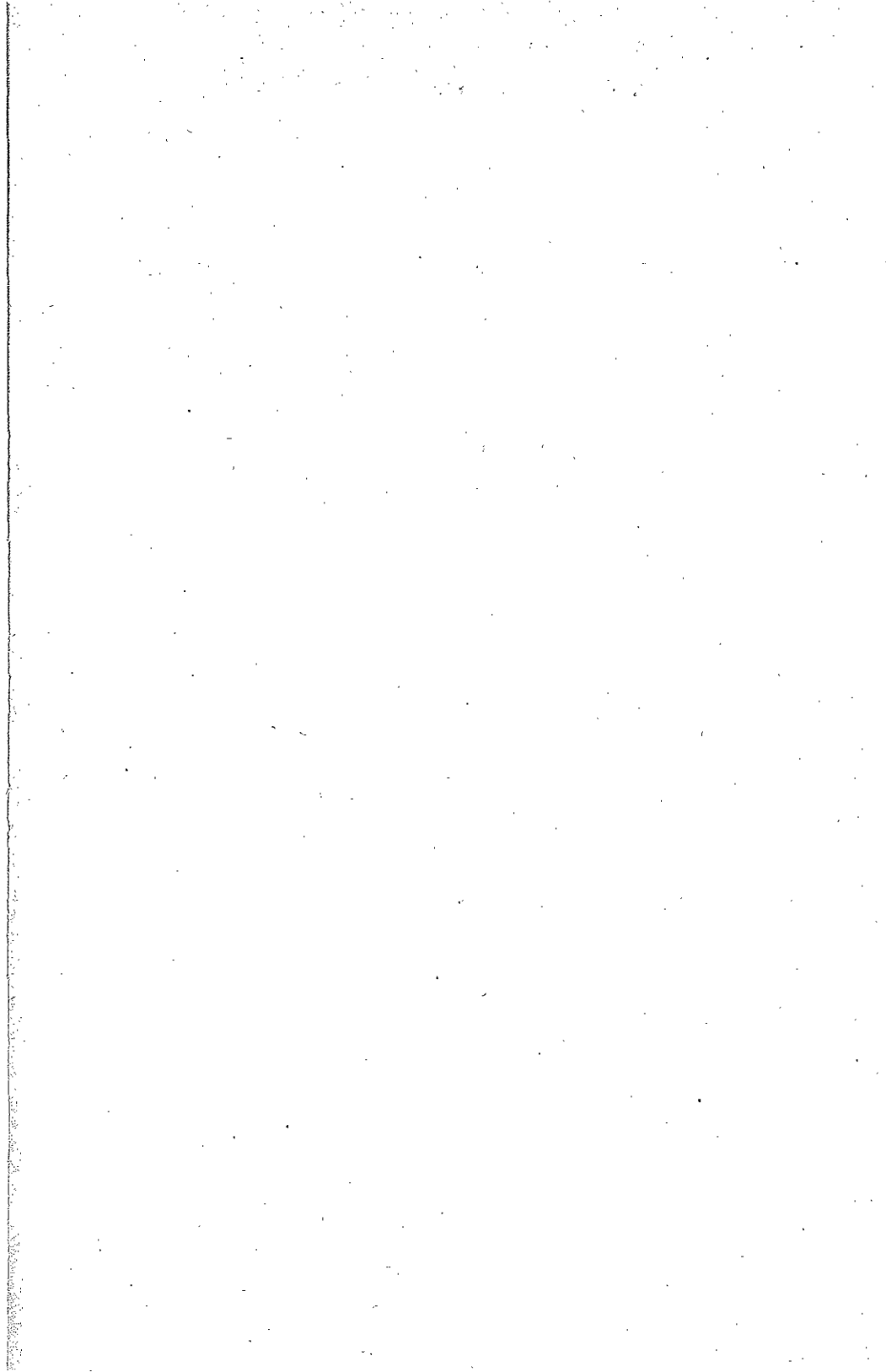
Furthermore, in the absence of the Minister (or Ministers) the Visitors shall confer with the Elders and Deacons concerning:

—Faithfulness and loyalty to God's Word, the Forms of Unity, the liturgical forms, and the Church Order, on the part of the Minister.

