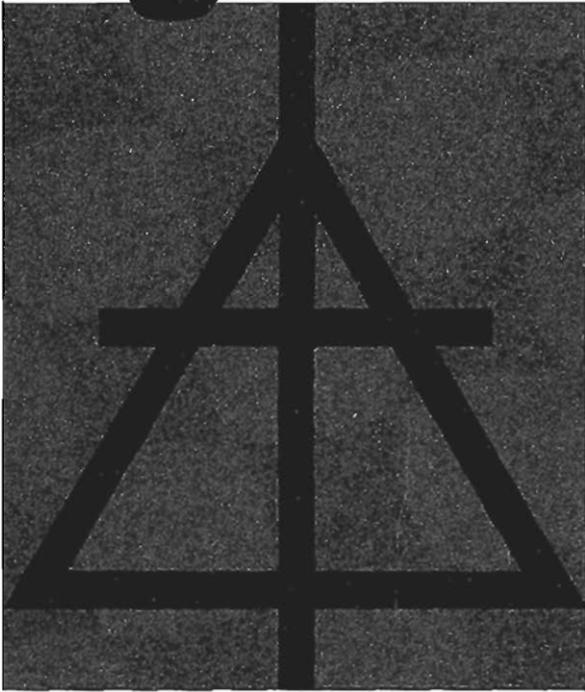


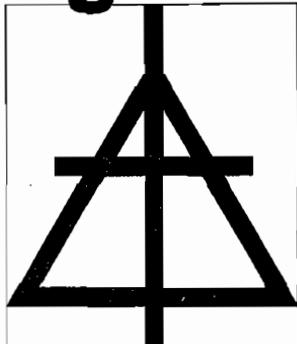
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# 1979 Agenda



# For Synod

# **1979 Agenda**



# **For Synod**

**JUNE 12 TO 22, 1979**

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

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

## Preface

The special prayer service for the Synod of 1979 will be held on Monday evening, June 11, 1979, at 8:00 p.m. in the Eastern Avenue Christian Reformed Church at 514 Eastern Avenue, S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Eastern Avenue congregation, which will this year celebrate its 100th Anniversary, is the convening church for the Synod of 1979. The prayer service will be in charge of the pastors of this congregation, the Revs. Gordon D. Negen and Vernon F. Geurkink.

The synod will begin its sessions, Tuesday morning, June 12, at 9:00 a.m. in the Fine Arts Center on the Knollcrest Campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The pastor of the convening church will serve as the president pro-tem until the Synod of 1979 is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected. Our congregations are requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on Sunday, June 10. Let us together pray that God may bless our denomination and his entire church to the coming of his kingdom and the praise of his name.



Stated Clerk  
2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE  
Grand Rapids, MI 49560

### DELEGATES—PLEASE NOTE

1. Delegates who travel by automobile are reminded of the decision of synod, that traveling together will effect considerable savings to our church.
2. Plane travel is generally the most economical for our delegates, since expenses for lodging and meals are not incurred.
3. All delegates should take with them their copy of the Agenda for Synod 1979 and all other supplementary materials that may be sent to you.

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## DELEGATES TO THE SYNOD OF 1979

Delegates		Alternates
<b>Classis Alberta North</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	H. De Moor, Jr. C. Tuininga	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	J. De Gier J. Van Vliet	Elders . . . . .
		N. Knoppers J. Boonstra J. Winkelaar H. Debbink
<b>Classis Alberta South</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	Dr. J. S. Hielema H. Van Niejenhuis	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	H. Heinen W. Stolte	Elders . . . . .
		J. Tuininga P. Meyer B. Walpot L. Vroon
<b>Classis Atlantic Northeast</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	R. W. De Vries T. B. Toeset	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	E. Dykshoorn L. Visser	Elders . . . . .
		P. Huisman B. van Eyk J. Chambery
<b>Classis British Columbia</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	P. M. Jonker P. Van Egmond	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	J. Ebbers D. De Lange	Elders . . . . .
		D. Pierik S. Pastine De Bree D. Van Dyke
<b>Classis Cadillac</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	W. Vanden Bosch M. Stegink	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	H. Ebels W. Vander Heide	Elders . . . . .
		R. Graves T. Brown G. Koster W. Boss
<b>Classis California South</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	D. J. Negen H. Hiemstra	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	P. De Graaf A. Westra	Elders . . . . .
		M. De Vries J. Howerzyl E. Brouwer J. Byrna
<b>Classis Central California</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	N. Vanderzee J. Van Dyken, Sr.	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	R. Vander Veen G. De Vries	Elders . . . . .
		G. Ebbers T. Wevers G. Van Mourik C. De Vries
<b>Classis Chatham</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	W. Renkema H. Eshuis	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	R. Bos F. Smids	Elders . . . . .
		J. Kerssies G. Mouw R. Feyen A. De Moor
<b>Classis Chicago South</b>		
Ministers . . . . .	N. Punt A. DeJong	Ministers . . . . .
Elders . . . . .	I. Slagter J. Hoekstra	Elders . . . . .
		J. Meppelink D. Zylstra J. Dekker J. Voss

**Classis Columbia**

Ministers ..... H. Bouma  
K. D. Koeman  
Elders ..... H. Roskamp  
W. E. Taylor

Ministers ..... O. J. Hogan  
J. E. Jeffers  
Elders ..... B. S. Van Dyken  
J. J. Hoekman

**Classis Eastern Canada**

Ministers ..... L. Mulder  
A. Dreise  
Elders ..... C. Kuipers  
Vedder

Ministers ..... H. Vriend  
G. Rignalda  
Elders ..... H. Staal  
M. Verburg

**Classis Florida**

Ministers ..... J. Vander Laan  
H. Vander Kam  
Elders ..... Dr. N. Jelles  
K. Tanis

Ministers ..... R. Pontier  
R. Ritsema  
Elders ..... W. Wichers  
G. Slinkman

**Classis Grand Rapids East**

Ministers ..... C. Terpstra  
J. E. DeVries  
Elders ..... P. Wobbema  
R. Geenen

Ministers ..... R. Van Harn  
T. E. Hofman  
Elders ..... H. De Wit  
A. Burger

**Classis Grand Rapids North**

Ministers ..... W. R. Witte  
J. P. Boonstra  
Elders ..... L. Haas  
H. Masselink

Ministers ..... R. J. Timmer  
J. H. Bergsma  
Elders ..... J. Gronsmann  
F. Kuperus

**Classis Grand Rapids South**

Ministers ..... J. H. Engbers  
H. J. Kwantes  
Elders ..... B. Sevensma  
J. A. Morren

Ministers ..... A. H. Jongsma  
W. Swets  
Elders ..... J. H. Nagel  
J. VanLaar

**Classis Grandville**

Ministers ..... L. Van Drunen  
J. Uitvlugt  
Elders ..... D. Veldman  
S. Klyn

Ministers ..... E. Blankespoor  
P. Vander Weide  
Elders ..... F. Holtrop  
J. Vander Lugt

**Classis Hackensack**

Ministers ..... B. Van Someren  
J. P. Vosteen  
Elders ..... N. De Jong  
D. Groelsema

Ministers ..... J. C. Rickers  
D. Boonstra  
Elders ..... E. Huizing  
P. Vermeulen

**Classis Hamilton**

Ministers ..... B. Nederlof  
H. R. De Bolster  
Elders ..... B. Dykstra  
B. Bakker

Ministers ..... J. Zantingh  
J. W. Jongsma  
Elders ..... G. Meyerink  
J. De Jong

**Classis Holland**

Ministers ..... L. J. Hofman  
J. Witvliet  
Elders ..... Dr. B. P. Bos  
E. Schierbeeck

Ministers ..... J. Blankespoor  
H. Roelofs  
Elders ..... L. Hekman  
M. Gritter

Ministers . . . . . J. Timmer  
 P. Szto  
 Elders . . . . . N. Hengeveld  
 W. Huyck

Ministers . . . . . H. Van Dyken  
 E. Den Haan  
 Elders . . . . . F. De Weerd  
 T. Lise

Ministers . . . . . E. G. Cooke  
 S. Ten Brink  
 Elders . . . . . J. VanderAa  
 J. Van Til

Ministers . . . . . W. D. Buursma  
 M. Buwalda  
 Elders . . . . . J. Gritter  
 D. Vander Steen

Ministers . . . . . R. Opperwall  
 D. Postema  
 Elders . . . . . J. Fiekens  
 Rev. E. Lewis

Ministers . . . . . L. D. Slings  
 R. A. Kok  
 Elders . . . . . J. G. Kuperus  
 J. Hammink

Ministers . . . . . H. Lamsma  
 J. Bultman  
 Elders . . . . . P. Mast  
 J. H. Riemersma

Ministers . . . . . D. Van Beek  
 J. Weeda  
 Elders . . . . . J. De Koning  
 W. Brouwer

Ministers . . . . . N. Steen  
 F. Walhof  
 Elders . . . . . A. Schaap  
 M. Bakker

Ministers . . . . . C. Admiraal  
 T. Medema  
 Elders . . . . . C. Laning  
 J. De Boer

**Classis Hudson**

Ministers . . . . . W. Kooienga  
 G. Frens  
 Elders . . . . . F. Visser  
 J. Klaassen

**Classis Huron**

Ministers . . . . . C. Bishop  
 A. Vanden Berg  
 Elders . . . . . S. De Ruyter  
 J. Proper

**Classis Illiana**

Ministers . . . . . G. Holwerda  
 D. Janke  
 Elders . . . . . J. Iwema  
 W. Schipper

**Classis Kalamazoo**

Ministers . . . . . C. De Ridder  
 F. De Boer  
 Elders . . . . . K. Apotheke  
 W. De Vries

**Classis Lake Erie**

Ministers . . . . . J. Boot  
 W. Verhoef  
 Elders . . . . . P. Geiger  
 D. Rubingh

**Classis Minnesota North**

Ministers . . . . . G. W. Van Den Berg  
 A. Van Hoff  
 Elders . . . . . J. De Jong  
 P. Van Der Hooft

**Classis Minnesota South**

Ministers . . . . . R. Fyneweaver  
 P. W. Brouwer  
 Elders . . . . . P. Walhof, Jr.  
 G. Esselink

**Classis Muskegon**

Ministers . . . . . H. D. Bultje  
 K. Wezeman  
 Elders . . . . . J. Zandstra  
 Rev. E. Piersma

**Classis Northcentral Iowa**

Ministers . . . . . J. Elenbaas  
 A. De Vries  
 Elders . . . . . J. De Waard  
 J. Geerdes

**Classis Northern Illinois**

Ministers . . . . . R. Grevengeod  
 L. Wolters  
 Elders . . . . . Dr. E. Van Reken  
 B. Van Houten

**Classis Orange City**

Ministers .....	J. Cooper	Ministers .....	J. Fondse
	M. Van Donselaar		J. Sittema
Elders .....	W. Wagenaar	Elders .....	J. Jonker
	J. Haveman		J. Broek

**Classis Pacific Northwest**

Ministers .....	J. A. Petersen	Ministers .....	A. A. Cammenga
	R. Vander Ley		R. B. Vermeer
Elders .....	D. Van Dyke	Elders .....	B. Pattie
	H. Vander Pol		D. Visser

**Classis Pella**

Ministers .....	R. J. Holwerda	Ministers .....	D. G. Zandstra
	H. Petersen		D. Draayer
Elders .....	P. E. Vos	Elders .....	W. Dieleman
	H. Groenendyk		L. D. Van Wyk

**Classis Quinte**

Ministers .....	J. Geuzebroek	Ministers .....	P. De Haan
	A. De Jager		G. Corvers
Elders .....	C. Hyman	Elders .....	L. Wesselius
	J. Rekker		B. De Bruyn

**Classis Rocky Mountain**

Ministers .....	E. Boer	Ministers .....	R. Nydam
	A. Mulder		A. Veltkamp
Elders .....	K. Kuipers	Elders .....	S. Gillson
	G. Vander Ark		W. Plomp

**Classis Sioux Center**

Ministers .....	L. Stockmeier	Ministers .....	D. Smit
	J. H. Piersma		H. De Groot
Elders .....	J. N. Poelstra	Elders .....	H. Haak
	A. Attema		W. Draayer

**Classis Toronto**

Ministers .....	L. Tamminga	Ministers .....	H. Bierman
	J. B. Vos		C. Tuyl
Elders .....	W. Suk	Elders .....	G. Vander Velde
	F. Greidanus		F. Masselink

**Classis Wisconsin**

Ministers .....	J. Pruijm	Ministers .....	N. Haan
	B. De Jong		G. Van Enk
Elders .....	H. Kok	Elders .....	A. Lensink
	W. Daane		R. Jansen

**Classis Zeeland**

Ministers .....	A. Besteman	Ministers .....	B. Byma
	J. Wesseling		E. Tamminga
Elders .....	A. Mannes	Elders .....	J. Monsma
	H. Van Elderen		H. Hazenberg

## Reports of Boards and Standing Committees

### REPORT 1

#### THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

The arm of the Christian Reformed Church which works with mass media carries on its work today in an atmosphere of suspicion, innuendo, and hoax. Now is a time when high visibility media religion is being scrutinized carefully and often ridiculed. The multimillion dollar budgets of some of the more prominent organizations are being publicized, and the lifestyles and financial dealings of some of the prominent media prophets have become material for magazine articles and books. The flamboyant and astonishingly successful religious leaders have become superstars, of all superstars the most curious and strange. And of course, 1978 closed with religious events of unspeakable horror in Guyana, and that horror has also cast its pale over the activities of all who give religious leadership.

Along with the cynical attitudes concerning media religion, there are also some highly respected Christian social critics who have apparently felt it incumbent upon them to speak in negative terms about the serviceability of the media for the mission and communication task of the church. Jacque Ellul, in his book *Propaganda*, is outspoken about this; he says: "The media that possess in themselves all their effectiveness and contain in themselves their own presuppositions and ends, cannot be put in the service of Jesus Christ." But then Ellul has an entirely pessimistic view of the possibility of Christianity's having any impact on modern culture. And Malcolm Muggeridge, who used to make his living in the media and even now uses the media to disseminate his views, nonetheless expresses a totally negative evaluation of the media's usefulness for our mission.

As we pursue our work, we are acutely aware of both the uneasiness regarding media religion and the sharp critique that has been leveled at it. We reflect on both of these. So far as the embarrassing excesses are concerned, we recognize that they exist and from them we have learned to exercise great caution in our own work. The Bible reminds us that the mission of the church has always been carried on in contexts that raised questions about the conduct of the representatives of the gospel, and Paul distanced himself from those who tried to use the gospel for personal gain; he said, "We are not, like so many, peddlers of God's Word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ" (II Corinthians 2:17). So too we are not, nor may we ever become, "peddlers" of the gospel.

So far as the more theoretical critiques of the church's use of the media are concerned, we feel we must consider them carefully but we must not

be daunted by them. They are too absolute. They also accompany theological positions which have no vision for a positive relationship of Christ to culture. We cannot escape the conclusion that Christ, who wants his gospel to go to all the world, created electro-magnetic radio waves so that this could be accomplished now when the population of the world has reached more than four billion. Nor can we escape the conviction that there is a power in the message of the gospel as such that must be exploited to the full. "Faith comes by what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Romans 10:17). So we continue to use broadcasting to bring Christ to the nations. This is still our central mandate; and it remains as exciting and as important as it was when first our church perceived it.

Because of the environment in which we carry on our work, though, it is necessary for our organization to conduct its work and expand it with great care. There are at least three elements of The Back to God Hour ministries which enable us to escape some of the pitfalls that accompany the use of the media in missions. They are these: *ecclesiastical character, accountability, and biblical orientation*. In terms of the first, The Back to God Hour is unique in the religious broadcasting field, for it is the only organization of its size that is directly related to a single church. As Paul has pointed out, we cannot preach unless we are sent, and everyone at The Back to God Hour is always aware of the fact that he is a "sent person"—sent by his church, sent to represent it. So far as accountability is concerned, the scrutiny of this organization by the church is explicit and meaningful, insuring that especially sensitive aspects of the operation are always monitored. And so far as biblical orientation is concerned, each of the ministers considers his task to be not the preaching of self but the preaching of Christ. Even more broadly, the goal of The Back to God Hour ministries is to proclaim the entire Bible, the whole counsel of God. We may not pander to men's sentimental needs while ignoring their greatest need. We may not use tricks to jolt loose avalanches of mail, but we must faithfully proclaim God's great message. And it is this last, incidentally, which can enable us to use the media simply as instruments, conveyances, bridges which carry the message that must be delivered, and which enables us at the same time to escape being so deformed by the media as to become useless to our Master.

We mention matters such as these at the beginning of our report this year because these intangible issues form the atmosphere in which we carry on our work. We are well aware that many within the church have serious questions about our church's use of broadcasting, and we want the church to be assured that we are not moving forward blindly, innocently continuing an activity that finds its primary justification in the fact that it has been done for forty years. If there are questions to be raised about this ministry, they are ours as well, and in all candor we admit that there can be times of doubt and misgiving. Near the end of 1978 and in our first meeting of this year, your committee has engaged in special periods of reflection and examination of long-range goals, and such activity is evidence of our conviction that a ministry as costly as this can continue only if its justification is strongly present in the minds of all involved in it. As the work grows and becomes in its own way more

awesome and nearly unwieldy, it is necessary for our church and those of us who have been called by the church to do this work to encourage one another with an encouragement that is rooted in an authentically Christian perception of God's will for us in this age.

And if there are intangibles within our culture and within our church which tend to make us somewhat uneasy as we represent you in this work, we must emphasize too that the most unsettling element of all is the fact that by means of these ministries literally millions of human beings are being touched with the gospel each week. In a sense it is so easy to do: one man working in a studio in Chicagoland or in Campinas, Brazil, can write and deliver a message that is heard by thousands and thousands. And this is thrilling. Yes. But it is also fearsome, for the message brought is the message of salvation *and judgment*. Again, the apostle's ideas are so very applicable here: "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life." We say with him, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (II Corinthians 2:15,16).

So then, these are the kinds of things that go through our minds and disturb the tranquility of our souls as we conduct the ministry described in this report. We wrestle with these matters, as staff, and as committee. We do so in the consciousness that we do not have the luxury of coming to conclusions that are attractive because we are comfortable with them, for the eternal welfare of thousands of people is at stake. And our eternal welfare is at stake too; not in the sense that our salvation is in danger, but in the sense that we move toward the judgment too—"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive good or evil according to what he has done in the body" (II Corinthians 5:10).

"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men. . ." (II Corinthians 5:11). It is in this attitude that we do our work. We together as staff, committee, and as church do our work in the fear of the Lord. It is in this spirit now that we turn to a description of the ministries of The Back to God Hour. For a formal description of the program presentations, a tabulated report concludes our material. CRC-TV, a division of The Back to God Hour, is described in a separate section of this report. Please look briefly at the worlds our church is reaching by means of radio.

### THE ENGLISH SPEAKING WORLD

The English speaking world is large and complex, especially if one includes in it the millions of people for whom English is not their first language but a language in which they are vitally interested. Near the end of 1978 we received a letter from Shanghai, China, written in Chinese by an Arabic speaking student who also wrote part of it in Arabic; he asked for English literature. He, too, in his own way, is part of the English-speaking world. And in order to serve this vast worldwide community of people who use English, The Back to God Hour produces several programs—not nearly enough, but several.

The Back to God Hour broadcast heard regularly throughout North

America is the mainstay of English language program offerings. We will assume that all of you are familiar with it. It has not changed a great deal over the years and continues to be effective as a long-term, always-there program that many people have grown to depend on. From time to time, when particularly provocative subject matter is handled on the program, the response is high. In distributing this program our present strategy is that we use well-run, powerful stations that blanket a large area. We are also responsive to local churches that request that we investigate releasing the program so that their church can be identified with it. We do this not only for our own churches, but also for other NAPARC churches in some instances. Among the long-range goals the committee is pursuing is the evaluation of this regular program of *The Back to God Hour*.

Within North America the 4½ minute program *INSIGHT* provides a regular weekday presentation of an interesting subject which usually contains a specifically Christian message. This program, though, is not a preaching program; it is aired on a public service basis.

In addition to *INSIGHT*, *RACOM SPOTS* (*RADIO COMmittee*) provide listeners with a short biblical or Christian idea—they are either one-half minute or a minute in length.

Another element of our North American English ministry is the *Media Package*. This consists of the use of all English language program offerings brought together for broadcast in a single locality, usually in cooperation with a local church. Materials from the regular program *THE BACK TO GOD HOUR*, *INSIGHT*, *RACOM SPOTS*, and *CRC-TV* can be combined to make a concentrated penetration in a market for a limited period of time.

In response to the need for English language programs throughout the world we release a daily program called *RADIO TODAY*. This is heard throughout Asia and in many parts of Africa. And our regular program is also produced in a foreign version, heard throughout the world.

The English language programs are supported by our English language literature ministry which consists primarily of the booklet *TODAY (THE FAMILY ALTAR)* and the *RADIO PULPIT*. Each month more than 40,000 copies of the *RADIO PULPIT* are sent out and many single copies of messages. *TODAY (THE FAMILY ALTAR)* now has a circulation of more than 270,000. When one considers that most of these copies are read by more than one person, the readership of this devotional guide is very high.

We do as much as we can to make each of our English language programs as useful as possible in the target area where it is heard. Obviously we are limited in this. There is so much more that could be done, different types of programs, possibly simple English programs. But already our church's contact with many people in the English speaking world is impressive.

### *ARABIC SPEAKING WORLD*

When the Rev. Bassam Madany began his Arabic language ministry in 1958 no one could have foreseen the conditions that characterize the Arabic speaking world today. The impact of this world on global

economics and the terror and upheaval within Iran are examples of the significance these people have achieved. Mr. Madany, who stays close to this world by frequent trips there and incessant monitoring of broadcasts and reading newspapers and books from that area, has developed a large and multifaceted ministry designed to touch the modern Arab and open his eyes to the Bible. As a native of Lebanon, the Rev. Bassam Madany is sensitive to the mystique of the Arab mind, particularly as this has been formed by the devious teachings of Islam. The large mail response, sometimes rising to 1,000 letters a month, tells of the size of his audience, and tells too how the Holy Spirit is using this ministry to cause people to turn from the false religion of Mohammed to Christ.

When this ministry began we could not anticipate, that now, just when the Arab world is becoming so influential, there are special radio stations available to this ministry that make possible a penetration of this area that is extraordinarily effective. The Arabic speaking people have long had a special dependence upon radio; their leaders have used it effectively to shape the popular mind. And the large stations our church uses to broadcast from Monrovia, Monte Carlo, and Cyprus dominate the air waves during some of the late evening hours.

The Rev. Mr. Madany is assisted by his wife Shirley, in this great outreach; their day-by-day work is very heavy, with the servicing of listener response and the regular program production that must continue. In addition, the Madanys' travel in the regions reached by the broadcast is time consuming as well. As a denomination, we should be deeply grateful to the Lord for giving these people to us and for giving us through them the opportunity to bring Reformed Christianity to the entire Arab world.

### FRENCH SPEAKING WORLD

Few languages have contributed more to the formation of our modern age than the French language. The Rev. Aaron Kayayan is the French speaking pastor for The Back to God Hour, and his ministry, headquartered in Paris, just a few blocks from the *Arc de Triomphe*, is having an increasingly significant impact on many French speaking people throughout the world. Of course our main target is the nation of France itself, but there are actually French speaking people in so many other places—South East Asia, Africa, and the great province of Quebec in Canada. It was actually in Canada that our French broadcast had its beginning, but it has now grown to be a truly international outreach in its own right.

Pastor Kayayan's ministry has a unique significance because of the leadership it is able to give to French Protestantism. He is very careful to undergird his broadcast work with in-depth literature offerings; his material both over the air and in print is designed to combat the false philosophies that are so prevalent. Intellectuals and members of the Roman Catholic clergy indicate that they find his material stimulating.

It has been particularly gratifying that his ministry has awakened interest in Calvinism in Zaire, a French speaking African nation. The broadcast is heard there by means of a station in Swaziland. As this

report is being written, Pastor Kayayan is making arrangements to visit these churches along with the Rev. William Van Tol of our Board for World Missions to ascertain what, if any, relationship should be established between the 32 churches which call themselves the Fellowship of Calvinistic Churches of Zaire and the Christian Reformed Church. Such substantial interest in this ministry is extremely encouraging.

We have also been pleased to learn that a new organization of French Protestants in Quebec has asked that the French language broadcast continue to be closely associated with their organization. We have pledged this group our support, and hope in the future to make our French language ministry even more useful to these Quebec Christians.

### LATIN AMERICAN WORLD

With the visit of Pope John Paul II to Latin America, all of us were made aware of the fact that Latin America is a part of our world in ferment. The border between Argentina and Chile is the scene of fierce hatreds which tear the hearts of people who should really be brothers. In addition, gross economic disparity has created societies in which hatredsmolder and revolution can break out at any moment. This is the Rev. Juan Boonstra's world.

His broadcasts are heard in North America, too, in the large cities where there are great concentrations of Spanish speaking people; and in Spain as well where finally the rigidities of the Franco regime have given birth to a new openness. And in both North America and Europe, Spanish speaking people listen and respond. But it is in the ferment of Latin America, where Juan Boonstra's own soul was formed as he grew up as a boy in Argentina, that the daily encounter of the Reformed faith with unbelief is expressed with greatest intensity.

Reaching a world as diverse and as changing as the Latin-American world demands a great deal of versatility and adaptation of various program materials to specific countries. The regular program *La Hora de la Reforma* is the main offering of the Spanish department. A similar program which is released only in Mexico is called *La Antorcha Espiritual*. Both programs are weekly. A half hour daily program called *Alpha y Omega* is produced with the cooperation of station HCJB.

Pastor Boonstra reports that his 4½ minute program *Reflexion* is becoming more and more popular, and where broadcasters prefer not to have the longer programs this daily broadcast is aired. The committee is also interested in exploring the possibility of producing special Spanish programs which use local pastors.

Mr. Boonstra has also produced Spanish television programs. At the end of last year his Christmas television special was aired both in North America and throughout Latin America.

The Spanish Department also participates in what is known as a *media blitz* approach to evangelization. Such a "blitz" was carried out in Tampico, Mexico, near the end of last year. This consists of using many of the Spanish programs and airing them often during the day for a specific period of time. The blitz was concluded with a special evangelistic meeting at which the Rev. Juan Boonstra preached. A similar

approach was used in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, in February.

The Spanish Department meticulously maintains an extensive mailing list and faithful workers work very hard at keeping it up-to-date—a major project when mail is being received from so many countries. Spanish speaking listeners receive literature regularly which enables them to study the material they have first heard on the air.

### *PORTUGUESE MINISTRY*

In Campinas, Brazil, the Rev. Dr. Wilson Castro Ferreira supervises the office of the Portuguese language ministry of The Back to God Hour. Dr. Ferreira also is the speaker for our Portuguese programs which are aired from the island of Bonaire and on many local stations within the country.

The ministry of The Back to God Hour represents a significant way our denomination in North America can cooperate with another denomination so that an entire country can be reached with the gospel. We have a cooperative arrangement with the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, and gradually this church is becoming more and more involved in the ministry. Pastor Ferreira travels throughout the country contacting local Presbyterian churches, encouraging them to support the broadcasts and preparing them to receive into their churches those who respond to the broadcasts.

Today Brazil is the most rapidly developing nation in Latin America—its population is more than 100 million. There is no question that this nation will have an important role to play in future Latin-American developments. It is encouraging to know that the broadcasts of our Portuguese language ministry are being heard daily in that great land.

The Portuguese broadcasts of The Back to God Hour are also heard in areas of Africa where this language is spoken.

### *THE CHINESE SPEAKING WORLD*

It is incredible that China has opened up as it has during the last several months, and this has put a special joy in the life of the Rev. Isaac Jen, the Chinese language minister of The Back to God Hour. When he began his ministry in 1974 there was something tentative, almost timid about it. We moved forward, but we had no idea whether it would ever be possible to receive letters from China. We scarcely dared hope that Pastor Jen would ever be able to see his native land again. But as this report is being written, we are receiving letters directly from mainland China, and Isaac Jen and his wife are preparing to spend at least a month visiting many cities in China, including Shanghai where both of them grew up. The Lord willing, they will return just prior to the last week of synod, and hopefully they will be able to address synod and tell about their trip at that time.

Since this ministry began, several stations in addition to the first station on Cheju Island have opened up for the broadcast. We now use a powerful station on the island of Guam, two in the Philippines, a station

in Hongkong, and one in Macao. In addition, several stations carry the broadcast in the States and in Canada. The programs are in the Mandarin dialect, the Cantonese dialect, and in combinations of both these dialects with English. Since the Chinese are very interested in hearing and learning English these days, response to the Chinese/English broadcasts has picked up a great deal.

When Mao Tse Tung was alive he sometimes said that his people should let "a hundred flowers bloom." By that he meant that the nation could tolerate several ideas. But Christianity was not one of the flowers he had in mind. We are praying that the day will come when this great faith will flourish mightily among the Chinese people, the largest single ethnic group in the world. Communism has not been able to root out the Chinese people's natural interest in the things of the spirit, even in God. We will now have the opportunity to tell more of them about Christ than ever before.

### *THE INDONESIAN WORLD*

Indonesia is the fifth largest nation in the world, covering a distance from the Western Coast of the United States all the way to the state of Maine. With more than 100 million people, a majority of whom are followers of Mohammed, the nation confronts us with an enormous missionary challenge. The Indonesian language is also used by many on the Malay Peninsula and our Indonesian programs are heard there as well as throughout Indonesia itself. In order to accomplish coverage of this vast area, we use the facilities of FEBC in Manila and many local stations throughout the country. We hope to strengthen our penetration into Indonesia by means of Trans World Radio's large outlet on Guam during 1979.

Our Indonesian ministry is headquartered in Jakarta and there the Rev. Junus Atmarumeksa supervises this work. Mr. Atmarumeksa is a convert from Buddhism, and he has graduated from both Calvin College and Seminary. At this writing plans are being made to have him study at Calvin for several months, and it is possible that synod will be able to meet him while he is in Grand Rapids.

The Indonesian ministry illustrates the way a mission can suddenly be halted by the apparently arbitrary decisions of government. Near the end of last year the Indonesian government decreed that Christians would no longer be allowed to do missionary work designed to convert people from Islam. In addition, they ruled that all monies from overseas that came into the country for religious work had to be registered with the government. The first of these laws is especially problematic, and if enforced could cause the end of working in Indonesia itself. The second law could also have damaging effects. At this writing though, it is not clear how these laws will actually be applied, and it is possible that our mission can continue within the country. If, however, the negative implications of these directives are realized, it may be necessary to shift the headquarters of this work to Manila. We are watching these developments carefully. Please make this a matter of prayer.

The Indonesian ministry is an extremely difficult one because of the

vastness of the nation and the breakdown in communication once one moves out of the larger cities. We also feel that our work will not be complete in Indonesia until we develop Javanese counterparts to our Indonesian language programs. Nevertheless Pastor Atmarumeksa receives steady and significant response from his listeners. When I visited him in May of last year he told of a young man in a Muslim seminary who was converted and is now studying for the Christian ministry. There is no doubt that the Indonesian people are using radio to learn the gospel of Christ.

During 1978 the possibilities of the Australian Reformed Church's becoming more involved in this ministry were explored. There are several factors which make our Indonesian radio mission a natural element in their worldwide outreach. Specifically their synod has been asked by our committee to underwrite a Guam release of the Rev. Junus Atmarumeksa's programs.

### THE JAPANESE SPEAKING WORLD

Given the omnipresence of Japanese products, one wonders sometimes whether the entire world has not finally been conquered by this extraordinary nation. In any case, the Japanese language can be heard these days in many restaurants and hotels from Vancouver to New York. We have received requests to investigate the placement of our Japanese language programs on a large station in Los Angeles that serves the Japanese population there. Already our programs are being aired regularly in South America from HCJB, beamed into Brazil where there are many Japanese people.

The international character of the Japanese ministry is also expressed as large, super power stations beam the gospel into that land from outside. We use Far East Broadcasting's super power station on Korea's Cheju Island to blanket the nation with the 15-minute broadcast of The Back to God Hour, *Asu e no Mado*. And we are very thankful that we can still purchase time for the five minute, early morning program *Asa no Kotoba* on one of the most powerful stations serving the Kanto plain region—the large area in which Tokyo is found.

Our Japanese ministry is also distinguished by the way it demonstrates creative cooperation. The Board for World Missions has graciously assigned a veteran Japanese missionary, the Rev. Henry Bruinooge, to full-time radio work; he manages The Back to God Hour Tokyo office. This work involves arranging for speakers, supervising follow-up, and making certain that whenever possible listeners are welcomed into churches of the Reformed Church of Japan. So the Japanese ministry also depends a great deal on cooperation with this church. Its ministers and other members speak on the programs and its doors are always open to receive our listeners.

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By means of broadcasting we have seen, then, that our church is able to penetrate several different worlds within our world. Each of the languages we use arises out of its own special world, and we are grateful to the Lord that he has raised up special men who are able not simply to

speak another language, but who are able as well to respond to the needs of the worlds we have just described.

But when we think of all this we know that our job is not yet finished, for there are several worlds that continue to be extremely challenging. One that many of the church have talked with us about is the great Russian speaking world. We continue to pray that a man may be found to do this work for us. Presently we are exploring possibilities whereby we may be able to begin a Russian language broadcast; up to this time the way has just not been opened. We also think about the millions of people who speak Hindi in the Indian subcontinent. There are obviously many challenges that remain, and we wait the leading of our God as we think about them.

### *VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS*

The ministries of The Back to God Hour cannot be carried on without our becoming related to many other agencies within the church and outside it and also to other churches. The Mission Coordination Council provides a forum in which The Back to God Hour plans and activities can be reviewed with the heads of other mission agencies and board presidents, and their activities can be communicated to us. The Rev. Juan Boonstra is active in the Spanish Literature Committee, and Pastors Madany and Jen are active with the committee dealing with major world languages. Dr. Nederhood is working with the Board of Publications on a book for young adults, a book which may also be useful in The Back to God Hour follow-up. We are pleased from time to time to learn that interest in our church's church school material has been generated by The Back to God Hour program—people hear the program and become interested in our church's educational material. It has been good to work with the Board for World Missions in connection with the developing interest in our church in Zaire. The Board for World Missions has also been involved in Juan Boonstra's evangelistic meetings in Tampico and Tegucigalpa, and the arrangements we have with them in Japan continue to be entirely satisfactory; we are in their debt for their congenial cooperation. We have also been pleased to work with the Board of Home Missions in the development of Media Packages that have been used in new fields.

In the nature of the case we also have contact with many churches of other denominations. We have recently sent to the Committee on Interchurch Relations a tabulation of the various relationships which we sustain with churches within North America and overseas. It is very gratifying that often churches of other denominations request that our programs be placed in their area; in many cases they are willing to pay the program cost; such interest exists especially in NAPARC churches. We are actively soliciting support of our Bonaire Plus program among churches of other denominations. The Bonaire Plus Project is the umbrella project that includes all of our overseas broadcasting, and there is a growing interest in this work among other churches, especially in the Southland.

As an organization we are closely tied into an important segment of

the evangelical world because of our dependence on large stations that have been built and are run by large radio mission organizations. The Far East Broadcasting Company is one, so is TransWorld Radio, and the World Missionary Fellowship, Inc. We are always grateful that these stations continue to be warmly interested in our work, and are especially encouraged when station personnel tell us that our programs are a source of spiritual help for them.

We also must continuously maintain professional relationships with the broadcasting industry. Ad-Mark Associates is the advertising agency we use for this work. This agency services our account and advises us on a wide variety of matters. In South America we use the J. Walter Thompson Agency.

We also utilize the services of RACOM Associates, an agency which serves us in a public relations capacity; its services are especially important in fund raising. This agency, which operates out of offices in Holland, Michigan and Lansing, Illinois, is a not-for-profit corporation which is supervised by The Back to God Hour and exists solely for the purpose of promoting this cause. It receives no money on our behalf—all funds raised are handled by our office directly. Our arrangement with RACOM has been eminently satisfactory and has enabled us to increase above-quota giving to this ministry.

#### *ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS*

As The Back to God Hour has grown, its operations have expanded significantly so that today the work is carried on not only in the International Communications Center, our headquarters, in Palos Heights, Illinois, but also within offices in Paris, France; Tokyo, Japan; Campinas, Brazil; and Jakarta, Indonesia.

The overall activities of The Back to God Hour are under the control of The Back to God Hour Committee of the Christian Reformed Church, incorporated in the state of Illinois, and with a subsidiary entity established in Ottawa, Ontario. This 14-member committee, comprised of an equal number of ministers and laymen (though the ratio may vary somewhat occasionally), is elected by synod on a regional basis. The committee members are: Rev. Jacob Eppinga, president (Michigan Area), Rev. Eugene Los, vice-president (Michigan Area), Dr. Raymond Seven, treasurer (Chicagoland Area), Rev. Howard Vanderwell, secretary (Michigan Area), Rev. Dexter Clark (California Area), Mr. Abe Geurkink (Tri-State Area), Mr. Harold Kooy (Pacific Northwest Area), Mr. J. Robert Struyk (Eastern Area), Rev. Anthonie Vanden Ende (Eastern Canada Area), Mr. Stanley Vermteer (Midwest Area), Mr. William Voortman (Eastern Canada Area), Mr. Wayne Vriesman (Chicagoland Area), Mr. Clarence Wagenaar (Western Canada Area), and Rev. Sampson Yazzie (Rocky Mountain Area). This year four members of the committee are up for reelection. The committee meets three times annually.

Within the organization itself, Dr. Joel Nederhood is the Director; the Rev. Bassam Madany supervises the Arabic and French language ministries; the Rev. Juan Boonstra, the Spanish and Portuguese; and the Rev. Isaac Jen, the Chinese, Japanese, and Indonesian. The Rev. Jerry

Vreeman works in English language production, follow-up, and serves as the Executive Producer of CRC-TV programs. Mr. Harry Vander Meer is the Operations Manager of The Back to God Hour; he is involved in financial control and planning, personnel management and supervision, as well as many administrative relationships with other agencies and with the business activities of the foreign offices. The International Communications Center, which houses the domestic operations of The Back to God Hour, employs twenty-nine people who are involved in program writing, production, and clerical and shipping activities. Materials for the English, Arabic, Spanish, and Chinese radio programs and literature are processed here, as well as CRC-TV productions; the rest of this ministry is carried out in the foreign offices, which are staffed by people native to the countries in which the offices are located.

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In this report it has been possible to touch only briefly the widespread work of The Back to God Hour activities. We who work in it on a day-by-day basis wish that more of our church could be aware of the magnitude of this work and would know too of the effective way broadcasting can be used in our time. We have been thankful that many people have made use of the opportunity which RACOM tours provide to acquaint people with this worldwide work. Those who have seen the impact the foreign work is making, for example, have returned home full of enthusiasm. So we ask those in leadership positions to encourage the people of our church to stay close to this ministry, so that more and more may be able to express an intelligent interest in it. This work is not very effective if it is not accompanied by the prayers of the people of God. All of us on the staff need the prayers of God's people continuously. And then think of the millions whose lives are being reached with this ministry. We must not sin against them by failing to pray for them. We believe that God will honor the prayers of his people and that many who hear his precious word over the air waves will respond with faith.

As a committee we must also share with you our concern that sufficient financial support will be found so that our mission may continue and may advance. We think of this not only in connection with our agency, but with the mission advance of our church on many fronts. We are beginning to sense that there is a growing economic uncertainty, and a developing fearfulness with respect to personal security for the future. We have been very pleased that many people have caught the vision of giving to missions by means of deferred-giving programs—this is a noble expression of stewardship. But we also have great short-term needs, and the spirit of generosity and sacrifice must be present among thousands of people if we are to meet them.

During 1978 we observed a softness developing in connection with certain categories of our giving, and we are watching the projections very carefully. An operation like The Back to God Hour is extremely large and it is disconcerting when we must end the year with a deficit. But our discomfort is caused not so much by the financial adjustments that must then be made, for they can be made, but it is caused by our feeling that with the need so great today the last thing we need is a deficit. We need

to move forward. The time is getting short. Christ is coming back. There is a harvest that must be brought in. And we have marvelous tools to bring it in.

We mention this because we are confident that our people have the faith, the vision, and the sense of stewardship that will enable them to rise to the occasion and meet the challenge once they know the urgency of the mission needs. It is so important that all of our mission agencies maintain a positive and aggressive stance. We may not give up. We may not retrench. We are exceedingly prosperous people. We have not yet given to the point where we have ourselves been hurt. We are confident that if our people know what is needed they will respond with cheerfulness and faith.

The financial performance that is needed to sustain the mission of the church today is not a burden, it is an incalculable privilege. Thank God that most of us know that this is true. It's a privilege to work with, for, and in a church like ours.

May God lift us all up as we press forward in his great name!

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

Program	Language	Length in Min.	Format	Freq'cy.	Coverage	Cont Basis	No. of Stations	Total Hrs. Broadcasting (weekly)
1. The Back to God Hour	E	30	a	Wkly	USA & Canada	Paid*	269	135
2. The Back to God Hour (Overseas Release)	E	30	a	Wkly	Overseas	Paid*	30	15
3. The Back to God Hour (Australian Release)**	E	30	a	Wkly	Australia	Paid	15	7
4. Radio Today	E	30	b	Daily	India, SE Asia	Paid	3	24
5. Insight	E	4-5	c	Daily	USA	Free	85	62
6. Racom Spots (Radio & TV)	E	1	d	NA	USA & Canada	Free	NA	NA
7. Saatu-L-Isilah	A	30	a	Wkly	Arab World	Paid	2	2
8. Saatu-L-Isilah	A	15	c	M. Sat.	Arab World	Paid	5	10
*9. Saatu-L-Isilah	A	15	c	M. Sat.	Arab World	Free	1	2
10. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a	Wkly	USA	Paid	6	6
11. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a	Wkly	USA	Free	4	7
12. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a	Wkly	L.A.	Paid	21	28
13. La Hora de la Reforma	S	15	a	Wkly	L.A.	Free	46	66
14. La Antorcha Espiritual	S	15	a	Wkly	MXC	Paid	3	1
15. Radio 316	S	30	b	Daily	L.A.	Paid	1	29
16. Alfa y Omega	S	30	b	Daily	L.A.	Paid	1	15
17. Reflexion	S	5	c	Daily	L.A.	Paid	3	15
18. Reflexion	S	5	c	Daily	USA	Paid	2	8
19. Reflexion	S	5	c	Daily	USA	Free	1	7
20. Reflexion	S	5	c	Daily	L.A.	Free	34	92
21. Reflexion	S	5	c	Daily	L.A.	Paid	3	9
22. Luz para o Caminho	P	30	b	Daily	Bra.	Paid	1	7
23. Local Portuguese	P	15	b	Daily	Bra.	Paid	6	10
24. Perspective Reformas	F	15	a	Wkly	Canada	Paid	6	2
25. Perspective Reformas	F	15	a	Wkly	Europe	Paid	3	0
26. Perspective Reformas***	F	15	a	Daily	Europe & Africa	Free	1	7
27. Majaestic Plans****	J	5 & 15	NA	NA	Indonesia	NA	NA	NA
28. Window to Tomorrow	I	15	a/b	Daily	Japan	Paid	2	14
29. Asa no Kotoba	J	5	n	Daily	Japan	Paid	1	6
30. Good News for the Whole World	M	15	a	SuMoThSu	China	Paid	4	24
31. Good News	C	15	a	SuMoFr	China	Paid	2	1
32. Good News	C	15	a	SuMo	Hongkong & Macao	Paid	2	4
33. Today	M	15	e	MoTuWeFrSa	China	Paid	4	2
34. Today	C	15	e	MoWe	China	Paid	2	3/4
35. Today	C	15	e	SuMo	Hongkong & Macao	Paid	2	1/2
36. Bible Story	M	15	e	SuMoTuWeThFr	China	Paid	4	2
37. Bible Story	C	15	e	WeFr	China	Paid	2	1/2
38. Good News	M	15	a	Su	Los Angeles	Paid	1	1/4
39. Good News	C	15	a	Su	Los Angeles	Paid	1	1/4
40. Good News	C	15	a	Su	San Francisco	Paid	1	1/4
41. Good News	C	15	a	Su	Vancouver	Paid	1	1/4
42. Today	M	15	a	Su	Los Angeles	Paid	1	1/4
43. Today	C	15	e	Su	Los Angeles	Paid	1	1/4
44. Today	C	15	e	Su	San Francisco	Paid	1	1/4
45. Today	C	15	e	Su	Vancouver	Paid	1	1/4

CODE:

- E - English
- A - Arabic
- S - Spanish
- P - Portuguese
- F - French
- I - Indonesian
- J - Japanese
- M - Chinese Mandarin
- C - Chinese Cantonese

- a - Music/Sermon Format
- b - Magazine Format-News-Music-Message
- c - Talk Only
- d - Spot Announcements
- e - Bi-lingual
- NA - Not applicable

\* A portion of The Back to God Hour network is provided by stations on a free public service basis

\*\* Produced and Financed in Cooperation with The Reformed Church in Australia

\*\*\* Paid by Nederlandse Gereformeerde Kerk of South Africa

\*\*\*\* Produced in Cooperation with Gerda Kristen Indonesia and Indonesian Broadcasting Foundation

### CRC-TV—A PROGRESS REPORT

As we continue to develop a television ministry, we do so with the conviction that it is necessary for our church to find a way to use this medium effectively, and we believe that there has been some real progress thus far. The progress has been achieved with the help of God on the following fronts.

First of all, it is clear that the documentary format that CRC-TV has been working with is an acceptable format within the industry, and it does make it possible for us to receive prime-time releases on good stations in major markets. Many in our church have seen the documentaries in Western Michigan where they have been aired on Sundays, and this has given rise to some misunderstanding, for the programs have been produced for weekday viewing at prime-time on secular stations. CRC-TV programs aired during the week of December 25-31 were seen by 1,562,000 viewers according to the ARBITRON ratings of the stations which aired the telecasts.

Secondly, there has been progress in the ability of our organization to produce material that is attractive to the industry. The upgrading of our equipment now enables us to produce material within our studios that is fully acceptable to major television stations. Moreover, our in-house television crew has been strengthened by the addition of personnel and by experience. CRC-TV has also engaged free-lance talent as this is needed. Thus CRC-TV has become a production entity capable of a variety of productions. The presence of such a production unit in the church is an important addition to our denominational resources.

Thirdly, CRC-TV has gained experience in marketing that has enabled it to make projections for significant future program placement. Advertising Marketing Group, Inc., our advertising agency, is very important in this regard.

Television is an extremely demanding and complex field and provides a high level of challenge for all personnel involved. We are now coming to the point where we are doing some things for the second and third time, and as we gain experience, we feel somewhat more comfortable with our tasks. We also feel that some of the latest documentaries show the results of increased production capabilities.

The following documentaries were distributed during 1978: *Abortion: Another Side*; *Honor Your Father and Your Mother*; *Education, Where Are We?*; *The Family, Who Needs It?*; *Facing Death*; *Illegitimacy—Whose Concern?*; *The Dawntreader*; and *What Kind of Freedom?* Most of the titles indicate the subject matter treated in these programs; but just a word about two which might not be clear: *The Dawntreader* tells the story of the Dawntreader Christian School in inner city Paterson, New Jersey, and demonstrates that Christian education is an important answer to urban problems. The program dealing with freedom examined the matter of religious liberty and shows how true religious liberty will not be enjoyed until Christians are given the opportunity of expressing their faith in many sectors of society—education and politics being two very significant sectors.

These programs were not only a departure from generally aired

religious broadcasts in terms of their format, but they were also a departure in that they showed the implications of the Christian faith for the family, for society in connection with large social problems such as teenage pregnancy, and for some of the great institutions of society such as education and political life. The program dealing with abortion took strong issue with the prevalent liberal view of this matter.

Some of these programs stimulated significant mail response, for example the programs dealing with abortion and illegitimacy. In the case of the latter many young women who wanted help in terms of their own situation wrote our office. Our mail response, though, must be evaluated in the light of several factors: first of all, our programs are in a format different from some of the more expensively produced programs available; secondly, we have not incorporated elements into the programs designed to draw large mail response; thirdly, the documentary programs are designed to be an event in themselves—that is, watching them is a completed action so that viewers are not made to feel that they should respond by letter; the usual response to an ordinary television program is not a feeling on the part of the viewer that he should write in.

Now with respect to the documentary format and the types of subjects to which this naturally lends itself, we are aware that as a church we will have to make a judgment within the next years regarding whether we want to continue this approach. If we are interested only in a straightforward presentation of the gospel over television, delivered in a format similar to a regular worship service, obviously the documentary format is unsuitable. On the other hand, if we want to achieve large prime-time viewing, this format holds great promise, especially if over the next several years we can perfect our approach. If we want to show our fellow citizens in North America the highly interesting way our faith relates to our modern age, the documentary format is an excellent tool indeed. The documentary format is also extremely versatile and there are scarcely any subjects related to the Reformed faith that cannot be handled, provided we develop the prerequisite skill.

The documentary format is also very attractive as a way of meeting modern television on its own terms, with a view of making a contribution, however small, to upgrading this medium. The documentary format is a recognized regular element of television—think of *60 Minutes* for example—and when we enter television in this way we are speaking to many people in terms they can understand. All of us are deeply troubled by the way television is corrupting our age. If we are serious about our disenchantment with television as a whole we should view CRC-TV documentaries as the beginning of our church's attempt to do something about this problem.

All of these ideas are matters which the church must think about over the next several years and evaluate. It is our hope that for the present the church will reserve judgment on this matter for at least two or three more years. We ask for your encouragement as we continue to invest our efforts in the perfecting of this format. At this point it is our considered judgment that several more years of work with the documentary format will pay rich, long-term dividends for the church. We are doing our very best; and given the present circumstances and assignment of funds, we

feel that we may be thankful that CRC-TV has come so far.

In addition to the documentary programs produced by CRC-TV, an Easter Special and a Spanish Christmas Special have been produced as well. These programs have a variety-type format and are generally aired on a public service basis. Work has also been completed on a family-type, dramatic program—this now exists in a pilot form and we are presently evaluating what role, if any, this type of program should play in CRC-TV program development in the future. A special program highlighting the historic NAPARC prayer service last June was aired in Western Michigan.

And in the last months we have begun the distribution of the program series called FAITH-20. This program is virtually a televised version of the regular program of The Back to God Hour is designed primarily for release in smaller markets on Sunday. We are excited about the possibilities this program presents the church, for with it we will be able to present Reformed preaching over television, and as a church we have strong convictions regarding the power of such preaching of the Word. FAITH-20 will provide an opportunity to show how the Reformed faith contrasts to other available Christian messages these days and will also contrast sharply with some of the serious deformations of Christianity that now corrupt television religion.

As the church collects data that will determine the future direction of its television ministry, the way FAITH-20 develops will play an important role in determining the final form our future television activity will take.

#### *ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS*

CRC-TV is constituted as a separate division of The Back to God Hour, and thus its accounts are kept separate from the rest of the organization, with certain overall expenses of The Back to God Hour allocated to this division. Of the ministerial staff, the Rev. Jerry Vreeman spends a major part of his time working in this division, serving as Executive Producer of the programs. Presently The Back to God Hour Committee is examining just how the CRC-TV operation should relate to other operations of The Back to God Hour. Relationships that served during the initial developmental stages may not be appropriate as CRC-TV grows. The regular program services of The Back to God Hour which are under the direction of the Operations Manager, Mr Harry Vander Meer, serve CRC-TV as well, and commensurate costs of these activities are assigned to it. Income for CRC-TV is kept strictly separate from the regular funds of The Back to God Hour, though there is borrowing between accounts from time to time in order to enable both operations to function smoothly with a minimum use of commercial loans.

So far as the future financial of CRC-TV is concerned, your committee is now asking that the \$10.00 quota be continued for 1980. At the same time we would like the church to consider seriously whether it might wish to increase this quota by \$1.00 or \$2.00. Frankly, maintenance of our quota request at this modest level is occasioned by the somewhat provisional nature of our current programming. It should be pointed

out, however, that the investment which our church is making in television is very, very low. The major religious television broadcasters who are making a great impression on all of us have published budgets of more than \$10 million, and most of them are well over \$20 million. Our projections for 1980, which involve documentary production and FAITH-20 production and distribution, are just above a million dollars; and a \$10.00 quota will leave us depending greatly on special gifts from the churches. We should recognize that the extent of our progress is directly related to the level of investment that our church makes in this project. So we ask for \$10.00, though synod may wish to consider increasing this by a certain amount. We will do what we can with the funds available to us.

We must not forget that it is simply true that there are millions of our fellow countrymen for whom truth is not truth until it is seen on television, for whom fact is not fact until it is seen on the screen. There are millions of our fellow countrymen who receive their information almost exclusively from television. They are being molded by this medium, and by little else. We may not like this. We may in fact be appalled by it. But it is a fact nonetheless.

CRC-TV is working hard and moving forward with the conviction that the Lord of the church wants us to use this significant communication medium in reaching men with his message. He is King. He exerts his claim on our times. We want to exalt his kingship. We want to express his evaluation of what is going on in our age. We want to insinuate ourselves right in the middle of everyone's attention, and we want to tell them about Christ's point of view regarding our very sick world. And we believe that we are doing his will. We must not turn back. We must go forward.

This is our conviction—those of us who have worked with CRC-TV from its beginning as a germinal idea to the present. We are grateful to God for what has been accomplished. We feel an extremely significant beginning has been made, and we are confident that several more years of work in this field will provide the church with important data that will enable it to make important decisions regarding its use of television for the rest of this century.

It is a privilege to represent our church as we work in television. Please continue to pray for all of us who with you are seeking God's will as we work with this awesomely effective tool for communication.

CRC - TV  
PROGRAM SCHEDULE - AUGUST - OCTOBER

W01	5	Ames, IA	3:00 pm	July 30	Education: Where Are We
			3:00 pm	Aug. 6	The Family-Who Needs It
			12:00 pm	Aug. 20	A Special Kind of Dying
			12:00 pm	Aug. 27	Abortion-Another Side

WZTV	5	Nashville, TN	7:00 pm	Aug. 10	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 17	Education: Where Are We		
				Aug. 24	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Aug. 31	A Special Kind of Book		
				Sept. 7	A Special Kind of Fatherhood		
				Sept. 14	A Special Kind of Sacrifice		
				Sept. 21	A Special Kind of Dying		
KTCM	12	Helena, MT	10:00 pm	Aug. 5	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 12	Education--Where Are We		
				Aug. 19	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Aug. 26	A Special Kind of Book		
				Sept. 2	A Special Kind of Fatherhood		
				Sept. 9	A Special Kind of Sacrifice		
				Sept. 16	A Special Kind of Dying		
WATR	20	Waterbury, CT	11:30 am	Aug. 6	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 13	Education-Where Are We		
				Aug. 20	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Aug. 27	A Special Kind of Book		
				Sept. 3	A Special Kind of Fatherhood		
				Sept. 10	A Special Kind of Sacrifice		
				Sept. 17	A Special Kind of Dying		
WXLT	40	Sarasota, FL	5:00 pm	Sept. 10	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Sept. 17	Education-Where Are We		
				Sept. 24	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Oct. 1	A Special Kind of Book		
				Oct. 8	A Special Kind of Fatherhood		
				Oct. 15	A Special Kind of Sacrifice		
				Oct. 22	A Special Kind of Dying		
Atlantic TV Systems Ltd.			10:00 pm	Aug. 2	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				CXGW 2	Moncton, NB	9:00 pm	Education-Where Are We
				CJCH 5	Halifax, NS	9:00 pm	The Family-Who Needs It
				CKLT 9	St. John, NFD	9:00 pm	Abortion-Another Side
				CJCB 4	Sydney, NS	4:00 pm	A Special Kind of Book
						4:00 pm	A Special Kind of Fatherhood
						3:00 pm	A Special Kind of Sacrifice
		3:00 pm	A Special Kind of Dying				
CFPL	10	London, ON	11:30 am	Aug. 6	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 13	Education-Where Are We		
				Aug. 20	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Aug. 27	Abortion-Another Side		
CFNX	8	Wingham, ON	12:30 pm	Sept. 3	A Special Kind of Book		
				Aug. 13	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 20	Education-Where Are We		
				Aug. 27	The Family-Who Needs It		
CKY	7	Winnipeg, MB	3:30 pm	Aug. 13	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Aug. 20	Education-Where Are We		
				Aug. 27	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Sept. 3	Abortion-Another Side		
BCI-TV			11:30 am	Aug. 5	A Special Kind of Book		
				CHBC 2	Kelowna, BC	Aug. 13	A Special Kind of Fatherhood
				CFJC 4	Kamloops, BC	Aug. 20	A Special Kind of Sacrifice
						Aug. 27	A Special Kind of Dying
						Sept. 3	Honor Your Father & Mother
						Sept. 10	Education-Where Are We
Mid Canada TV System			11:30 pm	Sept. 17	The Family-Who Needs It		
						Sept. 24	Abortion-Another Side
				Aug. 6	A Special Kind of Book		
				Aug. 13	A Special Kind of Fatherhood		
				Aug. 30	A Special Kind of Sacrifice		
				Sept. 3	A Special Kind of Dying		
CKMK	9	Sudbury, ON	11:30 pm	Sept. 10	Honor Your Father & Mother		
				Sept. 17	Education-Where Are We		
				Oct. 1	The Family-Who Needs It		
				Oct. 8	Abortion-Another Side		
CFCL	6	Timmons, ON					
CHNB	4	Northbay, ON					

## REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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MARKET/STATION	CHANNEL	TIME	DATE	PGM. #	PROGRAM
Ames/WOI-TV	5	1:30 PM	Dec. 10	109	Facing Death
			17	110	Illegitimacy
			24	111	Dawntreader
			Jan. 7	112	Freedom
Grand Rapids/WZZM	13	2:30 PM	Dec. 10	109	Facing Death
			17	110	Illegitimacy
			24	111	Dawntreader
			31	112	Freedom
Madison/WKOW-TV	27	6:30 PM	Dec. 20	109	Facing Death
			27	110	Illegitimacy
Wausaw/WAOV-TV	9		Jan. 3	111	Dawntreader
			10	112	Freedom
La Crosse/WXOW-TV	19		Jan. 3	111	Dawntreader
			10	112	Freedom
Sioux City/KMEG-TV	14	7:00 PM	Dec. 20	109	Facing Death
		6:30 PM	30	110	Illegitimacy
		6:30 PM	Jan. 5	111	Dawntreader
		7:30 PM	10	112	Freedom
Miami/WCIX-TV	6	9:30 PM	Dec. 24	111	Dawntreader
			30	110	Illegitimacy
			Jan. 6	109	Facing Death
			13	112	Freedom
Los Angeles/KCOP	13	10:00 PM	Dec. 25	111	Dawntreader
			Jan. 1	110	Illegitimacy
			8	109	Facing Death
			15	112	Freedom
Chicago/WNSN-TV	44	9:30 PM	Dec. 26	111	Dawntreader
			Jan. 2	110	Illegitimacy
			16	109	Facing Death
			23	112	Freedom
Cleveland/WUAB-TV	43	8:00 PM	Dec. 26	111	Dawntreader
			Jan. 2	110	Illegitimacy
			9	109	Facing Death
			16	112	Freedom
New York/WOR-TV	9	10:30 PM		109	Facing Death
			Feb. 8	110	Illegitimacy
			13	111	Dawntreader
			18	112	Freedom
Vancouver/CHAN-TV 7850 Enterprise St. Burnaby, BC, Can	8	8:30 PM	Dec. 4	109	Facing Death
		8:30 PM	13	110	Illegitimacy
		8:30 PM	18	111	Dawntreader
		7:00 PM	27	112	Freedom
Moncton/CKCW	2	9:30 PM	Dec. 5	109	Facing Death
			12	110	Illegitimacy
Halifax/CJCH	5		19	111	Dawntreader
Sydney/CJCB	4		26	112	Freedom
St. John's/CJON CJON Television Bldg. Prince of Wales St. St. John, NFD, Can	6	6:30 PM	Dec. 5	109	Facing Death
			12	110	Illegitimacy
			19	111	Dawntreader
			26	112	Freedom
Toronto/CHCH-TV 163 Jackson St. SW Toronto, ON, Can	11	1:00 PM	Dec. 10	109	Facing Death
			17	110	Illegitimacy
			24	111	Dawntreader
			31	112	Freedom

*MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION*

I. The committee requests that Dr. J. Nederhood, and either the president, the Rev. J. Eppinga, or the secretary, the Rev. H. Vanderwell, be given the privilege of the floor when The Back to God Hour matters are discussed.

II. The committee requests that the Rev. Isaac Jen be given permission to address synod on behalf of The Back to God Hour.

III. Nominations:

*MICHIGAN AREA:* Rev. Eugene Los (incumbent)  
Rev. Norman Meyer

*CHICAGOLAND AREA:* Dr. Raymond Seven (incumbent)  
Dr. Gerda Bos

*EASTERN AREA:* Mr. J. Robert Struyk (incumbent)  
Mr. John Steen

*MICHIGAN AREA:* Rev. Howard Vanderwell (incumbent)  
Rev. Clyde Van Winkle

IV. The committee requests that the proposed budget for 1980 be approved and the quota of \$30.00 be adopted.

V. The committee requests that synod recommend The Back to God Hour for one or more offerings for above-quota needs.

VI. The committee requests that synod recommend a special offering in December for The Back to God Hour marking its 40th anniversary.

VII. The committee requests that the proposed budget for CRC-TV for 1980 be approved and the quota of \$10.00 be adopted.

VIII. The committee requests that synod recommend CRC-TV for one or more offerings for above-quota needs.

The Back To God Hour Committee  
Joel Nederhood, director

## REPORT 2

## CALVIN COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

This report covers actions of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary from June 1978 to February 1979. A supplementary report will follow after the May 1979 meeting of the board.

## I. INFORMATION

A. *The Board of Trustees*

1. The semiannual session of the board of trustees was held February 5-8, 1979. The board is composed of forty-seven members, of whom thirty-eight are classical trustees and nine are district trustees. Thirty-four ministers and four laymen represent the classes and the nine district representatives are all laymen, including one woman.

2. The following delegates were elected as officers at the February board meeting:

President.....	Rev. William Vander Haak
First vice-president.....	Rev. Louis Tamminga
Second vice-president.....	Mr. Harry J. Bloem
Secretary.....	Mr. Norman B. De Graaf
Assistant secretary.....	Rev. John M. Hofman
Treasurer.....	Mr. Henry De Wit

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

## 4. Faculty-Board Conference

The faculty-board conference held during the February meeting brought board members and members of both faculties together for discussion and fellowship. The conference centered in a presentation by Dr. Ford Lewis Battles in which he sketched the possibilities for developing Calvin College and Seminary as a center for the study and application of Calvinism. A lively discussion followed his presentation. The conference was concluded with dinner at the Commons.

## 5. International Conference of Institutions for Christian Higher Education

Perhaps the most important conference hosted by the college and seminary during 1978 was the Second International Conference of Institutions for Christian Higher Education, held during the week of August 13-19. The person mainly responsible for the organization of the conference was Nicholas Wolterstorff, of the college philosophy department, who was secretary of the Steering Committee of the conference. Approximately 150 scholars registered for the conference, coming from more than twenty foreign countries from all the continents.

The theme of the conference was "Justice in the International Economic Order," and each day several lectures on that topic were delivered, with discussions following. These lectures are now being edited, and will be available in a book to be published by the college. Though many of these lectures were very significant addresses to the topic of the conference, probably most of the delegates to the conference would agree that just as important as what they learned from the lectures was their experience of meeting Christian scholars from such a wide variety of foreign countries. Mainly the scholars who attended the conference had their Christian roots in the European Reformed churches. And the remarkable thing was that, four centuries after the birth of the Reformed churches, the energies released by that movement of spiritual reform are still strong enough to draw together scholars from around the world and to give them a sense of deep and immediate kinship. That is something extraordinary in the contemporary world.

The Free University of Amsterdam was not officially present at the conference, in protest against the support of the University of Potchefstroom in South Africa of that country's policy of apartheid. As the result of a good many hours of intense discussion by the delegates to the conference, a letter was sent to the University of Potchefstroom strongly urging them to remove all traces of discrimination in their university policies, and another letter was sent to the Free University expressing regret at their absence and urging them to take their rightful role in the preparation for future conferences.

The delegates were lodged and fed at the college; and universally they expressed appreciation for the college facilities and for the hospitality shown to them by the college and seminary staff.

### B. *The Seminary*

1. Faculty and Staff Matters
- a. General Information

There are fifteen members on the seminary faculty this year. At the present time none of the members of the faculty is on leave.

Auxiliary services are provided by Ford L. Battles (Visiting Lecturer), Melvin Berghuis (Practical Theology), Peter De Klerk (Theological Librarian), Robert De Vries (Coordinator of Field Education), John Vander Lugt (Registrar), Anthony Hoekema (Systematic Theology), Alvin Plantinga (Philosophical Theology, second quarter), Harvey Smit (Philosophical Theology, third quarter), and Henry Stob (Philosophical Theology, second quarter). Professor Sidney Greidanus will assist the seminary in the critique of student sermons during the second and third quarters of the current academic year.

Professor-elect Neal Plantinga is completing his doctoral studies at Princeton Theological Seminary and is scheduled to begin teaching in September 1979.

Emeritus Professor Martin J. Wyngaarden passed away in August 1978. Dr. John Kromminga was one of the officiating pastors at the funeral.

b. Dr. Marten Woudstra to Australia

A request that Dr. Marten Woudstra be released to teach at the Reformed Theological College of Geelong, Australia has been approved by the executive committee. The following elaboration is presented.

The small sister institution at Geelong faced a temporary emergency with respect to its teaching services in the Old Testament field. They anticipate having an Old Testament professor on staff two years hence; but in the meantime they must provide instruction for students who will graduate before this time. Through their president, Ray Zorn, who was in Grand Rapids during the past summer, they requested Dr. Woudstra's services to fill this need. Dr. Woudstra is highly regarded in Geelong, having taught there for three months on a previous occasion.

The instruction he will provide in Australia will take place during the period from late February to the end of August 1979. During this time he will teach concentrated courses in Old Testament theology to the second and third year students. The Christian Reformed Board of World Missions has cooperated actively in this project, providing travel funds for the trip to Australia. If any additional cost is incurred by Calvin Seminary due to Dr. Woudstra's absence, the Geelong school has agreed to make reimbursement. Various members of the seminary staff have agreed to pick up the additional counseling and committee duties occasioned by Dr. Woudstra's absence. Thus through the cooperation of various parties we are able to provide the assistance needed during a critical period in the life of a Reformed seminary "down under."

c. Faculty reappointments

For the reappointments of Dr. Richard De Ridder and Dr. Marion Snapper, see part II, Recommendations.

d. Reappointment of Registrar

Mr. John Vander Lugt was reappointed seminary registrar for a term of four years.

e. Inaugurals

The achievement of tenure by Professors David Engelhard, Melvin Hugen, and Robert Recker will be recognized in appropriate ceremonies to be held March 23, 1979.

f. Sabbatical Leave

Professor Andrew Bandstra was granted a sabbatical leave for the second and third quarters of the academic year 1979-80. He intends to work on publications in the area of Pauline studies. He is eligible under the approved sabbatical regulations for such leave, and satisfactory arrangements will be made for the teaching of his courses.

g. Minority Member of the Seminary Faculty

The seminary faculty requested the board to take steps toward the appointment to the faculty of a member of a minority race.

Concern for this matter arose out of concern for the recruitment and retention of minority persons as students at the seminary. It coalesced with the need felt elsewhere in the denomination of improved training of minority leadership at various levels.

Calvin Seminary's need for the minority faculty member arises out of the seminary's intimate connection with the Christian Reformed Church. As a key institution in the ministry of the church, the seminary reflects certain denominational needs in a concentrated way. The church has experienced a measure of success in its ministry to racial minorities, resulting in the formation of congregations with various kinds of non-white identities within the denomination.

Nevertheless there is new ground to be gained. There must be a fuller recognition and joyful acceptance of what God has done for the Christian Reformed Church in the addition of members and congregations who are not of the white race. God is enabling the Christian Reformed Church to become more fully the church into which the nations are gathered. The confession that the Son of God gathers, defends, and preserves to himself a church out of the whole human race is becoming a concrete and visible reality. This blessing needs more concrete and visible recognition and acceptance. The non-white communities not only have needs which white communities can help to meet, but gifts which the white communities need in order to become the church of God's design. Likewise, the white communities have needs to be met by, and gifts to present to, the non-white communities.

The seminary has its own distinctive need for development if the church is fully to meet the needs and enter into the opportunities provided by this emerging situation. The peculiar problems involved in becoming integrated into a largely white denomination of largely Dutch extraction are not well understood by most white members. The members have not had this experience; the white students who will minister to them do not know about this experience from the inside; and the white professors who seek to equip them for their ministry are also without this illuminating experience.

Furthermore, the denomination and its theological school are living in the social situation of the waning seventies. Urban problems are with us, not as dramatically as in the late sixties, but just as persistently. The Christian Reformed Church itself is becoming more and more urbanized. An increasing number of congregations are being faced with ministry in changing neighborhoods from which they refuse to flee. The future leaders of that church in its preaching and teaching ministries need to be sensitized to and instructed in the contributions to be received from and the ministry to be rendered to the minority communities among them. And the white faculty of Calvin Seminary needs help in order to accomplish that goal—help which can be provided in part by a minority colleague who will provide his own direct input into the teaching but also instruct his fellow professors in their own better address to the opportunity for

ministry which God has given us in our non-white brothers and sisters.

Finally, the Christian Reformed Church needs a ministry which includes persons from the racial minorities among us. There is every bit as much reason in this regard as in regard to the white ministry of the denomination to de-emphasize borrowing from other churches and to emphasize training of students who have spent their lives in the Christian Reformed Church. To experience success in this direction, Calvin Seminary will have to establish its authenticity as a school where minority concerns gain an adequate hearing and where minority persons experience a climate of acceptance. Much as we would like to have it otherwise, the seminary has not been viewed as such a place to this time.

The board of trustees, while desirous of moving forward in the direction indicated by the faculty's request, was unable to conclude its action on the faculty's proposals at its February meeting. Further work on these proposals is underway, and recommendations will be submitted to the board in May for the board's consideration and recommendation to synod.

#### h. Appointment in Philosophical Theology

The board and synod in 1978 authorized the appointment of a professor of Philosophical Theology. The theological division engaged in a good deal of work aimed at submitting a nomination to the board in February 1979. Consideration of possible nominees had proceeded to the point where the faculty was ready to invite the most likely prospects for interview. But, at this point, the new initiative to appoint a minority faculty member made a more deliberate and cautious procedure appear advisable. The board requested the seminary faculty to continue work on an appointment in Philosophical Theology with a view to submitting a nomination to the board in February 1980. The board also requested the seminary faculty to submit recommendations to the May 1979 meeting as to teaching the necessary core courses in this area.

## 2. Academic Matters

### a. New Courses

The board of trustees approved the following new elective courses:

- 1) Contemporary Cults in the Western World—Professor De Ridder
- 2) Theology in America—Professor Zwaanstra
- 3) Liberation Theology—Professor Klooster
- 4) Contemporary Social-Ethical Problems—Professor Minnema

### b. Foreign Student Scholarship

Dr. and Mrs. Anthony Hoekema have donated the sum of \$5,000 to provide scholarship aid to foreign students at the seminary. The board of trustees approved the following description and regulations for this scholarship:

I. *Name*

The name of the scholarship shall be FOREIGN STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP. "Foreign" designates a student coming from a country other than the United States or Canada.

II. *Administration*

- A. The funds are to be invested at the most favorable rate of interest available and the scholarship funds shall consist of the accrued interest.
- B. The principal amount of this fund may be increased at any time by further gifts from the original donors or other parties.
- C. The names of the original donors or any succeeding donors shall not be attached to the scholarship fund or mentioned in the publicity regarding it.

III. *Selection of Recipients*

- A. Awards made from this fund shall be applied to a year of study in any one of the seminary's degree programs.
- B. The scholarship shall be publicized in the seminary's catalog and elsewhere as is deemed necessary and appropriate.
- C. The seminary faculty, upon recommendation of the Prizes and Scholarships Committee, shall determine who the recipients shall be.
- D. In making its awards, the faculty shall take into account the applicants' Christian character, financial need, academic ability, and potential for service in the Kingdom of Christ.

IV. *Frequency and Amount of Award*

- A. If no suitable candidate is available for a given year, or if accrued funds are insufficient, no scholarship shall be awarded in that year.
- B. More than one scholarship may be awarded in a given year.
- C. The amount of the scholarship shall be adjusted to the need of the student, shall be commensurate with available funds, and shall not exceed tuition cost for one year of study.
- D. A recipient of the scholarship may apply for an additional award in a succeeding year within the limits of funds then available. Renewal of the award shall be at the discretion of the faculty.

c. *Revision of Rules Governing Seminary Appointments*

For a number of years the board of trustees has struggled with the dissimilarity in the rules of the Christian Reformed Church which apply to college and seminary faculty appointments. In summary, the rules for college faculty appointments stipulate that the board of trustees has the authority to make such appointments, subject to the ratification by synod. The present rules for seminary faculty appointments require the board of trustees, except in extraordinary circumstances, to submit at least two names to synod; synod in turn makes the appointment from this nomination. It is the considered judgment of the board of trustees that the needs of

the church, and the educational ministry of the seminary faculty, can be better served by revision of the rules governing seminary appointments. We acknowledge that the preceding observations merely introduce this proposal. The representative of the board of trustees and seminary administration at synod are prepared to further develop the merits of this proposal. (See part II, Recommendations)

- d. Change in Constitution of Calvin College and Seminary (see part II, Recommendations)
- e. Social Justice Inquiry

In addition to the proposal being developed for appointment of a minority member to the faculty of Calvin Seminary, the board of trustees reports the following actions by Calvin Seminary:

- 1) It is to be noted that the principal address of the faculty to matters of social justice is in their capacity as teachers of those who are intending to minister in the church.
  - 2) Classroom address to social justice occurs in the core course on Christian Social Ethics, in such elective courses as Church and Kingdom, Black Theology, Liberation Theology, and The Church and Its Ministry in Relation to the State, and in other courses as appropriate to the subject matter.
  - 3) Two seminary representatives participated in the conference of institutions for higher education on the subject, "Justice in the International Economic Order," held on the campus of Calvin College and Seminary in August 1978.
  - 4) Through its participation in the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education, the seminary provides for the education of its students in urban concerns.
  - 5) The faculty has taken up the question of minority student concerns, resulting in the recommendation to appoint a black professor to membership on the seminary faculty.
  - 6) Three public lectures given by Dr. Johannes Verkuyl under seminary sponsorship were addressed to dialog between Christianity and Marxism, a subject closely related to that of social justice.
  - 7) Professor John Stek published an article entitled, "Salvation, Justice, and Liberation in the Old Testament," in the November 1978 issue of the *Calvin Theological Journal*.
- f. Master of Church Education Admission Requirements

The board of trustees approved the following admission requirements:

- 1) To qualify for admission as a candidate for the M.C.E. degree, an applicant must possess an A.B. degree, or its equivalent, from an accredited college and have a grade point average of 2.67 (B-) or higher. (No change)
- 2) The applicant's pre-seminary education should include courses in the following areas: English, history, natural sciences, and social sciences. (Added)

- 3) The following specific requirements are prescribed:
  - a) Education and/or Psychology: a minimum of six semester hours, including a course in educational psychology.
  - b) Religion (or Theology) and Philosophy: A minimum of nine semester hours distributed between these areas.
  - c) Speech: A minimum of three semester hours in oral rhetoric.
- 4) An applicant whose academic history does not show sufficient breadth in the liberal arts may be requested to do additional work as a condition of admission.

*Grounds:*

- 1) Since specific course admission requirements for the M.C.E. degree program are minimal (unlike the M. Div.) a person with a B.R.E. degree could enter the M.C.E. degree program with an inadequate liberal arts background. The addition of points 2 and 4 (above) will prevent that from occurring.
- 2) A similar format for the admission requirements of both the M.C.E. and M.A.Th.S. degree programs will then be established.

### 3. Administrative Matters

#### a. Response to Classis Eastern Canada

In October the executive committee received from Classis Eastern Canada a lengthy document addressed to the opportunities for evangelistic work among the French-speaking population of Quebec. The classis took grateful note of the formation of an organization called "*Alliance de la Reformee Evangelique (ARE)*," and appealed to various ecclesiastical agencies for cooperation with this new organization.

The specific recommendation addressed to the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary reads as follows:

That classis request the BOT and the faculty of Calvin Seminary to:

- a. take note of the establishment of the ARE and its expressed desire for a Reformed theological training of Francophone Christian workers in Quebec.
- b. discuss with the ARE how Calvin Seminary could assist the ARE to develop a program of Reformed theological training of Francophone Christian workers.

*Grounds:*

- a. Our denominational involvement in the establishment of the ARE makes Calvin Seminary an obvious choice as a partner in any program of Reformed theological training.
- b. Christian workers in Quebec can be expected to be sufficiently bilingual to be able to benefit from any contribution on the part of Calvin Seminary.
- c. The geographical location of the seminary and its resources also make it an obvious resource center for this purpose.

In response to the above communication, the board of trustees adopted the following resolution:

The board of trustees, having taken note of the establishment of the "*Alliance de la Reformee Evangelique*," assures the ARE of its willingness to discuss with the ARE how Calvin Seminary could assist the ARE to develop a program of Reformed theological training of Francophone Christian workers.

b. Procedure for Appointing a President of Calvin Seminary

In anticipation of the eventual retirement of Dr. John Kromminga as President of Calvin Seminary, the board of trustees has prepared recommended rules for this appointment. (See part II, Recommendations)

c. Rules for Periodic Evaluation of the President of Calvin Seminary (see part II, Recommendations)

d. Christian Schools Discussion

For some time past the administration has been in conversation with a representative of Christian Schools International about ways and means to increase support of the cause of Christian education at the seminary. Upon the recommendation of the Educational Policy Committee, the faculty agreed to engage in a discussion of this matter. In the process of preparing for that discussion a questionnaire was distributed to the student body regarding student attitudes to Christian education. A large number of students responded, and their response was, in general, a gratifying endorsement of the cause. This response will provide good input into the faculty discussion which is yet to be held.

e. Second Calvin Colloquium

During the Calvin centennial year, 1976, a colloquium of Calvin scholars was held under seminary auspices. Response was so favorable that a second colloquium was sponsored last November. A gratifying result of the second colloquium was the formation of a Calvin Studies Society. The assembled scholars elected two of Calvin Seminary's personnel as officers of the society; Dr. Ford Battles as president and Mr. Peter De Klerk as secretary-treasurer. This new society gives promise of the enhancement of studies of John Calvin and his associates, and of the position of Calvin College and Seminary as a center for such studies.

f. New International Version of the Bible

The New International Version of the Bible, recently published, has met with a very favorable reception. This is an appropriate occasion for taking note of the fact that Professors John Stek and Marten Woudstra played a very substantial role in this translation effort.

C. *The college*

1. Faculty

a. Faculty Profile, September 1978

In the 1978-79 academic year there are 204 persons on the full-time teaching staff of the college. Three of these persons—Dr. Paul Henry, Dr. Elaine Botha, and Mrs. Linda Spoelman—were

with us for the fall semester only; hence, the actual number of full-time staff in terms of full years is 202½. Fifteen faculty members, including Dr. Gordon Spykman and Dr. Donald Oppewal who are Fellows in the Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship this year, will be on leave of absence for all or part of the academic year. Approximately 50 persons will have taught on a part-time basis in one or in both of the fall or spring semesters. The total teaching load of these part-time instructors is equivalent to the load of 19 full-time faculty members.

The full-time student-faculty ratio for 1978-79 is significantly lower than it was in 1977-78. This is due primarily to the fact that staff planning was based on anticipated enrollment in the fall of 1978 of about 4100 while the actual enrollment was 3973. Although adjustments in the use of part-time personnel were possible, we were not able to effect a full-time equivalent student-faculty ratio of 19:1—the guideline which was established last year for determining staff needs.

#### b. Staff Needs

The student-faculty ratio of 19:1 is defined as the full-time equivalent student enrollment at the end of the registration period divided by the number of full-time equivalent faculty who are actually teaching for the year. Projected enrollment for 1979-80 is 3850, which would be equal to a FTE student enrollment of 3713 ( $3850 \times 96.44\%$ ). To achieve a 19:1 student-faculty ratio we will need a total of 196 FTE faculty actually teaching.

Dean De Vos and Vice-President Vanden Berg, in consultation with department chairmen, have spent a considerable amount of time analyzing teaching staff needs for 1979-80, department by department and for the college as a whole. Their recommendations for allocation of staff result in a tighter staffing situation next year than this year, but no department will have an unduly heavy teaching load and no department's program will be weakened. (It should be noted that the major impact of the reduction in the staff has been in the use of part-time personnel.)

The following departments were approved for staff additions in 1979-80:

Dutch—one two-year appointment to a regular position.

Economics—one one-year terminal appointment to a temporary position.

English—two one-year terminal appointments to fill two temporary positions.

German—one two-year terminal appointment to fill a temporary position.

Philosophy—one two-year appointment to a regular position, plus one one-year terminal appointment to a temporary position.

Physics—one one-year terminal appointment to a temporary position.

Political Science—one one- or two-year terminal appointment to a temporary position.

Religion and Theology—one two-year appointment to a regular position, plus two one-year terminal appointments to temporary positions.

Speech—two one-year terminal appointments to two temporary positions.

c. Leaves of Absence

1) Sabbatical leaves of absence for varying lengths were approved for nine faculty members for 1979-80.

2) Non-sabbatical leaves of absence were approved for seven faculty members for 1979-80.

d. Bereavements

The board requested President Diekema to convey its Christian sympathy and concern to those staff members who recently experienced bereavements.

e. Honors and Achievements

The board took note of the faculty honors and achievements as presented in the president's report and instructed President Diekema to convey the board's congratulations to the faculty members for their accomplishments. Along with the list of honors was also a list of contributions made to the church, Christian education, and other areas of concern in the Christian community.

f. Illness

The board took note of illnesses of staff and emeriti as reported by the president. The board requested the president to convey to the persons and families mentioned its concern for their welfare as well as to express our thanks to God for restoration in full or in part as reported. The board took special note of the improved condition of President Emeritus Spoelhof with thanks to God for his continued service to Calvin College.

2. Academic Programs

a. New Programs and Courses

The board approved

1) a new program of supplementary and minor concentration,

2) a Master of Arts in Christian Studies,

3) Adult and Continuing Education programs,

4) Master of Arts in Teaching concentration,

5) eight new courses,

6) a faculty development seminar program.

b. Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship

The board approved a revised constitution and bylaws.

3. Administration

a. The board approved the appointment of a full-time ordained minister to the position of college chaplain in the student affairs division.

b. The board approved the addition of a twelve-month position to the admissions counseling staff.

## c. President Diekema's Request for Evaluation

In accordance with President Diekema's request, and in keeping with the agreement of the board of trustees at the time of his appointment, the board will conduct an evaluation of President Diekema's performance of his responsibilities and duties as college president, according to the following guidelines:

- 1) That the president of the board of trustees appoint a committee of four members of the board. Such committee shall have broad geographical representation, familiarity with higher education, one or more members shall be clergymen, one shall be a member of the executive committee, and one shall be the chairman of the college committee of the February board of trustees.
- 2) That the evaluation be based upon the job description as contained in the board of trustees *Handbook* and any available guidelines used to evaluate Calvin College administrators.
- 3) That evaluative information be solicited from all college constituencies: board of trustees members, faculty, administrators, students, alumni, presidents of other M.I.A.A. colleges, and any other sources and persons deemed relevant by the committee.
- 4) That President Diekema and his family be included in the interview process.
- 5) That the evaluation committee present a written report to the board of trustees at its May 1979 meeting.

D. *Business and Finance*

1. The board approved tuition rates for the year 1979-80 as follows:
  - a. College

	Semester Rate Proposed for		
	1978-79	1979-80	\$ Increase
Non-Christian Reformed	\$ 1,230	\$ 1,340	110
Christian Reformed—			
Local Michigan	1,130	1,240	110
Other Michigan	1,090	1,200	110
Out-of-State			
Within 300	1,010	1,110	100
300 to 1,000 miles	970	1,070	100
Over 1,000 miles	930	1,030	100

(The in-house financial aid budget, which benefits primarily non-Michigan students, will also be increased.)

## b. Seminary

	1978-79	Proposed for 1979-80
M. Div. and M.C.E. candidates	\$ 24	\$ 26
Per unit of field education	13	14
Th.M. candidates	40	40

2. The board approved room and board rates for the year 1979-80 as follows:

There will be an increase in the room-and-board rate for 1979-80 by \$110—from \$1,270 to \$1,380. This is necessary to meet the higher

minimum wage, higher food costs, and anticipated higher utility charges.

3. Commons Building Addition

Last May the board authorized the administration to employ architectural services to design an addition to the Commons. The administration had planned to solicit bids for the project before the February 1979 board meeting. However, as a result of some negative campus reaction to the proposed project, the architects interrupted their work while the program was restudied by the priorities committee, who received input from the campus community through a series of hearings with students and staff.

As a result of the study, the gross area for the proposed building has been reduced from 29,000 square feet to 22,540 square feet. The revised budget is:

22,540 square feet @ \$45	\$1,014,000
3,500 sq. ft. of roof overhang @ \$22.50	78,000
Fees	66,000
Furniture and Equipment	92,000
<u>Total Project Budget</u>	<u>\$1,250,000</u>

Gifts and pledges already earmarked for this project total \$763,000. The administration is confident that the remaining funds can be obtained before the project is complete.

The revised schedule calls for bid opening the first week in May so that the board can take definitive action on the project at its May session.

4. The Western Michigan Business Drive produced just over \$300,000 in gifts and pledges this year, to be used for the commons building addition.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. *Seminary*

1. Faculty Reappointments

The board of trustees recommends the following seminary faculty reappointments:

- a. Dr. Richard De Ridder, associate professor of Church Polity and Church administration for two years.
- b. Dr. Marion Snapper, professor of Church Education for two years.

2. Revision of Rules Governing Seminary Appointments

The board of trustees recommends the approval of the following new rules for appointments to the seminary:

- a. The need for additional teaching help or eventual replacements shall be reviewed annually by the seminary president and the board of trustees at its May meeting in order that the board may make the necessary appointments (s) at its February meeting.
- b. When the need for appointments has been established, this need shall be referred to the seminary faculty, whose duty shall be to canvass the field of possible candidates, to gather the required personal, academic, ministerial, and other relevant information con-

- cerning them, to evaluate them, and to submit a nomination to the board.
- c. At the May meeting the board may submit to the faculty the names of persons whom it wishes the faculty to consider as possible nominees. The faculty shall solicit further recommendations of names for consideration from consistories and classes, establishing a suitable deadline for the submission of such names. All names so submitted shall be reported by the faculty to the board when its nomination is submitted to the board.
  - d. The faculty's nomination shall be presented to the board by the seminary president at the February meeting of the board, and shall be accompanied by a file on the nominee(s) and by a written statement prepared by the faculty [in justification of its nomination]. Members of the faculty who cannot subscribe to this statement shall be expected to present to the board their own written evaluation of the faculty's nominee(s). At this February meeting, the faculty having rendered its report, the board of trustees shall decide on the advisability of making an appointment to a professorship, an associate professorship or an assistant professorship, or a lectureship.
  - e. When presenting the faculty's nomination, the seminary president shall make specific recommendations concerning rank and tenure to be held by the appointee.
  - f. In case the board should wish to add to the list of nominees submitted by the faculty, the proposed addition(s) shall first be presented to the faculty for evaluation.
  - g. Having given due consideration to the nominee(s) of the faculty, to the accompanying materials, and to the faculty's evaluation of other nominees, and having interviewed the nominees, the board shall make the appointments.
  - h. The board's appointment to be submitted to synod shall be published twice in the church papers immediately after the February meeting of the board so as to give the church ample time for consideration and expression of possible objections.
  - i. The board shall submit the appointment to synod for approval. Synod shall interview the appointee before voting on the appointment. If synod does not approve the appointment, the board shall be asked to submit a new appointment in accordance with the aforesaid procedure. The appointment shall be accompanied by supporting materials.

The teaching needs occasioned by this interim situation shall be filled by the executive committee of the board in consultation with the seminary faculty until the board can make provision for the vacancy.
  - j. When the board is not ready to make a regular appointment, it shall make an interim appointment. These are to be submitted to synod for approval.
  - k. A regular appointment shall, as a rule, be for the rank of Assistant Professor.

1. The seminary faculty shall maintain a complete file of information on possible candidates for Seminary teaching positions with a view to providing for long-range as well as immediate needs.
3. Change in Constitution

The board of trustees recommends the approval of the following amendment in Article V of the constitution of Calvin College and Seminary:

Synod reserves for itself the right to appoint the presidents, respectively, of Calvin College and Seminary. It authorizes the board to make all other appointments, but with the understanding that these shall be in harmony with the adopted bylaws and that all regular appointments to the staff of either institution shall be subject to the approval of synod.

4. Procedure for Appointing a President of Calvin Seminary:

The board of trustees recommends approval of the following rules of procedure in appointing a president of Calvin Seminary:

- a. When the office of president is vacant or is about to become vacant, the board of trustees shall, with a view to the election of a president, constitute a nominating committee consisting of four members of the board elected by the board, three members of the faculty, elected by the faculty, and two members-at-large, elected by the board from a nomination prepared by the Board of the Seminary Alumni Association.
- b. It shall be the duty of the nominating committee to canvass the field of possible candidates, to gather relevant information concerning them, to evaluate them, and to prepare a nomination.
- c. The committee shall give opportunity to members of the seminary faculty and the board of trustees and to consistories of the Christian Reformed Church to submit in writing names of persons who are judged to meet the qualifications specified above. The committee shall establish a time limit for the suggestion of names.
- d. The committee shall be expected to interview prospective candidates and to make use of any other regularly approved method to gain whatever information it needs in order to arrive at a satisfactory list. In the interest of safe-guarding privacy and confidentiality the interviews should generally not be held on campus.
- e. The nomination prepared by the nominating committee shall be presented to the faculty, and the faculty shall prepare for the board a written evaluation of that nomination. Members of the faculty who cannot subscribe to this evaluation shall be expected to present to the board their own evaluations in writing.
- f. Having given due consideration to the faculty's evaluation(s) and having interviewed the prospective candidates, the board shall make its nomination from the recommendations of the nominating committee. Should the board reject the nomination or find the evaluation(s) of the faculty a serious obstacle to the making of a final selection, then the nominating committee shall be asked to prepare a new recommendation. This new recommendation shall, in turn, be submitted to the faculty for evaluation before being submitted to

- the board. The nomination which the board eventually approves shall be submitted to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.
- g. The board of trustees shall submit its nomination to synod, and synod shall elect a president from the nomination. If the synod finds the nomination unacceptable, synod shall instruct the board of trustees to prepare a new nomination. The board of trustees shall be empowered to make whatever interim provisions are necessary for the administration of the seminary during this procedure.
  - h. The election of a president by synod should take place, if possible, a year before the president is to assume office, in order to allow him opportunity to prepare himself for his administrative duties.
  - i. In case the president-elect is not already a full professor with permanent tenure, he shall, on assuming the office of president, be given that rank and that tenure. His initial appointment as president shall be for a term of four years, after which he shall, if reelected, hold permanent tenure in that office.
5. Rules for Periodic Evaluation of the President of Calvin Seminary  
The board of trustees recommends approval of the following rules for the periodic evaluation of the President of Calvin Seminary:
- a. Purpose  
The purpose of this evaluation is to promote the president's growth in the conduct of his office.
  - b. Agency  
The committee for evaluation shall be the Seminary Committee of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees.
  - c. Period  
The evaluation shall be conducted at four-year intervals.
  - d. Data Acquisition  
The committee shall secure confidential but signed written evaluations from the following, using questionnaires or free-form communications according to the committee's discretion:
    - 1) the president's faculty and administrative colleagues relative to his administration of faculty affairs;
    - 2) the officers of the student senate with respect to his relations with students;
    - 3) the officers of the board of trustees with respect to his relations with the board and the church;
    - 4) the Business Manager of Calvin Seminary with respect to his administration of the business affairs of the seminary;
    - 5) The president of Calvin College with respect to his relations with the College.
  - e. Communication of Findings  
Having considered the written evaluations, the committee shall make written suggestions and recommendations to the president and shall interview him with respect to the results of the inquiry.
  - f. The committee shall report its findings to the board of trustees.
- B. *College*
1. Reappointments of Administrators and Librarian  
The board recommends the following reappointments:

- a. John L. De Beer, Ed.D.—Director of the Instructional Resources Center for one year (in emeritus status)
  - b. Donald Distelberg, B.A.— Director of Annual Giving for two years
  - c. Johanna Duyst, M.A.L.S.—Librarian for two years (with faculty status)
  - d. Judith Mullins, M.Ed.—Dean of Women for two years (with faculty status)
  - e. Thomas Ozinga, Ph.D.—Director of College Relations for two years (with faculty status)
2. Reappointments to the Faculty with Tenure (*italics indicates raise in rank*)
- The board recommends the following reappointments:
- a. Robert De Vries, Ph.D.—*Associate Professor* of Political Science
  - b. Henry Hoeks, Ed.D.—Professor of Religion and Theology
  - c. John Worst, Ph.D.—Professor of Music
3. Terminal Appointments
- The board recommends the following terminal appointments:
- a. Patricia Blom, M.A.—Instructor in Speech for one year.
  - b. Delvin Ratzsch, Ph.D.—Visiting Assistant Professor of Philosophy for one year
4. Terminal Reappointment
- The board recommends the following terminal reappointment:
- Sandra Ariza, M.A.—Instructor in Romance Languages for one year
5. Regular Reappointments
- The board recommends the following regular two-year reappointments: (*italics indicates raise in rank*)
- a. Claude-Marie Baldwin, M.A., Visiting Assistant Professor of Romance Languages.
  - b. Ronald Blankespoor, Ph.D., *Professor* of Chemistry
  - c. Bette Bosma, M.A., *Assistant Professor* of Education
  - d. Kenneth Bratt, M.A., *Assistant Professor* in Classical Languages
  - e. Barbara Carvill, M.A., Assistant Professor of Germanic Languages
  - f. Bradley Class, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Romance Languages
  - g. David Diephouse, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of History
  - h. Eugene Dykema, M.B.A., Assistant Professor of Economics
  - i. Daniel Ebels, M.S., Assistant Professor of Economics
  - j. Edward Ericson, Ph.D., Professor of English
  - k. Edna Greenway, M.A., Instructor in Romance Languages
  - l. Thomas Hoeksema, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Education
  - m. David Holquist, M.A., Ed. S., *Associate Professor* of Speech
  - n. Gertrude Huisman, M.Mus., Assistant Professor of Music
  - o. Carl Kaiser, M.Mus., Associate Professor of Music
  - p. Kenneth Kuipers, M.B.A., Assistant Professor of Economics
  - q. Arie Leegwater, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Chemistry
  - r. Ellen Monsma, M.A., *Assistant Professor* of Romance Languages
  - s. Carl Mulder, Ed.D., Associate Professor of Education
  - t. Charlotte Otten, Ph.D., *Professor* of English
  - u. James Penning, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Political Science

- v. Jeffrey Pettinga, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Physical Education
- w. Corwin Smidt, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science
- x. LeRoy Stegink, M.A., *Associate Professor* of Education
- y. John Tiemstra, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Economics
- z. Peter Tigchelaar, Ph.D., *Professor* of Biology
- aa. John Timmerman, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English
- bb. Brenda Van Halsema, M.A., Instructor in Art
- cc. Timothy Van Laar, M.F.A., Instructor in Art
- dd. Nancy Van Noord, M.A., Instructor in Physical Education
- ee. Glenn Weaver, Ph.D., *Visiting Associate Professor* of Psychology
- ff. Karla (Hoesch) Wolters, M.A., Visiting Instructor in Physical Education

Board of Trustees Calvin College and  
Seminary  
Norman B. De Graaf, secretary

## REPORT 3

## BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS

Through the missionary enterprise the church becomes physically present in the distant reaches of our world and manifests God's sovereignty in the midst of the transitory kingdoms of this world. God's sending of his own Son to become physically present in our world at the center of its need, stands as a living example to the church for its own work of sending. As a bride preparing for the coming of the bridegroom, she seeks to gather all her treasures from every part of the world to present to him on that great day of consummation. This passion continues to impell the church to send her emissaries around the world to plant the church and to herald his peace and justice. Through these sent ones the church follows the example of her Lord and becomes physically present in the distant reaches of our world, at the center of desperate need, both physical and spiritual.

Our missionaries labor today in the context of rapid social change. The welcome our missionaries once received as representatives of the enlightened and affluent West has often withered now into resentment. More than ever today our missionaries are required to indicate clearly that Jesus Christ is not to be identified with any particular economic system or political ideology, and that it is only his kingdom which we seek to represent.

This turbulent world desperately needs the gospel. Animosities once held in check have now been unleashed into the sinews of almost every third world country. Islamic militancy forms an alliance with petro dollars to build mosques in every large city of the world. The tumult in Iran gave new exclamation to the call of the minaret. Our church continues its ministry with the Islam In Africa Project and carries on its search for recruits for our ministry in Bangladesh. Synod has assigned to CRWM the provision of a pastor for the Amman International Church in Jordan where Christians have daily contact with Muslims.

Political turbulence affected our missionaries in Nicaragua and the United States recognition of mainland China gave us cause for concern for our missionaries in Taiwan. At the same time, the brightening possibilities for the planting of churches among the multitudes of China gives us new hope for the future.

The sending churches responded to these deepening challenges with determination. After the severe financial crisis of CRWM in 1977, many new churches undertook above-quota support of CRWM missionaries. Applicants for missionary service came forward for many fields as regular missionaries, associate missionaries, or volunteers. There was spiralling inflation overseas and a shocking dollar devaluation, and through it all the church kept faith with those whom it has sent out. The following pages give account of that sending.

## SECTION ONE

**Administrative Matters***A. The Board*

The annual meetings of the board took place on February 6-8, 1979. The executive committee met bimonthly in accordance with its mission order. The officers during 1978 were: Rev. Eugene Bradford, president; Rev. Jacob Vos, vice-president; Mr. David Radius, treasurer; Mr. Alvin Huijbregtse, recording secretary; Dr. Eugene Rubingh, executive secretary.