—The measure of edification which his sermons impart.

—The Minister's general conduct.

—The measure of diligence which his work evidences as a studious preacher and teacher.



—Full-time application to his work.

—Adequacy of salary paid by the Congregation.

Next, in the absence of the Elders, the Visitors shall confer with the Minister (or Ministers) and Deacons concerning:

—The Elders' attendance at the Church services and Consistory-meetings.

—Supervision exercised by the Elders over Catechism work through actual attendance.

—Faithfulness on the part of the Elders as to their pastoral duties toward the Congregation, specifically: visiting the sick; comforting the sorrowing; admonishing the irregular; overseeing all auxiliary organizations in the church.

—Their conduct.

Finally, in the absence of the Deacons, the Visitors shall confer with the Minister (or Ministers) and Elders concerning:

—The Deacons' attendance at the church services and such consistory meetings they are obligated to attend according to the Church Order and local arrangement, and Deacons' meetings if these are held.

—Faithfulness on the part of the Deacons in the exercise of their office, specifically: caring for the poor and the distressed with deeds of mercy and words of consolation.

—The method of administration of the diaconal funds.

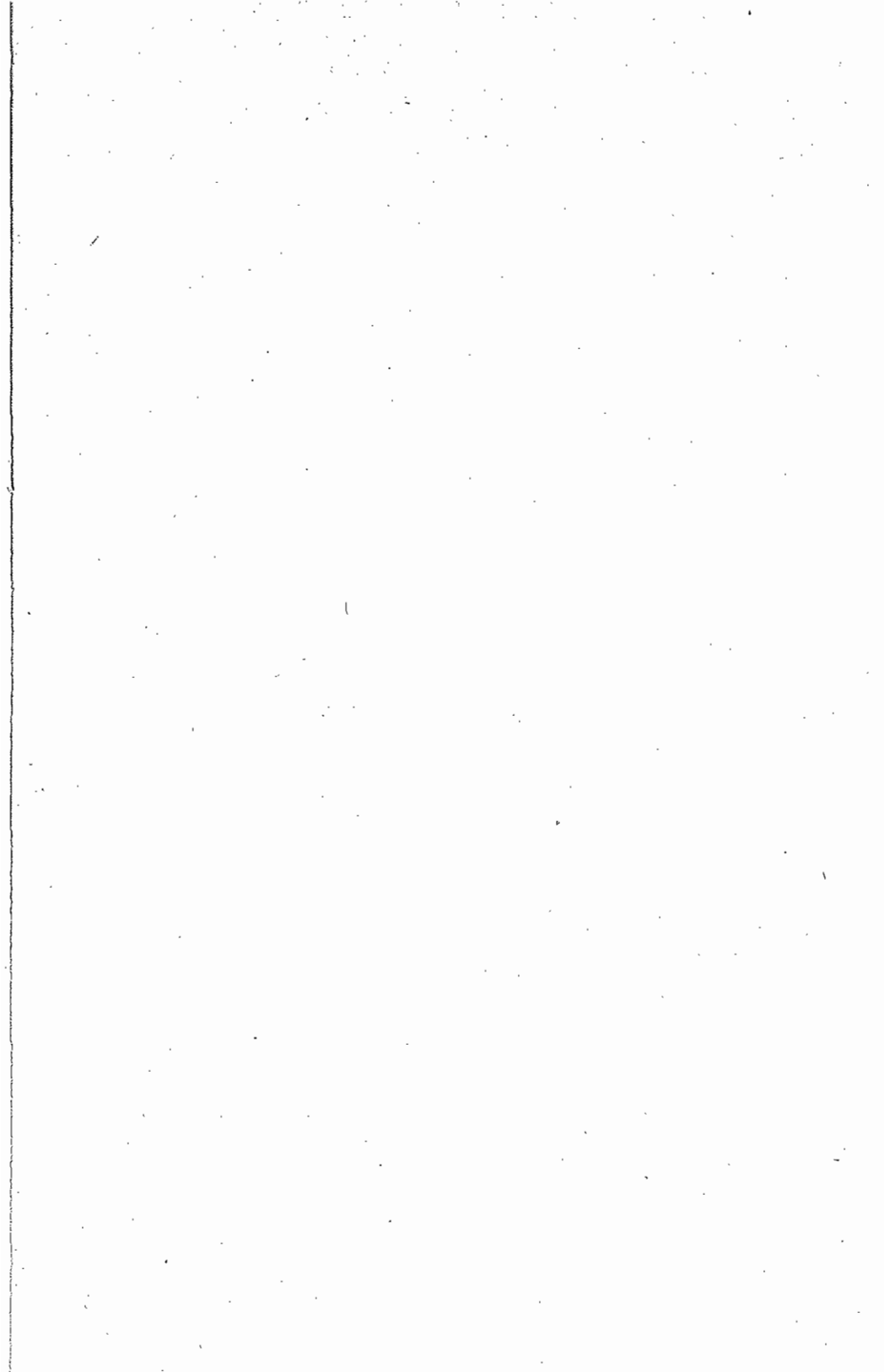
—Their general conduct.