The eighteen members of the executive committee are elected annually by the board. The Africa, Asia, and Latin America Area Committees process field minutes in conjunction with the following administrative committees: Officers, Finance, Communications, Personnel, and Recruitment. A Global Outreach Committee assesses the positions and funding of the total program and considers both current and possible future deployment.

The office personnel is as follows: Executive Secretary, Dr. Eugene Rubingh; Africa Secretary, Rev. William Van Tol; Asia Secretary, Rev. Edward Van Baak, Business Secretary, Mr. Donald Zwier; Accountant, Mr. James Tamminga; Communications Secretary, Mr. William Schultze; Support Services Coordinator, Mr. Ellis Deters; Personnel Secretary, Mr. Ronald Zoet.

*B. Representation at Synod*

The board requests that its president, executive secretary, treasurer, and business secretary be authorized to represent the board on all matters pertaining to Christian Reformed World Missions

*C. Nominations for Board Membership*

Certain vacancies exist in the positions described by the Mission Order for member-at-large and alternates. The following slate of nominees is represented with respect to current vacancies. Profiles of each nominee will be presented to the appropriate synodical committees.

Central United States-----	Dr. G. Arthur Mulder
	Mr. Raymond Browneye
Central United States Alternate-----	Mrs. Karen Kass
	Mr. Jack Holwerda
Central U.S., Alternate-----	Mr. Robert Dykstra
	Mr. Stuart Vander Heide
Eastern Canada, Alternate-----	Mr. John Oegema (incumbent)
	Mr. Klaas Terpstra

*D. Appointment of Latin America Area Secretary*

During 1978, Dr. Roger Greenway concluded many years of service with CRWM and accepted a call to a pastorate. A diligent search was conducted for a replacement and the board recommends to synod the appointment of the Rev. G. Bernard Dokter as the Latin America Area

Secretary. The Rev. Mr. Dokter has the confidence both of the board and the Latin America missionary family, possesses proven cross-cultural skills and language competency. Mr. Dokter has served for over fourteen years in both Argentina and Central America and has a wide-ranging familiarity with Latin American missiological issues in the very delicate and volatile situation which often exists on this continent. He has demonstrated an administrative ability as the field secretary of the Central America Field Council, and as the senior missionary on that field has significant experience in the orientation of new missionaries. The board heartily recommends his appointment for the initial term of two years.

#### *E. Presentation of Missionaries*

Missionaries on home service or under appointment have regularly been introduced to synod and greetings are brought from specific fields. Once again we request permission for the presentation of the missionaries so that synod may have opportunity to meet personally with these representatives of the churches' world missionary endeavor.

## SECTION TWO

### General Matters

#### *A. Communications*

In the face of the swiftly changing missionary situation today, adequate communication with the sending churches is crucial. Our philosophy of communication stems from the conviction that the challenge of the missionary adventure is itself so impelling that if full communication is maintained, the sending constituency will respond with determination. This implies also that we will share our problems and failures with the churches in a posture of trust and candor. We believe that this philosophy has been instrumental in the fact that thirty-four churches entered the special missionary support program in 1978 and thirty-three expanded their commitments to include additional missionaries. Some 404 congregations now undergird the program with prayer and above-quota support.

The annual report to the constituency entitled "World To Win" has again been published and is ready for wide distribution. Several pages are devoted to financial accounting. Audio-visual productions undertaken in 1978 have included the following: "Unto all Generations" 16 mm film, Japan; "By All Means . . . In Mexico" 16 mm film, Mexico; "Compassionate Hands" slide/tape, Nigeria; "SUM Air Day" slide/tape, Nigeria; "TV In Nigeria (missionary pilots and planes); "The Builders" slide/tape, Mexico; Liberia slide/tape, to be completed in 1979; Philippines 16 mm film, to be completed in 1979.

#### *B. Delegation from World Missions Related Churches*

Synod has authorized the extending of invitations to leaders and/or representatives from national churches overseas to be present at sessions

of synod. A representative of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico and of the Iglesia Cristiana Reformada of Cuba have been invited to attend the 1979 synod.

### C. Major World Language Literature Study Committee

Synod of 1977 authorized a study regarding the feasibility of forming a permanent committee to plan, organize and publish needed Reformed literature in the major languages of the world. Representatives of the various interested agencies produced a report in line with the following mandate:

1. A study of possible languages to be covered and the order of the priority.
2. Needed staffing and budget.
3. A survey of present CRC activity in foreign language publications.
4. A study of structure and synodical relationships.

The study committee produced a sizeable report and judged that the formation of a permanent committee to plan, organize and publish needed Reformed literature in major world languages is both feasible and advisable. Four grounds were adduced for the establishment of such an entity:

- a. This committee can coordinate the present diverse and unrelated efforts of various denominational and church related agencies in the CRC.
- b. This committee can give a denomination-wide report on activities in this field and more equitably channel funds available to the areas of greatest need.
- c. This committee can promote cooperative efforts with churches abroad to pool talents and abilities for mutual aid and encouragement.
- d. This committee can develop a long-range program that would encourage Reformed churches abroad to develop their own resources to write or translate Reformed literature in their language(s).

In fulfillment of its mandate on this matter, CRWM recommends to synod that the present Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad (CEACA) be reorganized under a broader mandate to become an umbrella-type organization as a Translation and Educational Assistance Committee (TEAC), and that synod designate CEACA as the implementing agent for this reorganization after which the present CEACA, with its present mandate for educational assistance to churches abroad with its present membership will become a subcommittee, with other divisions to be the various translation subcommittees (Spanish Literature Committee, etc.).

#### *Grounds:*

1. CEACA is already a permanent committee of synod, accountable to synod directly.
2. CEACA already has extensive contacts with churches abroad.
3. CEACA members have expertise in a number of world languages.
4. CEACA has been considering a broadening of its mandate so that it can better serve educational needs of churches abroad.

5. CEACA already fulfills a coordinating function between various denominational and church-related agencies.

6. Both CEACA and SLC have been consulted and concur with this arrangement.

The elaboration of this proposal as recommended to synod by the board is as follows:

I. Composition, Task and Staffing of TEAC as the Permanent Coordinating Committee for the Publication of Major World Language Literature.

A. *Composition.*

It was decided to recommend that the composition of TEAC include, as needed, one representative each from Calvin College and Seminary, CEACA, CRWM, CRWRC, The Back to God Hour, The Board of Publications, The Board of Home Missions, one member-at-large to represent agencies engaged in publication and distribution of Reformed literature abroad such as the American Calvinist Fellowship, SLC, World Home Bible League, The Evangelical Literature League (TELL), etc., and one member-at-large to represent other educational institutions such as Reformed Bible College, Dordt, Trinity, King's College, etc.

It is further recommended that the representatives from Calvin College and Seminary, CRWM, CRWRC, The Back to God Hour, The Board of Publications, and the Board of Home Missions be appointed for three-year terms (initially staggered so that all terms do not expire at once) by synod after nomination by the agencies themselves and that the members-at-large be appointed by synod for three-year terms (initially staggered so that both terms do not expire at once) after nomination by CEACA.

B. *Task.*

It was decided to recommend that the task of TEAC relative to the expanded mandate be enlarged to include the following:

1. Report to synod annually on the publication work being done in major world language literature by TEAC subcommittees and coordinated denominational and church-related agencies. This would give synod an effective overview of the work the church is doing in this field.

2. Recommend to synod a unified literature budget which would include both the quota amount requested for TEAC's own subcommittees and gift and offerings goals for church-related agencies.

3. Appoint a treasurer to receive quota funds from classes and make payments required by major language subcommittees.

4. Accept responsibility for the present Spanish Literature Committee as a subcommittee of TEAC, setting the general policy under which this and other subcommittees would operate.

5. Receive and evaluate requests for the production of Reformed literature from CRC denominational and church-related agencies and from churches abroad.

6. Determine unmet needs and set up other major world language subcommittees along the same lines as the Spanish Literature Committee.

7. Cooperate with evangelical and Reformed churches and agencies in

North America and abroad in the production and distribution of Reformed literature.

8. Gradually develop subcommittees for other world languages according to the priorities established.

### C. *Staffing.*

1. Secretarial. The present Spanish Literature Committee employs a program secretary half-time. Within the initial two-year period TEAC will require the full-time services of a secretary to deal with correspondence and to keep track of translating and publishing programs of additional language subcommittees that develop.

2. By the third year, TEAC will require the services of a part-time executive secretary to supervise the increasingly more detailed language subcommittee programs on behalf of TEAC.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. It will take several years to get new programs in other languages organized and productive.
- b. An emeritated pastor or retired businessman could probably be appointed to act as part-time executive secretary.
- c. A gradual growth in administrative staff as the language subcommittee programs develop will be more efficient and financially responsible.

## II. Composition, Task and Staffing of Major World Language (or TEAC) Subcommittees.

### A. *Composition*

It was decided to recommend that:

1. Members of each subcommittee be selected from CRC denominational and church-related agencies, from CRC members with special competence in the languages involved, and from members of Reformed churches abroad which use the language involved.
2. Initial members of subcommittees as such committees are developed by TEAC according to the priorities established be selected and appointed by TEAC.
3. Replacement of additional members be selected and nominated by the existing subcommittee with TEAC approval.
4. Officers of each subcommittee be selected by that subcommittee itself with TEAC approval.
5. Terms of membership, officers and functions of officers be determined by a general policy decided by TEAC.

### B. *Task*

It was decided to recommend that subcommittees have the following tasks:

1. Survey Reformed literature needs with the major language (or languages if one subcommittee is assigned more than one language), determine which needs should be met by CRC efforts, decide priorities in which the needs should be met, and report this annually to TEAC.
2. Prepare and submit a proposed annual budget to TEAC.

3. Request and arrange for the cooperation of existing CRC denominational and church-related agencies on approved projects.
4. Arrange for the writing, translation, publications and/or republications of approved Reformed literature, appoint and pay writers and translators or make arrangements with agencies and churches employing appointed writers and translators by which such agencies and churches will make this work part of their job assignment.
5. Edit materials submitted and supervise publication and distribution.
6. Conduct, or arrange for conducting of, workshops within the language(s) area to encourage the writing of Reformed literature by qualified persons in the language(s), and sponsor such writers in cooperation with churches abroad.

#### C. Staffing

It was decided to recommend that:

1. The subcommittees not employ administrative staff apart from occasional and/or part-time secretarial help.
2. Specialized help on individual projects for writing, translation, editing and production be requested from coordinated agencies and/or churches abroad. In some cases money be budgeted for short term intensive work during furloughs, vacations, leaves of absence or loan arrangements of persons with needed special abilities.

III. *Budget and Quota.* It was decided to recommend that TEAC be granted a total quota of \$1.65 (approximately \$96,150) for major world language literature work in 1980. (TEAC may submit an additional quota request to synod for expenses involved in other parts of its program.). The budget/quota would be used in the following ways:

A. *Spanish Literature Subcommittees:* Quota—\$1.00 (no change from 1979).

*Ground:* This committee is committed to a publishing program for the next two or three years that will require this much continued quota support.

B. *Other language subcommittees:* Quota—\$.50

*Ground:* Initially not too much funding will be required to begin these programs since the earlier phases of translation and editing are less expensive. After a year or two, when printing and publishing are undertaken, this will likely rise to \$1.00.

C. *Administration:* Quota—\$.15

*Ground:* This amount will be required for anticipated needed secretarial help, correspondence and travel. This will probably rise to \$.25 when the executive secretary is appointed.

#### D. Office of Evangelist

The Synod of 1978 authorized the ordination of evangelists under certain conditions. A sizeable number of unordained missionaries are currently engaged in evangelism overseas, and the board expressed a desire to apply the provisions for ordination to the office of evangelist to them

when this is desirable and feasible. CRWM therefore recommends to synod that the following policy regarding ordination to the office of evangelist for CRWM missionaries be adopted:

### 1. General Regulations

- a. Ordination shall be sought only if the national church related to the CRWM outreach itself recognizes the office of evangelist as described in the Acts of Synod 1978.
- b. The applicant's term of service as evangelist shall agree with the term of service overseas to which he is appointed by CRWM, and may be renewed by mutual consent during each home service. The commissioning church shall also agree to such renewal.
- c. His work as evangelist is regulated by Article VII of the synodically approved mission order and is under the supervision of CRWM. He shall report semiannually concerning his work to CRWM and his commissioning church.
- d. His work shall be conducted according to the regulations of the Field Council and national church in the country in which the evangelist labors. If he accepts an appointment to another field, is assigned to work with another national church, or becomes a member of another CRC church, he shall not hold the office of ordained evangelist until he submits to such examination as is considered appropriate by the classis to which his calling church belongs, and he shall be ordained again as stipulated by the Acts of Synod 1978, page 78.

### 2. Procedure for Ordination

- a. After at least one term of missionary service with Christian Reformed World Missions, a lay missionary may formally indicate to his Field Council his desire to seek ordination as an evangelist.
- b. The Field Council shall forward the application to CRWM and provide an attestation from Field Council and the national church (if one has been established) regarding the applicant's abilities and qualifications. The Area Secretary shall then make recommendations to the board or its executive committee regarding the application.
- c. The commissioning church shall thereupon be notified of the action of Field Council, national church (if applicable), and CRWM. CRWM shall supply to the commissioning church the attestation from Field Council and national church concerning the applicant's ability to function competently in the office of evangelist.
- d. The commissioning church shall make the appropriate arrangements for the classical examination as stipulated in the synodical decision (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, p 78).

## E. Financial Situation

### 1. General Overview

During 1978, missionary agencies operating overseas received stunning shocks in terms of the devaluation of the United States and Canadian dollar and also in terms of spiralling inflation in many countries where missionaries are at work. In Argentina, for example, inflation during 1978 reached 169%. The cost of maintaining our missionaries in

Japan escalated significantly as the North American dollar purchased fewer yen than before. In Nigeria cutbacks in staffing became unavoidable as the 1978 budget proved inadequate to maintain the level of ministry previously envisioned. The prospect of radical reductions in outreach loomed ominously.

We are, however, heartened to report that the sending churches responded to this situation with significantly increased support. For the first time in CRWM's history, its income surpassed the \$5,000,000 mark. Synod also provided an emergency contingency fund for 1979 to deal with these pressures which are often unpredictable and sporadic. This evidence of continued support and determination to carry on our evangelistic task was a source of deep encouragement to our missionary family in 1978.

## **2. Contingency for inflation and devaluation**

The severe shocks that are taking place in international financing have given rise to the conviction that it is the part of responsible planning to look ahead to the recurring possibility of ongoing devaluation and overseas inflation which may seriously disrupt the continuation of our missionary programs. The board therefore requests that a quota amount of \$1.50 once again be provided which may be used in 1980 in the event that dollar devaluation and overseas inflation continue far in excess of that which obtains in North America.

## **3. Australia and Jordan**

In 1977, synod gave permission for CRC pastors to serve the Australian Reformed Churches on a loan basis. Supplemental salary support is provided through a modest quota amount channeled through CRWM. Last year synod authorized a quota of \$.20 to assist in funding three appointees for 1979. The Rev. and Mrs. John Houseward currently serve at Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia, and synod has authorized additional appointees. However, the funding requirements for 1980 can be satisfactorily met with a quota amount of \$.10 per family. This will enable us to carry out the mandate given to CRWM by the 1977 Synod.

In 1978, synod assigned to CRWM the recruitment and staffing for the Amman International Church in Jordan. Since that time a call has been extended to the Rev. Philip De Jonge to serve in Amman and synod is therefore requested to carry forward the \$.35 per family quota amount for 1980 in order to continue this ministry.

## **4. Salary scale information**

Synod of 1978 instructed "all those agencies requesting quota support to include their salary and fringe benefits schedules in their annual report, and these reports be included in the agenda" (page 94.). CRWM has repeatedly asked that there be action on this matter so that a uniform manner of reporting may be achieved. At this writing no guidelines have as yet appeared. It was decided, however, to make an initial report nonetheless in an effort to comply with synod's explicit instructions on this matter.

a. Missionary salaries, 1979.

1) Basic salary:

Married employees—\$12,200

Single employees—\$9,700

2) Prior service increase: \$50.00 per year of prior service with ten years maximum. Applicable to work undertaken previous to employment with CRWM in a field similar to or qualifying the individual for CRWM service.

3) Service increase: \$100 per year for each year of service with CRWM.

4) Children's allowance: \$400 per year per child.

5) Cost of living subsidy on all fields where applicable.

6) Payment of 2.05% of salary as an allowance to the ordained for social security or pension plan purposes.

7) Payment of pension plan payments and all medical and hospitalization costs.

8) Payment of 50% of dental expenses.

9) Provision of housing on field and during home service.

10) Provision of automobile or transportation costs overseas.

11) Assistance towards excessive education costs for children.

b. Office staff

During November 1978 the executive committee adopted a tentative 1979 office salary scale as a working model to be further refined in an attempt to meet synod's directive.

1) Basic salary: At the present writing 8 individuals receive basic salaries ranging from \$15,500 to \$19,000.

2) This amount includes housing, automobile, utility, children's or ministerial social security allowance.

3) Experience is remunerated to the extent of \$150.00 per annum with a 20 year maximum.

4) Remuneration for post-graduate education ranges from 5 to 15% of basic salary.

5) The executive secretary receives a responsibility index of 10% of the basic executive salary.

6) Pension payments, life insurance and Blue Cross hospitalization costs are paid.

It should be noted that, while the basic salaries of the missionaries are less than those of the office staff, the former are provided with housing and transportation, as well as children's allowances. On the average, the two groups have similar incomes.

F. *Challenge and Expansion*

1. **Historical background**

During the past few years the world missionary enterprise of the CRC has experienced unusual blessing on several fronts. National churches in many countries have come to birth and a leadership potential have developed in these swifty rising communities. If at this moment of harvest we can provide significant leadership training, we will be in a position to hand on the torch of evangelism to these growing national

churches. We have also been greatly blessed with an unusual number of applications for missionary service. After several years of recruiting famine during the Vietnam conflict, men and women have come forward to offer themselves as heralds of the gospel in our global village. There has also been the blessing of significant financial support so that the budget for world missions has risen consistently year by year. Throughout this period the board has considered the way in which these blessings might be more adequately communicated to the sending churches and by which the synod could itself participate more fully in perpetuating and strengthening the church's vision.

This concern has continued to exercise the board in recent months. It was undoubtedly the matter of inflation and dollar devaluation which was the catalyst to the board's renewed determination to request synod to be more fully a participant in a decision regarding the undertaking of current challenges and the possibility of expansion into new fields.

At the 1978 board meeting the board found it necessary to reduce the level of expenditures which had been previously mandated and authorized by synod. Furthermore the proposals for 1979 as received from the fields were scrutinized and several severe modifications were made in those proposals. Synod itself participated with generous provision and the churches rallied to our support during 1978.

In the formation of the 1980 budget, the same question again arose. The financial problematics were pointed out to all the fields and guidelines were established for their budget preparation. Nevertheless, when the budgets were received and totalled, the requests came to an astonishing \$7,450,000. The board wrestled with these requests and finally came to the decision to request from synod authorization for a basic budget which is in most cases simply a maintenance budget and in some cases a budget which will result in a curtailment of ministries. This proposed budget figure is set at \$6,350,000. This base figure is designed to do no more than maintain the current level of ministry on most fields.

The board, however, felt that it simply could not at that point extinguish the vision and challenge presented to it by the missionaries. It decided, therefore, to present this challenge of possible expansion and the restoration as to the scope of churches' own determination and potential.

To that end all budgetary amounts related to expansion or the restoration of previously cut positions were removed from the initially proposed budget and placed in a separate schedule for presentation to synod. We crave God's blessing upon synod as it considers the following items.

## 2. Papua New Guinea

For several years requests have come to CRWM to undertake a ministry in the Sepik River Valley of Papua New Guinea. A work pioneered by Mr. and Mrs. Orneal Kooyers has drawn the support of many Christian Reformed people and an academy and evangelistic ministry has been established at Ambunti. During the course of 1978 a visiting committee was sent to Ambunti to survey the area as a possible field for CRWM involvement. A basic Christian influence has already been established and a limited missionary involvement from CRWM

could provide significant results in church planting and leadership training. It was therefore decided to recommend that CRWM be permitted to loan two missionary families for a period of five years to provide leadership training in the Sepik River Valley area of Papua New Guinea. The mandate and loan agreement will be drawn up in conjunction with the Sepik Christian Akademi board and funding will be channeled through CRWM. Two seminary graduates currently candidates for the ministry stand ready to enter this outreach in terms of a five-year commitment. The board therefore recommends that permission be granted to undertake this ministry.

### **3. Dominican Republic**

A thrilling account of the response of the ministry of the Back to God Hour has already become well-known in the Christian Reformed constituency. Indigenous congregations have sprung up, nourished from time to time by our missionaries from Puerto Rico. During 1978 a visiting committee to the Dominican Republic informed the board that unusual potential for the establishment of Reformed churches in this country lay at hand. In a world in which many doors seem to be closing here an area of openness and responsiveness was blossoming by God's grace. Congregations going under the name Christian Reformed have already been established and the potential for the establishment of others is clear. The board therefore decided to request synod to initiate work in the Dominican Republic with two missionary families in 1980, one of these families to be redeployed from Puerto Rico.

### **4. Special Missionary Challenge**

In the foregoing paragraphs, the board's decision to share with synod the possibility for the accepting of new missionary challenges has been explicated. Papua New Guinea and Dominican Republic represent new countries in which CRWM missionaries have not officially labored up to this time. However, the board was also impressed with the challenges that exist on the fields of our current responsibility. The board decided that these challenges should also be shared with synod so that synod might participate in the decisions of expansion and reduction. All the proposals for the restoration of previously cut positions and all the proposals for expansion were removed from the basic budget and are herewith presented to synod in a separate category. The board has placed each of these ten positions in a rank of priority and requests synod to deal with them in the order presented. The order is not a haphazard one but the result of careful prioritization in the light of many factors. The positions in Nigeria and Mexico are the proposals for the restoration of previously cut positions. It is indeed true that the ministries in Nigeria are rapidly being transferred to national church and Christian community, but this should occur in an orderly fashion according to a careful strategy and not simply because of funding strictures. Significant staff reductions have already occurred on this field from ninety-six positions in 1969 to seventy-eight positions in 1978. During 1979 another six positions will be eliminated. The board wishes to point out that during this period of transfer, additional reduction should be avoided during 1980. The restoration of the previously cut position in Mexico is also compel-

ling as we stand at a crucial moment in this country in our relationship with the Independent Presbyterian Church.

The schedule is herewith presented for synod's consideration as a special missionary challenge so that the synod may itself mandate the board and reaffirm the missionary vision which these proposals embody.

Rank	Country	No. of Positions	Task	Funds Requested	Quota
1	Nigeria	1	Church Education (Team Ministry—CRCN)	\$30,000	\$ .50
2	Liberia	1	TEE/Evangelism	\$50,500	\$ .87
3	Dominican Republic	1	Church Planting	\$30,000	\$ .50
4	Mexico	1	Church Planting	\$30,000	\$ .50
5	Nigeria	1	Evangelism Co-ordination (NKST)	\$30,000	\$ .50
6	Central America	1	Church Planting	\$30,000	\$ .50
7	Liberia	1	TEE/Evangelism	\$50,500	\$ .87
8	Nigeria	1	Bible School (CRCN)	\$30,000	\$ .50
9	Philippines	1	Church Planting	\$25,000	\$ .43
10	Philippines	1	Church Planting	\$25,000	\$ .43
					<u>\$5.60</u>

#### G. Recognition for missionary service

The board also takes grateful notice of the years of service rendered by the following missionaries who terminated service with CRWM in 1978:

Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Browneye, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Harry Faber, Nigeria; Dr. and Mrs. Peter Greidanus, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Bert Ubels, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Warren De Boer, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. David Whitney, Guam; Mr. and Mrs. Stuart Greydanus, Nigeria; Rev. and Mrs. Orlin Hogan, Mexico; Mr. and Mrs. Louis Regnerus, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Zaagman, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Dick Vander Steen, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Johannes Kotze, Nigeria; Miss Nancy Chapel, Nigeria; Dr. Harry R. Boer, Nigeria; Dr. and Mrs. Martin Reedyk, Nigeria; Rev. and Mrs. Robert De Vries, Philippines; Miss Betty Vreeman, Nigeria; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Geels, Nigeria; Rev. and Mrs. David Doyle, Mexico; Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Hempel, Japan.

#### H. Conclusion

During 1978 CRWM embarked upon a significant program of missionary evaluation, and a process of accountability was established for all our fields. Proposals for a field mandate for each field and a ten-year strategy statement have been adapted and work on these items is being carried out on each field. This emphasis upon planning and strategy is an essential part of our quest for excellence in the name of our Lord.

During 1978 several other significant events took place. It became necessary to request the evacuation of our personnel in Nicaragua. The issue of evacuation is an extremely complex one and continues to exercise the Central America Field Council and the Latin America Committee. The board and staff continue to discuss the feasibility of the concentration of missionaries in a relatively small number of countries over against the diffusion of personnel into a larger number of countries so that we may proceed thoughtfully to most effectively deploy our personnel and

financial resources. The work on these issues continues as we set ourselves to the task of this new year.

Meanwhile, we are not ultimately interested in technique or the explicitness of organizational lines. Above all we seek to be obedient to the Lord of the harvest whose burning love was evident when he became physically present among us and walked the streets of our world. Because of the salvation which he proffers, the sending church continues to lift her eyes to the far reaches of the world to herald there the coming of the Lord.

### SECTION THREE

#### Africa

##### Missionaries:

##### Islam-In-Africa Project

Dr. and Mrs. Peter Ipema

##### Liberia

Mr. and Mrs. O. Aukeman\*  
Mr. and Mrs. P. Theule\*

##### Appointed in 1978

Miss M. Enter  
Rev. and Mrs. D. Slager

##### Nigeria

Rev. and Mrs. S. Anderson\*\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. L. Baas  
Rev. and Mrs. R. Baker  
Rev. and Mrs. W. Berends  
Miss P. Blik\*\*  
Rev. and Mrs. J. Boer  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Bierling  
Mr. and Mrs. R. Bosserman  
Mr. and Mrs. D. Bremer  
Mr. and Mrs. G. Brinks  
Mr. and Mrs. G. Buys  
Mr. and Mrs. R. Cok  
Mr. and Mrs. J. De Jager  
Miss M. De Bruyn\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. D. Dykgraaf  
Mr. W. Dykhuus  
Miss M. Dykstra  
Mr. and Mrs. S. Ellens\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. W. Evenhouse  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Gezon  
Mr. M. and Mrs. (Dr.) G. Hoekman  
Miss A. Hoolsema  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Horlings\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. R. Kooops  
Rev. and Mrs. H. Kiekover  
Mr. and Mrs. C. Korhorn  
Miss F. Karnemaat  
Miss M. Kaldeway  
Mr. D. Koetje\*\*  
Mrs. L. Koetje

Miss M. Kooiman  
Miss A. Kuipers  
Mr. and Mrs. S. Lambers\*\*  
Dr. and Mrs. R. Lett  
Miss M. Mast  
Mr. and Mrs. B. Meyer  
Dr. and Mrs. D. Peerbolte  
Dr. and Mrs. K. Plate\*\*  
Miss C. Roos  
Mr. and Mrs. O. Rouw  
Miss R. Salomons  
Mr. and Mrs. D. Seinen  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Sjaardema  
Rev. and Mrs. G. Spee  
Miss D. Sytsma  
Mr. and Mrs. W. Termorshuizen  
Mr. and Mrs. P. Theule  
Miss L. te Nyenhuis\*\*  
Miss G. Vanden Berg  
Miss J. Vander Laan  
Miss R. Vander Meulen  
Mr. A. Vander Pol\*  
Miss F. Vander Zwaag  
Rev. and Mrs. L. Van Essen  
Mr. and Mrs. M. Van Hal\*  
Miss L. Van Leeuwen  
Miss T. Van Staalduinen  
Mr. and Mrs. C. Van Wyk  
Mr. and Mrs. L. Van Zee  
Miss R. Veltkamp  
Mr. and Mrs. N. Viss  
Miss A. Vissia  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Vreeke  
Miss P. Warsen\*\*

##### Appointed in 1978

Miss N. Berg\*\*  
Miss D. Boot\*\*  
Dr. and Mrs. D. Bosscher\*  
Dr. and Mrs. H. Bratt\*  
Mr. and Mrs. G. Cremer  
Rev. and Mrs. T. Nelson  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Persenaire

*Mr. and Mrs. D. Schepel*  
*Mr. M. Van Der Dyke*  
*Mr. and Mrs. R. Vander Weide*

*Dr. and Mrs. J. Van Dorp*  
*Dr. and Mrs. (Dr.) F. Veenstra*  
*Mr. R. Ubels\**

## KEY

- \*Short Term or Volunteer
- \*\*Associate Missionaries
- \*\*\*On Loan from PCA

Africa's population is increasing rapidly. Major causes of the population explosion are: abolition of slave trade and cessation of interethnic warfare; improved shelter, sanitation and health services; improved strains of crops and methods of cultivation; and development of industry and transportation systems. As a result, the population of Africa, now estimated to be 436 million, is expected to double in twenty-seven years. Africa has the highest crude birth rate in the world: 50 per 1,000 per annum. Twelve percent of the population is suddenly urban. Nine cities have over one million people. It is estimated that 35% of the population will be urban by the year 2000. Uneven spatial distribution caused by large areas of inhospitable climate already gives some countries in East, West and North Africa populations that average over one hundred persons per square mile.

The entire continent has deep-seated needs. Viable social, political and economic systems are needed to displace growing potential for unrest, violence and extreme political views. Education and emphasis on literacy are needed. More than 60% of Africa's children receive no formal education and the overall illiteracy rate is still over 75%. Food and agricultural development are needed. Food imports are rising dramatically. Forty-five percent of the population is under the age of fifteen years, placing a huge economic burden on parents and social institutions. Tropical diseases still take their toll. Over a million people die each year from malaria.

The wholeness of the gospel must be heard. The challenge of Islam, the rise of secularism, the resilience of traditional religions, the truncated gospel of many independent churches and rising nationalism often tinged with Marxism all call for the gospel.

### Islam-In-Africa Project

The Islam-In-Africa Project reaches across sub-Saharan countries with courses and literature to train African Christians to confront the Islamic community with the Gospel. Dr. Peter Ipema, General Advisor of the Project, criss-crossed the continent during his final year of Africa service. During 1979 he will reside in the United States to alert the Church to the challenge of Islam. A replacement for Dr. Ipema will hopefully be sent to Africa in 1980.

### Liberia

A substantial revision of the mandate and strategy for our work in Grand Bassa County, Liberia, was adopted by the board in February, 1979. The Bassa people, with a population of 255,000, comprise 15% of Liberia's people. The mandate and strategy present us with a unique opportunity to build the church among the Bassa. Numerous independent, indigenous churches are springing up among them. A major aspect of our

strategy involves the ministry of seven missionaries among them for the next fifteen years. These missionaries are, and will be, developing a well-rounded program of witness and education to the untrained leaders and laity of these churches, the majority of whom lack even the most fundamental understanding of, and commitment to, the Gospel. It is hoped that the number of missionaries can be expanded from three in 1978 to seven by 1980.

### Nigeria

In Nigeria we have two mission efforts which report separately to our board although the entire mission is administered by one general secretary and treasurer. Both dimensions are supported by a joint service program, which also reports to CRWM.

One mission effort serves the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) located in the area where Miss Johanna Veenstra began her work in 1920. Another group, known as "EKAN Tukum," separated from the CRCN in 1973. There are fifty congregations, over 240 places of worship and over 60,000 church attenders. Thirty-six missionaries and associate missionaries from CRWM (teamed with two from CRWRC) serve in this area.

A second mission effort serves the Church of Christ in the Sudan Among the Tiv (NKST), located primarily in Benue State but spreading to the larger cities. Begun by the Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa in 1911, this work was transferred to us in the late 1950's. NKST now has 60 congregations, 1,558 places of worship and over 200,000 church attenders. Fifty-three missionaries and associate missionaries serve with NKST in a variety of ministries.

Additional missionaries are involved in service ministries such as the aviation program, construction and maintenance and instruction of missionary children at Hillcrest School.

The Nigeria mission has been deeply involved in efforts to reorganize its relationship to the national churches and revise its mandate and strategy. Eight institutions with over 250 students from the churches we serve, are training leaders. All but one of these are now owned and operated by the Nigerian churches. Scholarship programs, which support over sixty students training for the ministry, and rural health programs, which supervise over one hundred dispensaries, maternity centers and community health posts, are being transferred to the churches. Plans are developing for transfer to the churches of a literature program which has numerous wholesale outlets, bookstores and literature agents. As these transfers of responsibility are completed, a majority of the missionaries will be loaned to the churches under "Guidelines for Church and Mission Interdependence" developed by CRWM. The administrative structure of the mission will be revised, streamlined and gradually diminished.

From a high of 96 missionaries in 1976 we now budget for 72 positions. This decline has been partially offset by designating teachers who are on government contracts as associate missionaries. It is hoped, however, that our financial situation will allow us to stabilize the number of missionaries serving the church for a transitional period. Numerous

challenges brought on by rapid growth of the churches require assistance for several years as these churches complete the full cycle of mission to mission. There is fervent hope that by 1982 a new strategy, in concert with the churches, can be directed to the cities and unreached ethnic pockets of Nigeria which urgently need the Gospel. Of Nigeria's 80 million people, who comprise one fourth of black Africa's population, 41 million are Muslims and 21 million are in the process of change from traditional religions to Christianity, Islam or secular ideologies. Both groups need the urgent address of the gospel now.

Until a few years ago, CRWM owned and operated various schools and hospitals in Nigeria. The schools are now operated by the Nigerian churches or, as in the case of Mkar Teachers' College, have been taken over by the government. Most of the schools struggle with problems brought on by rapid expansion and inadequate funds, but continue to be places for vital witness among the nation's young people. Takum Christian Hospital was taken over by the government a few years ago. Negotiation for financial compensation continues.

Only two major medical institutions, Mkar Christian Hospital and Benue Leprosy Settlement are still owned by the mission. For the past three years the major problem has been a shortage of medical doctors. That has just been resolved through recruitment of Nigerian and missionary doctors. Now both the hospitals and leprosy settlement face serious financial problems because grants from the Nigerian government have been delayed. The inability of the Nigerian government to assist as planned is tied to declining demand for its oil. The government's ability to assist may improve due to events in countries such as Iran.

An institution like Mkar Hospital is symbolic of the pressures faced across the continent because of financial problems. The need for educational and medical facilities far surpasses the ability of African governments and people to provide, while the need for theological schools, adequate church education programs and qualified pastors far surpasses the ability of African churches to provide. Competent missionaries able to train African leadership are needed and monetary grants to the training and evangelistic programs of national churches will be increased.

In summary we note some of the highlights of mission activity in 1978 and challenges for the future.

### *1978 Highlights*

Over 6,000 adults and children were baptized in 1978.

All but one of the Seminaries and Bible Schools are now owned and operated by the Nigerian churches. Nearly 250 men and women are studying at these schools.

Scholarship programs help support over sixty students training for the ministry.

The mission boards of the Nigerian churches have sent out twenty "home" missionaries.

Arrangements to transfer responsibility to the Nigerian churches for the Literature, Rural Health and Scholarship programs are nearly completed.

Mkar Christian Hospital and Benue Leprosy Settlement, dependent on

the Nigeria government for 50% of their income, faced severe financial problems when grants from the government were delayed.

Dr. Harry Boer retired after twenty-six years of missionary service in Nigeria.

Mr. Johannes Kotze, the last CRC missionary from South Africa, was imprisoned for two weeks by Nigerian authorities for "security reason". He subsequently resigned from missionary service and returned to South Africa with his family.

Rev. and Mrs. Donald Slager and Nurse Margaret Enter began work in Liberia.

A new Piper Navajo airplane was flown to Nigeria by missionary pilot, Ray Browneye.

Inflation in Nigeria is over 30%. The price of gasoline once doubled in a single day.

### *Challenges Ahead*

**THE URBAN CHALLENGE.** Nigeria presently has 20% of its people living in cities. It is estimated that 50% of the population will be urban by 2000 A.D.

**THE CHALLENGE OF INTERDEPENDENCE.** Within a few years most mission programs and property in Nigeria will have been transferred to the Nigerian churches. Increasing numbers of missionaries will work under the direction of Nigerian Christians.

**CHURCH GROWTH CHALLENGE.** The response to the Gospel in Africa today is enormous. We must hold before the churches the urgent call to reach these multitudes themselves as they now keep alive the flames of evangelism in their own societies.

**CHURCH EDUCATION CHALLENGE.** Many new Christians are hardly literate and have only a rudimentary understanding of the Christian faith.

**THE CHALLENGE OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES.** In Liberia, Nigeria, and across Africa hundreds of small independent churches are springing up. These churches, and especially their leaders, need biblical and theological training.

**FINANCIAL CHALLENGE.** It is becoming expensive to do mission work in Africa. Costs have doubled in the last ten years.

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING CHALLENGE.** Church growth requires the number of pastors and evangelists to double in the next five years.

## SECTION FOUR

### Asia

#### *Missionaries*

##### **Guam**

Rev. and Mrs. G. Cooper  
Mr. and Mrs. C. Douma

##### **Japan**

Rev. and Mrs. H. Bruinooge  
Rev. and Mrs. M. De Berdt

Rev. and Mrs. R. Hommes  
Mr. and Mrs. J. Jones  
Rev. and Mrs. G. Koedoot  
Rev. and Mrs. A. Kress  
Rev. and Mrs. D. Kwantes  
Mr. and Mrs. S. Norman  
Rev. and Mrs. W. J. Stob  
Rev. and Mrs. R. D. Sytsma

Rev. and Mrs. R. E. Sytsma  
Rev. and Mrs. M. Vander Bilt

Mr. and Mrs. R. Vander Griend\*

#### Philippines

Mr. and Mrs. V. Apostol  
Rev. and Mrs. G. Bekker  
Rev. and Mrs. H. De Vries  
Rev. and Mrs. A. Helleman  
Mr. and Mrs. A. Munro  
Rev. and Mrs. H. Smidstra  
Rev. and Mrs. D. Stravers  
Rev. and Mrs. J. Tangelder  
Rev. and Mrs. E. Vander Berg

#### Taiwan

Rev. and Mrs. C. Afman  
Rev. and Mrs. P. Tong  
Rev. and Mrs. M. Vander Pol

#### Australia

Rev. and Mrs. J. Houseward

#### Jordan

Rev. and Mrs. P. De Jonge

#### \*Seminary Intern

Asia was convulsed with political and economic changes during 1978, and many of these had a direct effect upon our mission programs in Asia and our plans for the future. Certain changes in emphases have been projected for the future, some of them a result of previous planning, and some of them accelerated by current events. Once associated with the warfare in Vietnam, the Western world has now appeared to be relatively docile compared to the brutal invasion perpetrated by the Vietnamese on their neighbor, Cambodia, and then by the Chinese upon Vietnam.

During the closing days of 1978 the American government recognized three different regimes in Iran. Since Japan is dependent upon Iran for 45% of its energy resources, the effect of the political upheavals in Western Asia were directly felt in Japan and caused increased fluctuation in the value of the dollar which supports our missionary enterprise there. Some recovery of the dollar at year end improved our financial situation in Japan Field, but we had already made decisions on the basis of recommendations of the Japan council which will enable continuation of the chapel building program in Japan through the sale of chapels to the emerging groups and by selling some missionary residence no longer needed because of a reduction in staff level.

No immediate changes occurred in the mission on Taiwan after the startling announcement of official American recognition of the mainland People's Republic of China government on December 15. Most evangelical missions are exercising caution in their projections regarding future missionary enterprise on the mainland. The political changes that have occurred do create some new opportunity because of greater cultural openness between China and the United States. We must recognize, however, that thirty years of minimal interrelationships between the two nations have created a great vacuum of understanding. It is particularly necessary for the Christian churches in the West to recognize that our brothers and sisters in China have gone through a traumatic crisis of several decades of persecution, opposition, and adaptation of style of worship and fellowship under a hostile regime. It is well for the churches in the West to come to an understanding of what our fellow Christians in China have suffered during these decades, and engage in as much research as is possible before specific plans for evangelism are laid. The invitation of the churches in China will be

necessary for the inception of any forms of evangelism, and the personal participation of overseas Chinese must certainly be given priority.

### Japan

Toward the end of 1978 there was a 12 to 15% increase in the value of the dollar as compared to its lowest point in 1978. There was a proportionate increase in the value of the chapels and the residences which the mission has built in Japan. Chapels have always regularly been sold to the emerging congregations and the Japan Mission has now decided to sell some of the missionary residences as well. From a high of fourteen positions in Japan, the mission will gradually reduce to eight or ten positions. The board approved the recommendation of the Field Council to place all funds received on the field from such sales in a capital funds account, and to use these funds for future building projects rather than for operating expenses.

During 1979 several new posts will be opened, using the resources of these property sales. The Japan Mission will thus be functioning on a lower operating budget than it had in previous years, but may be able to open more posts. The increased responsibility of the Reformed Church of Japan in our joint endeavors was evidenced by the dedication of the Sakado Chapel, a new work of evangelism done jointly by the Kamifukuoka congregation and the Japan Mission. The Reformed Church in Japan also provided some of the expenses for the Revs. Ichikawa and Suzuki to come to the United States for study programs. Contributions were made by our mission to the Blind Center of the RCJ congregation in Shizuoka City, funded primarily by that congregation. The contribution of the Japan Mission to Kobe Seminary was at an all time low in 1978, but one missionary teacher will be teaching part time at Kobe Seminary during 1979.

### Philippines

During 1978 all the field positions budgeted in the Philippines were filled, and the staff was augmented by the presence of four CRWRC personnel assigned to assistance projects with the mission. The Geneva Reformed Seminary in Bacolod City changed its name to Christian Reformed Seminary and Bible College, and began with a fine enrollment of over thirty students. Since the capacity of the school is only about 100 students, and four classes of students are expected when full operation is achieved, this was a challenging start. During the year the first pastor ordained to the ministry in the Christian Reformed Church in the Philippines, the Rev. Wilhelm Medes, visited the Christian Reformed Church Synod in Grand Rapids. Later in the year the Rev. Fred Salerio was installed as minister of the Bacolod City congregation, becoming the second ordained man in the denomination. New evangelistic work was begun in the southern part of the island of Luzon, and progress was made towards the development of congregations there and in Manila.

The new positions in the Philippines will be opened in 1979, and new posts will be begun on Luzon and Panay Islands. Within the next year or two new churches on Luzon will hopefully be organized and may possibly also form another classis. The second year class of the Seminary

and Bible College will also begin, the enrollment in which will be some indicator of the reception which this institution has in the Philippines. The church and mission are challenged to explore a better economic base for the pastors, or to develop more lay pastoral care, and perhaps to pursue this through the development of courses in Theological Education by Extension. During 1979 the first interdependence project combining resources of the national church and the Philippine Mission will be undertaken.

### Taiwan

The withdrawal of United States diplomatic recognition of Taiwan left the island in a state of shock because of the suddenness of the announcement, and left the people of Taiwan feeling betrayed, and bewildered by the change in United States policy. Missionaries responded by rising above the political nuances that so deeply affected relationships with people on Taiwan, and continued their work in illustration of the fact that we are members of a kingdom that is not tied to the kingdoms of this world.

Reports from missionaries on Taiwan indicate that the division between the two presbyteries of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, with which we cooperate, may find healing in the foreseeable future. Personal communication between pastors in the presbyteries, and between elders of the churches, bodes well for the future.

There is a challenge to maintain the missionary staff under the uncertain conditions that now prevail. At year end there is much that has yet to be explained as to how visas may be obtained in the future and whether residence permits will be renewed on the same basis as previously. Meanwhile, there is still a great deal of freedom to proclaim the gospel and establish churches in Taiwan, and the need for work with the Christian church on Taiwan is undiminished. The spirit of materialism and the pursuit of physical wealth continues, and while Taiwan has had spectacular success in this area, there is also a growth in materialism that will reduce the nation to being rich in this world's goods while being poor in spiritual and moral values.

### Guam

A significant change during 1978 was accomplished under the leadership of the Rev. George Cooper when the emphasis in the Hospitality House was changed from being a ministry to servicemen to a direction of reaching Micronesian students who live on Guam while attending the University of Guam. To assist in this work, the mission has employed the Rev. Minoru Louis, a native of Truk, to work with the students in the Trukese and Ponapean languages with which he is familiar. Meanwhile, the increase of the employment of Guamanians and islanders in schools and industry on Guam has significantly reduced the number of United States mainland people who frequent the church.

The mission continues to assess the use of the building that is loaned on Marine Drive, and which has a continual parking problem, and also examines the use of this building by the bookstore, which needs to increase its selling space and storage space. The mission and the church

together had decided upon a program of relocation, but this has been stalled because of the economic uncertainties on the island. During 1979 a Daily Vacation Bible School program by members of the Faith Church in three of four Micronesian island locations is being planned. The bookstore has another excellent sales record averaging over \$1,000 per working day, mostly in sales of religious books.

### **Bangladesh**

Implementation of the decision to send two men to Bangladesh in assistance to CRWRC workers and encouragement of their mission has been impossible for lack of a team to go there. Recruitment continues, and the urgency of the challenge was also evident during the year. Requests for service of personnel by the United Bible Society and Portable Recording Ministries of Holland, Michigan, has been noted by the Board. Meanwhile the CRWRC personnel on the field have cordially continued their invitation and encourage CRWM participation with them in their work.

### **Ministers on Loan**

The request for three ministers by the churches in Australia began with a good response, and by mid-year the Rev. and Mrs. John Houseward had begun their service in the Toowoomba congregation in the Brisbane area of Australia. A second minister on loan has been requested for a one year period by the Reformed Theological College in Geelong, and during 1979 it is anticipated that this position will be filled by ministers on loan from Calvin Seminary to RTC. Dr. Marten Woudstra will fill the position of Old Testament at Geelong during the first part of 1979. It is hoped that the third position can be filled in 1980.

The decision of synod to send a minister on loan to the Amman International Church in Jordan was implemented by World Missions as synod instructed. Applications were solicited after synod met in 1978, and a nomination was sent to Jordan at the end of 1978. A call was issued in January to the Rev. and Mrs. Philip De Jonge of Holland, Michigan. They accepted the call in February, prepared to leave in March, and began their ministry in Amman International Church in April, 1979.

Recommendation is being made to synod that two men be loaned to the Sepik Christian Academies Board for religious instruction of leaders in tribal areas in the Ambunti area of the Sepik River Valley in Papua New Guinea. The Ambunti Akademi has been conducted by Christian Reformed Church members for several years. Volunteers are available for this work, and budgetary provision has been made within the 1979 Asia budget and quota request.

## *SECTION FIVE*

### **Latin America**

#### **Missionaries:**

#### **Argentina**

Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Brinks  
Miss Cecelia Drenth

Mr. and Mrs. Raul Gimenez  
Rev. and Mrs. John Hutt  
Rev. and Mrs. Jack Huttinga  
Miss Eunice Kimm\*  
Mr. John Medendorp\*

	Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Rooy Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Stob Rev. and Mrs. Louis Wagenveld	<b>Mexico</b> Mr. Ed Aulie* Miss Sandra Cooper* Mr. and Mrs. John De Young Miss Winabelle Gritter Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kroeze Mr. and Mrs. Abe Marcus Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Nyenhuis Dr. and Mrs. Derk Oostendorp Rev. and Mrs. Larry Roberts Mr. and Mrs. Jack Roeda Rev. and Mrs. Robert Ruis Mr. and Mrs. James Visser* Dr. and Mrs. Hans Weerstra
<b>Brazil</b>	Rev. and Mrs. Carl Bosma Rev. and Mrs. Willem Dirksen Rev. and Mrs. Charles Uken	
<b>Central America</b>	Dr. and Mrs. Paul Bergsma Rev. and Mrs. James Dekker Rev. and Mrs. Wayne De Young Rev. and Mrs. Bernard Dokter Miss Joan Kamphouse* Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Klaasen Rev. and Mrs. Jose Martinez Rev. and Mrs. William Renkema Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Rumph Mr. and Mrs. Gary Schipper Mr. and Mrs. Gary Teja Rev. and Mrs. John Van Der Borgh Mr. Dan Vugteveen* Mr. and Mrs. John Wind	<b>Puerto Rico</b> Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker Rev. and Mrs. Thomas De Vries Rev. and Mrs. Arie Leder Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Sprik
		*volunteers

Christian Reformed missionaries are working today in eight countries in Latin America. During 1978 work began in Guatemala with the posting of the Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Rumph to the Mariano Galvez University in Guatemala City, where the Rev. Mr. Rumph is engaged in Theological Education. The Rev. and Mrs. Tom Klaasen and Mr. and Mrs. Gary Schipper became the first Christian Reformed Church personnel to be posted to El Salvador in the initiation of a new missionary enterprise in that country. Thus CRWM now operates in four of the six countries in Central America and our budgeted positions on that field increased during 1978 from five to twelve.

Contact is also carried on in a limited manner with the twelve Christian Reformed Churches in Cuba. Somewhat sporadic contacts are carried on with these churches as this proves possible and these courageous fellow Christians continue to plead with us to be remembered in our prayers. Many heartwarming and heartrending accounts could be provided concerning the life and witness of these brothers and sisters in Christ.

Throughout all the Latin America fields the cry for national leadership is increasingly heard. Particularly from Argentina, Baja (Mexico), Brazil and Puerto Rico our missionaries voice particular concern regarding the need for national leaders to whom the transfer of responsibility and authority can be effected. Programs for the training of pastors are underway on most of our fields and pastors from several denominations have been trained in these facilities. Yet many times pastors leave congregations to go into other employment or to move to other denominations. On several fields, therefore, the impetus has come to consider training programs with a more modest level of sophistication for the preparation of effective lay leadership.

The conducting of mission in the face of political ferment and economic oppression continues to challenge our Latin America missionaries. Argentina and Nicaragua were the focal points for the ferment

during 1978. The Theological Fraternity in Argentina, which is closely related to the ministry of several of our missionaries, continues to call for Christian social involvement while other missionaries express strong opinions against being diverted from the central issue of spiritual degradation into endless social concerns. The tension has been creative on almost all fronts and has driven our missionaries to the Bible to seek for answers to perplexing questions of direction and stance as they seek to be models for the emerging churches.

With the departure of Dr. Roger Greenway from the position of Latin America Secretary, the administration of the farflung Latin America Fields has been shorthanded. The Latin America missionaries join in the hope that synod will receive wisdom in the selection of a new Latin America Secretary.

In Argentina runaway inflation played havoc with the economy of the people. This economy largely based on agriculture is becoming increasingly industrialized and urban blight scars many of the larger cities. Evangelical Christians are estimated to comprise only 3.5% of the population, and it is within this small segment that the Iglesia Reformada of Argentina finds itself. The church planting vision of the Argentina Field Council is complicated by the request to post missionaries into established congregations of the denomination in the face of severe shortages of ministers. CRWM currently has fifteen missionaries plus several volunteers in Argentina. The newest venture focuses on youth. Youth groups are now being formed and rejuvenated in all the churches and mission centers. The missionaries and national church leaders are now convinced that this effort is the key to the provision of strengthened and committed church leaders in the future.

It is said that Brazil is like a new star being born in the constellation of the nations. With the gross national product that ranks eighth in the western world, Brazil plays an increasing role in world affairs. Roman Catholics constitute 83% of the population but very few are reckoned to be practicing Roman Catholics. Charismatic movements continue to grow in both the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. Indeed, two-thirds of all South American Protestants are in Brazil. Church growth among the evangelicals is continuing at a high rate even though an ungodly spiritism enthralles 25% of the total population. (It has even been called the national religion.) CRWM presently has only three missionary families in Brazil. Visas have been impossible to obtain, and our prayer is that in 1979 there may be a new openness to missionary presence in this land of tremendous potential.

CRWM missionaries currently operate in four of the six Central American nations. Honduras and Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala are small, yet beautiful countries where a marvelous openness to the Word of God is evident. CRWM strategy for Central America calls for mission work in three stages with total withdrawal of missionary personnel planned for December 31, 1999. As the Lord blesses this strategy there will be nationally organized churches in all the Central American countries at that time, able themselves to implement the task of evangelism and education. During 1978 the unrest in Nicaragua daily exercised both the missionary family and the home churches. Accounts of unspeakable ter-

rorism and compassionate Christian witness were detailed in those days. Indeed, it cannot be said that the issue is resolved, but the church continues to grow in the context of unrest and turmoil. Church planting, evangelism, radio ministry follow-up, theological education, leadership training and relief ministry in conjunction with CRWRC continue to challenge our missionaries.

Mexico is one of the fastest growing nations in the world. Its present level of sixty-seven million people is expected to grow to 100 million before the close of the century. In addition to population growth, Mexico's potential as an oil producing nation has significant consequences for its future. It is estimated that the evangelical Christians comprise perhaps only 2% of this vast multitude, particularly in the enormous capital city of Mexico City which is now reported to be the largest city in the world. The Independence Presbyterian Church of Mexico, with whom our missionaries are associated, demonstrate significant growth and maturity during 1978. The organization of a new presbytery in January 1979 was another significant milestone. The Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City continues to be a center of theological education while training centers also exist in Oaxaca and Baja. Church and mission continue to be concerned over the distance and complexity of the Baja ministries and their relationship to the work in Central Mexico. The national church is currently engaged with the mission in a study of the total deployment of resources and personnel in terms of the ministry in the entire nation.

The missionary program in Puerto Rico revolves around church planting and nurture, the ministry of the Reformed Evangelical Seminary, radio broadcasting follow up, liason with Christian Reformed Churches in the Dominican Republic, and evangelistic programs. Five missionary families represent the Christian Reformed Church on this island and occasionally North American volunteers help in the construction of new chapels and in the distribution of literature. The combined efforts of the Back to God Hour and the preaching-teaching visits of our Puerto Rico missionaries continue to nourish the two Christian Reformed churches which have sprung up in the Dominican Republic.

Challenges for the Latin America work in 1979 include the following:

- An evangelistic breakthrough in conjunction with the Reformed Church of Argentina.
- A change in the visa policy in Brazil.
- Wisdom in the selection of new centers for evangelism and posting in Central America.
- Continued strengthening for the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico.
- Growth among the newly emerging churches of Puerto Rico.
- Freedom for Christians in Cuba.

#### SECTION SIX

#### Spanish Literature Committee

The Spanish Literature Committee has enjoyed another active year of publishing books and materials for use in Spanish-speaking churches and

missions in North America and overseas. Thirteen new titles were published last year, including reprint editions of John Calvin's commentaries on *Romans* and *Hebrews*.

One of the happiest items to report is the increase in sale and distribution. Because sales have increased, the committee has had to reprint several books, and more reprints are scheduled for this year. As sales increase, we know that the influence of Reformed literature is increasing, and that encourages us to push forward with the publication of more materials which will help churches grow and mature along Reformed lines.

Membership on the committee this year has consisted of the Rev. Juan Boonstra, representing The Back to God Hour; the Rev. Peter Borgdorff, the Board of Home Missions; Dr. Roger Greenway, representing until recently the Board of World Missions and now serving as member-at-large; Prof. William Hendricks, the Board of Publications; and Mr. Herman Baker, member-at-large. The Rev. Jerry Pott serves the committee as Editorial Supervisor and Miss Debra Vugteveen as Production Supervisor. Dr. Greenway will continue to serve as General Coordinator until a new Latin America Secretary has been appointed. Mr. Donald Zwier, Treasurer, and Mr. James Tamminga, bookkeeper, of the World Missions office, are in charge of the financial side of the committee's operation.

The importance of Spanish Christian literature continues to grow. Spanish is the second language in North America, and it is spoken in twenty-two countries abroad. While on the one hand there is a great deal of religious literature available in Spanish, very little of it is of the Reformed nature, and the vast majority of books are Pentecostal and dispensational in nature. For that reason, the Spanish Literature Committee plays a unique role among the publishers of Spanish literature, in that it chooses Reformed titles to translate and publish and it makes these books available to Reformed and Presbyterian churches at prices which the ordinary people can afford.

Almost all the distribution of Spanish Literature Committee books is done through The Evangelical Literature League (TELL), whose office and warehouse are in Grand Rapids. Most of the printing is done at our denominational printing plant, and the committee acknowledges with appreciation the work done by Mr. Peter Meeuwssen and his staff in Publications.

Because Baptists, Pentecostal, and dispensationalist-type bookstores are sometimes unwilling to carry Reformed titles, and, if they do carry them, they tend to put Reformed books on the back shelves, the Spanish Literature Committee, together with The Evangelical Literature League, has become increasingly involved in opening new markets of distribution. In Chile, for example, the Presbyterian churches are growing in number and in concern for distinctively Reformed literature. Most of the committee's translators live and work in Chile, and several are faculty members at the John Calvin Seminary (Presbyterian) of Chile. The Chilean brethren are planning to launch an extensive new distribution program throughout the cities where they are working, and the committee, along with The Evangelical Literature League, is assisting them in

this effort.

In this connection, the committee wishes to acknowledge with appreciation the work done by Mr. Jack Roeda, CRWM missionary to Latin America, whose services have been loaned to the Spanish Literature Committee and to The Evangelical Literature League on more than one occasion to make trips to various Latin American countries to promote sales and open new outlets for Reformed literature.

By its very nature, a publication program has to have long-range goals and involve itself in projects which carry over from one year to the next. Accordingly, the Spanish Literature Committee has undertaken the translation and publication of the New Testament Commentaries of Dr. William Hendriksen. Nothing like this series is available in Spanish, and the committee feels that the publication of these commentaries will make a significant and lasting contribution to the knowledge of God's Word in the Spanish-speaking world. Two of these commentaries will be ready by the end of this year, and translators and editors are working on the others which will appear on an average of two per year.

Printing costs keep rising and the committee wants to continue to make its books available at prices which Spanish readers can afford. The committee's overhead costs are kept at a minimum, and no appeals for funds are made outside the annual quota request to synod. In view of this, the committee feels that it needs a synodical quota of one dollar in 1980, which is the same amount granted in 1979. The committee thanks the World Mission Board, the synod, and the churches of the Christian Reformed Church for their support and cooperation, and the privilege of serving Christ's kingdom in this way for another year.

## SECTION SEVEN

### Financial Matters

#### A. *Treasurer's Report*

At the request of the board, our auditors, Arthur Andersen & Co., did not prepare preliminary audited statements, as of December 31, 1978, to include in the agenda. The basis for this decision was that a preliminary report would not include the fourth quarter expenses from the fields which should be incorporated. A full audited report for the year ending December 31, 1978, has been given to the Synodical Interim Finance Committee, requesting that it be presented to synod. The budget for 1978 was approximately five million four hundred thousand dollars, and we are happy to report that this amount was almost attained in receipts during 1978. We had sufficient funds during the year to meet all obligations to our missionaries and for the programs supported and budgeted for by synod.

#### B. *Budget for 1980*

A complete list of budget requests for 1980 will be submitted to the officers of synod and to members of its advisory committee when synod meets. A summary of these requests follows:

1. Basic Operating Budget Expenditures:			
Administration			500,580
Fund Raising			189,000
Personnel Costs:			
Salaries	2,647,355		
Missionary Services	327,650		
Medical Expenses	107,426		
Travel & Freight	293,645		
Housing & Inland Travel	551,550	3,927,626	
Program Costs		1,192,834	
Capital Costs		452,560	
Contingency for Inflation/Devaluation		<u>87,400</u>	
Total Basic Operating Budget Expenditure			6,350,000
Basic Operating Budget Income:			
Quota Receipts at \$56.65 per family			3,300,000
Missionary Support			1,725,000
Gifts & Offerings			1,125,000
Field Receipts			100,000
Miscellaneous Receipts			<u>100,000</u>
Total Basic Operating Budget Income			<u>6,350,000</u>
2. Special Missionary Challenge Budget Expenditures:			
(In order of priority)			
Nigeria	Church Education		30,000
Liberia	TEE/Evangelism		50,500
Dominican Republic	Church Planting		30,000
Mexico	Church Planting		30,000
Nigeria	Evangelism Coordination		30,000
Central America	Church Planting		30,000
Liberia	TEE/Evangelism		50,500
Nigeria	Bible School		30,000
Philippines	Church Planting		25,000
Philippines	Church Planting		<u>25,000</u>
Total Field Expansion Budget Expenditures			<u>331,000</u>
Special Missionary Challenge Budget Income:			
Quota Receipts at \$5.60 per family			<u>331,000</u>
C. Quota Requests for 1980			
1. Basic Operating Budget		\$55.15	
2. Basic Operating Budget—Contingency for inflation/devaluation	1.50		\$56.65
3. Special Missionary Challenge Budget			5.60
4. Continue Australia Program assigned by Synod to CRWM			.10
5. Continue Jordan Program assigned by Synod to CRWM			<u>.35</u>
Total Quota requested for 1980 per family			<u>\$62.70</u>

*D. Request for Special Offerings*

We are requesting approval of an operating budget of \$6,350,000 and a field expansion budget of \$331,000. Total quota income will amount to \$3,631,000. The balance of \$3,050,000 must be raised through missionary support, gifts and offerings, and income derived from field and miscellaneous receipts. To meet this financial need, it is urgently necessary that the Board for CRWM be recommended for one or more special offerings. Therefore, we respectfully request that synod continue CRWM on the list of denominational causes for one or more offerings during 1980.

*E. Quota Request for Spanish Literature Committee*

The Spanish Literature Committee is requesting a quota of \$1.00 per family for 1980, the same as granted for 1979.

## SECTION EIGHT

## Summary of Items Requiring Synodical Action

1. Representation at synod, Section One, B.
2. Election of member-at-large and alternates, Section One, C.
3. Appointment of Latin America Area Secretary, Section One, D.
4. Presentation of missionaries, Section One, E.
5. Delegations from Abroad, Section Two, B.
6. Major World Language Literature Study Committee, Section Two, C.
7. Office of Evangelist, Section Two, D.
8. Expansion, Papua New Guinea, Section Two, F,2.
9. Expansion, Dominican Republic, Section Two, F,3.
10. Financial Matters:
  - a. Budget for 1980, Section Seven, B.
  - b. Request for Basic Quota of \$55.15, Section Seven, C,1.
  - c. Contingency for Inflation and Devaluation, Section Two, E, 2 and Section Seven, C, 2.
  - d. Special Missionary Challenge, Section Two, F,4, and Seven, C,3.
  - e. Australia—Section Two, E,3 and Seven, C,4.
  - f. Jordan—Section Two, E,3 and Seven, C,5.
  - g. Request for Special Offerings, Section Seven, D.
  - h. Quota, Spanish Literature Committee, Section Six and Section Seven, E.

Board for Christian Reformed World Missions  
Eugene Rubingh, Executive Secretary

## REPORT 4

## CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

## I. INTRODUCTION

Isaiah, the prophet, wrestled with the realities of sin. Living in the context of rebellion, he saw the human world as a wasted wilderness, with no reason for hope or promise of fruitfulness. In a world where human life withers as grass and fades as a flower, what can a person cry and what can a preacher preach?

But God revealed himself to the prophet. In a world where flesh withers, God's Word endures forever. In a land of death, the living God is at work. Out of dry ground, a root comes forth with life. God sends One to atone for sin and initiate an eternal kingdom. In Isaiah 61, the Savior is described as One anointed by God to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim freedom to the captives and release for the prisoners. This One will give to God's people a crown of beauty, the oil of gladness and the garment of praise. God's people will be called "oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor." They will be known as a people that the Lord has blessed.

We, who are members of the Christian Reformed Church, are among the people whom the Lord has blessed. As we rejoice in our privileged position, we also assume our responsibilities. We are to bring his Word and extend his kingdom. But, our human situation is such an unpromising one. Hatred, envy, injustice and unrighteousness permeate human relationships. Family circles, business associations, political bodies and social institutions of every sort suffer from the alienating forces of sin. Powers of secularism, materialism and selfishness are as rampant in Canada and the United States as they are in other lands.

The Christian Reformed Church, in obedience to the great commission and out of love for the people of our lands, has established the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions and assigned to it the responsibility of directing the Home Missions activity of the denomination. Home Missions is to give leadership in the task of bringing the Gospel to the people among whom we live and draw these people into fellowship with Christ and his church.

The annual report of Home Missions, which was considered by the board at its meeting is entitled "SEED 1979." The theme text of the report is Isaiah 61:11, "For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the sovereign Lord will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations." Home Missions engages in its work with confidence because the sovereign God is working also in our nations.

The SEED report, which outlines the concerns and needs of Home Missions along with statements of goals and objectives, was prepared by the staff and regional home missionaries. Persons or churches interested in

reading this report are invited to request a copy by writing to the Home Missions office.

The story of Christian Reformed Home Missions activity in the two lands in which God has given us a place is one of many accomplishments, but also disappointments. Thousands of lives have been touched with the Gospel. Many have responded affirmatively, some still are questioning, but there are those who have turned away. Blessings sometimes are provided by God far beyond our expectations. At other times, unexpected difficulties detour our efforts. At all times, there is need for God's help.

It is extremely difficult to report on the extensive work of Home Missions. This report to synod is largely administrative. With its lists and names, its brief explanations and policy statements, this report provides a broad outline and a framework within which synod may make its decisions. A complete report of denominational home mission activity would include reports by over two hundred home missionaries and reports on the evangelism program in every Christian Reformed Church. In a cooperative effort with *The Banner*, a special issue entitled "October One," which gave a word and picture report of the variety of Home Missions activity, was sent to everyone on the denominational mailing list. Hopefully, this gave many people an overview of the work.

Three things which require the attention of synod take up a considerable amount of space in this report. They are: 1) a report on Evangelism Principles and Strategy, 2) a revision of the Grant-In-Aid Policy, 3) a revision of the Home Missions Order. The entire report is presented in the hope that it will be helpful to the church. The board is grateful for the privilege of serving our denomination and our God.

## II. THE BOARD

The board, which consists of a delegate from each of the thirty-eight classes plus eleven board members-at-large, met February 20-22, 1979. In addition, the executive committee met eight times during the year.

### A. *Officers of the Board*

Mr. Marvin Van Dellen, president  
Rev. Edward Cooke, vice-president  
Rev. John G. Van Ryn, executive secretary  
Rev. Roger G. Timmerman, assistant secretary  
Mr. Gerard J. Borst, treasurer  
Mr. Ed Berends, assistant treasurer

### B. *Subcommittees of the Executive Committee*

Administration Committee: Mr. M. Van Dellen, Rev. E. Cooke, Mr. E. Berends, Rev. R. Timmerman.  
Evangelism Committee: Rev. E. Cooke, Rev. W. Vanden Bosch, Rev. P. Kranenburg, Mr. H. Nieman, Rev. A. Machiela.  
Finance Committee: Mr. E. Berends, Mr. J. Daverman, Rev. J. Holleman, Mr. H. Soper, Mr. M. Van Dellen.  
Fields Committee #1 (Indian): Rev. G. Postema, Rev. B. Mulder, Rev. M. Groenendyk, Miss G. Vander Ark.  
Fields Committee #2: Rev. W. Leys, Rev. G. Hutt, Rev. R. Timmerman, Mr. B. Sharpe, Rev. W. Swets, Mr. G. Vander Bie.  
Personnel Committee: The Staff.

### III. OFFICE PERSONNEL

#### A. Staff

Executive Secretary  
 Minister of Evangelism  
 Treasurer  
 Fields Secretary  
 Personnel Secretary  
 Associate Minister of Evangelism

Rev. John G. Van Ryn  
 Rev. Wesley Smedes  
 Mr. Gerard J. Borst  
 Rev. Peter Borgdorff  
 Rev. Duane E. VanderBrugg  
 Rev. Henry M. De Rooy

#### B. Support Personnel

Church Relations Secretary  
 Office Manager  
 Graphic Arts

Mr. Stanley Koning  
 Mr. Howard Meyers  
 Mr. Joe Vriend

#### C. Developments

The year 1978 was an unusual year in the office. All personnel including the secretaries remained the same. Though the board had approved additional persons in communications and stewardship, no one with the necessary qualifications was found in fill either of these positions. Mr. Stanley Koning, who began as Church Relations Secretary in August 1969, was reappointed for another term of four years. The board is now engaged in a search for a person to serve in the office of Minister of Evangelism to take the place of the Rev. Wesley Smedes, who will be retiring from that office. The Administration Committee will be happy to receive suggestions regarding possible candidates. The board expects to present a recommendation to the Synod of 1980.

#### D. Reappointment of Mr. Gerard J. Borst

1. Background: Gerard Borst has served the Board of Home Missions since May, 1965. The board thankfully notes Mr. Borst's many years of competent service and is happy to recommend him for another term.
2. Recommendation: The board recommends that synod reappoint Gerard J. Borst to the position of Treasurer of Home Missions for another four year term.

### IV. FIELDS

#### A. General Information

The term "field" is used to refer to the ministry or mission activity in a particular place which is administered by the Board of Home Missions. There are two kinds of fields. First, denominational fields which means that the denomination, through the board as its agent, is the employer of the missionary and has the primary responsibility for supervising the work. Second, there are the Grant-In-Aid fields, so-called when a church, group of churches or a classis is the employer of the missionary and has the primary responsibility for supervising the work, while receiving assistance from the board through the Grant-In-Aid program.

Among both kinds of fields, there are basically two kinds of ministries. First, church planting: these are ministries initiated and developed in strategic places where there is a need for a Christian Reformed Church, there is opportunity to do evangelism, and there is potential for organizing believers into new congregations. Second, specialized ministries:

among these there are ministries that have been initiated and developed when there has been strategic opportunity to address the needs of students, military personnel, seafarers or other groups. The goal of such mission activity is the extension of the church of Jesus Christ, although the organization of a new Christian Reformed congregation is not anticipated.

In approximately 25 years, the ministries under the auspices of Home Missions have expanded from 11 (1950) to 140 (1978). The scope of ministry has also been expanded. Activity now extends to city, suburb, reservations, campuses, military bases and seaports and includes ministries to several minority groups. Presently, there are 100 denominational fields and 35 Grant-In-Aid fields.

**B. Regional Home Missionaries**

Immediate supervision and consultation is provided by the Regional Home Missionaries through the coordination of the Field Secretary. The Regional Home Missionaries are:

- Canada ..... Rev. John Van Til of London, ON
- Eastern U.S. .... Rev. Ron Peterson of Hawthorne, NJ
- Mid-East U.S. .... Rev. Paul Vermaire of Kalamazoo, MI
- Rocky Mt. .... Rev. Dirk Aardsma of Denver, CO
- Western U.S. .... Rev. John Rozeboom of Newark, CA
- Southwest (Indian Field) ..... Rev. Earl Dykema of Gallup, NM

**C. Present Fields and Personnel**

**INDIAN MINISTRIES**

*Reservation Churches*

- Church Rock, NM—(Vacant)
- Crownpoint, NM—Rev. G. Stuit, Mr. H. Begay, Mr. A. Becenti.
- Farmington, NM—Rev. S. Yazzie, Mr. G. Verhulst.
- Ft. Wingate, NM—Rev. G. Haagsma.
- Gallup, NM—Rev. A. Mulder, Miss E. Vos.
- Naschitti, NM—Mr. C. Brummel, Mr. A. Henry.
- Navajo, NM—(Vacant)
- Red Rock, AZ—Mr. B. Garnanez.
- Sanostee, NM—Mr. F. Curley.
- Shiprock, NM—Rev. A. Koolhaas, Mr. B. Benally, Mrs. E. Benally.
- Teec Nos Pos, AZ—Rev. P. Redhouse, Mr. J. Talley.
- Toadlena, NM—Mr. G. Klumpenhouwer, Mr. F. Frank
- Tohatchi, NM—Rev. E. Henry, Mr. H. Redhouse.
- Tohlakai, NM—Mr. M. Harberts.
- Window Rock, AZ—Mr. C. Grey
- Zuni, NM—Rev. R. Posthuma, Miss W. Van Klompenberg.

*Specialized Ministries (On-Reservation)*

- Crownpoint, NM—Miss M. Feyen, Miss K. Stroven.
- Rehoboth, NM; Christian Education Office—Mr. T. Weeda, Miss H. Nyhof.
- Rehoboth, NM; Christian School:
  - Houseparents—Mr. & Mrs. M. Apol, Miss J. Ensink, Mr. & Mrs. R. Kamps, Mr. & Mrs. S. Gonzales, Mr. & Mrs. J. Lee, Mr. & Mrs. F. Hale.
  - Dining & Kitchen Staff—Mr. W. Hoekstra, Miss N. DeKleine, Mrs. K. Savino.
  - Educational Staff—Mr. K. Kuipers, Mr. R. Polinder, Mrs. A. Boyd, Mr. J. De Korne, Mr. K. Faber, Miss J. Gough, Mr. D. Hart, Mr. M. De Young, Mr. C. Kloosterman, Mrs. M. Koning, Miss L. Ottens, Mr. S. Pikaart, Miss R. Posthuma, Mr. D. Van Andel, Miss R. Vander Woude, Mr. J. Van't Land, Mr. E. Yazzie, Miss L. Helland.
  - Custodian/Maintenance Supervisor—Mr. R. Kerr
  - Rehoboth, NM; Industrial Staff—Mr. E. Oppenhuizen, Mr. T. Tibboel, Mr. J.

Den Bleyker, Mr. A. Bosscher, Mr. S. Siebersma, Mrs. V. Henry.  
 Zuni, NM; Christian School—Mr. A. De Jong, Mrs. B. Berghuis, Mr. G. Bruxvoort,  
 Miss J. Vander Fleide, Mr. S. Vander Molen, Mrs. L. De Jong.

### *Churches Off-Reservation*

Albuquerque, NM—Rev. A. Veltkamp.  
 Chicago, IL—Mr. H. Bielema, Mrs. M. Strouse.  
 Salt Lake City, UT—Mr. N. Jonkman.  
 San Francisco, CA, Friendship House—Rev. D. Klompeen.

### *Specialized Ministries (Off-Reservation)*

Phoenix, AZ, Cook Christian Training School—Rev. H. DeJong.  
 Regina, SK—Rev. H. Kuperus.  
 San Francisco, CA, Friendship House—Mr. J. Richards, Mr. N. Baker.

## **CITY & SUBURBAN**

### *Church Development*

Anaheim, CA (Spanish)—Rev. C. Nyenhuis.  
 Appleton, WI (GIA)—(Vacant)  
 Atlanta, GA—Rev. F. MacLeod.  
 Bakersfield, CA—Rev. N. Vanderzee.  
 Boise, ID—Rev. D. Lagerwey.  
 Brigham City, UT—Rev. E. Boer, Mr. M. Anderson.  
 Burke, VA—Rev. W. Ribbens.  
 Calgary (East), AB (GIA)—Rev. K. Verhulst.  
 Cape Coral, FL (GIA)—Rev. R. Pontier.  
 Cedar Rapids, IA—Rev. K. VanDeGriend.  
 Champaign, IL—Rev. A. Menninga.  
 Chicago, IL  
   Hyde Park (Chinese)—Rev. P. Han.  
   Lawndale (GIA)—Ms. B. Clayton.  
   Pullman (GIA)—Rev. H. Botts.  
   Roseland (GIA)—Rev. A. VanZanten.  
 Cochrane, ON—(Vacant)  
 Colorado Springs, CO (GIA)—Mr. B. Foster.  
 Columbia, MO—Rev. R. Steen.  
 Corvallis, OR—Rev. H. Spaan.  
 Dallas, TX (GIA)—Rev. D. Zandstra.  
 Davenport, IA—Rev. S. VanderJagt.  
 Dayton, OH—Rev. J. Hollebeek.  
 Denver, CO, Sun Valley (GIA)—Rev. L. Roossien.  
 Detroit, MI, Nardin Park Community—Rev. G. Philbert.  
 East Grand Forks, MN—Rev. L. Slings.  
 East Islip, NY—Rev. A. Likkel, Rev. P. Kelder.  
 El Paso, TX—Rev. J. Berends.  
 Enumclaw, WA (GIA)—Rev. W. Ackerman.  
 Fairfield, CA—Rev. G. Hofland.  
 Flagstaff, AZ—(Vacant)  
 Flanders Valley, NJ—Rev. J. VanderArk.  
 Ft. McMurray, AB—Rev. W. Smit.  
 Ft. Wayne, IN—Rev. E. Holkeboer.  
 Fredericton, NB—Rev. J. Klumpenhouwer.  
 Fresno, CA—Rev. M. Reitsma.  
 Gaylord, MI (GIA)—Rev. J. VandenHoek.  
 Honolulu, HI—Rev. R. Palsrok.  
 Houston, TX—(Vacant)  
 Indian Harbour Beach, FL—Rev. J. G. Aupperlee.  
 Iowa City, IA—Rev. L. Vander Zee.  
 Jacksonville, FL—Rev. H. Karsten.  
 Kalamazoo, MI, Lexington Green (GIA)—Rev. M. Buwalda.  
 Kamloops, B. C.—Rev. D. Tigchelaar.  
 LaCrosse, WI—Rev. J. Osterhouse.  
 Los Angeles, CA  
   Chinatown (Vietnamese)—Rev. J. Tong.

Crenshaw—Rev. S. Jung  
 First—Rev. B. Niemeyer, Mr. R. Williams.  
 Mason City, IA—Rev. M. DeYoung.  
 Meadowvale, ON—Rev. H. Lunshof.  
 Miami, FL, Good Samaritan (Spanish)—Rev. F. Diemer, Rev. R. Borrego.  
 New Glasgow, NS—Rev. A. Dreise.  
 Norfolk, VA—Rev. J. Rickers.  
 Ogden, UT—Rev. A. W. Heersink, Mr. T. Koeman.  
 Olympia, WA—Rev. S. Workman.  
 Paterson, NJ  
     Madison Ave. (GIA)—Miss J. Gill.  
     Northside (GIA)—Mr. G. Onugha.  
 Richfield Springs, NY (GIA)—Rev. T. Toeset.  
 Riverdrive Park, ON (GIA)—Mr. F. DeVries.  
 Riverside, CA—Rev. L. Van Essen, Mr. E. Vis.  
 Sacramento, CA (GIA)—Mrs. J. Nishizaki.  
 St. Cloud, MN (GIA)—Rev. P. Kortenhoven.  
 St. Louis, MO—Rev. W. Stroo.  
 Salt Lake City, UT, Immanuel—Rev. A. Kuiper.  
 San Francisco, CA, Golden Gate, Immanuel—Rev. P. Yang.  
 South Windsor, CT—Rev. B. Van Antwerpen.  
 Syracuse, NY—Rev. W. DeVries.  
 Terre Haute, IN—Rev. P. Brink.  
 Toronto, ON, Lighthouse (GIA)—Rev. J. Hielkema.  
 Tri-Cities, WA—Rev. H. Bouma.  
 Tucson, AZ—Rev. J. Hofman, Jr.  
 Vanastra, ON—(Vacant)  
 Vancouver, BC (Chinese)—(Vacant)  
 Visalia, CA (GIA)—Mr. V. Schaap.  
 Washington, PA—(Vacant)  
 Windsor, ON—Rev. P. Hogeterp.  
 Winnipeg, MB, Hope Centre (GIA)—Rev. D. Habermehl.  
 Winter Haven, FL (GIA)—Rev. J. Van Ens.  
 Yakima, WA, Summitview—Rev. F. Rietema.

## SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

### *Campus*

Ames, IA (GIA)—Rev. F. Walhof.  
 Bellingham, WA (GIA)—Rev. D. Bosscher.  
 Boulder, CO—Rev. S. Verheul.  
 Columbus, OH—Rev. E. Lewis.  
 Detroit, MI—Rev. J. Natelborg.  
 Edmonton, AB (GIA)—Rev. T. Oosterhuis.  
 Guelph, ON—Rev. E. DenHaan.  
 Hamilton, ON (GIA)—Rev. E. Gritter.  
 Iowa City, IA—Rev. J. Chen.  
 Kingston, ON—Rev. W. Dykstra.  
 Lafayette, IN—Rev. T. Van't Land.  
 London, ON—Rev. J. Westerhof.  
 Los Angeles, CA—Rev. H. DeYoung.  
 Madison, WI—Rev. K. Bulthuis.  
 Minneapolis, MN—(Vacant)  
 Mt. Pleasant, MI (GIA)—Rev. K. Tanis.  
 Paterson, NJ—Rev. K. VanderWall.  
 Tempe, AZ—Rev. M. Nieboer.  
 Toronto, ON—Rev. J. Veenstra.  
 Vermillion, SD (GIA)—Rev. M. Davies.  
 Waterloo, ON—Dr. R. Kooistra.

### *Seaway*

Montreal, PQ (GIA)—Rev. H. Uittenbosch.  
 Vancouver, BC (GIA)—Rev. J. Dresselhuys.

*Servicemen's Homes*

Honolulu, HI—Mr. & Mrs. J. Witte.  
 Norfolk, VA—Mr. & Mrs. B. Frens.  
 San Diego, CA—Mr. & Mrs. D. Rottenberg.

*Unclassified*

Middlesboro, KY, Appalachi—Rev. T. Limburg.  
 Denver, CO, Ecumenical Concern (GIA)—Rev. J. Holbrook.  
 Salt Lake City, UT, Bible Academy—Mr. J. Sloterbeek.  
 Toronto, ON, Y.E.S. (GIA)—(Vacant)

*D. Grant-In-Aid Fields*

The board recommends that synod approve the following Grants-In-Aid for the year July 1, 1979 to June 30, 1980.

## NEW:

Akron, OH—campus.....	\$ 5,000
Big Rapids, MI—campus.....	\$ 9,800
Burbank, IL (1).....	\$ 8,000
Helena, MT.....	\$10,000
Los Angeles, CA/Korean.....	\$ 6,000
Oakdale, CA (2).....	\$ 9,000
Roseville, MI.....	\$10,000

## RENEWALS:

Ames, IA—campus.....	\$ 3,250
Appleton, WI.....	\$10,000
Bellingham, WA—campus.....	\$ 5,000
Calgary, AB.....	\$10,000
Cape Coral, FL.....	\$ 6,000
Chicago, IL	
—Lawndale.....	\$ 9,000
—Pullman.....	\$12,500
—Roseland.....	\$12,000
Colorado Springs, CO (3).....	\$ 6,500
Dallas, TX.....	\$ 8,500
Denver, CO	
—EC.....	\$ 3,500
	(final grant)
—Indian.....	\$10,600
—Sun Valley.....	\$ 7,500
Edmonton, AB—campus.....	\$ 8,000
Enumclaw, WA.....	\$ 7,500
Gaylord, MI.....	\$ 7,000
Hamilton, ON.....	\$ 4,500
Kalamazoo, MI—Lexington Green.....	\$ 2,500
Lake City, MI.....	\$ 4,000
Montreal—seaway.....	\$ 4,500
Mt. Pleasant, MI—campus.....	\$ 5,000
Orange Cty., CA/Korean.....	\$ 6,000
Paterson, NJ	
—Madison Ave., Position #1.....	\$ 9,920
—Madison Ave., Position #2.....	\$ 7,000
—Northside.....	\$14,400
Richfield Springs, NY.....	\$ 9,500
Riverdrive Park, ON.....	\$ 1,000
Sacramento, CA.....	\$ 5,000
St. Cloud, MN (4).....	\$ 7,000
Salem, OR.....	\$ 4,000
Tacoma, WA (5).....	\$ 8,000
Toronto, ON	
—Lighthouse.....	\$ 9,500
—Rehoboth.....	\$ 4,400
—Y.E.S.....	\$ 500
	(final grant)

Vanastra, ON (6).....	\$ 2,400
Vancouver, BC—seaway.....	\$ 4,500
Vermillion, SD—campus.....	\$ 4,000
Winnipeg, MB.....	\$ 5,400
Winter Haven, FL.....	\$ 9,500

- NOTE 1: 3-year decreasing phase-out.  
 2: 4-year phase-out.  
 3: \$6,500 subject to use of BHM salary scale.  
 4: This figure to be decreased \$1,000 a year beginning with 1980.  
 5: Subject to 5-year phase-out.  
 6: Subject to favorable action by classis.

*E. 1978 in Review*

1. New churches

Work was started in Boise, Idaho; Calgary, Alberta and Enumclaw, Washington. Attempts were made to find missionary personnel for new church development in Vancouver, British Columbia and Houston, Texas. Work will soon begin in Fairfield, California. Hopefully, missionary pastors will soon be working at each of these places, and God will, through them, establish new Christian Reformed churches.

2. Graduated Fields

When a field has passed through the various steps of organizational development, of which there are four, they are referred to as "graduating." At that point, the church is no longer under the administration of Home Missions, nor is it financially dependent upon it. It usually continues to receive denominational support through the Fund for Needy Churches Committee.

Anchorage, Alaska; Greeley, Colorado; Rehoboth, New Mexico; Wappingers Falls, New York; and Webster, New York graduated during 1978. This organizational development is being actively discussed with a number of additional churches, which have been under the sponsorship of Home Missions for a number of years.

3. Statistical Information

In reviewing the annual reports of all fields (including fields supported for the Grant-In-Aid) the following blessings are revealed as gifts from God in 1978:

	Fields		Total
	Denominational	Grant-in-Aid	
Number of families in HM churches	1415	410	1825
Number of Non-Member Families Attending	417	70	487
Average Morning Attendance	5473	1480	6953
Average Evening Attendance	2324	759	3083
Sunday School and/or Church School Enrollment	3427	797	4224
Adult Baptisms	72	11	83
Professions of Faith	162	34	196
Reaffirmations of Faith	135	9	144
Infant Baptisms	155	40	195

Note: The above statistics do not include attendance at 22 campus ministries supported by denominational funds. It is estimated that another 2,000 persons are involved in these ministries.

These statistics reveal a slight increase in the adult baptism and infant baptism categories during the year 1978. However, both professions of faith and reaffirmations of faith were up significantly from 1977. The

other statistics remained relatively the same with the exception of Sunday School enrollment which increased from approximately 3500 to just over 4200. The overall results for 1978 indicate further evidence of the Lord's blessing and the Holy Spirit's leading in Home Missions' ministries throughout Canada and the United States.

#### F. *Developments for 1979*

##### 1. Graduation of Fields

Continuing conversation and already completed planning indicates that perhaps five more churches will graduate during 1979 and conversation will continue with at least fourteen additional churches in the hope that they will be able to graduate by December 31, 1980. Such progress reflects the vitality of the present Home Missions churches and will make resources available with which to reach into new cities.

##### 2. New Fields

In addition to recommending several new Grant-In-Aid requests which are indicated in Section IV, D, of this report, the board at its February 1979 meeting decided to begin work in Loveland, Colorado; Virginia Beach, Virginia; Nanaimo, British Columbia; Chicago, Illinois (in the Mexican-American community).

Loveland, Colorado is a beautiful city located at the gateway of the big Thompson Canyon, twelve miles south of Ft. Collins. Population is approximately 32,000 and is growing at the rate of 12½ percent per year. There are a few Christian Reformed families living there now and more are expected to be moving in during the next few years. There appears to be a good opportunity to reach out in an evangelistic ministry.

Virginia Beach, Virginia, is located on the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean directly east and south of Norfolk. The city is growing at the rate of 1,000 per month with population of over 1,000,000 anticipated by the year 2000. There is a high percentage of unchurched people and opportunity for a Christian Reformed mission outreach.

Nanaimo, British Columbia, is located on the Island of Vancouver. Its general economic picture, religious makeup and fast growing population have convinced the classis that there is a need for a Christian Reformed church in this community.

The Spanish-American people are the fastest growing minority in the United States. It is estimated that Hispanics may outnumber Blacks within ten years. The Christian Reformed Church is carrying on mission work in various Latin American countries through World Missions and has in limited ways addressed Cubans and other Spanish-speaking people in the United States. There is need now to consider what additional responsibilities our denomination has toward this needy segment of the population. In response to a request from Classis Chicago North, Home Missions is planning to begin a church planting ministry in the Mexican-American community in the Pilsen-Lawndale area of Chicago. In response to a request from Classis Holland, the board is also investigating the possibilities of a ministry among Mexican Americans in southern Texas.

##### 3. French Canada

During 1978, Classis Eastern Canada and Home Missions engaged in

an investigation of the need for Reformed witness among the French people of Quebec. This effort drew together a number of people of various ecclesiastical connections who then formed the Alliance de la Reforme Evangelique. At present, it appears that the best way to show interest in and concern for the progress of the Gospel in the Francophone community of Canada is to give support and encouragement to this Alliance. Classis Eastern Canada has requested the Back to God Hour, Calvin Seminary and Home Missions to give various kinds of assistance to the Alliance. Home Missions is ready to grant the assistance requested by classis which involves a grant of \$12,000 and the appointment of a liaison person, providing that synod expresses itself affirmatively.

### *G. Revision of Grant-In-Aid Policy*

1. Background: The present grant-in-aid policy has been in use for several years. Excellent ministries have been enabled through this denominational program. Having worked with the policy for some time, the board now feels that some revisions are necessary. One change being recommended is a change of procedure which will allow the board to approve the grants without bringing them to synod for action. The second recommendation is for a general policy revision which, in the spirit of decentralization, puts more control and responsibility with the local church or classis which receives the grant.

#### *2. Recommendations:*

- a. The board recommends that synod approve a change in procedure which will allow the board to give approval to all GIA requests.

#### *Grounds:*

1. This will allow these grants to become effective at an earlier date, which will be of benefit to churches and to classes (April 1, rather than July 1).
  2. Synod has been routinely approving these requests.
  3. Classes act on these requests and in the event of disagreement, appeal may be made to synod.
  4. Synod has given the board similar authority in other matters.
- b. The board recommends that synod approve the GIA policy revision as presented below, with the provision that no changes will be made in "Part I Policy Statement" without presenting these to synod, whereas Parts II and III which provide operational guidelines and procedures may be adjusted by the board as may be required.

## GRANT-IN-AID POLICY STATEMENT

### I. POLICY STATEMENT

#### *A. The Purpose of the Grant-In-Aid Program*

To assist churches or classes by providing, in addition to consultation services, financial resources for certain types of Home Mission work where salaried personnel is required. Financial assistance can be provided when the nature of the work warrants denominational involvement and the costs of the ministry are beyond the financial resources of the supporting agency(ies).

## B. *Types of Ministries Which Qualify for GIA Assistance*

### 1. *The Establishment of New Congregations*

To qualify for funding under the provision of this section, it must be demonstrated that the potential for establishing a new mission-oriented congregation does exist and that the participating families or individuals are committed to work toward this goal. It is assumed that such a new church can grow to financial independence within a reasonable amount of time and that funding through the Grant-In-Aid Program will be on an annually decreasing basis.

### 2. *Community Outreach*

A church may apply for financial assistance to call/appoint a staff worker to assist in the church's community outreach where such potential for ministry is greater than can be addressed by the present staff and where the congregation needs financial assistance to employ such a person.

- a. When such financial assistance is being requested for an additional staff member in a church that is growing or serving a changing community, then all the normal policies/procedures of the Grant-In-Aid provision shall apply.

Note: It is recognized that not all churches are equally financially able to decrease the GIA amount requested on an annual basis. The Board of Home Missions, by way of exception to the normal policy provision, may assist a local ministry without annually decreasing the grant. This provision should be understood and stated at the time of the initial GIA request and this exception will be applicable only in very unusual circumstances.

- b. When financial assistance is requested for an additional Staff member to provide training in evangelism for the congregation, such assistance is provided as a three-year incentive grant. To qualify, the following criteria need to be met:
  - 1) The church shall give evidence that evangelistic goals have been adopted.
  - 2) The church shall approve the employment of a Director/Minister of Evangelism.
  - 3) The church shall provide a job description for the Director/Minister of Evangelism which emphasizes training programs in evangelism.
  - 4) The church shall give assurance that the pastor of the congregation will also be actively involved in evangelism.
  - 5) The church shall provide matching funds on an increasing percentage (50%, 60%, 70%) during the three years of this incentive Grant.

### 3. *Specialized Ministries*

Financial assistance can be requested for a ministry where the establishment of a congregation is not envisioned, but where the church, nevertheless, needs to be present with the proclamation of the Gospel, e.g., seaway ministry, campus ministry, or such like ministry opportunities.

## II. GRANT-IN-AID OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

### A. *Period of Grant*

1. Grants will ordinarily be approved for three years and may be renewable. It is understood that other funding sources, e.g., the local ministry, classis or neighboring churches, will also be requested to make three-year commitments.

2. Up-dated goals and progress reports shall be submitted to the Classical Home Missions Committee and Home Missions for approval, on forms provided for that purpose and on a schedule as set by Home Missions, prior to the payment of the second and third year of the grant. The approved grant will be paid in equal, quarterly installments.

3. Home Missions may, in consultation with the Classical Home Missions Committee, stop payment of the Grant-In-Aid, during the term of the three-year grant, if the goals of the ministry are not being met, GIA policies are not being adhered to, or unusual circumstances develop on the field. In any case, no GIA funds will be disbursed by the BHM during the time of a vacancy in the position for which the GIA was initially approved.

### B. *Renewal Grants*

1. A new application needs to be submitted for each three-year grant.
2. Ministries that aim to become self-supporting shall reflect annually decreasing amounts in the support requested, at the time the application is submitted.
3. Ministries where self-support is not a possibility in the foreseeable future, may qualify for renewal funding beyond a normal phase-out period if local and regional

resources are not adequately available.

4. Each renewal three-year application must have a MAP evaluation of the ministry attached, as well as a "Personnel Assessment" of the person involved in the Grant-In-Aid ministry. The due-date for all new applications shall be on a schedule as set by Home Missions.

### C. *Personnel of Grant-In-Aid Ministries*

#### 1. *Calling/Appointing of Personnel*

- a. The decision whom to call/appoint is the supervising agencies' in consultation with the Regional Home Missionary (RHM) and the Personnel Committee of the Board of Home Missions.
- b. The use of BHM's "SEARCH" process is strongly recommended to evaluate personnel needs in preparation for securing a person.

#### 2. *Compensation for Personnel*

- a. The exact amount of total compensation is to be determined by the employing church or committee, with the following guidelines:
  - 1) The approved Home Missions scale of compensation is to be used by GIA ministries.
  - 2) Due to diverse situations, a variance of ten percent is permissible.
- b. Normally no grant will be greater than 75 percent of the sum of salary and benefits(excluding housing) for the person involved in the GIA ministry. The actual salary and benefits paid will be used to compute this amount for the person involved.
- c. Housing costs are the responsibility of the local group.

3. *Attendance at Home Missions Conferences:* all GIA missionaries and their spouses are invited to attend the annual Home Missions Conference. To enable attendance, Home Missions will assume the cost of such attendance above an amount designated by the BHM.

### D. *Communication*

1. All GIA Missionaries shall submit monthly reports on forms provided by Home Missions for that purpose. This is essential to good communication between the ministry supported by Home Missions and those persons delegated to be its board members. Annual reports are taken care of by the progress report submitted for the second and third year of the grant, or the renewal application form.

2. To assist a local ministry and to enable Home Missions in its administration, the RHM normally will make two visits to the field per year. The RHM is the first point of contact in the GIA ministry's relationship with Home Missions.

### E. *Contingency Funds*

In the event that a ministry encounters emergency or unexpected expenses which were not foreseen at the time the application was submitted a request may be made for help from the "Contingency Fund." A description of the unexpected need and the amount of money requested, along with an endorsement of the CHMC must accompany such a request.

## III. GRANT-IN-AID REQUEST PROCEDURE

### A. *New Applications (Also Applies to Renewal Applications)*

1. An application form will be sent upon request during the month of May. Second and third year progress report forms and three-year renewal application forms will be sent automatically, also in May.

2. The application (or progress report) form should be completed by those directly involved in the ministry. General goals and specific objectives need to be developed so that progress in the ministry can be charted and reported. All basic documents must accompany the application form. The RHM is able to provide assistance in the completion of this information. The following needs to be attached:

- a. Completed application form, with specific goals and objectives.
- b. Statement of commitment of those desiring to establish a new church (if applicable).
- c. Financial statement of the previous fiscal year of both the ministry involved and the supporting agency(ies).
- d. A budget for the ministry envisioned and a budget of the supporting agency(ies).
- e. A financial projection for the next five years for the ministry being envisioned.
- f. A job description for the staff person to be called/appointed.

3. The application and supplementary documents shall be submitted to the supervising

committee for approval. This committee should forward them to the CHMC prior to the fall meeting of classis and in sufficient time to enable the CHMC to make a recommendation concerning the request of classis.

4. All of the above material must be sent to the RHM and be received by him no later than October 15.

5. Home Missions at its annual meeting (February) will consider the GIA request and notify the applicant concerning its decision. If an applicant finds the Home Missions decision disagreeable, appeal may be made to synod through the appropriate classis.

6. The time-lines for GIA applications, approval and payment are as follows:

- a. All applications and progress reports are due October 15.
- b. The BHM acts on the applications in February.
- c. Newly approved grants become effective April 1, ordinarily for a three-year period.
- d. Payments are made quarterly during the first month of each quarter (April, July, October, January).

#### B. Progress Reports

1. Progress report forms (for the second and third year of the grant) will be sent automatically during the month of May.

2. Progress report forms should be completed by those directly involved in the ministry. General goals and specific objectives should be *revised*, so that the progress and ministry can be charted and recorded. The following documents should accompany the progress report:

- a. Revised job description (if applicable).
- b. Financial statement of the previous fiscal year of both the ministry and the supporting agency(ies).
- c. A budget for the ministry envisioned and a budget of the supporting agency(ies).
- d. Revised financial projection for the next five years.

3. The progress report and the revised goals and objectives need to be submitted to the supervising committee of the ministry. This committee should forward the documents of the CHMC for review, approval and endorsement. (Classical approval is not necessary unless classical rules require it.)

4. All of the above material is to be received by the RHM no later than October 15. Funds cannot be released for payment unless the progress report has been received and evaluated by Home Missions' staff.

5. Home Missions at its annual meeting will review the progress reports for approval. Payment of the remaining balance of the grant will be made automatically unless the provision of "a,3" is invoked. If an applicant finds the Home Missions decision disagreeable, appeal may be made to synod through the appropriate classis.

#### V. PERSONNEL

Because of God's grace in the life of the Christian Reformed Church, 233 full-time missionaries, not counting spouses, are part of, and tell the story of, God's love in Jesus Christ. The richness and the depth of the life and faith that God has given the Christian Reformed Church provides a foundation of quiet and prayerful confidence for these missionaries. They dare to believe that God will bless their effort and increase his church. (For a list of field personnel, cf. IV,C of this report.)

##### A. *Discovering those whom God has called to Home Missions*

Through prayerful SEARCHing, question-asking, and careful thought, God has brought Home Missions the workers of his choice. These are:

—People who are able to *dream* about what should be—a vision of the "new creation" in one's city, one's neighborhood—an expectation of believing response to the Gospel as it is spoken and acted.