(Classis Pella.)

76. Classis decides to send the following overture to Synod:

Classis Muskegon desires to call to the attention of Synod the fact that there is a discrepancy between a part of Art. 9 of the form for Articles of Incorporation as found in the Manual of the Church Order published by Stuart and Hoeksema, and the compiled laws of the State of Michigan, 1929, 10979, Section 6 (1901 — 148 — Sept. 5, '01.)

This discrepancy exists in the fact that the State law requires a two-thirds majority vote of the congregation before they can sell, convey, mortgage, lease, or release any real estate or fix the salaries of ministers, while Article 9 of our form calls for a majority vote. In the other Articles our form corresponds with the law in calling for a two-thirds majority.



Whereas this difference may at any time cause difficulties or misunderstandings to arise, the Classis overtures Synod to put forth efforts toward the correction of this matter. Classis cannot very well do this herself because all the churches of the State, and possibly of other States, are involved.

It is our opinion that either the State law should be changed to comply with our Articles or at least so changed as to allow of our position, or our Articles should be so changed so as to conform with the State law, or some statement should be inserted either in the law or in our Articles which would make them sufficiently flexible to meet the requirements which in this instance may vary in different States or Denominations.

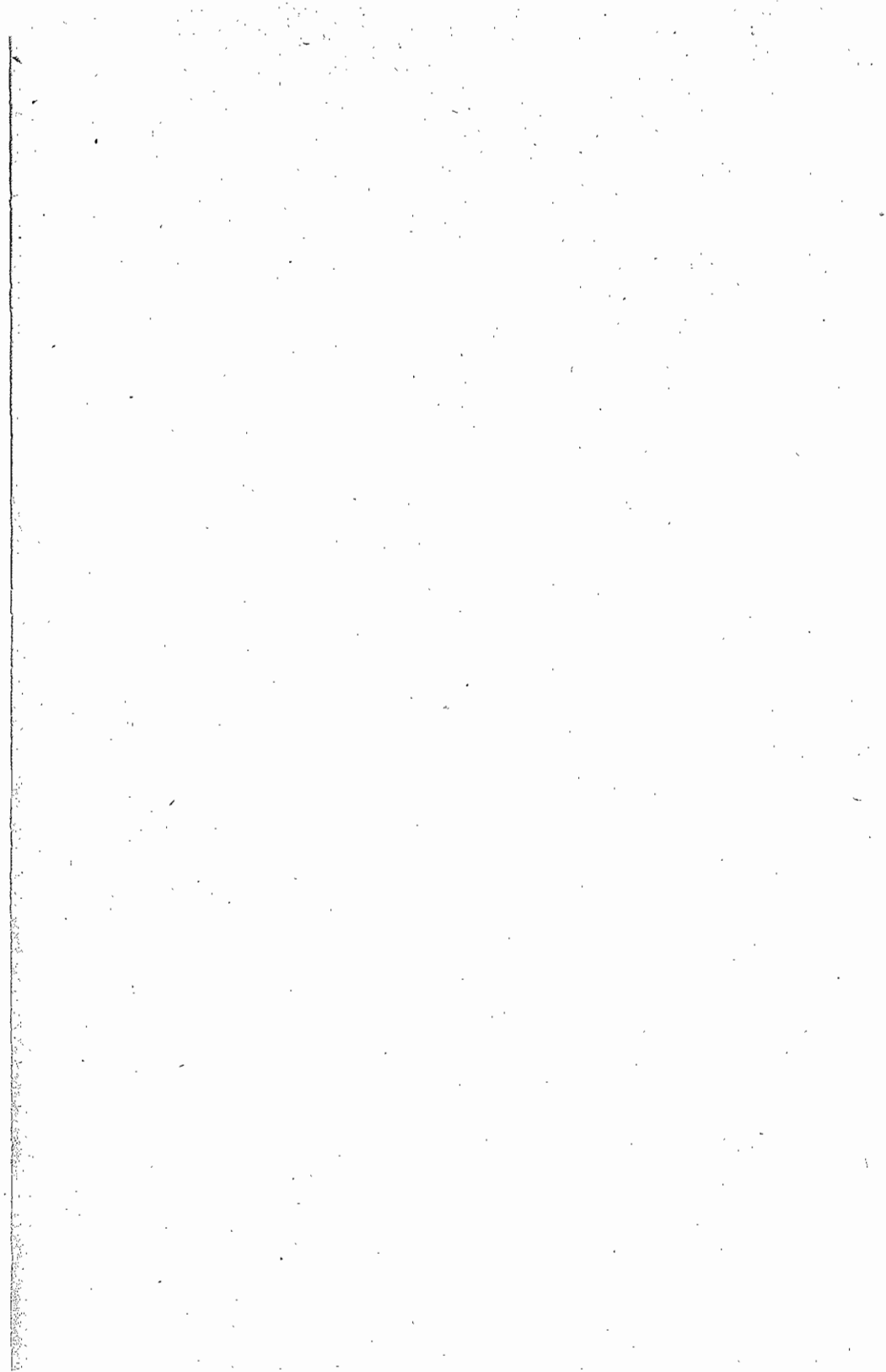
(Classis Muskegon.)