—People who are able to *plan* what can be through creative leadership, use of personal energy, goal orientation, efficient work and resilience—all combined with a sense of timing for speaking his Word.

—People who are able to *work*; who dream and plan, but also know

that something can be done by God's grace, they combine Christian obedience with personal creativity and personal initiative. They understand organizational matters, and they are skilled in discerning and responding to needs through speech and action in the name of Christ.

There is a continuous need to recruit more of these people. Home Missions' efforts to discover these are focused through a process called SEARCH. It is used with fields that need personnel and persons who are looking for God's calling in their life. This process—a combination of fields telling their story and evidencing their need and expectation, and persons telling their stories, identifying their skills and gifts—is used to find workers for Home Missions,

#### *B. Enabling Those Whom God has Sent*

Being a competent worker in God's kingdom is a continuous growing process. Since one's maturity is always in relation to specific tasks which are themselves always changing, there is a continual need for missionaries to grow. Through a personal assessment policy (begun in 1976), individualized "In-Service Training," an annual Home Missions Conference, continuing education is a regular part of a missionary's standard work year. In this way, missionaries are strongly encouraged to reflect on where God is leading and to improve or develop the particular gifts and skills that are necessary to be faithful to God's will.

In 1978, four regional conferences were held in cooperation with Calvin Theological Seminary, on the subject of preaching. Operating on a four-year cycle, 1979 is the year for an international conference. The theme chosen for this conference was taken from Christ's words recorded in Matthew, "Proclaiming From the Housetops." Smaller conferences dealing with particular needs of home missionaries are being held in various parts of the country. Individualized training is purchased from other institutions or agencies. The goal is to enable home missionaries to be continually and increasingly useful in God's mission in North America.

#### *C. Utilizing the Many Gifts of God's People*

Home Missions maintains a long-term volunteer program, using (for the most part) young adults in a parish program for a year or more. More recently, older people and early retirees have offered their time and skills for church work. A proposal was developed to provide a way to bring together members of the Christian Reformed Church, who desire to volunteer their time and talent, and the churches, agencies, and boards, who need and can make effective use of the services of these volunteers. Synod's Service Committee for the Use of Members' Gifts intends to use this program as its way to serve people in the denomination. This reservoir of a variety of skills, gifts, and abilities available, will make possible the expansion of existing programs or beginning of some new ones at low cost. More leisure, early retirement, changing views of how one wants to spend his life and what is important has made more volunteer time available for church work.

#### D. *Recruiting and Enabling Minority Leadership*

The Christian Reformed Church is faced with the challenge of defining itself in inclusive ethnic terms and becoming a denomination which embraces a people from a variety of ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds. Home Missions, over a number of years, has been giving leadership in this challenge. In the early 60's, Home Missions' involvement in "inner city" situations, combined with the responsibility for the Indian field resulted in the situation in which 40% of the Home Missions' budget was designated for minority groups. One crucial element in developing this inclusiveness of the denomination is indigeneous leadership. As a denomination, we have experienced very limited success in such development. Home Missions, participating with various people and agencies, addressed itself to this issue during the past year. The result is a proposal about development of minority leadership which is being presented to synod by the Synodical Committee on Race Relations. The Home Missions Board decided to support this proposal of SCORR and intends to participate in this new development program, if it is approved by synod.

#### VI. EVANGELISM

Through its "Church Order," articles 11,b; 24,b; 73,b; and 74,a, the Christian Reformed Church has highlighted the responsibility of each church to do the work of evangelism in its own area. The task of giving leadership to the denomination in this important work has been assigned to the Board of Home Missions, article 76,b. During the past year, efforts have been made to provide this leadership through assisting the churches with education, training, materials, consultation and study and/or research. There is evidence that many congregations are taking their evangelism responsibility seriously.

##### A. *Education*

During 1978, the following educational efforts were accomplished: 1) "Close-up," a consistory study program focusing on the local church was produced and is available to consistories; 2) twenty-five regional seminars and ten seminars for individual churches on "The Growing Church" were conducted; 3) "Reach," a newsletter for evangelism committees and pastors, was published six times; 4) "Home Missions News" was sent to the entire membership.

A program designed to assist churches in understanding the role of gifts in ministry and to enable congregations to identify and utilize the gifts of members so that the church's whole life may be a witness to the world of the saving power of the Gospel is being developed. Recognizing this to be an area of mutual interest, Home Missions' staff met with the Service Committee for the Use of Members' Gifts. This denominational committee is encouraging Home Missions in its efforts and will be kept informed as the project progresses.

##### B. *Training*

"Witnessing Where You Are" conferences, which help Christians identify with Christ in their daily contacts, were conducted in nineteen areas of the denomination. Members of over fifty churches were trained

through the Congregational Evangelism Training program. CET is proving to be a very effective training and calling evangelism program. Training for women involved in "Coffee-Break" evangelism was provided through seminars or workshops conducted in nineteen different places. "Summer Workshop in Ministry" (SWIM), a joint project of the Young Calvinist Youth Federation and Home Missions, provided training for 325 young people during 1978. These young people worked in seventy different fields or churches.

### C. Materials

Various kinds of materials were provided for use. Over 175,000 handouts called "Born Again" were distributed by the churches. Four issues of "The Way" were published. Over nine hundred subscriptions to "His" Magazine were provided for Christian Reformed students on secular campuses. Materials on Jewish evangelism were sent to all Classical Home Missions Committees to provide encouragement and help in the area of Jewish evangelism. THE FAITH BUILDER SERIES, now including "Knowing Jesus," "Assurance," "Living in Christ," and the "Gospel of Mark," was revised. Work is being done on a new discipling package of materials which can be used for follow-up. Churches interested in a complete list of evangelism materials and tools are encouraged to write to Home Missions.

### D. Consultation

Assistance and counsel regarding evangelism is available to the churches through the evangelism staff and regional home missionaries. During the past year, many churches were helped through correspondence, telephone, personal visits, and meetings. Churches are encouraged to make use of this service.

### E. Report on Evangelism Principles and Strategy

1. *Background:* The following report prepared by Home Missions is submitted to synod as its answer to the instruction of the Synod of 1978 (Cf. Acts of Synod, 1978, Article 30, I, C.)

2. *Recommendation:* That synod affirm that the present report, with those to which it refers, constitutes an adequate framework for the churches in their evangelism task. Churches are urged to reflect on these guidelines as they engage in the work.

#### 3. Report

In the mystery of his sovereign love, God redeems his people and makes them agents of redemption. Those who hear the good news of reconciliation through the Lord Jesus Christ are given the privilege of bringing that good news immediately to those who have not heard.

The time has come for every congregation of the Christian Reformed Church to give priority to this task—to so believe and to so structure its life and work that the good news may be proclaimed and believers may be brought to mature membership in the church.

### I. BACKGROUND

For many years, the Christian Reformed Church has engaged in defining the task of evangelism. Denominational board and study

committees have searched the Scriptures and delineated the principles which must guide the church in its work of outreach. Synods have received these reports and referred them to the churches for reflection and implementation, e.g., in 1977, 1953, 1952 and 1926.<sup>1</sup> These reports and the recommendations adopted by the synod have demonstrated that God does graciously reveal his will to those who sincerely seek it. They have enriched the church's understanding of its glorious task. The Board of Home Missions has sought to implement these reports both on its fields and in its various services to the churches.

A Consultation on Reformed Evangelism was convened by the Board of Home Missions in March 1978, "to articulate clearly the principles of Reformed Evangelism and to develop guidelines to use in developing and evaluating evangelism programs." Among the 20 persons participating in this consultation were members of the faculty of Calvin Theological Seminary and of Calvin College, pastors of Christian Reformed congregations in the United States and Canada, and members of the staff of Home Missions. The consultation engaged in three days of discussion and reflection, determining to convene again in September to draft statements of principle and strategy which would guide Christian Reformed evangelism efforts.

The Synod of 1978 received an overture from Classis Alberta North, requesting a more thorough study of the principles of evangelism. Synod's advisory committee stated that they wished to point out "that no single strategy of evangelism can be created to meet all men everywhere. The Bible does not spell out the 'how' of an evangelism strategy, and therefore there is difficulty in determining a specifically biblical methodology." The committee observed, however, that "the Board of Home Missions is actively engaged in the further working out of a more clearly articulated view of the nature and strategy of Reformed evangelism... and hopes to report such findings to the Synod of 1979."

Synod then called upon the Board of Home Missions "to press this concern for the formulation of a more clearly articulated view of the nature of evangelism particularly as this relates to Reformed Evangelism strategy, at the continuance of the Consultation on Reformed Evangelism in the fall of 1978."

Synod also requested the board "to incorporate a formulation of the biblical view of the nature of Reformed Evangelism and the resulting strategy in its report to the Synod of 1979."<sup>2</sup>

During the past year the staff of the Board of Home Missions has engaged in intensive reflection on the task before the church today. The report which follows deals with many of the concerns which were discussed at the consultation and in other settings. It is presented in the awareness that reflection and action are a process and must continue as long as the church seeks to do God's will.

## II. THE NATURE OF REFORMED EVANGELISM

The evangel is the good news of what God has done for his people in Jesus Christ. Evangelism is the telling of the good news. Sometimes the term encompasses all that the church does, since the whole life of

God's people is a demonstration of the meaning of the good news. More particularly evangelism refers to the deliberate and direct effort of God's people, by word and deed, to introduce the unconverted to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, to win their allegiance to him and to incorporate them into the nurturing and serving fellowship of the church. This meaning is the one which is used in this report and which is indicated by the mandate which synod has given to the Board of Home Missions.

Reformed evangelism is that which flows from Scripture and is in harmony with the Reformed confessions. The basic truths concerning evangelism have been stated from time to time in synodical studies, were affirmed at the Evangelism Consultation and must continue to guide the churches.

Evangelism, first of all, rests upon a strong Trinitarian foundation.<sup>3</sup> Salvation is the work of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Salvation is planned by the Father,<sup>4</sup> wrought by the Son,<sup>5</sup> and applied by the Holy Spirit.<sup>6</sup> The Triune God is powerfully active in the world today, redeeming his people.<sup>7</sup>

The goal of evangelism is that God may be glorified as King in the hearts of men everywhere and in all their work. He is to be recognized as rightful Lord of every person and of all society. Through the work of evangelism, the church announces and expands the rule of God over every enterprise and all institutions.<sup>8</sup>

In bringing salvation to men, God assigns a great responsibility to his people. One of the primary duties of the church is to proclaim to those outside the church the saving grace of God.<sup>9</sup> Although the early Christians were often naturally hesitant, they were moved and empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the Gospel.<sup>10</sup> Living in love for one another, they denied themselves and made their lives a testimony to the world.<sup>11</sup> God revealed himself through their words and deeds. Living sanctified lives through the power of the Holy Spirit, believers were able to speak of their faith with spontaneity and integrity.<sup>12</sup> As the church now gives itself to this honored work, many will be saved and the church will grow. On the other hand, the church which gives a low priority to this task places not only others but itself in great peril.<sup>13</sup>

Those to whom the gospel comes must receive it. The Bible presents God as calling men in love to love him, and as holding those to whom the Gospel is proclaimed fully responsible and accountable.<sup>14</sup> The Canons of Dort state that God "does not treat men as senseless stocks and blocks, nor take away their will and its properties."<sup>15</sup> Therefore, God defers judgment "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance"<sup>16</sup> and calls men to a salvation which can be theirs through faith: "as many as are called by the Gospel are unfeignedly called."<sup>17</sup>

God in initiating salvation enables man by his grace to respond in repentance and faith. He works through his representatives, the church. Therefore believers have the responsibility to call upon unbelievers to make a decision,<sup>18</sup> to submit to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and to join themselves to his church.<sup>19</sup> Because people are

dying at every moment and coming before God's judgment and because our Lord may at any moment return in judgment upon our race, the task which God has given the church is most urgent.

There are basic elements of the biblical teaching concerning the nature of evangelism. At the same time, it must be recognized that the Scriptures consistently teach that there is no real knowing without doing, and that those who do not do what God commands cannot know his will.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, concerning evangelism it must be said that only the church which is practicing evangelism can meaningfully talk about it. The present report however says enough to guide the church into effective outreach in the immediate present and near future. We can expect more light from the Lord as we possess and utilize what he has given us.<sup>21</sup> We will understand the theology of evangelism better ten years from today if we now give energy and intelligence, prayers and wealth to do what we understand.

### III. IMPLICATIONS FOR EVANGELISM STRATEGY

The above biblical principles must guide each church in developing its particular evangelism strategy. Strategies must and will vary depending upon the particular congregation, the nature of the community, the persons addressed and many other variables. Each congregation is responsible to discover the types of programs the Lord would have it employ. God expects his church to grow. Congregations must discover how they can grow in ways that bring honor to him and demonstrate that they take his promises seriously. The church that sees no fruit upon its work must prayerfully seek to discover what will release and equip it for effective work.

Each church's strategy must include the following elements:

- A. *Faithful Obedience.* Biblical evangelism is above all else evangelism that is done.
- B. *Unceasing Prayer.* Christians should be continuously in prayer "that the word of the Lord may speed on and triumph."<sup>22</sup> Missions should have a prominent place in congregational prayers. Churches should encourage prayers in all meetings of the members and should develop prayer groups which specifically petition God to bless the work of evangelism and to bring unbelievers to salvation.<sup>23</sup>
- C. *Clear Articulation.* God has plainly revealed himself. The clear articulation of that revelation given in the Scriptures and expressly in Jesus Christ is essential to evangelism. The church must not shrink from declaring to lost men the whole counsel of God,<sup>24</sup> particularly Jesus Christ and him crucified.<sup>25</sup>
- D. *Dynamic Leadership.* The church's evangelism work must be marked by thorough planning. Those whom God has appointed as stewards of his work must create a climate conducive to effective evangelism and must be personally involved. They must guard the church against becoming secure in trusted congregational patterns, being open always to new forms of learning and service. Congregational budgeting for evangelism should also reflect the high priority of this task.

1. The role of the minister is crucial. "He shall, with the elders, engage in and promote the work of evangelism."<sup>26</sup> He must encourage members to be active, himself setting an example, and he must assist in the development of leadership.
  2. The elders must participate in and refresh the evangelism outreach of the church, not allowing it to grow stale or sterile.<sup>27</sup> They must provide for training various aspects of evangelism in order that the gifts which God distributes among his people may be fully utilized.
  3. The deacons should also give leadership in the work of reconciliation among people whose lives are broken.<sup>28</sup>
- E. *Congregational Mobilization.* Every member of the church is given gifts by the Holy Spirit. These gifts empower the church for evangelism.
1. Through a Christlike life-style. Believers must perceive themselves not merely as individuals, but as citizens of the kingdom, united in Christ. As his body, they will live in unity and manifest love which itself becomes a testimony of the gospel to the world.<sup>30</sup> Such a church must also look outward, entering into the life of the larger community<sup>31</sup> and becoming aware of the great need of the community for redemption.
  2. Through clear verbal witness:
    - a. All members are witnesses and must learn clearly to identify themselves as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ<sup>32</sup> in the context of a life of commitment.<sup>33</sup>
    - b. Those who have gifts for evangelism must be identified and encouraged to develop and use those gifts in the church's ministry.<sup>34</sup>
  3. All members must be involved in supporting the evangelism programs of the church—praying and working to increase the harvest.
- F. *Appropriate Programs.* Each congregation must discover the type of evangelism programs through which the Lord would have it share in his work of saving men. While such programs as Congregational Evangelism Training, Coffee-Break Evangelism and Witnessing Where You Are workshops are appropriate and effective for many congregations, no one method or approach is universally valid. The varieties of evangelism practice must be continually tested with Scripture and evaluated as to their effectiveness. The church must always seek to improve her understanding, attempting new ways to reach the unsaved, as the Spirit leads. The Board of Home Missions as mandated by synod will continually seek additional methods and approaches and offer them to the churches.
- G. *Meaningful Worship.* Worship services play an essential role in evangelism. The atmosphere of the church in worship must be celebrative: Our Lord is risen, our King is coming! Guests should be expected and warmly welcomed. The sermons should clearly and positively articulate the gospel. Prayers should be personal and

simple and should include specific mention of community persons and concerns. The sacraments should confirm the covenant in such a way that they direct the congregation's thoughts and prayers towards the larger family of the elect who are yet to be brought in. The service should open a window upon the world and its needs.

- H *Call to Decision.* The church in its witness everywhere must repeatedly call upon unbelievers to make a decision,<sup>35</sup> warning the hearers of the inevitable consequences of unbelief.<sup>36</sup> It must call for personal decisions and commitments, elements which in good Reformed tradition have always been stressed in family visits and in preparation for the Lord's Supper. Satan fights hard to hold on to the lost; so the church will, perhaps in tears,<sup>37</sup> beg<sup>38</sup> and repeatedly call<sup>39</sup> so that a sinner may be saved. The church must be ready to help the seeking unbeliever in the crucial moment of personal decision and surrender.<sup>40</sup> While calling men to repentance and faith, the church must also warn them of the inevitable consequences of unbelief.<sup>41</sup>
- I. *Comprehensive Service.* The church must be deeply mindful of the unconverted as total persons and must offer the variety of healing resources which a loving Christian community can provide. The Word of God addresses persons who are part of existing situations and structures, and it has much to say about daily work, mental health, money, politics, education and the arts. The church's total program must reflect this richness of God's Word while not neglecting its focus upon the need for individual persons to be reconciled to God.
- J. *Accepting Fellowship.* The social life of the congregation must involve as many persons as possible in planned and spontaneous fellowship in which they both give and receive support for the Christian life. The development of small groups should be encouraged as vital to the church's outreach and fostering internal growth. In such groups, the lonely find loving acceptance, the burdened find relief; gifts are discovered and developed and personal needs met. Members can learn to share and to express themselves and to "give a reason for the hope that is in them." Such "households" or "grow groups," mixing age groups, sexes, needs, races and interests are especially suited for the assimilation of new members and the nurturing of inquirers. They also provide an excellent matrix for the exercise of communal prayer for evangelism. Excitement is often bred in such groups which can reach into the larger congregation, contributing to overall congregational health and vigor.
- K. *Continuing Responsibility.* The church must recognize a continuing and expanding responsibility toward those with whom the Lord brings her into contact.
1. The church must locate and identify unbelieving persons and groups in its community,<sup>42</sup> building and strengthening relationships with them through regular contacts.

2. The church must seek to reach entire families, zealously enlarging all contacts established through child evangelism programs such as VBS, church school and youth groups.
3. In contacts with unbelievers, the church must accept from the start her responsibility for their enlightenment and nurture, ministering to their needs and discipling them through progressive stages from first interest to responsible church membership.

#### IV. CALL TO ACTION

The Reformed faith is a most valuable gift. The challenge before us today is to reach out aggressively with the call to that faith, to "compel them to come in" and, God working in us, to make the Reformed faith a vital reality in every community.

The church which in its own parish diligently witnesses to God's sovereign grace will manifest a spirit of expectance, knowing that God's Word does not return to him void. Such a congregation will expect to see the Holy Spirit renewing unbelievers and enfolding them into the church. This was the experience of the outreaching church after Pentecost<sup>43</sup> and has been in all the centuries since.

The task is urgent. The King is coming. The church longs for his return: "the Spirit and the Bride say 'Come.'"<sup>44</sup> This longing must help the church to order its priorities so that all the church is diligently involved in bringing the news of God's love in Christ to all whom it can reach. As the church takes up this great task, God will bless its ministry so that increasing numbers may face both life and death with God's peace in their hearts.

The command is clear. We must work with what we know, that we may come to know more. We must labor in the harvest, learning the art as we gather the sheaves.

The content of this report is supported by many statements in Scripture and the Creeds. Particular statements are supported by the following, among others:

- <sup>1</sup> Agendum of Synod 1926, pages 50-60 and Acts of Synod 1926, page 88 (These documents are reproduced in the Appendix. The following are more readily available): Acts of Synod 1952, pages 63-67, 188-231; Acts of Synod 1953, pages 84-89, 265-285, 378-387; Acts of Synod 1976, pages 16, 17, 177; Acts of Synod 1977, pages 32, 90-94, 614-643
- <sup>2</sup> Acts of Synod 1978, page 31
- <sup>3</sup> Belgic Confession, Articles 16, 17; Canons of Dort, II, 8
- <sup>4</sup> John 3:16, Eph. 1:3-6
- <sup>5</sup> Acts 4:12, I Cor. 15:1-4
- <sup>6</sup> John 3:3-8, Rom. 8:9-11
- <sup>7</sup> Belgic Confession IX, XVI, XVII, Heidelberg Catechism L.D. 21
- <sup>8</sup> L.D. 48, 49
- <sup>9</sup> Matt. 5:13-16, I Peter 2:9, L.D. 12
- <sup>10</sup> Acts 8:4
- <sup>11</sup> Acts 2:44-47, 5:13
- <sup>12</sup> Acts 2:43-47, I Peter 2:11-17, Rom. 1:8
- <sup>13</sup> Ezek. 33:6, II Cor. 5:17,18
- <sup>14</sup> John 1:12, 3:18, 10:27-29, Acts 13:46, Canons of Dort I, Art. 6
- <sup>15</sup> Canons of Dort III & IV, Art. 16
- <sup>16</sup> II Peter 3:9
- <sup>17</sup> Canons of Dort III & IV, Art. 8
- <sup>18</sup> Ex. 32:26, Deut. 30:19,20, Josh. 24:15, Acts 2:38, 16:31, II Cor. 5:20
- <sup>19</sup> Belgic Confession, Article XXVIII

- <sup>20</sup> John 7:17, 8:31,32, I John 2:4,5  
<sup>21</sup> Mark 4:25  
<sup>22</sup> II Thess. 3:1  
<sup>23</sup> Eph. 6:18-20, Col. 4:2-4, I Thess. 5:25  
<sup>24</sup> Acts 20:27  
<sup>25</sup> I Cor. 2:2  
<sup>26</sup> Church Order Article 11, b.  
<sup>27</sup> Church Order Article 24  
<sup>28</sup> Church Order Article 25, d.  
<sup>29</sup> Rom. 12:4-8  
<sup>30</sup> John 17:20-21  
<sup>31</sup> Matt. 5:13-16, John 17:15  
<sup>32</sup> Matt. 10:32,33, I Peter 3:15  
<sup>33</sup> James 1:26,27, Lord's Day 12  
<sup>34</sup> Rom. 12:6-8  
<sup>35</sup> I Kings 18:21, Ezek. 3:19, I Thess. 5:14  
<sup>36</sup> Isa. 1:19,20, Jer. 7:13-15, Heb. 4:1,2  
<sup>37</sup> II Cor. 5:11  
<sup>38</sup> II Cor. 6:1  
<sup>39</sup> Rom. 10:20,21  
<sup>40</sup> Isa. 1:16-18, 55:1, Matt. 11:28-30, Luke 18:22, John 6:67-69, James 4:7-10  
<sup>41</sup> Jer. 7:13-15, John 3:36, Lord's Day 31  
<sup>42</sup> L.D. 31, Q. & A. 84  
<sup>43</sup> Acts 2:41,47, 4:4, 5:14, 6:1,7, 8:6, 9:31,35, 11:21,24, 12:24, 13:43, 14:1,21, 16:5, 17:4,34, 18:8, 19:18,20  
<sup>44</sup> Rev. 22:17

## APPENDIX

Excerpts from the report of the Committee in the Matter of Evangelization or City Mission (Agendum of Synod, 1926, pp. 50-61)

... If we mistake not, the Synod of 1924 is the first one at which the matter of evangelization was taken up. One of the classes of our church, Illinois, has in the past taken up the matter quite extensively, but outside of the official action of this classis, we are not aware of any major meetings of our church taking up this interesting and important matter....

... Your committee finds its instructions in Article 68 of the Acts of the Synod of 1924. As we understand the instruction, it is incumbent upon the committee to determine upon and to formulate some definite principles which will be basic in the work of evangelization, and will indicate the Reformed standpoint of our church in this phase of mission work. In other words, a declaration of principles must be made. Furthermore, practical advice must be given to the churches in harmony with these principles, so that the work of evangelization may receive an impetus and come to efficient organization. Finally, the advisability of a general fund for evangelization is to be considered and determined....

... The overture to the last synod already declares an important principle. It is stated that it is the duty of the churches to be engaged in this work, though all have not an equal opportunity to the discharge of this duty. There is a threefold task in which the Christian church is engaged in this world: First, the proclamation of the gospel, that is, the missionary task; secondly, that of self-edification, that is, spiritual culture and Christian education of young and old; and then, especially in the modern days, the evangelistic task which the Dutch call,

"*Evangelisatie*." Jesus, in broad lines, indicates these phases of work in Matthew 28:19. There is the work of evangelization in a broad sense or, as he names it, *matheeteusate*, that is, making disciples. The believers constitute a spiritual community in the world, and this group seeks expansion. The Gospel which is in the possession of the church must be preached to Jew and Gentile. The Spirit of God works savingly where the Word is preacher. There are those who believingly accept the Word. These, then, must be baptized. They must formally and officially be introduced into the life of the church. These baptized individuals are not full-grown immediately in their religious life. They must be indoctrinated and edified. The church in the world must be engaged in self-edification through the ministry of the Word and the sacraments (Eph. 4:12,13). She also must bestir herself to inform all those around about her and those afar, Jew, Mohammedan, and Gentile, of the spiritual treasures in her possession. This latter is her missionary task in the fulfillment of which no church may be negligent. There is, however, also the necessary work of indoctrinating their growing children by some system of Christian education. Throughout the ages the church has always been more or less active in the discharge of these duties. In the modern day another branch of work came to development. *Essentially* this work is a branch of the missionary task. . . .

. . . . In fine, we would define this work of evangelization as a part of the task of domestic missions that devotes itself to the spread of the Gospel by word of mouth, or the printed page among the unchurched in Christian communities. (Bavinck.) . . . .

. . . . The *aim* of evangelization is to bring the Gospel to the unchurched and to lead them, by the grace of God, to conversion and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and then to membership of the Christian church. . . .

. . . . On the other hand, it is the most natural thing in the world that evangelization carried on, maintained and supervised by the Christian Reformed churches, will most naturally result in directing the converts to the church which was instrumental in bringing them into the fold of the Christ as lost sheep. The establishment of our own church organization is not the first aim of evangelization, but the extension of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men in general; yet, the church organization which labors according to its own distinctive principles and methods, naturally invites to its membership. . . .

. . . . There is no denying that it is the right and duty of the church to be engaged in evangelization. Unto the church have been given the Gospel and the holy sacraments. The instituted church is in possession of the Christian heritage of truth, institutions, and practices. She has the calling to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. . . .

. . . . It, too, is the duty of the individual members to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. There is an informal, unofficial activity of evangelization on the part of the church membership which ought to be going on all the time. And in view of the office of all believers, the instituted church cannot deny the right to the individual membership to initiate such work and to be engaged in it regularly;

yet, it has been the good practise of the Reformed church membership to seek and to submit to the direction of the office-bearers of the church. . . .

. . . . In order to come to such a program of principles, we humbly submit the following for your consideration, which are mainly a re-statement of those adopted by the Synod in the Netherlands at Utrecht, in 1923:

- (1) Evangelization is a phase of Home Mission work that aims to call unto God's service and to the membership of his church the un-churched in Christian communities;
- (2) This work among the unchurched or lost is, according to God's Word, the duty of the church of Christ;
- (3) The means employed is the Word of God, and this means must be used according to the formulated truth in the Forms of Unity;
- (4) Though it is the duty of every Christian to evangelize, yet, the formal work of evangelization ought to be carried on under the direction of the consistory, which can utilize the gifts and talents with which God has adorned and equipped the membership;
- (5) It may be profitable in some localities to confederate in this work. This co-operative endeavor must then be sought through the consistories;
- (6) The particular manner in which the churches desire to regulate the work of evangelization is left to their free choice as long as the above declared principles are adhered to.

IX. Report of the Committee in the Matter of Evangelization or City Missions (Agendum, pp. 50-60).

The Synod of 1924 (Acts of Synod 1924, Art. 68) instructed this committee "to determine upon and to formulate some definite principles which will be the basis in the work of evangelization, and will indicate the Reformed standpoint of our church in this phase of mission work," etc.

The Report now before synod not only shows that the committee considered this instruction a very important one, but a careful perusal of it must convince any Reformed man that here we have indeed a thorough and clear study of the principles and problems involved.

Your committee advises synod:

- a) To extend a vote of thanks to the brethren of this committee for the exhaustive study they made of the subject of evangelization, and the clear statement of principles and methods for this work as found in their splendid report;
- b) To urge all our churches which are engaged in evangelization-work carefully to study this report, and to be guided by the principles set forth and the methods described therein.

## VII. FINANCE

Receipts for 1978 which had been projected at \$4,550,000 (compared to 1977 actual receipts of \$3,921,000) fell down below projection by \$186,000 on a cash basis. A cash flow crisis was avoided, and the needs of present home missionaries were met, because a number of declines

were received from pastors called to new fields. These declines caused a delay in the opening of these fields and the need for the funds designated. While this delay had the advantage of easing the cash flow situation, it on the other hand resulted in postponement of certain mission activity. A full audited report for the year ending December, 1978 by Seidman & Seidman, Certified Public Accountants, has been given to the Synodical Interim Committee requesting that it be presented to synod.

#### A. General Information

It is noted with gratitude that the actual income rose \$442,000.00 over the previous calendar year. This is a substantial cause for joy. The willingness of churches to respond to encouragement to undertake partial, direct support of home missionaries, and even to take the initiative themselves to make such relationships, says a great deal about the higher priority which many of them are giving to the denomination's work of establishing new churches in the United States and Canada and to the importance of being vigorous in our outreach.

1. Percentage of total quota income received in 1978 was 91.8%, compared to 90.9% in 1977. The increase in participation by Canadian churches in the last decade rose from 41.5% in 1968 to 78.0% in 1978. The percentage of quota received over the last ten years is, as follows:

	Total	U.S.	Canada
1969	85.0%	97.1%	42.8%
1970	83.0%	95.8%	38.8%
1971	83.7%	95.8%	42.3%
1972	84.7%	95.7%	47.3%
1973	86.1%	96.2%	52.4%
1974	88.4%	96.3%	62.6%
1975	90.9%	97.3%	70.3%
1976	91.8%	97.3%	74.2%
1977	90.9%	96.1%	74.6%
1978	91.8%	96.2%	78.0%

2. Income from direct missionary support rose from \$256,633 to \$792,196 in the same period of ten years, as follows:

	Amount	% Increase
1969	\$278,631	8.6
1970	295,353	6.0
1971	311,023	5.3
1972	354,446	11.1
1973	388,750	9.7
1974	416,821	7.2
1975	497,107	19.3
1976	558,138	12.3
1977	648,943	16.3
1978	792,196	22.1

The number of support relationships between missionaries and churches increased from 160 in 1970 to 396 in 1977 and 434 in 1978. The practice of "Faith-Promise" support is increasing dramatically in this decade. Presently 422 of these relationships are found in United States churches, 12 in Canadian churches. The total number of churches which supported

home missionaries in 1978 was 295 (1977: 262).

3. Income from above-quota sources other than direct missionary support increased only \$14,707 in 1978, which is \$55,762 below the projected amount, as follows:

	Total	General	Armed Forces
1968	\$252,578	\$157,290	\$95,288
1969	251,349	173,187	78,162
1970	217,277	161,765	55,512
1971	218,811	173,568	45,243
1972	270,642	237,585	33,057
1973	253,818	218,616	35,202
1974	281,385	252,959	28,426
1975	275,270	246,140	29,230
1976	295,443	261,763	33,680
1977	354,531	312,050	42,481
1978	369,238	337,032	32,206

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

	Total		Above Quota		Armed Forces	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
<b>United States Churches</b>						
Number	646	635	351	365	125	160
Percent	100	100	54	57	19	25
<b>Canadian Churches</b>						
Number	174	171	49	42	0	2
Percent	100	100	28	25	0	1
<b>Total</b>						
Number	820	806	400	407	125	162
Percent	100	100	49	50	15	20

It seems probable that many churches, which are assuming direct support relationships, transfer their offerings for Home Missions to that category. Also, Missionary Unions raised over \$20,000 for the Rehoboth Fellowship Hall in 1978, thus attracting contributions for capital funds, which in other years may have gone into the above-quota category.

#### 4. Building Programs

Activity on-field in building programs increased during 1978. The following list reflects the 1978 program activity:

##### *Fields With Site Selection in Progress*

Boise, Idaho  
Kamloops, British Columbia  
Navajo, New Mexico

##### *Building Programs in Progress*

Atlanta, Georgia  
LaCrosse, Wisconsin  
Windsor, Ontario  
Jacksonville, Florida  
Northern Virginia  
Rehoboth Dining Hall

*B. Church Relations*

In addition to the increase in direct missionary support noted above, twenty-seven churches began support relationships for the first time in 1978. The trend appears to be continuing in 1979. Many other churches added one or more missionaries to those they were already supporting. Many churches increased the amount of support for those to whom they had already committed themselves. Several undertook a prayer support relationship, much to the aid and encouragement of the missionaries involved. Over twenty home missionaries have no prayer or salary support relationship at this time.

Production of displays, exhibits, brochures and fliers was stepped up to meet increasing requests. Staff members and regional home missionaries made numerous personal appearances. Home missionaries themselves made personal appearances in a great number of churches during the vacation months.

*C. Proposed Budget for 1980.*

On the basis of the proposed budget for 1980, which is summarized below, the board requests synod for a per-family quota of \$61.50. A more detailed budget will be submitted to the Finance Committee of synod.

CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS  
SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET  
PERIOD JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1980

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	TOTALS	% OF TOTALS
<b>SUPPORT FROM:</b>			
QUOTAS-Total		\$ 3,705,000	68.9%
Voluntary contributions (direct)	\$ 400,000		
Church collections & donations			
Church missionary support	1,060,000		
Special contributions:			
Endowments, legacies, grants, etc.			
NON-QUOTAS		1,460,000	27.1%
<b>OTHER RECEIPTS</b>			
Real Estate Repayments	\$ 150,000		
Indian Field Payments	25,000		
Interest	40,000		
<b>TOTAL OTHER GIFTS</b>		215,000	4.0%
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND OTHER RECEIPTS</b>		<u>\$ 5,380,000</u>	<u>100%</u>
<b>EXPENDITURES:</b>			
<b>PROGRAM SERVICES:</b>			
Evangelism	\$ 165,000		
Regular Fields	1,635,100		
Minority & Youth Fields	1,053,800		
Indian Fields	1,106,600		
Indian Schools	567,100		
Real Estate & Capital	369,000		
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES</b>		\$ 4,896,600	91.0%
<b>SUPPORTIVE SERVICES</b>			
Management, general	\$ 272,900		
Fund raising	210,500		
<b>TOTAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES</b>		483,400	9.0%
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>		<u>\$ 5,380,000</u>	<u>100%</u>

### VIII. REVISION OF HOME MISSIONS ORDER

The present Home Missions Order of the Christian Reformed Church was adopted by synod in 1959 and was revised in 1965. It is now time to revise the mission order to include various organizational and program developments, which have occurred since 1965 and have been approved by synod. Instead of trying to change various articles and expressions here and there, it was decided that it would be better to rewrite the entire document. This proposed revision does not represent any substantial change from the present order. At some points, things have been stated more concisely, while in other areas, it was felt that more information was needed. The "Introduction" or "Article 1," which gives a brief biblical, theological rationale for missions has been taken almost verbatim from the Mission Order of the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions, which was approved by synod in 1977.

The board now requests that synod approve the following Home Missions Order for the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions:

#### HOME MISSIONS ORDER CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

##### *Article 1. Introduction*

##### *Article 2. Mandate*

##### *Article 3. Board*

*Section 1 - Relationship to Synod*

*Section 2 - Administrative Responsibility*

*Section 3 - Members*

*Section 4 - Executive Committee*

*Section 5 - Officers*

*Section 6 - Relationship to Classes and Local Churches*

##### *Article 4. Personnel*

*Section 1 - Introduction*

*Section 2 - Field Personnel*

*Section 3 - Regional Personnel*

*Section 4 - Staff and Office Personnel*

##### *Article 5. Program*

*Section 1 - Introduction*

*Section 2 - Evangelism*

*Section 3 - Fields*

##### *Article 6. Conclusion*

##### *Article 1: Introduction*

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

In this mission God vindicates his honor through the defeat of Satan who falsely claims the world as his own, and through the creation of a redeemed people who are the first-fruits of his triumph over sin (Rev. 14:4). The Son, Jesus Christ, establishes the kingdom of God through his redemptive acts, empowers his people to be his witnesses by the work of the Holy Spirit, and send the church as his body into the world (Matt. 28:18-20). This community of sent ones heralds the gospel of the recon-

ciliation which will be fully realized at the consummation of his kingdom on the last day (Col. 1:20, Eph. 2:17, Rev. 11:15).

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

#### Article 2: *Mandate*

The Christian Reformed Church in North America, in obedience to the great commission establishes the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions and assigns it the responsibility of directing the home missions program of the denomination (Church Order Articles 73-76). The Board of Home Missions, hereafter referred to as the board, shall give leadership to the denomination in its task of bringing the gospel to, and drawing the people of Canada and the United States into fellowship with, Christ and his church.

The mandate of the board has two aspects. The board shall: a) Encourage and assist congregations and classes in their work of evangelism. b) Carry on mission activity in places or fields where the program is beyond the scope or resources of local congregations or a classis.

The board shall administer its work in accordance with the Word of God and in harmony with the regulations of the Church Order and the Home Missions Order.

#### Article 3: *The Board*

##### Section 1 - Relationship to Synod

While appointing the board as its agent, synod shall retain for itself the following responsibilities:

- a. Adoption and revision of the Home Missions Order.
- b. Appointment of the members and alternate members of the board.
- c. Appointment and reappointment of the executive secretary, treasurer, minister of evangelism, fields secretary and personnel secretary.
- d. Approval of an annual quota for the financial support of the program.
- e. Approval of major changes in policy.

##### Section 2 - Administrative Responsibility

The board shall:

- a. Direct all denominational evangelism and home mission field activity.
- b. Develop new programs and engage in long range planning to meet the home missions challenge.
- c. Arrange for the calling, appointment and supervision of home missionaries.
- d. Administer all funds relating to the tasks assigned to it by synod.
- e. Adopt or amend regulations and policies as may be required by decisions of synod.

- f. Submit to synod an annual report with appropriate recommendations.
- g. Meet as a full board at least once a year to discharge or arrange for the discharge of its duties.
- h. Be legally incorporated according to the laws of the State of Michigan having its main office in Grand Rapids, Michigan, with appropriate incorporation in Canada.

### Section 3 - Members

Since home missions is the work of the entire denomination and is closely linked with the classes, the board shall be composed of one member from each classis plus a synodically designated number of board members-at-large. All members and their alternates shall be elected for three year terms and shall be eligible for a second term according to the normal rules of synod. Terms begin in September.

Members who represent classes are proposed by their respective classes and are elected by synod. To provide liaison, board members ordinarily should be members of the classical home missions committee.

Members-at-large shall be elected by synod from a nomination presented by the board. These members reside in various parts of the denomination and shall be chosen for their special expertise and interest.

### Section 4 - Executive Committee

Whereas major policy and program decisions shall be made at the annual board meeting, the executive committee shall be responsible for the administration of home missions activity in the interim. It shall organize itself and meet as often as is necessary to function effectively.

Synod shall designate certain board members, both classical representatives and members at large, to be the executive committee.

### Section 5 - Corporate Officers

The corporate officers of the board shall be the president, vice-president, executive secretary and treasurer. The president and vice-president are board members and shall be elected by the executive committee at its September meeting. The executive secretary and treasurer shall be staff persons appointed by synod.

### Section 6 - Relationship to Classes and Local Churches

The board shall work closely with classes and local churches in all its activities. The prior rights and responsibilities of classes and churches shall be respected. When requested the board shall function as consultant for local evangelism and mission programs and shall give assistance in investigating new opportunities.

The board shall promote local initiative and encourage classes and churches to assume full administrative and financial responsibility for home mission activity within their own areas. When necessary the board shall assist by providing counsel and funds through the Grant-In-Aid program.

When a mission project is beyond the resources or scope of a classis or a local church, the board may assume responsibility for the work upon the request or with the concurrence of the appropriate classis.

Joint supervision of the work on home missions fields shall be arrang-

ed by the board with classical home missions committees in a manner which best reflects the interest of all parties involved and does not conflict with the Church Order or the Home Missions Order.

The board shall keep the classes and churches informed of its activities by sending copies of the minutes of board and executive committee to board members and their alternates, through correspondence and through the involvement of the regional home missionary.

#### Article 4: *Personnel*

##### Section 1 - Introduction

Home missionaries are called of God and sent out by the church to bring the gospel. The board shall give high priority to the recruitment and training of its personnel. It shall periodically evaluate its personnel to encourage professional and personal growth and to develop a dedicated competent missions team.

To provide necessary prayer and financial support the board shall encourage the establishment of relationships between missionaries and churches of the denomination. It shall help arrange for calling or supervising churches for its personnel who are ordained ministers or evangelists.

##### Section 3 - Field Personnel

The glory of God through participation in the ministry of reconciliation shall be the goal of all missionaries whether they work as pastors, evangelists, teachers, youth workers, houseparents, industrial workers or administrative personnel.

Missionaries shall develop their professional competence and make whatever personal adjustments their mission task may require. They shall work under the supervision of the board and in accordance with the provisions of the Church Order and the Home Missions Order.

##### Section 3 - Regional Personnel

Canada and the United States shall be divided into regions and each region shall be served by a regional home missionary. The regional home missionary shall function as an enabler in the home missions effort of the denomination. As the first point of contact between the board and its fields and personnel, he shall work at improving the effectiveness of each ministry in his region. As liaison between the board and classical home missions committees, he shall assist in the development of mutual concerns and joint supervision. As one who has expertise in missions and evangelism, he shall provide counsel and instruction to the classes and the churches of his region.

Regional home missionaries shall be appointed by the board to initial terms of two years. They are eligible for reappointment to additional four year terms.

##### Section 4 - Staff and Office Personnel

The staff and other office personnel in Grand Rapids, Michigan shall develop and provide programs and resources which will enable home missionaries and all of the churches of the denomination to be involved in significant mission outreach in their respective communities. The

board shall supervise the staff and regularly update complete position descriptions for each staff person. Appropriate support personnel shall be provided at the discretion of the board.

Persons serving as executive secretary, field secretary, personnel secretary, minister of evangelism and treasurer shall be appointed by synod for initial terms of two years. They are eligible for reappointment to additional four year terms.

- a. Executive Secretary: Shall be responsible for the execution of the policies and decisions of the board. He shall supervise and coordinate the work of the staff for the attainment of the overall objectives of the board.
- b. Field Secretary: Shall be responsible for the programs and activities on all home missions fields.
- c. Personnel Secretary: Shall be responsible for recruiting and training home missionaries.
- d. Minister of Evangelism: Shall be responsible for promoting evangelism throughout the denomination and assisting the churches in meeting the challenge of reaching out in their own communities.
- e. Treasurer: Shall be responsible for receiving and handling all funds, advising the fields in matters of physical and financial development and supplying financial information to the board which will assist it in making its decisions.

## Article 5: Program

### Section 1 - Introduction

Home missions programming shall have as its goal the glory of God through the proclamation of the gospel, the discipling of people and the extension of the church. The board as an agency of the Christian Reformed Church shall conduct its programs in harmony with the doctrines of the church as found in the holy Scriptures and expressed in her confessions. The Church Order and decisions of synod shall be honored.

### Section 2 - Evangelism

Recognizing the responsibility of the Christian Reformed Church to bring the gospel to the people of Canada and the United States, the board shall promote the work of evangelism in all of the churches of the denomination. The board shall provide assistance (training, materials and counsel) which will equip and enable churches to meet their local responsibility as described in the Church Order (Articles 11b, 24b, 73 and 74a). It shall help the churches to employ the gifts of their members in word and deed ministries, which will serve the people of their communities, calling unbelievers to repentance and faith, receiving new believers into their fellowship and teaching them all that Christ has commanded.

### Section 3 - Fields

The term "field" is used to refer to a ministry or mission activity in a particular place which is administered by the board.

#### A. Types of Administration

### 1. Denominational Fields:

The denomination through the board as its agent is the employer of the missionary and has the primary responsibility for supervising the work.

### 2. Grant-In-Aid Fields:

A church, group of churches or a classis is the employer of the missionary and has the primary responsibility for supervising the work while receiving assistance from the board through the Grant-In-Aid program.

## B. Kinds of Ministry

### 1. Church Planting Ministries:

Ministries shall be initiated and developed in strategic places where there is need for a Christian Reformed church, there is opportunity to do evangelism and there is potential for organizing believers into new congregations.

There are four stages of organizational development:

- a. Stage I: A missionary is working on the field and a program of ministry is begun, a steering committee is appointed and worship services are initiated.
- b. Stage II: The congregation has been organized as a church within a classis and a consistory has been elected.
- c. Stage III: The church calls its own pastor while still financially dependent upon the board and under its supervision.
- d. Stage IV: The church and its pastor become independent of the board.

### 2. Specialized Ministries:

Ministries shall be initiated and developed where there is strategic opportunity to address the needs of students, military personnel, seafarers and other groups. The goal of such mission activity is the extension of the church of Jesus Christ although the organization of a new Christian Reformed congregation is not anticipated.

## C. New Fields

Potential fields shall be thoroughly investigated as to need and opportunity. There shall be consultation with the appropriate classis. The board shall adopt a new field when it is convinced that a significant ministry is possible and denominational resources are necessary.

## Article 6: *Conclusion*

Detailed descriptions of policies, procedures and responsibilities shall be set forth in the Home Missions Manual and updated as needed by the board.

This Home Missions Order having been adopted by synod shall be faithfully observed by the board. Any revisions thereof shall be made by synod.

## VIII. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

A. The board respectfully requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to its president, executive secretary and treasurer when matters pertaining to Home Missions are discussed.

B. The board respectfully requests permission to present to synod, at one of its sessions, home missionaries who may be present.

C. The board requests that synod reappoint Mr. Gerard Borst as treasurer for a four-year term (Section III, D of this report).

D. The board requests that synod approve the grant-in-aid recommendations as presented in Section IV, D of this report.

E. The board requests that synod approve grant-in-aid procedure and policy changes recommended in Section IV, G, 2 of this report.

F. The board requests synod to pass the resolution regarding evangelism principles and strategy found in this report, Section IV, E.

G. The board requests that synod approve the new Home Missions Order as found in this report, Section VIII.

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

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

J. The board requests that synod approve a quota of \$61.50 per family for the year 1980.

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

1. Central United States

a. Regular

\*Miss Gertrude Vander Ark                      Mrs. Martheen Griffioen

b. Alternate

\*Mr. Mark Vander Ark

Nominee not elected as regular delegate.

2. Central United States

a. Regular

Mr. Howard De Haan                      Mr. Donald Dekker

b. Alternate

Mr. Richard Wunderink

Nominee not elected as regular delegate.

3. Southwest Ontario

a. Regular

\*Mr. Henry Nieman                      Mr. Harry Klomps

b. Alternate

\*Dr. Jan Oosterhuis

\*indicates incumbent

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

## REPORT 5

## CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS

The Board of Publications continues to produce, implement, and supervise the education materials, periodicals, and other products as mandated by synod. The Board of Publications is composed of delegates elected by each classis and approved by the synod of the Christian Reformed Church. At our February 1979 annual board meeting all the classes were represented.

Officers chosen by the board to begin terms in September 1979 are president, Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen; vice-president, Rev. Morris N. Greidanus; secretary, Rev. Willard H. DeVries; and treasurer, Mr. William Leys. The officers of the board together with all members of its committees covet the prayers of the church for grace and guidance.

The February 1979 board meeting was "spirited" in many respects. The following report describes major board decisions and activities during the past year. The report was prepared by the board secretary; Mr. Peter Meeuwesen and Mr. Allen Van Zee, Business; Dr. Lester De Koster, Periodicals; and Mr. A. James Heynen, Education.

## SECTION ONE

## Staff Structure

The Board of Publications in session February 1979 received the report on staff structure for information. They adopted the following: the proposed staff structure, definitions of staff functions, the implementation schedule, and other specific recommendations relating to staff structure. In determining the selection process for position of Executive Director of the Board of Publications, the board decided to make the nomination for this position by mail-ballot to all members of the board. Synod will have before it, in a supplemental report, the nominees for the position of Executive Director of the Board of Publications.

The board presents the entire staff structure report to synod for information. This Synodical Interim Committee (in session February 27, 1979) decided "to endorse the general outline of the new staff structure in accord with the request of the Board of Publications."

*STAFF STRUCTURE COMMITTEE REPORT*

A special study committee of the board was mandated to:

Study the current staff structure of the entire Board of Publications including the functions of business, education, periodicals and printing, and serve the Executive Committee with advice on alternate ways to organize the staff to carry out the policies of the board in the most ef-

fective manner. (Board of Publications Minutes Art. 78-A11-D and Minutes of Executive Committee April 6, 1978.)

The committee studied various ways to organize the staff of the Board of Publications. We requested and received written statements from Dr. Lester De Koster, A. James Heynen, and Peter Meeuwssen, concerning their views of editorial responsibility and freedom and their suggestions relative to staff structure. These three staff members also appeared before the committee for an interchange of ideas.

The following denominational agencies were contacted and each of them presented us with a schematic of their staff structures: The Back to God Hour, Home Missions, World Missions, and the World Relief Committee.

Throughout our deliberations we maintained the assumption that the Board of Publications will continue to exist to carry out the seemingly diverse assignments given to it by the Synod of 1968 and following synods. We did not consider it proper to challenge that assumption.

In our discussions we eventually came to a clear expression of the mission of the Board of Publications. We view the Board of Publications to be engaged in a ministry of publication and that this basic concept underlies all the responsibilities assigned to the board. This concept also serves as a context in which the denomination can expand its ministry through the board in areas such as music education, outside sales of church school materials, and more effective publication of material from other agencies within the church. It is our judgment that the Board of Publications can best carry out this ministry by having an Executive Director to coordinate all the work which must be done by the staff of the Board of Publications.

Of all the structures considered by the committee, the one recommended is the most radical and therefore might be "threatening" to the present staff members. Your committee, however, does not envision great changes in work assignments and believes that, after implementation, staff will have a better and more efficient environment in which to work. The primary difference of the proposed reorganization of staff from the present staff structure is that it assigns definite responsibilities for doing the work as expeditiously as possible.

Because the committee wanted the proposed structure to be implemented with a minimum of uncertainty for the staff, the necessity of definite job descriptions became evident. This especially applies to the Editor-in-Chief of the BANNER, the Editor of DE WACHTER, the Director of Education, and the Business Manager, for whom it is important to define as clearly as possible the relationships between them and the Executive Director. A set of job descriptions is added to this report. These descriptions reflect the fact that we consider it vital for each of the editors to retain responsibility for the editorial content of their respective publications. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Director to provide suitable conditions so that these editors can effectively and freely perform their editorial assignments. Regarding the job descriptions, the committee feels that they provide general frameworks of responsibility which can be filled in with greater detail as the new structure is implemented and developed during the first year.

The proposed structure recognizes that art and journalism personnel are part of a team which produces the educational and periodical materials. Thus they are assigned to work in one or the other departments. However, since their work loads vary from time to time, the Executive Director will deploy the artistic and journalistic skills for the best interest of the overall work of the Board of Publications.

Although our committee did not consider a revision of the structures of the board and its committees, we are of the opinion that the proposed staff structure could be adapted to accommodate any restructuring the board might propose for its own committees.

We recommend that the staff of the Board of Publications be structured as depicted in the enclosed schematic entitled *Proposed Staff Structure*.

### *Advantages and Features of the Proposed Structure*

1. The proposed staff structure provides a unified work force to serve as a publications ministry for the denomination. The one who is assigned the responsibility of overseeing an effective and progressive ministry can best carry out that responsibility as a member of the staff, rather than as a member of the board or committee. Officers of the board or committee members will not have to be called in to resolve questions which arise within staff functions. This in turn will permit selection of board officers and committee members from a larger geographical area because they do not have to be "on the scene."

2. The proposed staff structure makes possible a more effective discharge of the following functions than is possible under the present structure:

- a. Scheduling—Permits better scheduling of materials; from creation to preparation, ordering, production, and shipping.
- b. Personnel—Provides efficient use of personnel by immediately adjusting work levels among all departments as needed. Permits more uniform salary administration for comparable work and skills among all those who work for the Board of Publications. Uniform performance reviews within staff structure are attainable.
- c. Outside Projects—Promotes the soliciting, pricing, processing, and producing of projects for other denominational agencies, as well as special reports and other assignments mandated by synod (e.g., simplified lodge report). This work also includes providing supplies (Bibles, forms, etc.) as a subsidiary service.
- d. Budgetary Matters—Adequate budget proposals and allotments for each department would be considered within a broader context, preventing oversights and avoiding duplication.

3. The Editor-in-Chief of the BANNER, for Editor of DE WACHTER, and the Director of Education would continue to be identified with their respective publications for publicity and promotion purposes. The Executive Director would be assigned more of the administrative details and would be the one representing the Board of Publications in working with other denominational boards, agencies, and committees. He would

also promote the publication ministry not only within but also outside the denomination. This arrangement would allow the editors to concentrate on their editorial functions, and would permit selection of future editorial candidates with less concern for their ability to administer details.

4. The assigning of overall administration to one person may enable the executive committee to meet less frequently.
5. Permits the board to enlarge its publication ministry by actively expanding our markets. The Executive Director could evaluate which department needs greater promotion and additional staff to better serve the denomination (e.g., additional BANNER staff for better news and journalistic coverage of the entire denomination).
6. This proposed staff structure is consistent with the intent of the Synod of 1968 to unify the work assigned to the Board of Publications.

The committee was also mandated to consider the matter of the appointment of experts to serve the Board of Publications as consultants or as committee and/or board members. The Board of Publications Minute, Article 78-A8 (see also Executive Committee Minutes, Art. 78-X63B) reads:

"Assuming the board must rely on the work and consultation of experts and assuming that these probably will not arise spontaneously out of the classical election process, it is moved that a committee be appointed by the board president to review the mandate of synod regarding the appointment of experts to our organization and recommend answers to the following questions:

1. How can the Board of Publications and its committees best be served by experts as consultants and/or implementers?
2. What should be their relationship with the Board of Publications and its committees with respect to:
  - membership status
  - attendance at meetings?
3. Can or should the roles of consultantship on, and administration of policy, be mixed?
4. Should the matter of business technicalities and policy be treated from those concerns of education and periodicals?

The committee considered the pros and cons of three alternatives for the status and use of consultants:

- a. The present system;
- b. Full board membership (proposed last year but rejected at the 1978 Board of Publications meeting);
- c. As consultants only (no committee or board membership).

After some deliberation we concluded that it would be best to postpone consideration of this matter until the new staff structure has been functioning for at least one year. It is our opinion that the newly structured staff will be able to function with the present make-up of the committees. After one year of experience the Executive Director together with the other heads of staff will be able to advise the board as to what kind of committee and board structure would be most helpful. Further-

more, we thought it might be confusing to present to this year's synod a new staff structure together with a new board-committee structure. It might be difficult for the delegates to understand how these two different areas of concern would be interrelated.

We propose a time schedule for implementing the new staff structure. It should be noted that we suggest that the Board of Publications authorize the Executive Committee to make nominations and interview candidates for the position of Executive Director within the next few months. At its February meeting the board would also have to determine the candidates selection process which would take place probably in the month of May.

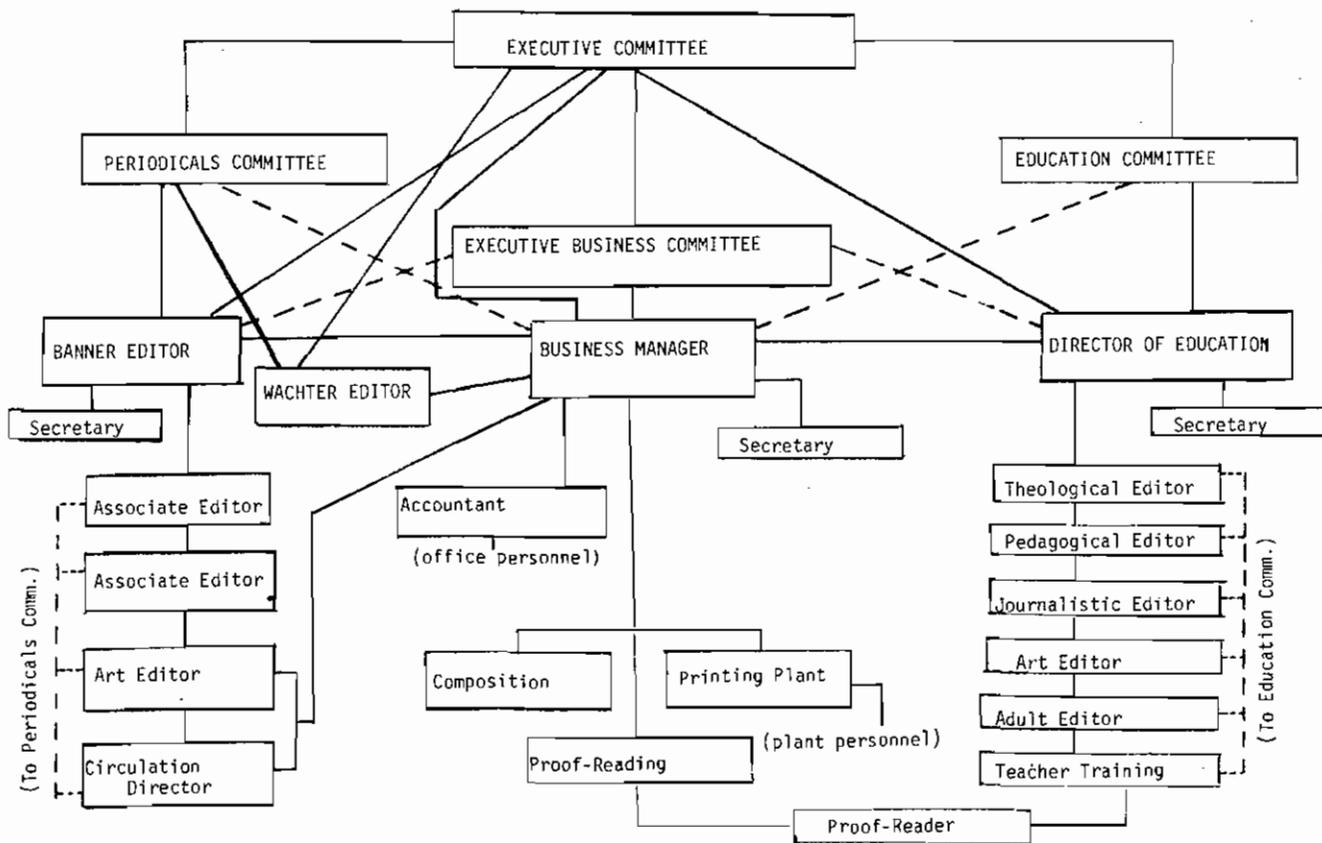
On behalf of the Executive Committee (which approved recommendations in Article 78-X89, Executive Committee Minutes, November 2, 1978) we ask the Board of Publications to:

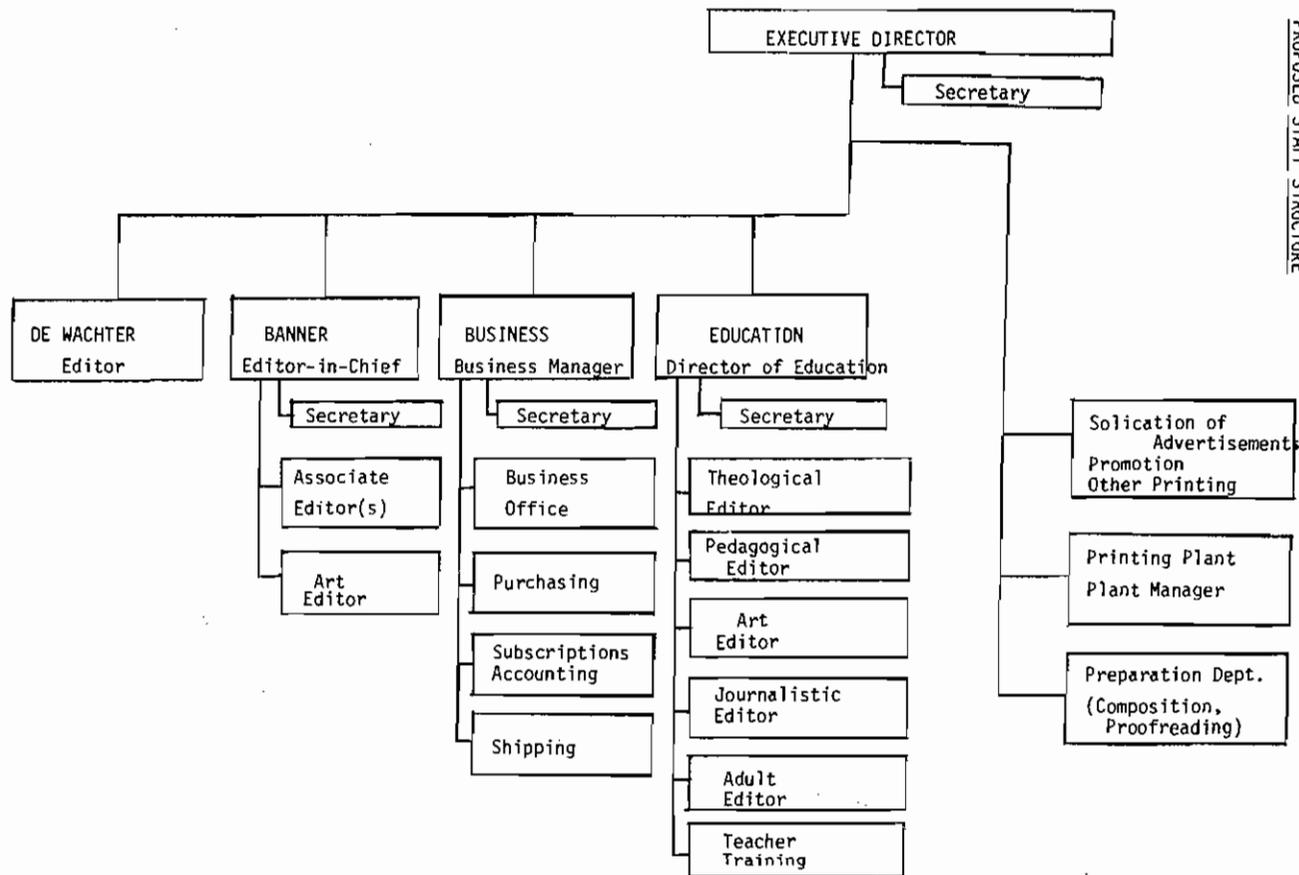
1. Adopt the plan for staff restructure as depicted in the enclosed schematic.
2. Approve the various "Staff Functions" presented in the enclosed job descriptions, including that of Executive Director, BANNER Editor-in-Chief, Director of Education, Editor of DE WACHTER and Business Manager.
3. Authorize the executive committee to make a list of nominees for the position of Executive Director.
4. Determine the selection process the board wishes to use, either "a" "b" or "c" as found on the enclosed implementation schedule. (The executive committee recommends "c.")
5. Inform the Synod of 1979 of the restructured staff to begin September 1, 1979 and request that they elect an Executive Director from the submitted nominees.
6. Postpone implementation of Article 78-A8 of the February 1978 Board meeting until the newly proposed staff structure has been in operation for at least one year.

Committee on Staff Structure

Tom Dykstra, chairman  
Neal Punt, secretary  
Hero Bratt  
Sid Dykstra  
Morris Greidanus  
Ray Holwerda  
Ken Horjus

## CURRENT STAFF STRUCTURE





PROPOSED STAFF STRUCTURE

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director is the agent of the Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church responsible for its total ministry. To fulfill that responsibility, he/she shall:

1. Represent the Board of Publications to other Christian Reformed boards, agencies, and committees, and to such other groups or organizations as may be involved with the board's ministry.
2. Assure that uniform personnel policies and procedures are used in staff supervision and review. In addition, he/she shall be responsible for implementing uniform personnel policies and procedures for all employees not directly supervised by the Banner Editor, Director of Education, or Business Manager.
3. Serve as an *ex officio* member of the Executive, Executive Business, Education, and Periodicals Committees, and as the primary staff representative to the Executive Committee and the Board of Publications.
4. Convene and chair regular meetings of an administrative group consisting of the Banner Editor, Director of Education, and Business Manager.
5. Take responsibility for functions not specifically assigned to the Banner Editor, Director of Education, and Business Manager.
6. Develop and present for approval within one year detailed job descriptions and lines of accountability for administrative positions within the Board of Publications. Thereafter, he/she shall annually review such job descriptions and report to the Executive Committee.

### BANNER EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Editor-in-Chief of The Banner is responsible for the content of The Banner.

To fulfill that responsibility, he/she shall:

1. Represent the work of The Banner to the Christian Reformed Church and to such other groups or organizations as may be involved in the ministry of The Banner.
2. Take responsibility for implementing uniform personnel policies and procedures for all employees responsible to him/her.
3. Serve as the primary staff representative to the Periodicals Committee, and attend the Executive Committee and board meetings.
4. Participate in regular meetings of an administrative group with the Executive Director, Director of Education, and Business Manager.
5. Assist in the development and review of detailed job descriptions and lines of accountability for administrative positions within the Board of Publications.

### DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

The Director of Education is responsible for the content of the church education material and the program of teacher training.

To fulfill that responsibility, he/she shall:

1. Represent the work of church education to the Christian Reformed Church and to such other groups or organizations as may be involved in the ministry of church education.
2. Take responsibility for implementing uniform personnel policies and procedures for all employees responsible to him/her.
3. Serve as the primary staff representative to the Education Committee and attend the Executive Committee and board meetings.
4. Participate in regular meetings of an administrative group with the Executive Director, Editor-in-Chief of The Banner, and Business Manager.
5. Assist in the development and review of detail job descriptions and lines of accountability for administrative positions within the Board of Publications.

### *BUSINESS MANAGER*

The business Manager is responsible for the administration of those business, financial and accounting matters as are necessary to achieve the ministry of the Board of Publications.

To fulfill that responsibility, he/she shall:

1. Present and explain the business and accounting matters of the Board of Publications to all such groups or organizations as deemed appropriate by the Executive Director.
2. Take responsibility for implementing uniform personnel policies and procedures for all employees responsible to him/her.
3. Serve as the primary staff representative to the Executive Business Committee, and attend the Executive Committee and Board meetings.
4. Participate in regular meetings of an administrative group with the Executive Director, Editor-in-Chief of The Banner, and Director of Education.
5. Assist in the development and review of detailed job descriptions and lines of accountability for administrative positions within the Board of Publications

### *DE WACHTER EDITOR IN CHIEF*

The Editor-in-Chief of De Wachter is responsible for the editorial content of De Wachter.

To fulfill that responsibility, he/she shall:

1. Represent the work of De Wachter to the Christian Reformed Church and to such other groups or organizations as may be involved in the ministry of De Wachter.
2. Take responsibility for implementing uniform personnel policies and procedures for all employees responsible to him/her.
3. Serve as a staff representative to the Periodicals Committee, and attend the Executive Committee and board meetings upon invitation.
4. Participate in meetings of an administrative group with the Executive Director, Director of Education, and Business Manager, upon invitation.
5. Assist in the development and review of detailed job descriptions

and lines of accountability for administrative positions within the Board of Publications.

### IMPLEMENTATION

<b>November, 1978</b>	<b>February, 1979</b>	<b>March - May</b>
Executive Committee	Board Approval of Structure	Candidate Selection
Approval of Structure	Notify Synodical Interim Committee	June
Notify Synodical Interim Committee	Determine Candidate Selection Process Options:	Notify Synod of Staff Structure Plan
	a. Executive Committee Empowered; or	Synodical Appointment of Executive Director
	b. Special Board Meeting; or	<b>September</b>
	c. Ballot Approval By Mail (recommended)	Implementation

## SECTION TWO

### Periodicals

#### I. MULTIPLE EDITORSHIP OF THE BANNER

##### *Background*

The Synod of 1978 received an overture from Classis Grand Rapids East which was referred to the Board of Publications for consideration. The mandate from synod states:

"That synod refer Overture 27 to the Board of Publications for serious consideration and that it instruct the Board of Publications to advise the Synod of 1979 regarding the recommendations of this overture.

##### *"Grounds:*

a. The implications of this overture are too significant for this synod to make decisions apart from a study by the Board of Publications which has been assigned responsibility for the supervision of The Banner.

b. The Board of Publications is currently working on a staff structure which will include the editorship of The Banner" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 112).

The overture makes the following requests:

"1. That, if synod approves the recommendation of the Board of Publications to approve the schedule for appointing a new editor-in-chief of The Banner, synod also instruct the Board of Publications to draw up a specific plan for the restructuring of the editorship of The Banner which will incorporate an editorial 'staff' of five persons in addition to the editor-in-chief, two of whom shall be residents of Canada. This staff

shall be chosen with the approval of the editor-in-chief, shall be designated as associate editors, shall serve on the staff for a limited time, without remuneration (except for whatever writing they may do which shall be remunerated at regular special-writer rates), and shall meet on a quarterly or bi-monthly basis in order to assess the editorial challenge, to identify areas of need and concern in the life of the church and the world, to analyze seriously the 'agenda' of the church in our times, and to seek to arrive at a broad 'consensus of editorial viewpoint and opinion' on vital issues in the life of the churches while ensuring editorial freedom and responsibility for each writer under the continued supervision of the Periodicals Committee and the Board of Publications.

"This would assume that each associate editor would be responsible for an assigned number of editorials each year as designated by the staff and approved by the Periodicals Committee, with the editor-in-chief carrying out a major role in editorial writing and being responsible for the general administration of the affairs of The Banner.

"2. That the plan be submitted for the approval of the Synod of 1979 for implementation in 1980 for a three-year trial period.

*"Grounds:*

- a. The long-standing and recurring concern for restructuring with a form of multiple editorship is indicative of a very persistent need for more broadly-based editorial leadership.
- b. The dimensions of the challenges and problems of the church are such that no one person can reasonably be expected to give vital leadership in all areas, nor to write nearly fifty-two meaningful editorials per year.
- c. Greater breadth and diversity in the editorship will serve to bring greater unity in the midst of the very fine and growing diversity of the CRC, for it will introduce a breadth of experience and insight and greater mutual appreciation.
- d. The unique bi-national nature of the CRC must be given totally serious consideration if The Banner is to serve a leadership role in the whole CRC. That will require knowledgeable editorializing which will not be attained without some form of multiple editorship.
- e. The cost of such restructuring will not be prohibitive. Whereas regional diversity of the 'staff' would be a 'plus' factor, it would not be deemed essential except with respect to the inclusion of Canadian residents.
- f. There is a reservoir of competent and effective persons who would be able to serve in this capacity for limited periods of time.
- g. Since this is a significant restructuring of the editorship, it ought to be adopted on a trial basis in order to insure an in-depth review at the end of a suitable period."

(Acts of Synod 1978, p. 113)

*Response*

The Board of Publications appreciates the opportunity to respond to the overture of Classis Grand Rapids East.

Our board has considered the matter of multiple editorship for several years. Classis Grand Rapids East again raises real issues which we too

believe must be answered in the best possible manner. We have some concern, however, about achieving the goal it desires on a strictly voluntary basis as the overture recommends. It has been our experience that persons already employed in full-time positions do not have the time to make the kind of contribution asked for by the overture. In addition to this, at its February 1979 meetings the board adopted a new staff structure which has implications for the editorship of *The Banner*. On the basis of this, we make the following recommendations:

1. That synod continue to employ an editor-in-chief who will be responsible for the editorial policy and weekly presentation of *The Banner*.

*Grounds:*

- a. Effective and efficient editorial administration of all *Banner* affairs requires an editor-in-chief.
  - b. The Board of Publications, at the instruction of synod, presents to synod the nomination of persons for the position of editor-in-chief.
2. That synod mandate the Board of Publications to consider adding persons to *The Banner* staff who would serve as assistant editors so as to increase the effectiveness of *The Banner* in its address to the divergent elements of the church.

*Ground:*

This recommendation responds to the valid concern expressed in the overture from Classis Grand Rapids East to make *The Banner* more responsive to the diversity found within the church.

## II. BANNER EDITOR

The Periodicals Committee presented three names of persons for editor of *The Banner*. All three candidates were judged by the board to possess those qualifications necessary for the position of Editor-in-chief of *The Banner*. The names of the candidates are:

Rev. William Buursma  
 Dr. James De Jong  
 Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven

The following items are included for synod's information:

1. A paper, "Criteria Used in Search for Next *Banner* Editor."
2. A biographical sketch of each nominee for *Banner* editor.
3. Prior to the meeting of Synod 1979, each synodical delegate will receive position statements written by the nominees.

The Board of Publications instructed its secretary to indicate to synod the great appreciation it expressed to the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, chairman of the Periodicals Committee, and to the Periodicals Committee for the excellent work that was done in securing nominations for *Banner* editor.

### *Criteria Used In Search For Next Banner Editor*

In seeking an Editor for *The Banner* we must keep in mind that *The Banner* is a church paper, not a theological journal. The editor should be one who is able to see a very diverse group of people as his reading au-

dience. The editor ought also to keep the church at large in mind and be able to demonstrate through the pages of *The Banner* the place the Christian Reformed Church occupies within the larger family of the church. The *Banner* editor must be alive to the issues and cross currents of the world in which we live at this time and be able to reflect such awareness in the pages of this periodical.

We see the following three qualities as primary characteristics of *The Banner* editor:

a. This person must know our Christian Reformed denomination, must know the church at large, and must know the world of our day in which the church lives and works.

b. This person must know how to write for and put together a denominational periodical such as *The Banner*.

c. This person must be able to supervise the personnel who are responsible on a regular basis for the weekly production of *The Banner*.

Elaboration on the above three points.

a. The editor should be one who fits solidly within our biblical-confessional framework and heritage.

The editor should have theological expertise and insight.

The editor should be knowledgeable about the world of our day, and must be especially sensitive to the issues of the United States and Canada, the two countries in which the majority of our church membership lives.

b. The editor's writing should be characterized by clarity, liveliness, and overall suitability for our particular church periodical.

The editor should be able to solicit copy from a variety of authors, evaluate such material as to its suitability for publication in *The Banner* and edit the copy that is to be published.

c. The editor must have the ability to work effectively and cooperatively with others on *The Banner* staff, the personnel employed by the Board of Publications and with the members of the Board of Publications.

*Biographical sketch of the Rev. William Buursma*

Born:	August 16, 1925 in Friesland, the Netherlands
Married:	Althea F. Kass in 1950. They are parents of four children
Education:	Beechwood Public School, Holland, Michigan—grades 1-8, Holland Christian High School—grades 9-12 Calvin College—A.B. 1949 Calvin Seminary—B.D. 1952
Employment:	Pastor at Strathroy, Ontario, Canada from 1952-1955 Pastor at Munster, Indiana from 1955-1963 Pastor at Bethel Church in Grand Rapids, Mich. from 1963-1973 Pastor at Kalamazoo, Mich. from 1973 to the present

- Publications: For *The Banner*—  
 March 1971—*An Afternoon In The Park*  
 May 1971—*Sunday Morning at an English Church*  
 June 1970—*A House For The Whole World*  
 1972—*A Visit to a Country Fair*  
 Dec. 1974—*Remembrances of Christmases Past*  
 For *The Reformed Journal*—  
*Reflections on An Ecumenical Beginning Family Altar*—Nov. 1957, March 1962  
*Federation Messenger*—Oct. 1977 "Is the Christian Reformed Church Still Orthodox?"

*Biographical Sketch of Dr. James DeJong*

- Born: July 10, 1941 in Paterson, New Jersey  
 Married: Lois DeKoch in 1963. They are parents of two children.  
 Education: Grades 1-12 at the following schools: Westside and Oakdale Christian Schools in Grand Rapids; Kodikonal Boarding School, South India; Christian Junior and Senior High School at Pella, Iowa.  
 Calvin College—A.B. 1963  
 Calvin Seminary—B.D. 1966  
 Free University of Amsterdam—Th.D. 1970  
 Employment: Assistant Professor of Theology, Trinity Christian College, 1970-1974  
 Associate Professor of Theology Dordt College, 1974 to the present  
 One-fourth of responsibility at Dordt College is in area of pastoral counseling.  
 Publications: 1 scholarly monograph (dissertation); several scholarly articles in *Pro Rege*; contributions to two international resource projects—  
*New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* and *Eerdmans Handbook to the History of Christianity*;  
 about thirty-five semi-popular and popular articles in sources like *Renewal* and *The Banner*; a dozen or so academic book reviews in  
*Calvin Theological Journal*, *Fides et Historia*, *Pro Rege*, *Westminster Theological Journal*;  
 another ten or twelve more popular reviews in church papers; an author of *Bible Landmarks* for Board of Publications;

author of *Soundings*, a 150 page mimeographed course reader in Biblical theology, Dordt College; several miscellaneous pieces and manuscripts.

Parachurch Groups—A look at a New Term—the BANNER, June 10, 24, July 8 and 15, 1977

The Form for the Baptism of Children—A New Translation—May 7, 1976 the BANNER

*Biographical sketch of Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven*

- Born:** In The Netherlands in the year 1927
- Married:** Ena Heerema in 1952. They are parents of six children.
- Education:** Elementary and High School education in the Netherlands.  
Studied law at the Free University but did not complete the requirements  
Calvin Seminary—B.D. 1957  
Princeton Theological Seminary—1957-58  
John Calvin Academy (the graduate school of Kampen Theological School) 1962-63  
Presently working on doctoral dissertation on the Theology of First Peter.
- Employment:** Pastor at Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada from 1958-1964  
Pastor at Hamilton, Ontario from 1964-1970  
Pastor at Wallaceburg, Ontario 1970-1971  
Theological Editor and later Director of Education under the employ of the Board of Publications serving in the Education Department from 1971-1976  
Pastor of Church in Mississauga, Ontario from 1976 to the present
- Publications:** Occasional articles for *The Banner*; contributions for a department called "The Word and the World" including review of Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth*; For the Education Department of the Board of Publications: two study books for young adults: *Love Your Neighbor* and *The Church*  
three study books for adults: *Partnership*, *The King is Coming* and *Study Guide on Romans*;  
one mission pamphlet;  
booklet based on reports of various committees and individuals, called *Church Education in the Christian Reformed Church*; "Bible

Background" in Teachers' Manuals for five different courses in the church school curriculum; 13 Family Altars (later: Today) for the Back to God Hour; re-wrote 12 Family Altars which were published by Paideia Press under the title *Daylight*; currently working on popular commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism, tentatively titled *The Doctrine of Comfort*.

### III. ADDITIONAL MATTERS FROM PERIODICAL COMMITTEE

Banner Staff meetings are held for the purpose of resolving matters involving Banner production and promotion, and for making staff recommendations to the Periodicals Committee. Attending these meetings are: the Editor, Associate Editor, Art Director, Business Manager, Production Supervisor, Circulation Director, Secretary.

A Banner Staff study of the possibility of a Denominational Every Family Plan did not receive endorsement by the Periodicals Committee.

Fifty requests were received during 1978 for permission to republish articles appearing in *The Banner*. Such requests come from other periodicals, for inclusion in books and studies, and for use in church and school publications. Requests come from the United States and Canada, and from foreign countries like India and Australia.

The number of churches on the Every Family Plan stood at 196 on January 1, 1979, and total subscriptions passed the 46,000 mark, highest in the history of *The Banner*.

Readers of *The Banner* express heartiest appreciation for *The Young Look*, *Cabbages and Kings*, *Meditations*, and *Just Between Us*. Publication of the film guide under "Cross Currents" occasioned considerable criticism, and some endorsement. The staff, Periodicals Committee, reviewers, and board have all been involved in evaluation of the guide in efforts to make this contribution as useful as possible to the church.

\* \* \* \*

The Rev. William Haverkamp, Editor of *De Wachter*, also addressed the Board of Publications, in February, 1979. He indicated receipt of many letters praising the work done by those who contribute to *De Wachter*. Subscriptions to *De Wachter* have stabilized and thus it appears understandable that the publications of *De Wachter* should continue. The Rev. Mr. Haverkamp was very pointed in his assertion that *De Wachter*, like *The Banner* is an official publication of the Christian Reformed Church. *De Wachter* fulfills an obvious need among our Canadian churches.

## SECTION THREE

### Report From Director of Education

#### I. HISTORY

When the Rev. J. M. Bosma wrote the Preface to his catechism, *Exposition of Reformed Doctrine*, he bluntly allowed that "...no serious

efforts have been made to combat the views held by non-Reformed teachers of religious truths." That was 1907. This is 1979 and things have changed considerably.

In 1907, Bosma was banking on the immaculate isolation of the Christian Reformed Church from her American environment. Since his students wouldn't face any non-Reformed theologies, why bother them about such matters? In 1979, nothing is more certain than the fact that Christian Reformed students of all ages will be nose-to-nose with other theologies on a regular basis.

Since Bosma's day we've retained a fondness for thinking of ourselves as "distinctive." But fondness is one thing, facts are another, and the peculiar source of our distinctiveness is illusive. For a part of our history we confused "being Dutch" with "being distinctive." That confusion is passing, but precisely what content ought to replace that confusion is less certain. We're simply not always sure what it means to be Reformed, even though we're sure it's important.

Ambiguities over being distinctively Reformed have been mirrored in the Christian Reformed history of church education. At our founding (1857), we cast our lot with the *Afscheiding* (1834), teaching what Dordt's church order told us to teach: the Kort Begrip (Compendium) and the Heidelberg Catechism from which it was extracted in 1608. The materials were Dutch and so were we, and teaching these materials said we were Reformed.

But by the early 1900s our Dutch houses of worship had an American guest, the Sunday school. As certainly as catechism sprang from our Netherlands roots, so certainly was the Sunday school an American flower. And the differences between those two programs of church education have represented a tension in our denomination throughout this century. If we are Reformed, we must have catechism. But to be evangelicals, we must have a Sunday school. And since the Synod of 1910 we've been spilling ink over the question, What do we do with these two programs?

The 1970 Synod gave the latest and longest answer to that question: In the place of two, make one. Instead of Sunday school and catechism, said that synod, there should be a church school which has evangelical warmth and the sturdy Reformed heritage. Since the Bible and the confessions are mutually understood in our tradition, they should be mutually taught. Both evangelism and the covenant find their center at Calvary; therefore, essentially one lesson must be learned by all students no matter which homes they come from.

In theory, that synod answered the question. In fact, the Education Committee—which only two years earlier had become part of the Board of Publications—was told to answer the question with a new curriculum.

In 1971, the committee began assembling a staff. In 1972, the staff began producing a curriculum called BIBLE WAY. By the close of 1978, the BIBLE WAY curriculum had been completed from the level of three year olds through grade ten. Not all courses try to teach all truths, and the integration of Sunday school and catechism does not mean 50% of each at every level. But, taken as a curriculum, these materials teach the Bible and the confessions, and teach *both* from a Reformed perspective with an evangelical concern.

The program approved in 1970 was a radical change. Since the Education Department was created specifically to effect that change, the department at first seemed radical. Those who applauded big changes applauded the Education Department. Those who had opposed the 1970 decision in the first place transferred that opposition to the new Education Department. Opponents of the 1970 decision *still* refer to the BIBLE WAY curriculum as "the Education Department's new curriculum," not too subtly suggesting it belongs neither to them nor their denomination.

That history becomes one of our teachers now that we're about to launch a major new program of adult education. The idea that church education is for children, not for adults, is at least as well ingrained in the Christian Reformed Church as was the division between Sunday school and catechism. The tradition will not change in a month, or a year, or probably even a decade. But if we're wise we'll do better at explaining what we're planning (and why) for adult education than we did for "the new curriculum" some years ago. And we'll now be aided by the growth of trust, and even some mutual admiration, between the department and the denomination.

And recollection of history helps give us perspective. The Education Committee and her staff worked hard this past year. Some of that work is evident in products completed, projects begun, and proposals sent to the board. Much of the work is and will remain unseen.

What's most important, though, isn't a project here or a proposal there, or even the events of a single year. What counts most is an overall direction toward obedience to Christ and service to his church.

## II. PERSONNEL

Four staff members have been with the Education Department since its beginning: Mrs Alida Arnoys has faithfully served as secretary for a string of Directors and the entire department since 1971. Robert Rozema joined the staff a few month after Mrs. Arnoys. As Education (or, Pedagogical) Editor, it's he who deserves the praise when teachers tell us the curriculum is "easy to teach." Paul Stoub (Art Editor) has, since 1972, taught us that art is an essential ingredient in learning—it's neither sugarcoating for a pill nor the gloss which makes stuff sell. Mrs. Ruth Vander Hart (Journalistic Editor) has been responsible for our spelling and punctuation and syle for almost eight years. Mrs. Cele Mereness and Dr. Edwin Walhout joined us in 1976: Mrs. Mereness to create and then coordinate a program of teacher training, and Dr. Walhout to bring us from grand discussions to actual materials for adult education. Ms. Dorothy Kuperus also came to us in 1976. She was a teacher, and now she's our copy editor. Dr. Harvey Smit left Japan to become our Theological Editor in 1977. In that position, he gives many hours planning courses, advising other editors, and writing theological background materials for publication.

The current Director, A. James Heynen, came in 1974. His term, together with those of Dr. Smit, Mr. Stoub, and Mrs. Vander Hart, expires this year. The Board of Publications, therefore, presents the following recommendations to synod:

A. *Mr. A. James Heynen*

The Board of Publications recommends that Mr. A. James Heynen be reappointed as Director of Education for a four-year term beginning September, 1979.

*Ground:*

Mr. Heynen has served the Education Department for three years as Managing Editor and for two years as Director of Education. He has demonstrated and used without reserve a wide variety of gifts in fields administrative, educational, theological and others. He has achieved a high quality and amount of educational output. He has maintained excellent relations with the staff and with the church we serve. Without reservation we recommend his reappointment.

B. *Dr. Harvey A. Smit*

The Board of Publications recommends that Dr. Harvey Smit be reappointed as Theological Editor for a four-year term beginning September, 1979.

*Ground:*

Dr. Smit was first appointed to his current post by the 1977 Synod. He has served the Education Department exceptionally well during his first two years in office, and he certainly deserved reappointment. He provides a consistently Reformed perspective for our work. He offers leadership and gentleness, both of which are appreciated by the entire staff. He is a very fine Theological Editor, and his reappointment is important to the work ahead of us.

C. *Mr. Paul Stoub*

The Education Committee recommended that Mr. Stoub be reappointed as Art Editor for a four-year term beginning September, 1979. However, on January 4, 1979, Mr. Paul Stoub declined to be considered for reappointment as Art Editor. His reasons, as stated in a letter to the Education Committee, included these thoughts: "I have chosen to follow art instead of art criticism and art manipulation because it suits me better. . . . My choice leads me in the direction of visual expression rather than production and completion of specific printed pieces. . . . It puts me in the position of an author instead of an editor."

The Board of Publications reluctantly accepted Mr. Stoub's resignation, and adopted the following description of the Art Editor's position. It is provided here for the information of synod:

Title: *Art Editor*

Responsibilities:

1. The Art Editor is that editor responsible for the appearance of all materials produced by the Education Department. He/she shall:
  - a. Work with other editorial staff in the planning and design of all publications, developing presentations with models and options in shape, size, dimension, packaging, art specifications (type, keylining, format), and material.

- b. In cooperation with the Director of Education, develop contracts for specific projects with contracting artists.
- c. Critique and approve work submitted by contracting artists, and integrate that work into the final product.
- d. Provide artwork of his or her own as the need arises.
2. The Art Editor is responsible for approving production of material after other editors have completed their work. He/she shall:
  - a. Organize job flow and schedules for work from the editorial staff through approval of "press sheets."
  - b. Monitor and approve typesetting, paste-up, and proofs (including blue-prints, color keys, press sheets) on all material produced by the Education Department.
3. The Art Editor, within the boundaries of approved budgets, is responsible to make necessary and routine purchases of art supplies and equipment for use in the Education Department. He/she identifies needs for new expenditures and makes appropriate recommendations to the Director of Education.
4. The Art Editor is responsible to secure all copyrights applying to art work in materials of the Education Department.
5. The Art Editor may be assigned such other responsibilities as are deemed necessary and appropriate by the Director of Education and/or the Board of Publications.

*Accountability:*

The Art Editor is responsible to the Director of Education.

*D. Mrs. Ruth Vander Hart*

The Board of Publications recommends that Mrs. Ruth Vander Hart be reappointed as Journalistic Editor for a four-year term beginning September, 1979.

*Grounds:*

It was the Synod of 1977 that first named Mrs. Vander Hart Journalistic Editor. Before that time, Mrs. Vander Hart had done essentially the same work but under a variety of different titles. Having now completed two years in office, she is eligible for a four-year appointment.

She provides our staff not only with basic copy editing skills, which are important, but also with a creative writing capacity that often rescues us from abysmal failure. Much of the student material in BIBLE LANDMARKS, for example, came from the mind and typewriter of Mrs. Vander Hart. She is a gifted and willing editor, always ready to take on a new project, more demanding of herself than others. We heartily recommend Mrs. Vander Hart's reappointment to a four-year term.

**III. CURRICULUM FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS**

The BIBLE WAY curriculum is complete from the level of three year olds through junior high school. But they're only "temporarily complete." According to our current production cycle, we'll begin reworking these courses in 1980. Our goal: Three completed revised courses by 1982, and two more by 1984. We are now soliciting additional

criticisms of these materials, and guidelines for revision should be submitted to the 1980 synod.

#### IV. CURRICULUM FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The staff finished work on the second year of BIBLE LANDMARKS—our ninth and tenth grade study of the Heidelberg Catechism—late in 1978. In format and content, and even in its basic concept, BIBLE LANDMARKS was new, demanding, and squarely in the limelight. For many pastors, this was the only course in the "new curriculum" they'd ever seriously studied or used.

BIBLE LANDMARKS is not perfect, but it gets high marks almost everywhere it's used. More student are currently enrolled in this course than in any other we've ever produced. Given the general acceptability of BIBLE LANDMARKS and the press for other courses, we decided to delay revisions in LANDMARKS for two years. Mistakes are being corrected, but a complete revision will wait until the fall of 1980.

Meanwhile, we've gone to work on the young adult course on Scripture. We lost six months of production time, and at least one author, by setting out with a course plan which was approved but had no other virtue. It was October before we'd cleaned up the disastrous plan, and November before we had people to write. Now the rush is on to have a course ready for use in September.

The difficulty we encountered with the plan for the young adult Scripture course extended to other young adult core courses. Therefore, we requested board approval for basic changes in the remaining two courses in that series.

We originally proposed, and both the board and synod approved, a plan calling for three one-year core courses for young adults. In addition to the course on Scripture, which is now being written, we planned:

#### CONFESSIONS: "This We Confess" (10 sessions)

Provides a brief overview of ecumenical and Reformed creeds, including historical content and primary doctrinal issues.

#### "Reformed Doctrine" (18-20 sessions)

Using appropriate confessional statements, this unit examines the doctrines of God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), man, Christ, Holy Spirit, salvation, church, and last things. Approach is experiential—first asking key questions about God, man, and the world, then helping students find answers in the creeds

#### CHRISTIAN RESPONSES: "Personal Morality and Christian Ethics" (18 sessions)

Teaches students to apply moral principles to such ethical problems as world hunger, poverty, abortion, ecology, self-abuse, and racism. Promotes student involvement in the solution of such problems.

#### "Christian Apologetics" (13 sessions)

Enables students to recognize and deal with various modern "attacks" on the faith. Organizes around a series of "I don't believe. . ." statements, such as ". . . there is a God," "God is good,"

"Jesus is God," "... the Bible is God's Word."

The Board of Publications now recommends that synod grant the following changes in young adult core courses plans (with detailed descriptions to be approved by the Education Committee):

In the place of "Confessions," a one-year core course under the theme "Defending the Faith." This course will be a thorough study of ecumenical creeds and Reformed confessions, and will ask students to develop apologetic responses to attacks on the Reformed or Christian faith.

In the place of "Christian Responses," a one-year core course under the theme, "Showing Obedience." This course will ask students to explore and apply Christian moral and ethical principles by way of working through a variety of case studies.

The effect of approving these changes will be:

- (1) There will no longer be a separate unit on apologetics attached to a course dealing with moral and ethical issues. Rather, there will be an entire course which has as its content the Reformed creeds and uses, as basic pedagogy, applied apologetics.
- (2) Consideration of moral and ethical responses will be expanded from approximately eighteen sessions to a full year's study, with "case studies" as the basic pedagogy for the entire course.

#### V. CURRICULUM FOR ADULTS

The last synod unanimously approved plans for adult education sent from the Board of Publications. Now we must produce what they approved.

First there will be A PLACE TO STAND. Editorial problems delayed release from September of last year to February of this. By the time synod convenes, this course should be well known in the church.

The staff is now working on two other courses in the adult curriculum. A second one-year study of Reformed doctrine, BEYOND DOUBT, will provide a reflective, devotional study of problems which plague the faith.

The author of BEYOND DOUBT is the Rev. Neal Plantinga, who also wrote the text for A PLACE TO STAND, and the production schedule calls for release by January 1, 1980.

A church history course which moves in thirty sessions from Old Testament Israel to Pope John Paul II is also now being written. The author is Dr. Frank Roberts who has been on leave from Calvin College while working for us. This course is also supposed to appear on January 1, 1980.

The board has endorsed, and requests synodical approval for, the following major addition to the previously approved adult curriculum plan:

The current plan calls for the following:

#### DIVISION FOUR: LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD

A one-year course of study (approx. 30 lessons) which examines various life situations requiring Christian moral response. The lessons will discuss moral questions from the point of view of what it means to live in the presence of God as Christians not yet perfected. Biblical guidelines, alternative Christian answers, non-Christian theories.

**Unit One: *Living Before God***

An introductory unit dealing with the norms, motivations, and values for living as free and joyous believers in the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

**Unit Two: *Living as a Sinner/Saint***

Lessons dealing with personal sanctification and the development of Christian virtues. Topics such as pride, anger, temptation, humility, self-discipline, self-indulgence, and tolerance will be treated.

**Unit Three: *Living Through Decisions***

Lessons dealing with basic life decisions such as choosing a vocation, marriage, children, education, aging, and retirement. Also included will be a treatment of situation in which the right ethical course is not always clear, such as 'white lies,' abortion, euthanasia, and participation in war.

**Unit Four: *Living in Society***

Lessons dealing with Christian responsibility in terms of such broader human problems as pollution, world hunger, racial discrimination, nuclear disarmament, just legislation, and nationalism."

We now propose that Division Four be a two-year sequence as follows:

**YEAR ONE: LIVING IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD**

(The previous descriptions remain intact with the exception of a new Unit Three.)

**Unit Three: *Living with Moral Dilemmas***

Lessons dealing with situations in which the right ethical course is not always clear, such as "white lies," abortion, euthanasia and participation in war. A "case-study" type of pedagogy might be employed for this unit.

**YEAR TWO: FAMILY LIVING**

A one-year course of study (approx. 30 lessons) which examines the characteristic relationships and problems of Christian family life. The course is organized according to the progressive stages through which families proceed, and will be designed for possible use by intergenerational groups as well as by exclusively adult groups.

**Unit One: *The New Family***

Lessons dealing with adjustments required and problems encountered during the earliest years of a family's life, such as marriage vows, adjustments to marriage, family planning, dual vocations, in-laws, choosing a church, buying a home, and deciding on a life-style.

**Unit Two: *The Family With Young Children***

Lessons dealing with the years a family adjusts to the advent of children and learns to train and discipline them, taking up matters such as pregnancy and birth, baptism, discipline of children, schooling, church school and church participation, interfamily relations, family devotions, favoritism, vacations, working mothers, absent fathers, TV, and sports.

*Unit Three: Special Challenges for the Family*

Lessons dealing with unusual conditions and problems occurring in certain family settings, such as the unmarried aunt, divorce and remarriage, handicapped or disturbed children, live-in grandparents, adoption, pregnancy before marriage, and changing residence.

*Unit Four: The Family With Adolescent Children*

Lessons dealing with the later years of family life as the children approach adulthood and taking up such matters as sex education, dating, family rules, profession of faith, alcohol and drugs, financial difficulties (taxes, etc.), helping children choose a vocation, children's friends, passages in life for parents, and letting the children go.

*Unit Five: The Family After the Children Leave*

Lessons dealing with the family after children have left home and into the years of retirement and taking up questions such as grandchildren, readjustments after children leave, dependence or independence from children, death of husband or wife, contributions to society, retirement home, post retirement work, and remarriage.

While new courses for adults are planned and produced, we continue publishing our weekly "Mini-Banner," BIBLE STUDIES for adults, on a quarterly basis. Beginning with the Fall (1979) Quarter, two changes should take effect in BIBLE STUDIES: (1) we'll publish twelve rather than thirteen issues each quarter, and (2) we'll number rather than date each issue. Neither change is enormous, and both should help some users.

## VI. OTHER PRODUCTION

Much of our time, and many of our nagging problems, involve projects other than the production of approved curriculum materials.

During the past year, for example, we:

Rewrote and illustrated the synodical report on world hunger to produce an eight-session study/action guide called AND HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM. First released in September, this book is now in its second printing.

Added a study of John's Revelation to our own "Revelation Series," booklets containing reprints of Bible studies. Dr. Walhout, Adult Education Editor, was the author of this guide.

Revised NO MORE STRANGERS, an inquirers' course originally produced in cooperation with the Synodical Committee on Race Relations.

Issued a Certificate of Profession of Faith on a model first suggested by Board of Publications member Mrs. Gerry Haagsma. The certificate contains an ornate printing of the famous first question and answer from the Heidelberg Catechism, with space on the bottom to give the name, date, place, etc., of the profession and the person making it. Edited (rewrote, actually) and published in booklet form the Christian Reformed Church's official position on lodge membership. The mandate for this job came first from the 1977 Synod, then from the Synod of 1978.

For some years we've been promising something, and producing nothing, for the training of officebearers. The Education Committee has now approved publication of a "Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government" which will consist of an annotated church order assembled by Stated Clerk Brink and Seminary Professor De Ridder. The manuscript for that manual has been submitted and editing began in early February. After the manual is published (probably August, but maybe in time for synod), we'll develop a course of the Church Order for officebearers. Meanwhile, we'll encourage consistory members to use A PLACE TO STAND and other adult curriculum courses to get a basic knowledge of Reformed faith and history.