77. Classis decides to send the following overture of the First church of Fremont to Synod:

"Synod consider the feasibility of giving financial assistance to churches when they have to pay the traveling expenses of the minister they have called together with the costs connected with the moving of his goods, this assistance to be given when such expenses amount to more than \$100.00, but with the understanding that the aid will never exceed the sum of \$150.00. *Grounds:*

- 1) As a rule the smaller churches, the very ones that find most difficulty in balancing their budgets, have more changes in their ministry and consequently more of these expenses than the larger churches.
- 2) Such a practice would be more in conformity with the apostolic injunction, 'Bear ye one another's burdens,' than the present method.
- 3) The burden that would fall on the other churches during the course of each year would be comparatively small.
- 4) Such a practice will probably encourage the churches to call men who are serving in another part of the country, possibly in isolated places, but who are not considered at present in view of expenses.
- 5) Conditions are far different in our country with its vast distances than in the Netherlands, yet our method is much like that of the churches of the land of our fathers."

(Classis Muskegon.)



VIII. APPEALS AND PROTESTS

F. Van Oyen, R. R. 1, Chicago Heights, Ill.

George Monsma, Edmonton, Canada. P. O. Sub. 18.

Albert Godeke, R. R. 4, Box 141, Milaca, Minn.

R. Feenstra, 1450 Kalamazoo Ave., S.E., Grand Rapids,
Mich.