And a manuscript has also been completed for a course on the "Use of Women's Gifts." The manuscript, written by Dr. Louis Vos, has been critiqued by a variety of persons who hold a variety of views on this topic. We're working on this course at the instruction of the 1977 Synod.

#### VII. MUSIC AND LITURGY

In recent years we've received a variety of laments and requests involving music and liturgy and how little we do to teach anyone about either. A board member (Dr. Thomas Dykstra) once proposed a Music Editorship. The denominational Liturgical Committee has rebuked us for our apparent inactivity in this area. We've had little evidence to build a good defense.

Against that background, it's notable that the Education Committee approved co-sponsorship (with Calvin's Music Department) of a major Church Conference on Music and Liturgy to be held at Calvin College July 18-20, 1979. The conference will provide education on "basic liturgical issues and practical musical concerns" for "ministers, church school music leaders, choir directors, organists, and anyone else who is interested." It's only a beginning, admittedly, but it *is* a beginning.

#### VIII. TEACHER TRAINING

Our Teacher Training program is beginning to have a history. In 1976-77, we made a decision to select qualified, professional teachers across Canada and the States (twenty in all) who would then be trained to go into local congregations to train church school teachers. The following year (1977-78), professional trainers were selected and equipped to do their new work. During the 1977-78 year, approximately 180 congregations were aided by these trainers.

During the 1978-79 year, our goal has been to establish on-going relationships between trainers and congregations where they work. We are seeking ways to more effectively promote the training program. And we're planning to add new trainers in some areas not adequately staffed in our first few years.

We are keenly interested in involving more pastors in the training process. They are often among the most ignorant in the church when it comes to knowing what actually happens in the church school classroom, unless they are themselves the teachers.

Also during the coming year we plan to hold, for the first time, several regional training workshops in areas where local congregations have not requested many events. Our goal remains the establishment of training

events in local congregations. It seems to us, however, that regional training workshops may be one way to deliver training while, at the same time, promoting it.

#### IX. EXPANDED MINISTRY

During the past year, use of BIBLE WAY materials both inside and outside the Christian Reformed denomination increased substantially. The number on non-CRC accounts grew by 18.6% and now represents roughly one-half of all accounts. Additional statistics, and information on our relationships with other denominations, will be available in supplementary report at synod.

Meanwhile, the Board of Publications received and approved a report regarding sales of church school materials through bookstores. The substance of that report, and the recommendations adopted by the Board, are presented here for synod's information:

#### INTRODUCTION

In its 1977 meeting, the Board of Publications received a lengthy report arguing the merits of selling church school material outside the Christian Reformed Church. The board received that report and adopted the following resolution:

... that the Board of Publications of the Christian Reformed Church, through its Education Department, is committed to an expanded ministry in the distribution of Reformed church education materials beyond the Christian Reformed Church.

That same resolution was later affirmed by synod.

A year later the Board of Publications received an even longer report discussing goals for sales beyond the Christian Reformed denomination, projections of possible sales, guidelines for curriculum in an expanded ministry, and financial implications involved in a changing market. What was also proposed, and then adopted by the board, was a recommendation that

... on a temporary and experimental basis, BIBLE WAY curriculum materials (and other items produced by the Board of Publications) be made available through selected Christian bookstores in Canada and the United States. The purpose of this action... [was] to determine whether or not our materials should be sold through bookstores on a permanent, long-range basis and, if so, on what conditions.

Although approval for selling our goods through Christian bookstores was first granted at last year's board meeting, it was no new idea then. People had been arguing for and against the concept for almost three decades. In effect, the board authorized an experiment to stop the argument and determine whether, in the future, we should or should not actively seek to sell material produced by the Board of Publications—particularly our church school curriculum—through Christian bookstores.

#### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Following the Board's approval for limited bookstore sales, a staff Management Team was appointed to plan, administer and evaluate results of our work. The Management Team began meeting in early spring and, by May, had begun to identify potential bookstores who might

be involved in the evaluation project. All bookstores who had previously contacted the Education Department asking to be considered for dealership were added to the list. Mr. William Zondervan (Zondervan Publishing) and Mr. Richard Baker (Baker Book House) were contacted.

In July, Mr. Heynen attended the annual Christian Booksellers Association Convention in Denver, Colorado. In August, he reported on what he'd learned there. Also in August, the Management Team approved the following documents (all of which were needed to contact or initiate work with any bookstore):

1. Letters to dealers who had previously contacted the Education Department, or with whom we'd had previously established accounts.

2. Letters to dealers with whom we'd had no previous contact but who were located in an area, or had a specific clientele, in which we had particular interest.

3. An extensive "Dealer Application Form" requesting legal, financial, promotional, and other information from dealers who were interested in handling our materials.

4. A complete schedule of discounts and conditions for sales of materials produced by the Education Department.

5. A policy outlining promotional materials and services available to dealers.

6. A policy statement for billing, accounting and shipping materials ordered by dealers.

From September through December, the Management Team made a concerted effort to contact and develop a functioning relationship with ten Christian bookstores around Canada and the United States. By the end of 1978, only four bookstores had been selected (three in the States and one in Canada). By the end of January (1979), only two of those four had placed an order for materials.

We have not yet determined the total sales potential which might be realized from sales of church school materials through bookstores. But we have determined, we believe, the costs which will be involved and the relationship between those costs and likely income.

#### ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

1. Those bookstores most immediately and obviously interested in handling our church school materials are bookstores located in areas which have a high concentration of Christian Reformed and/or Reformed Church in America congregations. Since many of those congregations already use these materials, or the likelihood of selling these materials is extremely high to such congregations not yet using them, dealers in those areas are guaranteed a profit by handling these products. The problem is: Such dealers' *profits* come at the expense of the Christian Reformed Church who must subsidize the discounts those dealers enjoy. The purpose of our experimentation with bookstores was to see if this method would provide a way of attracting *new* accounts, rather than providing an alternate method of servicing *current* accounts.

2. Many Christian bookstores are disinterested in handling church school curriculum at all; if they handle such curriculum, they are already doing more than they would like to do. Why? Because the profit margins

are too small for the amount of money, time, and warehousing required by church school curriculum sales.

3. National sales patterns for church school materials are increasingly changing from a bookstore-base to a sales-representative-base.

4. For the Board of Publications to successfully work with bookstores, we must:

- a. Add *at least* one additional staff member, full time, who can handle promotion, solicitation, ordering, etc., with bookstores.
- b. Alter our billing and accounting procedures, including all computer programming, to handle discounting schedules for bookstores.
- c. Provide additional national advertising and local promotional materials which are not currently available.
- d. Participate in national sales organizations in which we do not currently hold membership or participate.

At a minimum, the total cost of such changes would add \$50,000 annually to our budget. In order to recover those costs with new income, we would need to sell (given bookstore discounts) in excess of \$250,000 *annually* in *new* sales simply to cover new costs.

## CONCLUSION

Sales through bookstores will cost the Board of Publications more each year than we could possibly hope to gain in return.

## RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED

1. That the Board of Publications honor all current commitments to bookstores who have agreed to work with us "on a temporary and experimental basis."

### *Grounds:*

- a. Commitments which are made should be honored, even if the long-term policy will not be altered.
- b. Only four bookstores have entered into such an agreement, and those bookstores can be served decently, given current policy and practice.
- c. The commitments extend only through August 31, 1980, at which time no further commitments will be made.

2. That the Board of Publications adopt the following statement as its policy with regard to bookstore sales:

- a. Bookstores, dealers or other retail or wholesale suppliers may normally purchase and resell materials produced by the Board of Publications.

### *Grounds:*

- (1) Some bookstores may wish to handle our materials as a service to their customers.
- (2) While we do not want to actively promote bookstore sales, neither do we mean to penalize bookstore owners by prohibiting their sales of our materials.
- b. No discounts or other considerations will be provided bookstores, dealers or other retail or wholesale suppliers, other than such discounts or considerations as may be available to any purchaser (e.g., discounts based on volume of sales on certain items).

*Grounds:*

- (1) The Board of Publications is not organized to service bookstores adequately, and to make required organizational changes would be unreasonable.
  - (2) Some products are already available with discounts based on volume of sales. If bookstores wish to order materials in volume, we should not discriminate against them by denying existing discounts.
- c. Exceptions to this policy may be recommended for certain products, or under certain conditions, upon the approval of the Executive Business Committee of the Board of Publications.

*Grounds:*

- (1) There may be exceptional situations in which discount sales to or through a bookstore appear to be beneficial to the ministry of the Board of Publications. This clause allows for consideration of such exceptional situations without overthrowing the entire policy.
  - (2) The Executive Business Committee is in the best position to speak for the board, and policy should be determined by the board rather than the board's employees.
3. That, if the above recommendations are approved, all bookstores with whom we've entered into commitments be informed of such actions.

*Grounds:*

- a. Bookstores who have agreed to help us should not be misled.
- b. Bookstores may alter their plans based on such information.

## X. LISTENING TOURS

The most interesting invention of the past year was, I think, "Listening Tours." We've a fancier title, but Listening Tours is an apt description of what we've done and hope to do again.

In December, several editors and I took a trip of nearly 2,000 miles in six days, during which time we interviewed over 200 selected people regarding church education. In Chicago, Pella, Orange City, Inwood (IA), and Sioux Center, we met with pastors, teachers, parents, and young adults for 90-minute group interviews. We gave no speeches, led no workshops, sold no goods, and answered no questions ourselves. We merely put questions and made careful notes as people criticized our past work and made suggestions for the future.

The importance of *listening* may be obvious, but it has often been overlooked. Unless we find ways to listen closely to those people we're supposed to serve, we'll never serve them very well—including "service by leadership." The tours are an interesting, and I think helpful, method for receiving direct advice from those who pay our keep.

## SECTION FOUR

## Financial Matters

A thorough and detailed financial report was given to the Board of Publications at its annual board meeting in February. This report is also

available to anyone at synod desiring a complete picture from our finance personnel who will be present there.

The following are the audited financial statements for the year ended August 31, 1978, and the budget for the fiscal year 1980.

*A. Budget Versus Actual Results For Fiscal Year 1978.*

Our actual results from operations for fiscal 1978 exceeded our budgeted projection due to the following factors:

Greater than anticipated sales of Psalter Hymnals, church school materials, other printing services, and an increased experience factor percentage for quota receipts.

The board anticipates that substantial working capital demands will be experienced in the future from additional equipment requirements and from rising production and purchasing costs.

*B. Quota for the Board of Publications.*

The board is gratified that the operating results for the year ended August 31, 1978, were more favorable than anticipated and is looking forward to a continuation of those factors which contributed to that result.

Therefore, the budget which the board adopted for its year ending August 31, 1980, even though it recognized increased operating costs and other expenses, represents, not an increase, but a continuation of the current \$3.50 quota per family.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS  
BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN  
Year ended August 31, 1978

INCOME		
Subscriptions and sales		\$ 1,754,315
COSTS		
Material	\$ 681,022	
Direct Labor	187,489	
Artwork	36,122	
Manufacturing Expenses	260,376	
Writers	32,903	
Mailing Costs	142,982	
	1,340,894	
GROSS MARGIN		\$ 413,421
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE		
Direct (clerical-editorial-managerial)	\$ 325,892	
Indirect (depreciation-insurance-office supplies-postage, etc.)	226,220	
	552,112	
OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)		\$ ( 138,691)

OTHER INCOME - NET *	\$ 347,638
NET INCOME	\$ 208,947

\* INCLUDES \$314,593 QUOTAS FOR:

Banner	\$72,043
De Wachter	23,943
Unified Church School Curriculum	218,607
	\$314,593

BALANCE SHEET

BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

As of August 31, 1978

ASSETS

CURRENT

Cash on hand and on deposit	\$ 217,083
Accounts receivable	279,608
Inventories	267,760
Prepaid Expenses and Other	332,525
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS AND OTHER ASSETS	\$7,096,976

EQUIPMENT

Machinery & equipment, office furniture & fixtures, and truck	\$ 980,050	
Less accumulated depreciation	446,834	\$ 533,216
TOTAL ASSETS		\$1,630,192

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

CURRENT

Accounts payable	\$ 35,355	
Accrued expenses	58,725	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		\$ 94,080

DEFERRED INCOME	201,365
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EQUITY	1,334,747
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$1,630,192

BUDGET FOR 1980  
BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

INCOME			
Subscriptions and Sales			\$ 2,167,000
COSTS			
Material	\$ 863,000		
Direct Labor	228,000		
Artwork	53,000		
Manufacturing Expenses	320,000		
Writers	58,000		
Mailing Costs	190,000		1,712,000
GROSS MARGIN			\$ 455,000
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE			
Direct (clerical-editorial-managerial)	\$ 370,000		
Indirect (depreciation-insurance-office supplies-postage, etc.)	296,000		\$ 666,000
OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)			\$( 211,000)
OTHER INCOME - NET	*		\$ 224,000
NET INCOME			\$ 13,000

\* Includes \$223,000 Quotas For:

Banner	\$41,000
De Wachter	26,000
Unified Church	
School Curriculum	156,000
	\$223,000

## SECTION FIVE

### Miscellaneous Items

The following items are presented to synod for information, and, where indicated, action in regard to recommendations presented:

#### I. SYNODICAL MANDATES TO PUBLISH

The following recommendation of the Education Committee was approved by the Board of Publications which seeks synodical approval:

The Education Committee requests the Board of Publications' recommendation that "the Synod of 1979 establish a policy, along the following guidelines, regarding decisions concerning publication of various reports:

That a recommendation to synod from study or advisory committees to publish specific materials must include an estimate, developed in consultation with the staff of the Board of Publications, indicating the number and categories of readers anticipated, as well as a statement indicating the value a particular document may have for the ministry of the church. And, further, that all decisions to publish materials not previously accounted for in budget appropriations be made contingent upon budgetary provisions for meeting eventual costs.

*Grounds:*

1. Ad hoc publication decisions can not be anticipated in synodical agency budget requests.
2. Study reports are already published in every synodical Agenda and Acts, providing about 20,000 copies for office bearers and are available in nearly all church libraries.
3. Publication decisions should be made on the basis of broader input from several concerned sources."

## II. MAJOR WORLD LANGUAGES LITERATURE STUDY COMMITTEE

In 1977 the Christian Reformed World Missions (CRWM) Board proposed to synod that "a Major World Languages Literature Study Committee be appointed to bring recommendations to the Synod of 1978 regarding the feasibility of forming a permanent committee to plan, organize and publish needed Reformed literature in major world languages.

Synod adopted this proposal, but requested the CRWM Board to organize this committee and bring such recommendations to the next synod (one year's delay was granted in 1978). Synod also requested the CRWM Board to include personnel from the Home Missions Board, the Back to God Hour Committee, and the Board of Publications, "since the work and interests of these boards is such that should involve them in this common task."

This study committee began meeting November 1, 1977, under the chairmanship of a CRWM representative. The committee included representation as requested by synod, with the addition of an advisor from the American Calvinist Fellowship.

The study committee early decided that a permanent committee for Reformed literature in major world languages is not only feasible, it is also advisable. There are clear needs in this area. The present activities of our denomination are fragmented and regrettably uncoordinated.

The more difficult question was the structure of such a permanent committee and its relationship to synod, to denominational groups, and to church-related agencies. After studying various possibilities, the committee is recommending to the CRWM Board that it propose to synod a reorganization of the present Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad (CEACA) and a revision of its mandate such that it could absorb this task.

CEACA seems peculiarly fit to take over these functions. It already works with Reformed churches abroad, assisting them in theological training and in expanding library facilities. Literature assistance would fit in well. CEACA already acts as a coordinating body between various

denominational and church-related agencies, and already has members who are expert in a number of world languages.

Some reorganization of CEACA would be required. The study committee is recommending that CEACA include representatives from Calvin College and Seminary, CRWM, CRWRC, the Back to God Hour, the Board of Publications, the Board of Home Missions, one member at-large from agencies engaged in publishing and distributing Reformed literature abroad (American Calvinist Fellowship, WHBL, TELL, etc.), and one member at-large to represent other educational institutions in the CRC.

A reorganized CEACA could accept responsibility for the present Spanish Literature Committee, and could organize other special area (or language) committees to meet literature needs. It could receive and evaluate requests from CRC agencies and churches abroad regarding Reformed literature. It could recommend to synod a unified literature budget for its subcommittees, and gift and offering goals for church-related agencies. It could function as a general coordinator under synod for all publishing of Reformed literature in major world languages.

By "major world languages," languages other than English are meant, that is, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, Hausa, etc. However, Third World English (a simplified version intended for those to whom English is not a native language) is being considered as one of these major world languages under CEACA supervision.

According to the plan being recommended to the CRWM Board, CEACA would be primarily a supervisory committee. Much of the actual work of writing, translating, editing and publishing would be carried on by specialized subcommittees. Such subcommittees would, however, draw largely on language and editing expertise of people within existing agencies and churches abroad.

CEACA has enthusiastically endorsed the general guidelines of this plan. The CRWM Board will be considering this recommendation at its February board meeting. If the Board of Publications wishes to advise either the CRWM Board or synod regarding this matter, it may do so.

We request synod to receive this report for information.

### III. SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORT

The Stated Clerk wrote to say the 1978 Synod took the following action:

"... That synod through the Synodical Interim Committee, call upon its Christian Educational Institutions and agencies, its Board of Publications, CRWRC, and SCORR to enlist the skills of knowledgeable people to speak and to write publicly so that the church will be alerted to issues of social justice that challenge a Christian response. (And)... That synod require each denominational agency specified above to include in its annual report what has been accomplished in alerting the church to the issues of social justics" (Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 63, 64).

The Board of Publications passed the following motion in response to this request of synod:

"That we instruct our Director of Education and the Editor of The

Banner, requesting an annual report in which the above request reviewing our progress in the area of social justice is set forth."

#### IV. LITURGICAL BOOKLET FEASIBILITY STUDY

The board adopted the following recommendations for the approval of Synod 1979:

1. We recommend producing a service edition of the loose-leaf book of liturgical forms which will consist of metal, four ring binder with a locking mechanism, cover material to be one-piece 35 gauge, poly-plastic material with black polyflex lifters at an approximate selling price of \$4.50 each and \$3.95 for ten or more.

2. Also, we recommend printing the Psalter Hymnal containing the *music only* with the current regular Psalter Hymnal cover style, etc., at an approximate selling price of \$4.50 each and \$3.95 for ten or more.

The above two recommendations, we feel, will enable our churches to have the Psalter Hymnal (in music only) and also a separate service edition with easy access for insertion of updated changes in church order, baptism forms, etc. Also, we will continue to stock the existing Psalter Hymnal. Mr. Peter Meeuwsen will have necessary looseleaf books for display to Synod of 1979.

#### V. CANADIAN DISTRIBUTION CENTER

The board adopted the following to be forwarded to synod:

"In response to the Canadian Council of Christian Reformed Churches requesting that all denominational agencies consider establishing a central office and distribution point in Canada, the following is recommended: That we endorse the general concept of a Canadian center, and forward this sentiment to the Synod of 1979."

#### VI. REPRESENTATION ON SCORR:

The 1978 Synod noted that the Synodical Committee on Race Relations had an open position which was to be filled by a representative of the Board of Publications, and instructed the board to process such an appointment through the Synodical Interim Committee. When the board noted this action, SCORR had already begun work on revising its committee structure. Proposals for restructuring SCORR are apparently coming to the 1979 Synod. Therefore, and on the advice of SCORR, the Board of Publications has not named a delegate.

#### VII. APPROVAL OF PERSONS TO SERVE ON THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The following persons were elected from a prepared nomination to serve on the Education Committee and synod's approval is sought:

Education Type: Mr. Roger Bratt

Evangelistic Type: Mrs. Joanne Knierim

Theological Type: Dr. Gordon Spykman

### VIII. BOARD REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

The board requests that the following be permitted to represent the Board of Publications at the sessions of synod when matters pertaining to the board are being considered: Dr. Sidney Dykstra, president of the board; Rev. Willard H. DeVries, secretary of the board; Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, chairman of the Periodicals Committee (in all matters pertaining to The Banner editorship); Mr. A. James Heynen, Director of Education (in all matters pertaining to the education department); Mr. Peter Meeuwsen, Production Supervisor (in all matters pertaining to the business aspects of the board's operation); and the editors, Dr. Lester De Koster and the Rev. William Haverkamp (in all matters pertaining to their respective periodicals.

## SECTION SIX

### Recognition

Three persons were recognized by the Board of Publications at its 1979 meeting for services performed as members of the board and her Committees. Dr. Derke Bergsma is now completing his second full term as member of the Education Committee. Mrs. Rose Van Reken is completing her third term as a member of the Education Committee, and has also served two terms as member of the Board of Publications. Both persons were thanked for their contributions.

Special note was taken of the impending retirement of Dr. Sid Dykstra, President of the Board. Dr. Dykstra was a member of the Education Committee even before the Board of Publications was formed, and was chairman of the Board's Education Committee when he was named president in 1977. The board noted with appreciation the openness with which Dr. Dykstra has guided meetings of the board and Executive Committee, and the maturity which the board itself has achieved under his leadership.

And two board employees are completing their services in the coming months. Mr. Paul Stoub, Art Editor for the Education Department, is leaving the employ of the board when his term expires in August (1979). The board thanked God for Paul's gifts, and thanked Paul for using them in our ministry.

Mr. Peter Meeuwsen has been an employee of the Board of Publications and (earlier) "Christian Reformed Publishing House" since June 11, 1956. He has served as Business Manager to three Banner Editors and as many Education Directors. Until recently he was also Manager of the Denominational Building, responsible for facilities used by many denominational agencies. The Board of Publications, in words of appreciation and a gift to Mr. and Mrs. Meeuwsen, expressed its gratitude for the dedicated services given by Mr. Peter Meeuwsen during the past twenty-three years, and urges synod to take special note of Mr. Meeuwsen's distinguished record of service to the entire denomination.

## SECTION SEVEN

## Summary of Matters Requiring the Attention of Synod

A. *Requiring Action*

1. Approval of board representation at synod (Section Five, VII)
2. Appointment of an Executive Director for the Board of Publications (Section One)
3. Recommendations in response to Overture 27 (Section Two, I)
4. Appointment of an Editor-in-Chief for the Banner (Section Two, II)
5. Reappointment of Education Department Staff (Section Three, II)
  - a. Mr. A. James Heynen as Director of Education for a four-year term
  - b. Dr. Harvey A. Smit as Theological Editor for a four-year term
  - c. Mrs. Ruth Vander Hart as Journalistic Editor for a four-year term
6. Changes in the curriculum for young adults (Section Three, IV)
7. Addition to the curriculum for adults (Section Three, V)
8. Approval of the quota request by the Board of Publications (Section Four)
9. Approval of the board's recommendations concerning synodical mandates to publish (Section Five, I)
10. Approval of the recommendation concerning the liturgical booklet (Section Five, IV)
11. Approval of persons to serve on the Education Committee (Section Five, VI)
12. Recognition of the services of Mr. Peter Meeuwsen

B. *For Synodical Information*

1. Staff Structure Report (Section One)
2. "Criteria Used in Search for Next Banner Editor" (Section Two, II)
3. Biographical sketches of Banner editor nominees (Section Two, II)
4. The decision of Mr. Paul Stoub, Art Editor, not to be considered for reappointment (Section Three, II)
5. Description of the Art Editor's position (Section Three, II)
6. Expanded Ministry (bookstores) (Section Three, IX)
7. Major World Language Literature Study Committee Report (Section Five, II)
8. Social Justice Report (Section Five, III)
9. Canadian Distribution Center (Section Five, V)  
Board of Publications  
of the Christian Reformed Church  
Willard H. De Vries, secretary

## REPORT 6

## CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

## I. INTRODUCTION

The past year has brought many changes to CRWRC. The major change was the implementation of new systems of reporting and control which will enhance the integrity of CRWRC. We have attempted to answer some very basic questions: 1) How can we ensure that we are really helping people? 2) How can we know how many people are being helped? 3) Are our programs making people more dependent or more independent? and, 4) How can we determine if the spiritual needs of the people we help are being met?

A. CRWRC implemented two major reporting systems. The first one is a *monthly* report from each field which reveals:

1. Our financial situation on that field.
2. The number of people with whom we are working.
3. The results of our efforts.
4. Staff morale.
5. The problems between the home office and the field.

The second system, called the semi-annual skill rating scale, reveals the rate at which the national groups with whom we work are becoming independent.

CRWRC has endorsed concepts such as "development," "indigenization," and "helping people to help themselves," for many years. This implies that we wish to turn a project over to the local people (nationals) before we leave (phase-over).

To be successful we must:

- Identify important areas that the local people need to *learn*.
- Have a monitoring system which indicates if the learning is taking place.

The five key areas that we need to keep track of to ensure successful phase-over of projects are: 1) technical skills, 2) management skills, 3) financial skills, 4) board skills, and 5) evangelism skills.

Our strategy for indigenization and development (turning a project over to local people before we leave) is as follows:

1. *Technical Strategy for Indigenization*—The basic issue here is training nationals: teachers to teach, para-medics to provide health care, and agriculturists to help farmers.
2. *Management Strategy for Indigenization*—We must be training nationals to manage the projects so they will be able to ensure: appropriateness, effectiveness, and efficiency of service, while maintaining high staff morale.
3. *Financial Strategy for Indigenization*—There are two issues here: preparing the nationals to develop self-supporting projects and training them to document appropriateness of expenditures.
4. *Board Strategy for Indigenization*—Developing local boards which

determine direction, boundaries, and standards of performance.

5. *Evangelism Linkage Strategy for Indigenization*—Involves three issues for the local people: Evangelical Christians must own the project. The local people who provide the service must be identifying, and responding to, the spiritual needs of the people who use the service. And, the Constitution of the national project must require continuous linkage with the evangelical Christian church and the Constitution must be adhered to.

We believe that these reporting systems will be a great asset to CRWRC in our efforts to ensure that our programs are making the best possible use of the resources entrusted to us by the CRC.

For example, CRWRC has always had a strong commitment to a total ministry. However, we did not have a *systematic* method of reporting regularly whether a total ministry was being carried out. In an effort to ensure that CRWRC's work meets spiritual needs, as well as physical, and is closely tied to Christian groups, we have made this a "key area" which will be systematically and regularly analyzed.

Currently CRWRC is involved in over twenty different projects. Of these, two projects are problems to us when we attempt to ensure evangelical Christian support systems: Jordan and Bangladesh.

In Jordan, synod has authorized, and Christian Reformed World Missions has secured, a minister for the International Church of Amman, Jordan. A field visit firmly identified existing evangelical resources, began direct negotiations with evangelical Christian organizations, and revealed an enthusiastic commitment on the part of our staff to carry out this assignment. These achievements lead us to believe that significant progress has been made.

CRWRC still has concern about our ability to ensure a total ministry in Bangladesh. Two years ago synod authorized word ministries in Bangladesh. However, we have not been able to secure persons who have the unique qualifications necessary for these ministries. Bangladesh presents many difficult challenges: 1) Its culture is very different from our own. 2) It lacks Western-type schools and medical service for our personnel. 3) It is very far from any Western-type support systems. 4) It is a Moslem nation. For most of us, Bangladesh seems a place where we should work. CRWRC would appreciate the prayers of our denomination that people may be found soon to respond to this call for a ministry in Bangladesh.

B. The second change during the past year was the development of a plan which will provide direction for future CRWRC decisions. Both staff and board expressed a need for CRWRC to establish clear expectations and clear directions for the future.

For the next few years our foreign programs will concentrate on the area of world hunger. Although CRWRC is presently allocating \$1,500,000 to world hunger overseas, we believe that the mandate from synod is so strong that all new foreign programs should concentrate on world hunger.

The major focus of domestic programs for a few years will be closer links with our own denomination, especially cooperative efforts with CRC deacons and deaconal conferences. Many deacons are eager to assume a

greater responsibility in their local areas. Some of these deacons will need *temporary* financial and technical assistance to begin new programs.

CRWRC has reduced its budget during the past several years. In September 1978, CRWRC found it necessary to borrow money to meet expenses for the first time in recent history. During our CRWRC executive committee meeting in November, a decision was made to recommend a reduction budget to the annual board meeting of 1979. At that point, CRWRC was in an awkward position. While we had shifted some efforts in order to meet synod's challenge to respond to the new world hunger mandate, our own 1.5 million dollar budget for world hunger was deteriorating. Our major concern was that funds were being diverted from our existing world hunger programs to the new world hunger program. This information was given to the Task Force on World Hunger. They responded with a number of helpful suggestions.

In retrospect, it appears that the world hunger emphasis probably was an asset to our existing programs since November and December receipts were significantly increased. We are now operating from a solid financial base which will permit a modest growth expenditure for existing world hunger programs during both 1979 and 1979-80. We thank the Lord for his goodness.

Financial reserves are a very vital part of the CRWRC budget process. Since we are a non-quota agency we are especially vulnerable to decreased income in some periods. Our expenditures are approximately \$200,000 per month. Our lowest monthly receipts last year were only \$59,661. A significant reserve is needed to compensate for the low income months which usually occur during the spring and summer.

Finally, we are calling synod's attention to CRWRC's acceptance of Canadian government grants. In previous years the amounts have been insignificant, but have increased substantially this year. CRWRC accepts Canadian grants because there is no government interference in our word ministry. CRWRC has refused to apply for United States grants because there would be interference with our word ministry.

### *C. Hunger Alleviation Program*

The Christian Reformed Synod of 1978 adopted nineteen recommendations concerning world hunger. One of these recommendations instructed CRWRC, as the lead agency, to provide an annual progress report on the hunger alleviation program.

During the past year a healthy tension has developed between the demand for rapid action and the need for careful planning. As a result of this tension, an interim world hunger project in Mexico was agreed upon. In addition, the selection of a hungry country was advanced by one year. A recommendation will be submitted to synod this year if positive field assessments are available. This selection process is based on a forty page report, *CRWRC/CRWM Target Country Selection*.

The Day of Prayer and Fasting on November 5 was the highlight of the year for most churches. Ministers received: 1) a letter of encouragement to participate in the Day of Prayer and Fasting by Dr. Eugene Rubingh, 2) notes on fasting—a four page document by Dr. Paul Schrotenboer, 3) an advance copy of Dr. Joel Nederhood's radio message, "The Hunger

Fast," and 4) an offer of a free copy of *And He Had Compassion on Them*. In addition, the stated clerk of each classis was asked to place "The Day of Prayer and Fasting" on the agenda of classis to permit a uniform approach on this issue within classis.

The secretaries of deacons were mailed: 1) a letter announcing synod's actions and the expectations of deacons in relation to world hunger, 2) a copy of the book *And He Had Compassion on Them*, and 3) a detailed plan for the Day of Prayer and Fasting which included:

- obtaining council endorsement
- permission for study groups
- a special congregational meeting after the evening service, on the Day of Prayer and Fasting to:
  - discuss people's response
  - summarize the book *And He Had Compassion on Them*
  - form (eight-week) study groups, and
  - prepare for Phase II.

Apparently, interest in world hunger is high; *And He Had Compassion on Them* is in its third printing.

CRWM and CRWRC developed an educational approach to hunger alleviation primarily by working with existing Christian Reformed related agencies. The cooperation and response of these agencies during the planning stage have been impressive. We have no doubt this cooperation will continue.

Those who have a high investment in the world hunger issue may have wanted CRWRC to develop a crash program to alleviate world hunger. The danger of moving too rapidly is that the adjective "crash" could become a noun.

#### D. Relationships with Other Agencies

CRWRC is proud to be a member of the denominational agencies. Certainly each individual and each agency have problems and difficulties to overcome. However, the major impression that CRWRC has acquired by working with other denominational agencies is that the agencies' personnel are dedicated, competent, and excellent.

#### E. Social Justice

CRWRC is very interested in the issue of social justice. The Task Force on World Hunger is submitting a report to synod concerning social justice as it relates to world hunger. If synod accepts the recommendations of this report, CRWRC will be the lead agency in carrying out these recommendations in a number of significant areas.

## II. THE BOARD

The Executive Committee includes the following:

Dan Vander Wekken.....	Alberta South
John Gernaat.....	Cadillac
Martin Vanderzwan.....	Chatham
Dave Gabrielse.....	Grand Rapids East
Don Molewyk.....	Grand Rapids North
Jim Sjoerdsma.....	Grandville
Jack Kerkhof.....	Hamilton

Herschel Lubbers.....	Holland
Rich Kuiken.....	Hudson
John Vander Ploeg.....	Kalamazoo
Kenneth VerBurg.....	Lake Erie
Dr. N. Boeve.....	Muskegon
Peter Feddema.....	Quinte
Bruce Hulst.....	Zeeland
Donald Pruis.....	Member-at-Large
Dr. James Heersink.....	Member-at-Large
Kenneth Holtvluwer.....	Member-at-Large
Donald Swierenga.....	Member-at-Large
Rev. John Bergsma.....	Member-at-Large
James Tuinstra.....	Member-at-Large

The officers serving the board this year are:

John Vander Ploeg.....	President
James Tuinstra.....	Vice-President
Donald Pruis.....	Treasurer
Bruce Hulst.....	Secretary
Dave Gabrielse.....	Asst. Sec./Treasurer
Rev. John Bergsma.....	Ministerial Advisor

### III. DISASTER AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

#### A. Disasters—Domestic Programs

During 1978, CRWRC Disaster Response volunteers served in Johnstown, Pennsylvania; Rochester, Minnesota; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Monroe, Louisiana. At each location CRWRC helped to organize local interfaith groups, trained local volunteers, and provided consultation and advice for long-term disaster recovery. Compared to previous years, 1978 was a comparatively quiet year for CRWRC Domestic Response Services.

#### B. Disasters—Foreign Programs

Disasters, causing untold human suffering and death as well as destruction to property and crops, occur almost daily in the world. Some are disasters that can be coped with by the local government and relief agencies. Others are of such a major proportion that outside assistance is necessary. The CRWRC remains sensitive to the sudden disruption of everyday life and the misery caused by disasters, and uses every effort to respond to those in need by meaningful relief measures. Priority is given to disasters where CRWRC staff is available to analyze and recommend disaster response. In locations where there is no CRWRC staff, evangelical agencies are contacted. Where possible, World Missions staff people are utilized.

During 1978 the CRWRC responded to numerous disaster pleas for assistance overseas. Material and financial assistance was provided for disaster needs in Bangladesh, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Philippines, South India, Sri Lanka, Lebanon, Nigeria and Iran.

During the past year CRWRC Field Directors developed written disaster plans for their areas of jurisdiction so that the CRWRC will have a planned response to major disasters in the world where it has staff resources to direct disaster operations.

### IV. FOREIGN SERVICE OUTREACHES

Mass poverty continues to affect the majority of the world's popula-

tion, and the economic disparity between rich and poor seems ever to widen. The CRWRC is dedicated to extending the hand of mercy to those in need by developing programs that will provide the necessary technical assistance and finances, enabling local communities to acquire the skills necessary for them to find solutions to their basic needs. It is the priority of the CRWRC to accomplish its mission, where possible, in conjunction with a spiritual ministry so that the needs of the whole man may be addressed.

During 1978 the CRWRC focused its attention on strengthening ongoing programs, developing long-range development plans for current projects, and setting in motion phaseover plans for projects that have reached a point of self-management.

Thirty-one CRWRC staff people serve overseas in development programs. Including the national staff involved in CRWRC programs overseas, the total staff involvement numbers ninety-five. This past year the CRWRC has again been blessed with the addition of a number of highly qualified new personnel. But we have also bade farewell to a number of staff persons who have served the CRWRC with exceptional abilities. John and Kathy Brouwer, Rick and Edith DeGraaf, and Ron and Edith Prins completed their terms of service in Bangladesh. Larry and Sharon Slager have returned home from Jordan. Gertie Gietema completed her term of service with Alfalit, and Mark Kapenga returned home from Guatemala. Carol VanEss completed a literacy assignment in Honduras. The CRWRC expresses its gratitude to these staff members for a job well done.

## A. *Asia*

### 1. *Bangladesh*

Increased efforts to stimulate food production in the Bogra District of Bangladesh and to establish self-help projects for the very poor of the country summarizes the CRWRC activities in one of the world's most crowded nations. Programs include agriculture extension employing trained, national extension workers; a seed program to ensure that good seed is available for sale to the local farmers; a crop support program designed so that each farmer is guaranteed a return to cover his expenses on average crop production; tubewell irrigation projects to provide irrigation water to small farmers; a storage program to provide a market for farm products during the off season; and a community development program to develop small industry among the landless rural people. The year 1979 will complete the CRWRC commitment to the Mennonite Central Committee as John Deelstra, who has been on loan to MCC, completes his assignment in Bangladesh. The CRWRC staff includes Peter and Peg Vander Meulen, field director; Marve and Peggy DeVries; Kees Poppe; Doug Seebeck; and Dave and Nancy VanDerPuy. During 1979 the CRWRC will be seeking to fill two additional staff positions in Bangladesh.

### 2. *India*

The CRWRC outreach in India continues under the administration of the small Christian Reformed Church of South India. Financial assistance

is provided to subsidize a midday feeding program for young children of the church community. Funds are provided to assist the operation of two medical clinics. During the year 1978 the CRWRC also provided direct assistance for relief of flood and fire disasters in India. Safe drinking water remains a critical need in the Adoni area and the CRWRC is investigating possible alternatives in response to this plea for assistance. The CRWRC has no expatriate staff in India.

### 3. *Jordan*

The year 1978 marked a continuing, planned phaseover of the Jordan program. Efforts are being made to encourage evangelical groups in Jordan to assume projects that have been developed by the CRWRC. The focus of the program continues in the rehabilitation of the physically, mentally and socially handicapped. Great strides have been realized in the Jordan program as the CRWRC has been a catalyst in awakening the Jordanian government to an active role in rehabilitation responsibilities to its citizens. The CRWRC acknowledges with gratitude the technical assistance provided by the Pine Rest Christian Hospital in program development, as well as highly skilled personnel that have been loaned to the CRWRC Jordan program. Robert Haan acts as the field director assisted by Bob and Linda Bosch and Dan and Janys VanderVliet.

### 4. *Korea*

The CRWRC assistance to the HOLT/CAPOK program was finalized during 1978. The CRWRC now has one project remaining in Korea—the Family Assistance Program. This program is administered by Mr. Kee Ho Kang and offers educational, medical and social services to an extremely impoverished area on the outskirts of Seoul. Mrs. Soo Hong Chang acts as the business manager of the CRWRC interests in Korea. Both Mr. Kang and Mrs. Chang are long-time employees of the CRWRC. The CRWRC has no expatriate staff in Korea.

### 5. *Philippines*

CRWRC programs in the Philippines are designed to improve the general health and raise the socio-economic level of the people. Projects continue in health and nutrition, medical assistance, adult education, sanitation, and self-help programs. The CRWRC provides diaconal training to the Christian Reformed churches of the Philippines and coordinates programs through the local churches in Manila and Bacolod City. The programs are cooperative efforts with the Board for World Missions. CRWRC staff includes Ivan and Joy DeKam, field director; Eleanor Haan; Bill and Dorothy Fernhout; and Pete and Hennie Vellenga.

### B. *Africa*

#### 1. *Niger*

The CRWRC involvement in Niger began as a response to the severe drought in the Sahel Region of Africa. Marcus and Mary Ann Frei and Pat Franje are CRWRC employees on loan to the Sudan Interior Mission. Marcus and Mary Ann are completing their last term of service in Niger

as we envision the phaseover of the agricultural projects that have been developed under their guidance. Pat Franje is involved in reforestation projects. The CRWRC anticipates completion of its commitment to the SIM by 1982.

## 2. *Nigeria*

The Christian Rural Development Program in Nigeria is a joint agriculture effort with the Board for World Missions. Field director, Lou Haveman, and wife Janice are serving their ninth year in this successful program. Steve Nikkel assists as a CRWRC agriculturalist. Plans are now being developed for the complete takeover of the CRD program by the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria. Projects include animals and poultry, a demonstration farm, tree crop and nursery programs. A Nigerian, Bulus Ali, is now acting as assistant director as the CRWRC anticipates a phaseover by 1982.

## C. *Latin America*

### 1. *Costa Rica*

The CRWRC no longer provides expatriate staff to the Alfalit program which is headquartered in Costa Rica. The mission of Alfalit is to teach the people of Latin America to read and to write and to promote practical programs for the betterment of communities. The Alfalit programs are an intricate component of the CRWRC development process in other Central America countries. Financial assistance to Alfalit is monitored and results evaluated by CRWRC staff in Central America.

### 2. *Guatemala*

Central America Field Director, Peter Limburg and his wife Paula are stationed in Guatemala. Peter is responsible for the total CRWRC outreach in Central America. Programs in Guatemala are in the areas of food production, nutrition and health care, and literacy. Programs are carried out through the national Presbyterian Church of Guatemala and are staffed by national personnel.

### 3. *Haiti*

The CRWRC mission in Haiti continues to grow and develop in this poorest country in the Western Hemisphere. The CRWRC projects are carried out through the missionary churches in the central plateau area. A community development outreach encompassing food production, nutrition and medical care, and literacy is being carried out through a team approach in the villages of Logalite, Grand Lantanier, and Saintiacre. Dave and Deb Genzink continue in their fourth year of service as field director; Dick and Mary Both and Dave Kobes serve as agriculturalists; and Sandy Beelen continues to develop the medical outreach. A new staff member, Cloe Ann Danford, will be joining the staff as a nurse in 1979.

### 4. *Honduras*

The CRWRC mission in Honduras is in cooperation with the Christian Reformed churches of Honduras and CEDEN, a local evangelical association for the relief and development of Honduras. Programs in-

clude food production, nutrition and health care, literacy, and diaconal training. The Honduras CRWRC staff includes Darryl and Donna Jean Mortensen, Betty Roldan, and Joel Zwier. The goal of the CRWRC is to assist Christian groups to become self-sufficient, able to carry on the work of relieving hunger and poverty in their own countries.

#### 5. Mexico

Completion of phaseover plans for the Yucatan programs is anticipated in 1979. Efforts will then be focused on reaching out to the isolated tribes in the remote areas surrounding the Oaxaca Valley. The training center continues as a jointly administered outreach with the Board for World Missions in teaching agricultural skills and providing Bible study courses to local farmers. During 1979, the CRWRC and the Board for World Missions will expand their outreach to the Mixe Indians in the mountain areas, focusing on church development, food production, health care, and community development projects. Mexican Christians are to be trained to act as extension agents to their home villages. Clare DeBoer and wife Shirley serve their eighth year in Mexico as field director. Loren and Joy Buurma, Duane and Shelley Postma, Sam VanderEnde, and John and Joyce Koetje complete the Mexico field staff.

#### 6. Nicaragua

1978 was a year of turmoil as civil war raged in Nicaragua. CRWRC programs continued under the umbrella of CEPAD, the local evangelical association for the relief and development of Nicaragua and in conjunction with the Board for World Missions' young congregations. CRWRC agriculturalist, Joel Zwier, was home on furlough during 1978. However, under the direction of Peter Limburg the CRWRC continued its support of local projects and provided considerable relief assistance both in materials and financial aid to the rural families displaced by the ravages of civil strife. Joel Zwier will be temporarily stationed in Honduras, serving as an agriculturalist to both CEDEN and CEPAD.

### V. DOMESTIC PROGRAMING

#### A. Community Development

##### 1. Appalachia—Kentucky

The Christian Family Service program located in Middlesboro, Kentucky, is designed to help individuals and families caught in the web of extreme poverty. Programs include counseling, advocacy, group programs for women and youth, and community development efforts to enhance church involvement and response to local needs. CRWRC staff includes Jim Boldenow, Don Zeilstra, Verna Jones, and long-term volunteers Joann and Perry Cook. The ministry to the poor, its theological and spiritual dimensions, continues to occupy the attention and resources of the Rev. Tim Limburg, an employee of the Board of Home Missions.

##### 2. Appalachia—Virginia

The Christian Family Service program located in Pennington Gap is served by CRWRC staff Del Willink, Bob Van Denend, and Ann Nolan. The Rev. Tim Limburg of the Board of Home Missions serves as a

spiritual advisor to the CRWRC staff as he does in Middlesboro, Kentucky. Programs focus on nutrition, housing, emergency assistance, counseling, advocacy, and community development. These programs assist local church leaders to define and respond more comprehensively to local poverty conditions.

### 3. *Mississippi Christian Family Services*

CRWRC staff Elvinah Spoelstra and Susie Evans direct this program to improve the functioning of developmentally disabled children and adults in a day-training program. Services are also given to handicapped persons who are confined in their homes in Sharkey and Issaquena counties, Mississippi. Through a community pastoral program, individuals and churches are being taught how to respond to local needs. With the assistance of a government grant, local Christians are being hired and trained to teach and manage a program for handicapped persons.

### B. *Diaconal Ministries*

#### 1. *Cascade Diaconal Conference*

Project: One-to-One—matching Christian volunteers with persons confined in state correctional institutions to help prisoners make the transition back to the community.

Assistance: Partial funding for director's salary.

#### 2. *North Alberta Diaconal Conference*

Project: Edmonton Christian Family Counseling—Christian counseling for family problems.

Assistance: Partial funding for director's salary.

#### 3. *Detroit Area CR Churches*

Project: Detroit Community Assistance Program—providing emergency food and counsel to needy persons in the Detroit area.

Assistance: Funds to pay director's salary and partial program costs.

NOTE: This is a cooperative ministry with the Board of Home Missions.

#### 4. *Bethany Christian Reformed Church (Gallup, New Mexico)*

Project: Gallup Friendship House—Christian alcohol recovery program for Navaho Indians.

Assistance: Partial funding of three staff persons not covered by NIAAA grant.

#### 5. *Los Angeles Deacons Association*

Project: Los Angeles Resource Center—ministry to unattached (elderly, transient, addicted) persons in downtown Los Angeles.

Assistance: Program consultation, support for long-term volunteers Jim and Judy Zylstra, and program support costs, matched by locally raised funds.

#### 6. *Muskegon Diaconal Conference*

Project: Chronic Aid-to-Dependent-Children Mothers Program—counseling for chronically dependent welfare mothers.

Assistance: Start-up costs were completed to begin project.

#### 7. *Denver Diaconal Conference*

Project: Native American Urban Transition Program—ministry to Indian girls and families migrating to the Denver community.

Assistance: Funds for director's salary and partial program support costs.

#### 8. *Chicago Area Classes*

Project: Roseland Christian Ministries Center—a comprehensive worship, training, service program in the former Back to God Hour building.

Assistance: Cooperative ministry with the Board of Home Missions, SCORR, Chicago classes, and CRWRC, with each contributing approximately one-fourth of total program costs.

#### 9. *Denver Third Christian Reformed Church Diaconate*

Project: Sun Valley Christian Family Services—a ministry to Spanish Americans in the Sun Valley and Las Casitas community, based at the Sun Valley Community Church (a BHM church).

Assistance: Total project costs, including director's salary and program support costs.

### C. *Disaster Response Services*

The objective of this program is to train and use Christian Reformed volunteers for disaster response work. This program is currently being reorganized to place greater responsibility on local leadership. It will also increase the response capability of volunteers to disasters that strike within their own communities. CRWRC has prepared a paper, "The Role of Churches in Preparation for Long-Term Recovery." This paper was presented on three occasions during 1978 to church leaders from various denominations and is scheduled to be presented several times during 1979.

### D. *Refugees*

During 1978, CRWRC arranged assistance to a few Vietnamese refugees in adjusting to life in the United States. We hope to expand resettlement programs in 1979.

## VI. ADMINISTRATION, MATERIAL RESOURCE CENTER, FINANCE

After one year under Executive Director John DeHaan's administration a new management program is almost completed. A management information system was introduced to monitor the integrity of finances, programs, morale, and problems.

### A. *Office Administration*

The Directors of Program are Wayne Medendorp and Neil Molenaar; Director of Promotion is Karen DeVos; Director of Finance is Merle Grevengoed. Directors meet individually each week with the Executive Director to report and discuss their area of responsibility, and every Friday morning a directors' meeting is held to review and plan programs, promotion and finances.

Secretarial duties are handled by Connie Bolt, Kathy Door, Cherie Fennema and Jane Ritsema. Accounting duties are handled by Chuck Berghuis.

Our Canadian office is under the direction of Peter Zwart, Canadian Director.

All salaries are within the guidelines of the uniform salary policy recommended by SIC, which we anticipate will be presented to synod this year.

The audit firm of Touche Ross and Co. performed the 1978 audit of both the Canadian and United States offices. Their report follows:

#### *B. Material Resource Center*

No major disasters occurred around the world during 1978 and, therefore, no large shipments were made. During 1978 23,240 lbs. of clothing were received, and shipments of 103,878 lbs. were made, including shipments of clothing to Nicaragua, Honduras, and India. Also processed were 28,877 lbs. of personal items shipped for the BWM and CRWRC missionaries.

The annual board meeting extended the lease on the warehouse until August, 1980. In the meantime a feasibility study will be made on the future need for the warehouse.

#### *C. Finances*

The budget for 1978 was lower than the 1977 budget although higher than income received in 1977. For the first ten months the income did not meet our projected goals. Expenses were also decreased, however. November and December brought an abundance of funds bringing total receipts to \$40,000 over budget. This also meant an increase in fund balances at year end of \$175,293.

The world hunger fund brought in a total of \$85,211 and expenses of \$8,331 left a fund balance \$76,880.

The disaster fund took in \$154,988 with expenses of \$109,706 or an excess of \$45,282 of contributions over expenses.

The Canadian government has continued to assist CRWRC in funding its programs and has promised \$344,000 for the 8 month budget and \$436,000 for the 1979-80 budget.

All fund balances include unspent funds on the field as well as those in the home office.

In view of this increase in giving and the reductions that took place in expenditures over the past three years, CRWRC felt compelled to increase its programs for 1979 and 1979-80.

Synod has approved a change in fiscal year for CRWRC and, therefore, two budgets are submitted—one for 8 months, January through August, 1979, and the other for 12 months, September, 1979, to August 31, 1980.

#### *D. Request for approval for denominational offerings*

CRWRC requests that synod commend the work of mercy to our churches and urge them to take offerings on a regular and sustaining basis to provide the necessary funds for this ministry.

## VII. PROJECTED 1979 AND 1979-80 OUTREACHES

*ADOPTED BUDGET 1979*

Bangladesh	\$ 220,145	
Costa Rica	91,239	
Guatemala	97,076	
Haiti	92,677	
Honduras	147,836	
India	8,400	
Jordan	167,505	
Korea	61,965	
Mexico	85,228	
Nicaragua	81,142	
Niger	22,438	
Nigeria	99,245	
Philippines	125,073	
Expansion	15,000	
S. Am., Nicaragua, Benue	5,000	
	<u>\$1,319,969</u>	
Mississippi	\$ 69,162	
Middlesboro	90,431	
Pennington Gap	49,143	
Grants	70,773	
Other Projects	67,696	
Contingency (for. & dom.)	17,319	
	<u>\$ 364,524</u>	\$1,684,493
Administration	\$ 156,432	
Promotions	84,488	
Deferred Giving	16,000	
Warehouse	29,157	
	<u>\$ 286,077</u>	\$1,970,570
Grant Income	(\$ 344,000)	<u>\$1,626,570</u>

*ADOPTED BUDGET 1979-1980*

Bangladesh	\$ 277,363
Costa Rica	119,790
Guatemala	137,585
Haiti	200,851
Honduras	206,507
India	12,600
Jordan	212,542
Korea	119,819
Mexico	115,492
Nicaragua	122,760
Niger	38,851
Nigeria	226,735
Philippines	196,561

Expansion	15,000	
S. Am., Nicaragua, Benue	5,000	
	<u>\$2,007,456</u>	
Mississippi	\$ 125,237	
Middlesboro	117,883	
Pennington Gap	82,288	
Grants	104,454	
Other Projects	151,872	
Contingency	24,692	
	<u>\$ 606,426</u>	\$2,613,882
Administration	\$ 227,504	
Promotions	177,114	
Deferred Giving	18,000	
Warehouse	45,946	
	<u>\$ 468,564</u>	\$3,082,446
Grant Income	(\$ 436,000)	<u>\$2,646,446</u>

#### VIII. APPOINTMENTS

The Christian Reformed World Relief Committee Board recommends that Mr. John De Haan be reappointed as Executive Director of CRWRC for a four-year term.

##### *Grounds:*

Mr. De Haan has served CRWRC for two years. During this time he has introduced information and control systems which will enable both the board and staff to work more effectively.

In addition, he has maintained good relationships with both staff and other agencies. Therefore, we recommend his reappointment.

#### IX. SUMMARY MATTERS REQUIRING SYNOD'S ATTENTION

A. Representatives at synod—CRWRC requests that its president, John Vander Ploeg, minister board member, the Rev. John Bergsma, and its Executive Director, John De Haan, be granted the floor when matters pertaining to our work are discussed.

B. Program Approval for 1979 outreach (selection of "Hungry Country") (supplemental report)

C. Approval for Offerings (VI)

D. Reappointment of Executive Director (VIII)

E. Appointment of board-member-at-large

Christian Reformed World Relief  
Committee,  
John De Haan, Executive Director

## REPORT 7

## BACK TO GOD TRACT COMMITTEE

## I. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Calvin Bremer, Ren Broekhuizen, Jack De Vos, Willard De Waard, La Vern Haas, Stephen Lambers, Kenneth Swets, John Tibbe, and William Vander Hoven.

Mr. De Vos, Mr. De Waard, Mr. Haas, and Mr. Lambers are all completing their first three-year term of service, thus are eligible for reappointment.

Mr. Tibbe is completing his second three-year appointment; he is ineligible for reappointment.

## II. ACTIVITIES

One of the most significant committee activities during the past year was an extensive "self-analysis" of the purposes, functions, and future of the committee. In order to better evaluate our status and future, we had conversations with the Stated Clerk, representatives of several denominational boards and committees, and met formally with representatives of the Board of Home Missions, the Chaplain's Committee, and the Board of Publications. After much careful study, we unanimously decided that this committee should continue functioning as a separate, standing committee of synod, for these reasons:

1. The committee fulfills a unique role in and for the church;
2. The committee's function does not appear to fall exclusively under any other board or organization;
3. The materials produced by the committee meet some special needs not now being met by any other boards or organization;
4. In many instances, our materials go beyond those items or methods used by other boards or organizations; and
5. Our materials provide a unique, Reformed witness, reaching many who might not otherwise be reached with the Gospel message.

This has been an exciting, fruitful year in several other ways. For example, we used two special, four-color issues of *The Banner*—the special vacation edition and the Thanksgiving edition—for inserting a full-page, four-color ad in each, and to include in each copy one of our new tracts in a "tear-out-and-pass-along" format. Both editions—and our part in them—were well received.

Another significant activity, still in the process of being implemented as this is written, is the development of a new series of tracts relating especially to children. Called "God Made It All Series," it includes twelve new tracts, each in full color, with a large poster accompanying each tract and using the same cover design. We are promoting the series as a "tract of the month," sending free samples to each church as an introduc-

tion to the series, anticipating that the churches will like the idea enough to purchase the other tracts in the series. We're confident enough in the value, attractiveness, and usefulness of these tracts that we've had 100,000 of each tract printed.

We have procured, published, and distributed a number of other new tracts this year, as well as revised and/or reprinted many existing tracts. That's why, for the first time in many years, we have revised our catalog. We will distribute the new version soon.

Another new activity this year is an increasing amount of contacts with churches in the denomination. We are seeking ways to help people know how to use our tracts; we've made surveys regarding the users' reactions or critiques of our tracts; and we solicited opinions of church members as part of our work in developing new tracts.

We have offered tracts free of charge to Chaplains and to leaders of SWIM teams, sending quantities upon request. On several occasions we also have sent free tracts to organizations not connected with the denomination but whose work is such that it merited such contribution. We had a representative and a display at the Sunday School Convention again this year.

### III. PROCEDURES

The committee meets monthly in the denominational building. Three subcommittees take responsibility for suggesting titles and seeking authors (both clergy and laity); for editing copy and preparing it for publication; and for promoting and distributing the finished product. The full committee makes all final decisions.

We rely on Mrs. Angie Westerhuis as our secretary between meetings. She does a fine job with the day-to-day business of the committee; we appreciate her work very much.

Our tracts are printed, stored, and mailed at the denominational building. The tract covers, ads, layout and design, are produced by Wayne De Jonge. We appreciate his expertise, too.

### IV. STATISTICS

The committee distributed nearly one million tracts in the last two years. During 1978, a total of 395,825 tracts were dispensed. We gave away 38,674 tracts (no charge for Chaplains, SWIM teams, promotion samples, and for other worthy causes); a total of 361,651 tracts were sold.

### V. FINANCES

The work of the committee is funded by gifts and offerings from individuals and churches. Some income is received through sale of tracts. Our expenses are confined chiefly to gratuities for authors, for costs of clerical and distributed services, and for printing and other production costs. Here is a summary of our fund transactions:

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Balance, January 1, 1978.....	\$16,539.41
Receipts, January-December, 1978.....	<u>22,509.15</u>
TOTAL.....	\$39,048.56
Disbursements, January-December, 1978.....	<u>22,616.91</u>
Balance, December 31, 1978.....	\$16,431.65

A full financial statement and auditor's report will be submitted.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

We respectfully request that synod recommend this committee to the churches as worthy of moral, prayerful, and financial support, urging the churches to receive one or more offerings for support of the work.

Five new committee members must be selected to replace those whose terms expire; names of nominees will be submitted to synod for consideration and selection.

Back to God Tract Committee  
Kenneth L. Swets, secretary

## REPORT 8

## BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

Our review of the Old Testament portion of *Today's English Version* (also called *The Good News Bible*) has been completed, and will be published in the various church papers sometime during the first part of this year.

Several churches have asked when our review of *The New International Version* will be completed. The New Testament portion of NIV was reviewed in 1976 in *The Banner*, *De Wachter*, and in *Calvinist-Contact*. The Old Testament portion of NIV was published only recently, and we plan to complete a review of this prior to the Synod of 1980. Since synod has informed the Flagstaff Christian Reformed Church that NIV was being reviewed "with a view to its approval for use in the worship service" (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 42, C.2.), and since several others have also inquired about this matter, we will make a recommendation concerning this in our next report to synod.

The committee has taken note also of the synodical action requesting that the *New American Standard Bible* be reviewed with a view to its approval for use in the worship service (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 42, B.2.). We will not be able to act on this until the review of *The New International Version* has been completed.

## Bible Translation Committee

Andrew Bandstra, chairman  
David Holwerda, secretary  
Stanley Bultman  
David Engelhard  
Bastiaan Van Elderen  
Clarence Vos  
Louis Vos  
Marten Woudstra

## REPORT 9

### CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE

The Chaplain Committee is a standing committee appointed by synod to promote chaplaincy in institutions, in the military, and in business and industry. The committee has met regularly since the Synod of 1978, carrying out the responsibilities previously assigned to it. This report will reflect the work of the committee in promoting chaplaincy and make certain recommendations affecting same.

#### I. ORGANIZATION

Synod has appointed the following persons (dates indicate end of term) to serve on the Chaplain Committee, with the Rev. Harold Bode serving as Executive Secretary:

Rev. Duane Visser, chairperson, 1981; Rev. Marvin Baarman, vice-president, 1979; Mr. Donald Swierenga, treasurer, 1981; Mr. Harold Mast, vice-treasurer, 1979; Rev. John Van Til, (Canadian representative), 1979; Mrs. Jean Ettesvold, 1979; Mr. Neal Berghoef, 1980; Mr. Evert Vermeer, 1979; Dr. Melvin Hugen, 1980; Dr. Dick Van Halsema, 1980.

During this past year, the committee decided to restructure itself in its sub-committee work. We now have four sub-committees: the Personnel Committee, the Fields Committee, the Supportive Services Committee and the Canadian Committee. Each member serves with added sub-committee responsibilities because the volume of work has increased.

#### II. MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

The Christian Reformed Church has seventeen ministers serving on extended active duty and the same number of ministers serve in reserve and guard assignments. Chaplain Capt. Anthony Begay is the first Navajo American to serve as chaplain in the Armed Forces. A roster of active duty chaplains with their branches of service, assignment and date of induction follows:

##### *Air Force*

Chaplain, Major, Ralph W. Bronkema, Homestead AFB, FL (1966)  
 Chaplain, Lt. Col. Henry Guikema, McChord AFB, WA (1962)  
 Chaplain, Lt. Col. Louis E. Kok, Hancock Field, NY (1962)

##### *Army*

Chaplain, Capt. Anthony Begay, Ft. Hood, TX (1978)  
 Chaplain, Major, William Brander, White Sands MR, NM (1968)  
 Chaplain, LTC, John J. Hoogland, Ft. Mommouth, NJ (1959)  
 Chaplain, Major, Herman Keizer, Ft. Wadsworth, NY (1968)  
 Chaplain, LTC, Marvin Konyenbelt, USAGH, Honshu, Japan (1965)

Chaplain, Capt. Philip Touw, Ft. Bliss, TX (1977)  
 Chaplain, LTC, Paul Vruwink, Ft. Bragg, NC (1958)  
 Chaplain, Capt. Marinus Van De Steeg, Ft. Leonard Wood, MO (1979)  
 Chaplain, Capt. Karl K. Willoughby, Ft. Leonard Wood, MO (1967)

#### *Navy*

Chaplain, CDR, Herbert Bergsma, Special Assignment, Wash. D.C. (1966)  
 Chaplain, LCDR, Robert Brummel, Andrews AFB, MD (1966)  
 Chaplain, LCDR, Donald den Dulk, FPO, USS Sterett (1975)  
 Chaplain, CDR, Albert J. Roon, 3rd Marines, Okinawa (1966)  
 Chaplain, LCDR, Raymond Swierenga, FPO, USS Detroit (1960)

### III. INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCY

During 1978, seven ministers accepted positions to serve as institutional chaplains. The following chaplains serve full-time in a variety of institutional settings and have received ecclesiastical endorsement from the Chaplain Committee:

Chaplain Harold De Jong, St. Peter's Hospital, Olympia, WA  
 Chaplain John de Vries, Jr., Federal Penitentiary Service, Montreal, PQ  
 Chaplain Sidney Draayer, Christian Counseling Center, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Edwin Dykstra, Larue D. Carter Memorial Hospital, Indianapolis, IN  
 Chaplain Jerry Dykstra, Halifax Infirmary, Halifax, NS  
 Chaplain William Dykstra, State Prison of Southern Michigan, Jackson, MI  
 Chaplain A. Dirk Evans, Harper-Grace Hospital, Detroit, MI  
 Chaplain Eric Evenhuis, Voorman Psychiatric Medical Clinic, Upland, CA  
 Chaplain Jan Friend, Bethesda Hospital, Denver, CO  
 Chaplain Terry Hager, Community Counseling and Personal Growth Ministry, GR, MI  
 Chaplain Marvin Hoogland, Chicago Christian Counseling Center, Chicago, IL  
 Chaplain Gordon Kieft, Bethesda Hospital, Denver, CO  
 Chaplain James Kok, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Philip Kostler, Pontiac General Hospital, Pontiac, MI  
 Chaplain John Lammsa, Milan Federal Penitentiary, Milan, MI  
 Chaplain William Lenters, Calvary Rehabilitation Center, Phoenix, AZ  
 Chaplain Gerald Oosterveen, Dixon Developmental Center, Dixon, IL  
 Chaplain Elton Piersma, Christian Life Enrichment Ministries, Muskegon, MI  
 Chaplain Henry Post, Foote Memorial Hospital, Jackson, MI  
 Chaplain Robert Uken, Pine Rest Christian Hospital Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Adrian Van Andel, VA Palo Alto/Menlo Park MC, Palo Alto, CA  
 Chaplain Larry Vande Creek, Family Practice Dept., OSU, Columbus, OH  
 Chaplain Thomas Vanden Bosch, VA Medical Center, Sioux Falls, SD  
 Chaplain Nick Vander Kwaak, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Peter Van Katwyk, Interfaith Counseling Center, Cambridge, ONT  
 Chaplain Duane Visser, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Peter Winkle, Rehoboth Hospital, Gallup, NM  
 Chaplain Benjamin Ypma, Koinonia Medical Center, Muskegon, MI

### IV. THE YEAR OF 1978 IN REVIEW

#### *A. Institutional Chaplaincy*

Most chaplaincy positions in institutions are not filled by ministers of Reformed persuasion. When such positions become vacant, our ministers, who have been trained in specialized pastoral care, have a good possibility of being seriously considered. Placing a chaplain in such

an institution provides the church an excellent opportunity for Christian witness which reaches far beyond the boundaries of the denomination.

This year the committee assisted in the placement of two Christian Reformed chaplains in prison ministries. Three chaplains were placed in medical facilities which provide psychiatric care. Two chaplains were placed in general hospitals. More chaplains were placed in institutions during this year than in any other year in the history of the denomination.

The importance of specialized pastoral training must be emphasized along with an informed theological perspective which has something substantive to offer in pastoral care. This year we have offered stipends to four pastors. There are several others gaining specialized training at this time. During the final months of training these pastors seek chaplain positions and the committee facilitates the placement.

The committee has actively investigated opportunities for the placement of chaplains. After over two years of negotiation with Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, Florida, we hope to place a chaplain there before the sessions of the synod begin. We have investigated three other institutions and have placed a chaplain in one of them. This kind of work takes time, patience, persistence and wisdom.

The committee is pleased to make this positive report in response to its mandate from synod.

### *B. Business and Industrial Chaplaincy*

Another part of our mandate, this from the Synod of 1977, focuses on placing some business and industrial chaplains for a three year trial period. In response to this mandate, the committee has not been successful, although currently there are some indications of positive progress.

We now have one pastor who is working one day a week in pastoral care and counseling for an international firm, whose management offices are in the south. This pastor has opportunity to move into a full-time ministry in pastoral care and counseling this summer. The committee wishes to note that some of the executive personnel in the firm are of Reformed persuasion and they are quite willing to work with us in carrying out a model ministry in industrial chaplaincy.

We have also met with personnel from one of the departments at Pine Rest Christian Hospital. Efforts are being made to enter business and industrial communities, seeking to provide life enrichment ministries in such settings. This particular program is quite new and it remains to be seen how it will develop. Similar programs have been successful in other business and industrial centers such as Pittsburgh and Seattle.

The committee is proceeding cautiously because it is a new form of ministry. We hope that the church through its synod will be patient with us. We are encouraged by our Lord, who ministered on-the-job to persons involved in the business of fishing and had time for a tax-collector. May we do less as a church, knowing that we tend to minister to people primarily during their leisure time?

### *C. Military and Veteran Administration Chaplaincy*

Despite the seething unrest in the world, the military in North America is in a peace-time stance of preparedness. During such times, great effort is expended to cut defense spending while retaining a status of readiness. This often affects personnel actions, including those of chaplains. We as a denomination will continue placing pastors in the military but fewer of them will have the option of staying on for a career of twenty or more years. This will provide more pastors the opportunity to gain a three year experience in ministry in a military setting.

The Chaplain Committee was involved with some of the recent developments in Veterans Administration Chaplaincy. Our denomination has two VA chaplains. We should have five or six. Many senior VA chaplains will soon be retiring. The committee would like to have five pastors in readiness for VA services as positions open. These are excellent opportunities for the church to provide a ministry beyond its denominational boundaries.

### *D. Pension Coverage for Chaplains*

The Synod of 1978 adopted the joint recommendation of the Chaplain Committee and the Ministers' Pension Fund Committee to close out the Chaplain Deposit Fund by the end of 1978. This has been accomplished. Beginning in 1979 the Chaplain Committee began making pension payments for most of the chaplains. The committee will continue to work closely with the administrator of the Ministers' Pension Fund regarding pension coverage and records keeping, insuring that chaplains will not receive less coverage than other ministers but neither will they receive duplicate benefits at the expense of the denomination. The committee appreciates the fine cooperative spirit of the Ministers' Pension Fund Committee and its administrator on these matters.

## V. CHAPLAINCY IN CANADA

The Chaplain Committee is convinced that we will need to place greater effort and more time into the development of chaplaincy in Canada. The Canadian Sub-Committee is gaining visibility for the denomination through membership on several Federal and Provincial organizations affecting chaplaincy. Such visibility gains credibility that we minister from an informed theological perspective and have something to offer in terms of pastoral care to those needing chaplains' service.

Our emphasis on chaplaincy in Canada will focus on three areas: 1) Greater effort must be placed on recruitment of pastors who possess exceptional qualifications to serve in specialized pastoral settings such as hospitals and prisons. 2) More effort must be exerted in facilitating the specialized training of pastors to minister in chaplain service. The possibility of placing a pastor in chaplain service without specialized training is almost nil. 3) Greater effort must be focused on investigating opportunities for specialized pastoral ministry and for publicizing infor-

mation about these opportunities. It is possible that opening a Canadian office of the CRC-NA might facilitate the work of promoting chaplaincy in Canada.

## VI. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

The work of the Rev. Harold Bode, our Executive Secretary, moves along three important fronts. He functions as an administrator, as an endorsing agent of the church and as a pastor.

As an administrator, besides the typical functions, he prepares files on each chaplain candidate and presents the candidate to the Chaplain Committee for endorsement. He investigates and develops opportunities for the service of chaplains in institutions, business, industry, and military service. He coordinates and monitors the training of chaplains. He keeps the committee informed on the many facets of chaplain ministry.

As an endorsing agent, he represents the denomination on an ecumenical level with organizations affecting chaplaincy with the Armed Forces, in Correctional Institutions, with ministers in Specialized Pastoral Settings and with the Veterans Administration. He has been appointed secretary of the VA Endorsers Conference and secretary/treasurer of the Council on Pastoral Ministry to Correctional Institutions. He processes ecclesiastical endorsement for Christian Reformed chaplains with a variety of institutions and works closely with chaplains, local calling churches, classes and synodical deputies on chaplaincy matters. As a denominational endorsing agent, he works cooperatively with various professional organizations which seek to upgrade the qualification levels for chaplaincy.

As a pastor, he keeps in touch with chaplains and their families. He spent time with all but six chaplains during 1978 and of the six, three were serving overseas. He meets with chaplains while on visiting tours, at retreats or conventions. He serves as an advocate for chaplains in problem situations between the chaplain and the employing institution. He works pastorally with those in training and assists them in the process of placement. The pastoral function is highly important because chaplains often do not enjoy the support structure available to pastors serving churches.

## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. *Representation at synod*: We request that our Executive Secretary, the Rev. Harold Bode, and the Rev. Duane Visser, our chair-person, be permitted to speak at the synod on matters affecting the Chaplain Committee.

B. *Presentation of chaplains*: We request that active duty chaplains, both institutional and military, who may be present while synod is in session be presented to synod and one of each be allowed to speak briefly to synod.

C. *Committee Personnel*: The initial three year term ends for five of our committee members. They are: Jean Ettesvold, Harold Mast, Evert

Vermeer, John Van Til and the Rev. Marvin Baarman. All are eligible for reappointment.

—With Jean Ettesvold, a social worker and part-time teacher at Reformed Bible College; we present Mildred Weeber, counselor at Ottawa Hills High School and member at La Grave Ave. Christian Reformed Church.

—With Harold Mast, hospital administrator at Pine Rest Christian Hospital and a reserve Officer with the Navy in that specialty; we present Jay Morren, teacher of business at South Christian High School and part-time financial consultant.

—With Evert Vermeer, director of Kent County Social Services, currently serving on special assignment with HEW in Washington, D.C. with a return date of July 1979; we present Mr. Jerald Hop, the secretary/treasurer of Ter Haar-Venhuizen Cadillac-Olds of Holland, Michigan. Mr. Hop is a member of the Providence Christian Reformed Church.

—We recommend that the synod reappoint the Rev. John Van Til as the primary Canadian representative on the committee and recommend that the Rev. Carl Tuyl be appointed as an alternate member, either of whom may be in attendance at our meetings.

—With the Rev. Marvin Baarman, former executive secretary of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions and an emeritus minister, we present the Rev. Wilbert M. Van Dyk, pastor of the Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church in Grand Rapids, MI.

D. The Chaplain Committee requests the synod to approve the quota of \$3.95 per family for 1980. Please note that \$1.35 per family of that quota will be used to pay pension premiums for chaplains.

#### VIII. FINANCIAL REPORT:

The financial statement for 1978 is attached. The auditor's report and the proposed budget for 1980 will be available at the time of synod.

Chaplain Committee  
Harold Bode, Executive Secretary

CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
 FINANCIAL REPORT  
 Year Ended December 31, 1978

## BALANCE - January 1, 1978

Checking Account	\$ 11,732.02	
Savings Account	<u>48,551.65</u>	\$60,283.67

## RECEIPTS

Quotas	\$106,804.16	
Contributions & Gifts	556.85	
Bank Interest	3,967.37	
Other	<u>185.92</u>	
Total Available		<u>\$111,514.30</u>

## DISBURSEMENTS

Executive Secretary

Salary - Base Salary	\$15,400.00	
- Child Allowance	2,900.00	
- Housing Allowance	4,400.00	\$22,700.00
Other - Pension	\$ 1,200.00	
- Hospitalization	827.61	
- Self Employment Tax	710.00	
- Life Insurance	<u>96.00</u>	2,833.61

Operating Expenses

Travel - Executive Secretary	\$ 4,821.51	
- Other	<u>1,741.61</u>	6,563.12
Coordinated Services Agency		
- Labor & Supplies	\$ 1,329.75	
- Equipment & Postage	1,440.21	
- Telephone	652.45	
- Rent	<u>1,667.10</u>	5,089.51
Secretarial & Clerical		3,756.53
Advertising & Promotion		2,766.22
Subsidies		
- Salaries	\$ 9,910.00	
- Training	19,883.30	
- Moving	5,325.70	
- Travel & Testing	<u>1,018.50</u>	36,137.50
Membership & Dues		2,140.60
Retreats		3,073.52
Development - Industrial		-0-
Contingency		595.00
Miscellaneous		685.22

Other - Mayo Clinic

Less Total Disbursements	<u>2,700.00</u>	<u>\$89,040.83</u>
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## BALANCE - December 31, 1978

Checking Account	6,006.92	
Savings Account	26,750.22	
Michigan Money Market C.D.'s due 6/8/79	<u>50,000.00</u>	\$82,757.14

REPORT 10  
CHURCH HELP FUND

The Church Help Fund Committee met five times during the year 1978. After careful consideration, twenty-seven new loans were approved totaling \$375,575.00, which was ten more loans than were granted the year before. In general we are again appreciative of the helpful evaluations of the applications which are given by the classes. We are of the opinion, however, that in a few instances the classes should have reviewed the applications a bit more critically than they did. The classical evaluation is of great importance to us and does greatly influence our decisions as a committee.

We are grateful that most of the churches are prompt in the repayment of their loans. One case of delinquency which has been of concern to us is being remedied; the final payment on this loan is scheduled to be made by the end of 1979. Failure on the part of the churches in making their repayment on schedule jeopardizes the revolving nature of our fund.

Our treasurer encounters some difficulty because of the frequent changes in the Canadian exchange rate. We appreciate the fact that many of the Canadian churches are solving the problem by purchasing a bank money order or bank draft in United States funds. We encourage all of the Canadian churches to do so in accordance with the rules which require that they repay in United States currency.

The committee always faces the prospect of operating with a deficit with new loan requests surpassing the amount being received through the repayment of old loans. However, with the cooperation of the churches in not calling for their approved loans until the money is actually needed we were again able to provide the churches with approved funds upon request. Most of the loans this past year were again issued on a fifteen year repayment schedule. A few, however, were issued for periods of five, ten and twenty years. By keeping the loans on a somewhat shorter repayment schedule we are able to be of assistance to more congregations. We do not feel that this is unreasonable since the payments in most instances will be less than interest payments would be on commercial loans.

We wish to inform synod that we decided not to continue as a sponsor of Christian Stewardship Services of Canada after December 31, 1978. We feel that ours is not the type of cause that will attract deferred gifts.

During the past year, in response to suggestions made to us by the advisory committee of the Synod of 1978, our committee has frequently discussed the possibility of increasing the size of our fund so that we may be able to increase the size of the loans to be granted. This is a matter of great concern because of the great increase in building costs today. Depending upon the geographical area, building costs have doubled and even tripled over the past ten years while the size of our loans has not increased since 1967. Therefore our maximum loans of \$20,000 for a

church building and \$10,000 for a parsonage constitute an ever decreasing percentage of the total costs involved. In addition, the high interest rates on commercial loans constitute a great financial burden for weak and needy churches. It is impossible for us to increase the size of our loans, however, as long as the size of our fund is not increased. Already ten years ago the committee was of the opinion that the size of our fund should be increased to three million dollars from the present two and four-tenths million dollars. Some have suggested that the fund be increased by charging interest on the loans issued. The committee believes, however, that this would defeat the purpose of the fund, namely, to help "weak and needy" churches. After considerable study and discussion, therefore, we are convinced that the maximum amount on the new loans to be issued should be increased from \$20,000 to \$30,000 on a church building, and from 10,000 to \$15,000 on a parsonage in those cases that are especially needy and/or as funds available allow. These new amounts would apply to new loans issued and would not be retroactive to loans previously issued. This recommended increase, however, is to be contingent upon the adoption of a three dollar quota for a period of three years. Such a quota would increase the size of the fund close to the desired three million dollar level and would raise the needed revenue to allow for the proposed increase in the size of the loans to be issued. We suggest that the situation be reassessed after the three year period.

The personnel of the committee remained unchanged during the past year. Inquiries concerning the Church Help Fund should be sent to the secretary, the Rev. Paul E. Bakker, 1323 16th St., Rock Valley, Iowa 51247, or the treasurer, Mr. Elmer Huizenga, 212 Kentucky Ave., SW, Orange City, Iowa 51041.

#### MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ACTION

A. The terms of the Revs. P. Bakker and L. Bouma, and of Messrs. T. Van Bruggen, M. Breems, and alternate H. De Groot expire this year. All are eligible for reelection. Nominations will be forwarded to the Stated Clerk of Synod.

#### B. *Recommendations:*

1. That synod give the privilege of the floor to the secretary of the committee when Church Help Fund matters are being discussed.
2. That the maximum amount on new loans (beginning in 1980) be increased from \$20,000 to \$30,000 on a church building, and from \$10,000 to \$15,000 on a parsonage in those cases that are especially needy and/or as funds available allow. (This is to be contingent upon the adoption of the recommended quota.)

#### *Grounds:*

- a. Sharply rising building costs require larger loans.
- b. Extremely high interest rates on commercial loans constitute a tremendous financial burden for weak and needy churches.
- c. The advisory committee of the Synod of 1978 suggested that we

investigate the possibilities of increasing the size of loans and other sources of funding.

3. That synod establish a \$3 per family quota for three years for the Church Help Fund, Inc.

*Grounds:*

- a. As a strictly revolving fund, the size of the fund is not increased and therefore does not allow for an increase in the size of loans.
  - b. This is necessary in order to build up the fund to the three million dollar level which will allow for larger loans.
  - c. The alternative to a quota, namely, the charging of interest, would defeat the purpose of this fund, which is to help weak and needy churches.
4. That the size of loans be reevaluated after three years in the light of inflationary trends.
  5. That synod remind the Canadian churches that repayment of their loans must be made in United States currency according to the rules.

Church Help Fund Committee

J. Fondse, chairman  
 P. Bakker, secretary  
 L. Bouma  
 M. Breems  
 E. Huizenga  
 T. Van Bruggen

THE CHURCH HELP FUND  
 CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
 ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
 1978

SCHEDULE "A"

CASH RECEIPTS & DISBURSEMENTS

Cash on hand 12-31-77		
Northwestern State Bank		
Checking Account	\$50,765.12	
Savings Account	17,050.27	
Security National Bank, Savings Acct.	34,498.48	
First Nat'l. Bank, Savings Acct.	46,383.81	
American State Bank, Savings Acct.	<u>43,581.21</u>	
Total		\$192,278.89

RECEIPTS:

Repayment of loans - Schedule B	\$342,834.96	
Interest - Savings account	9,778.10	
U.S. Canadian Exchange	<u>4,445.22</u>	
Total		\$357,058.28

DISBURSEMENTS:

New loans disbursed - Schedule B	\$394,575.00	
Administration expense - Schedule C	2,537.58	
U.S. Canadian Exchange	<u>4,686.28</u>	
Total		\$401,798.86
Total Cash		<u>\$147,538.31</u>

Cash on hand 12-31-78		
Northwestern State Bank, Orange City, Iowa		
Checking Account	\$ 49,246.44	
Savings Account	17,777.14	
Security National Bank, Sioux City, Iowa - Savings Account		
	36,267.16	
First National Bank, Sioux Center, Iowa - Savings Account		
	23,593.54	
American State Bank, Sioux Center, Iowa - Savings Account		
	20,654.03	
Total		\$147,538.31

THE CHURCH HELP FUND  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
1978

		SCHEDULE "B"			
No.	Church	Balance 12-31-77	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-78
1	Abbotsford, B.C. - 2nd	\$19,500.00		\$ 1,500.00	\$18,000.00
2	Abbotsford, B.C. - Trinity		\$30,000.00		30,000.00
3	Ackley, Iowa	6,500.00			6,500.00
4	Acton, Ont.	1,118.75		718.70	400.05
5	Aetna, Michigan	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
6	Agassiz, B.C.	8,845.03		2,783.33	6,061.70
7	Alamosa, Colorado	4,000.00		2,000.00	2,000.00
8	Albuquerque, NM - Chelwood Community	6,666.70		1,333.33	5,333.37
9	Alliston, Ont.	3,833.37	10,000.00	833.33	13,000.04
10	Alto, Mich. - Lakeside Comm.		10,000.00		10,000.00
11	Ames, Iowa - University	4,700.00		4,700.00	none
12	Ancaster, Ont.		10,000.00		10,000.00
13	Anchorage, Alaska - Trinity	8,303.80		8,303.80	none
14	Ann Arbor, Michigan	2,500.00		1,200.00	1,300.00
15	Atwood, Michigan	1,334.80	4,575.00	667.40	5,242.40
16	Bakersfield, California	8,000.92		666.66	7,333.36
17	Belding, Mich. - Oakwood	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
18	Belleville, Ont. - Maranatha	1,500.00		750.00	750.00
19	Bellingham, Washington	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
20	Big Rapids, Mich. - Fellowship	10,500.00		1,500.00	9,000.00
21	Blenheim, Ont.	9,500.00		1,100.00	8,400.00
22	Bloomfield, Ont.	4,000.00			4,000.00
23	Blyth, Ont.	10,750.00		1,250.00	9,500.00
24	Boca Raton, Florida	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
25	Bowmanville, Ont. - Maranatha	5,500.00			5,500.00
26	Brandon, Man. - 1st	1,631.25	15,000.00	864.25	15,767.00
27	Britt, Iowa	2,600.00		825.00	1,775.00
28	Brookfield, Wisc. - Milwaukee	14,666.68		1,333.33	13,333.35
29	Brooten, Minnesota	2,640.00		660.00	1,980.00
30	Burbank, Ill. - Immanuel	24,666.00		2,333.34	22,332.66
31	Burnaby, B.C.	3,000.00		800.00	2,200.00
32	Byron Center, Mich. - 2nd	500.00		500.00	none
33	Cadillac, Mich.	5,000.00		1,000.00	4,000.00
34	Caledonia, Mich.	8,481.02			8,481.02
35	Calgary, Alta. - Maranatha	2,500.00		750.00	1,750.00
36	Cambridge, Ont. - Maranatha	5,000.00			5,000.00
37	Cedar, Iowa	1,422.08		1,422.08	none
38	Cedar Falls, Iowa	7,500.00		1,500.00	6,000.00
39	Cedar Rapids, Iowa - Peace	13,325.00		1,335.00	11,990.00
40	Cedar Springs, Mich. - Pioneer	3,250.00	10,000.00	750.00	12,500.00
41	Champaign, Ill. - Hessel Park	9,000.00			9,000.00
42	Chatham, Ont. - Calvary	20,000.00		1,333.00	18,667.00
43	Chicago, Ill. - Garfield	13,200.04		1,159.99	12,040.05
44	Chicago, Ill. - Korean	28,650.00		2,004.00	26,646.00
45	Chilliwack, B.C. - 1st	13,729.30		3,891.80	9,837.50
46	Chula Vista, California	17,334.00		1,333.00	16,001.00
47	Cleveland, Ohio - Maple Hgts.	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
48	Cobourg, Ont. - Grace	4,000.00		1,100.00	2,900.00
49	Cochrane, Ont.	9,333.34			9,333.34
50	Collingwood, Ont.	5,789.33		2,400.00	3,389.33

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

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No.	Church	Balance 12-31-77	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-78
51	Colorado Springs, Col.	\$14,666.67	\$	\$ 1,333.33	\$13,333.34
52	Comstock Park, Mich.	14,333.34		500.00	13,833.34
53	Conrad, Montana	4,380.00			4,380.00
54	Coopersville, Mi.-Little Farms	8,000.02		666.66	7,333.36
55	Coquitlam, B.C.	9,333.34		666.66	8,666.68
56	Cornwall, Ont. - Immanuel	11,562.50		1,000.00	10,562.50
57	Crown Point, Indiana	2,000.00		500.00	1,500.00
58	Cutlerville, Mi.-Cutlerville Hills	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
59	Cutlerville, Mi.-Providence		20,000.00		20,000.00
60	Decatur, Mich.	24,000.00		4,666.66	19,333.34
61	Delta, B.C. - 1st	800.00		800.00	none
62	De Motte, Indiana - Bethel	14,000.00			14,000.00
63	Denver, Colo. - Center of Hope	17,991.67			17,991.67
64	Denver, Colo. - Fairview	4,875.00			4,875.00
65	Denver, Colo.-Ridgeview Hills	16,000.02		2,333.33	13,666.69
66	Denver, Colo. - Trinity	9,750.00		2,500.00	7,250.00
67	Des Moines, Iowa	1,500.00			1,500.00
68	Dispatch, Kansas	20,000.00		1,500.00	18,500.00
69	Dorr, Mich.	14,666.68		1,333.33	13,333.35
70	Dundas, Ont. - Calvin	3,250.00		750.00	2,500.00
71	Dunville, Ont. - Bethel	4,750.00		1,500.00	3,250.00
72	East Grand Forks, Mn.-Community		20,000.00		20,000.00
73	Edmonton, Alta. - Ottewell	5,500.00		1,250.00	4,250.00
74	Edmonton, Alta. - Trinity	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
75	Edson, Alta.	9,185.68		1,416.00	7,769.68
76	Emo, Ont.	3,805.00		1,200.00	2,605.00
77	Exeter, Ont.	2,500.00			2,500.00
78	Ferrysburg, Mich.	14,666.68		1,333.33	13,333.35
79	Flushing, Mi.-Good Shepherd	25,000.00		1,250.00	23,750.00
80	Forest, Ont.	5,375.00		1,218.75	4,156.25
81	Forest Grove, Mi.	18,000.00		3,000.00	15,000.00
82	Ft. Collins, Colo.-Immanuel	19,334.00			19,334.00
83	Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.	15,166.72		1,833.32	13,333.40
84	Framingham, Mass.	2,000.00		500.00	1,500.00
85	Freeman, SD - Bethlehem	16,800.00		2,300.00	14,500.00
86	Fresno, Calif.	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
87	Fruitport, Mi.	9,566.69		1,303.33	8,263.36
88	Fulton, Ill. - Bethel	5,000.00		1,000.00	4,000.00
89	Gallatin Gateway, Montana	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
90	Gallup, NM - Bethany	20,000.00		1,333.00	18,667.00
91	Gary, Indiana - Beacon Light	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
92	Georgetown, Ont.	3,000.00		750.00	2,250.00
93	Grand Prairie, Alta.-LaGlace	1,309.75		333.66	976.09
94	Grand Rapids, Mi. - Arcadia	1,416.76	10,000.00	1,416.76	10,000.00
95	Grand Rapids, Mi. - Bristolwood	4,166.70		833.33	3,333.37
96	Grand Rapids, Mi. - Grace	20,000.00		1,335.00	18,665.00
97	Grand Rapids, Mi.-Ideal Park	4,000.16		1,333.32	2,666.84
98	Grand Rapids, Mi.-Princeton	3,000.00		1,500.00	1,500.00
99	Grand Rapids, Mi.-Sunshine	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
100	Grangeville, Idaho	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
101	Grandville, Mi. - Hanley	16,000.01		2,666.66	13,333.35
102	Grandville, Mi.-Ivanrest	1,750.00		1,750.00	none
103	Greely, Colo.-Fellowship	2,600.00		2,600.00	none
104	Grimbsby, Ont.-Mountainview	4,500.00			4,500.00
105	Guelph, Ont.	1,505.00		750.00	755.00
106	Halifax, Nova Scotia	3,249.01			3,249.01
107	Hamilton, Ont.-Immanuel	4,925.00		775.00	4,150.00
108	Hammond, Indiana	9,000.00		1,000.00	8,000.00
109	Hancock, Minnesota	2,125.00		500.00	1,625.00
110	Hawarden, Iowa		20,000.00		20,000.00
111	Hills, Minnesota	13,333.35		1,333.33	12,000.02
112	Holland, Iowa	6,666.70		1,333.33	5,333.37
113	Holland, Mi. - Calvary	3,500.00		3,500.00	none
114	Holland, Minn.	1,690.00		500.00	1,190.00
115	Hollandale, Minn.	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
116	Holland Marsh, Ont.	188.44		188.44	none
117	Houston, B.C.	8,400.00		600.00	7,800.00
118	Hudsonville, Mi.-Georgetown	30,000.00			30,000.00
119	Hull, Iowa - Hope	6,350.00	16,000.00	1,350.00	21,000.00
120	Hull, North Dakota	1,050.00		1,050.00	none
121	Indianapolis, Ind.-Devington	8,666.68		666.66	8,000.02

No.	Church	Balance	New Loans	Repay	Balance
		12-31-77			12-31-78
122	Ingersol, Ont.	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
123	Iowa City, Iowa - Trinity	7,200.00		600.00	6,600.00
124	Jackson, Mi.	1,250.00		250.00	1,000.00
125	Jamaica, New York - Queens	7,000.00		500.00	6,500.00
126	Jenison, Mi.-Cottonwood Hgts.	7,500.00		1,500.00	6,000.00
127	Kalamazoo, Mi.-Eastern Hills	13,000.00		1,000.00	12,000.00
128	Kalamazoo, Mi. - Faith	4,500.00	10,000.00	1,500.00	13,000.00
129	Kalamazoo, Mi.-Northern Hgts.	4,500.00		1,500.00	3,000.00
130	Kalamazoo, Mi.-Parchment	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
131	Kalamazoo, Mi.-Prairie Edge	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
132	Kalamazoo, Mi.-Southern Hgts.	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
133	Kansas City, Mo.- Lane Ave.	13,333.34		1,333.34	12,000.00
134	Kelowna, B.C.	21,666.69		1,999.81	19,666.88
135	Kemptville, Ont. - 1st	28,000.00		2,000.00	26,000.00
136	Kennewick, Wash.-Tri Cities		20,000.00		20,000.00
137	Kentville, Nova Scotia	10,300.00		1,550.00	8,750.00
138	Lacombe, Alta. - Bethel	1,750.00		750.00	1,000.00
139	La Crosse, Wisc. - Hope		20,000.00		20,000.00
140	Lake City, Mich.	6,625.00	20,000.00	2,825.00	23,800.00
141	Langley, B.C.	1,000.00			1,000.00
142	Leduc, Alta. - Ebenezer		10,000.00		10,000.00
143	Le Mars, Iowa - Calvin		10,000.00		10,000.00
144	Lindsay, Ont.	4,050.00			4,050.00
145	Listowel, Ont.	3,750.00		750.00	3,000.00
146	Long Beach, Calif.	15,000.00			15,000.00
147	Longmont, Colo.-Pleasant Valley	20,000.00	10,000.00	1,000.00	29,000.00
148	Lowell, Mich. - Calvary	22,000.00		2,333.33	19,666.67
149	Lucknow, Ont.	11,018.50		1,900.00	9,118.50
150	Lynden, Wash.-Mountainview	22,000.00		4,000.00	18,000.00
151	Lynnwood, Washington	12,000.00		2,000.00	10,000.00
152	Madison, Wisc.	17,333.34		9,406.59	7,926.75
153	Marysville, Wash.	9,333.33		1,333.33	8,000.00
154	McBain, Michigan	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
155	McBain, Mich. - Calvin	1,400.00		1,400.00	none
156	Medicine Hat, Alta.	9,750.00		1,750.00	8,000.00
157	Menno, S.D. - Peace		20,000.00		20,000.00
158	Mississauga, Ont.-Community		20,000.00		20,000.00
159	Middleville, Mi.	16,333.38		1,666.66	14,666.72
160	Minneapolis, Mn. - Calvary	1,750.00		500.00	1,250.00
161	Minneapolis, Mn. - 1st	20,250.00		2,250.00	18,000.00
162	Momence, Ill.	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00
163	Montreal, Quebec	13,500.00		1,500.00	12,000.00
164	Mountain Lake, Mn.	26,833.34		1,833.34	25,000.00
165	New Glasgow, Nova Scotia - Emmanuel	19,000.00		3,000.00	16,000.00
166	Newmarket, Ont. - Bethel	5,250.00		750.00	4,500.00
167	Niagara Falls, Ont.-Rehoboth	2,500.00			2,500.00
168	Noordeloos, Mich.	12,000.00		2,000.00	10,000.00
169	Oak Forest, Ill. - Hope	800.00		800.00	none
170	Ocheyedan, Iowa	14,000.00		2,000.00	12,000.00
171	Ogden, Utah	12,000.00			12,000.00
172	Ogilvie, Mn.		5,000.00		5,000.00
173	Olympia, Wash. - Evergreen	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
174	Omaha, Nebr. - Prairie Lane	6,750.00		2,250.00	4,500.00
175	Onalaska, Wisc. - Hope	10,000.00		666.66	9,333.34
176	Orangeville, Ont.	5,925.00		2,250.00	3,675.00
177	Orillia, Ont. - 1st	4,250.00		750.00	3,500.00
178	Orlando, Florida	15,000.00		2,000.00	13,000.00
179	Ottawa, Ont. - Calvin	1,375.00		625.00	750.00
180	Palo Alto, Calif.	21,333.37		2,000.00	19,333.37
181	Paramus, N.J.	14,000.01			14,000.01
182	Parkersburg, Iowa	12,000.00		1,500.00	10,500.00
183	Pembroke, Ont. - Zion	20,001.80		1,334.00	18,667.80
184	Penticton, B.C.	5,039.97		1,224.00	3,815.97
185	Peterborough, Ont.-Cephas	2,868.52		800.00	2,068.52
186	Phoenix, Ariz. - Orangewood	3,000.00		2,000.00	1,000.00
187	Pipestone, Mn.		20,000.00		20,000.00
188	Plainwell, Mi. - Calvary	6,000.00	4,000.00	1,000.00	9,000.00
189	Port Alberni, B.C. - 1st	6,500.04		700.00	5,800.04
190	Randolph, Wisc. - 1st	9,000.00		3,000.00	6,000.00
191	Redlands, Calif.-Highland Ave.	1,000.00		250.00	750.00
192	Regina, Sask. - 1st	16,188.27		1,600.00	14,588.27

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-77	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-78
193	Renfrew, Ont. - Hebron	2,250.00		1,000.00	1,250.00
194	Richfield Springs, N.Y. - Trinity	28,000.00		2,500.00	25,500.00
195	Richmond, B.C.	2,450.00		500.00	1,950.00
196	Riverside, Calif.	6,666.70		666.66	6,000.04
197	Rockford, Mi. - Plainfield	8,750.03		2,250.03	6,500.00
198	Rock Rapids, Iowa	17,333.34		1,333.33	16,000.01
199	Rock Valley, Iowa - Trinity	14,000.00		1,500.00	12,500.00
200	Roseville, Mi. - Immanuel	11,250.00		1,250.00	10,000.00
201	Rudyard, Mich.	5,333.38		666.66	4,666.72
202	Sacramento, Calif.	8,000.00		1,500.00	6,500.00
203	Saginaw, Mich. - Community	3,000.00			3,000.00
204	St. Joseph, Michigan	14,666.68		1,333.33	13,333.35
205	St. Thomas, Ont. - 1st	400.00		400.00	none
206	San Francisco, Calif. - Golden Gate	8,000.02		666.66	7,333.36
207	San Jose, Calif. - Moorpark	8,000.00		2,000.00	6,000.00
208	Saskatoon, Sash. - Bethel	9,450.00		2,500.00	6,950.00
209	Sauk Village, Ill. - Emmanuel	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
210	Seattle, Wash. - Calvary	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
211	Sheboygan, Wisc. - Calvin	2,083.36		1,083.33	1,000.03
212	Sheldon, Ia. - Immanuel	22,166.70		2,500.00	19,666.70
213	Sibley, Iowa	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
214	Silver Spring, Maryland	29,666.71		4,766.71	24,900.00
215	Simcoe, Ont. - Immanuel	14,466.68		3,336.00	11,130.68
216	Sioux Center, Ia. - Covenant	8,000.00			8,000.00
217	Sioux City, Ia. - 1st	6,790.00		830.00	5,960.00
218	Smithers, B.C.	1,520.00		380.00	1,140.00
219	Smithville, Ont.	15,666.64		2,333.32	13,333.32
220	South Holland, Ill. - Peace	3,000.00		1,500.00	1,500.00
221	Stony Plain, Alta. - Hope	6,000.00		500.00	5,500.00
222	Stratford, Ont.	12,544.00		2,042.00	10,502.00
223	Surrey, B.C.	5,450.00		800.00	4,650.00
224	Taber, Alta.	5,333.30		999.99	4,333.31
225	Tacoma, Wash.		20,000.00		20,000.00
226	Telkwa, B.C.	849.30		835.00	14.30
227	Terra Ceia, North Carolina	9,902.09		1,631.00	8,271.09
228	Thunderbay, Ont. - Bethlehem	6,000.00		6,000.00	none
229	Toronto, Ont. - Fellowship	7,500.00		750.00	6,750.00
230	Toronto, Ont. - Second	5,950.00		5,950.00	none
231	Toronto, Ont. - Woodbridge Maranatha	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
232	Troy, Mich. - North Hills	9,666.73		2,000.00	7,666.73
233	Truro, Nova Scotia - John Calvin	1,000.00	10,000.00	600.00	10,400.00
234	Tucson, Arizona - Elim	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
235	Vancouver, Wash. - Trinity	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
236	Vauxhall, Alta.	400.00			400.00
237	Vergenne, Vermont - Champlain Valley	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
238	Vernon, B.C.	12,469.78		1,033.33	11,436.45
239	Victoria, B.C.	2,500.00		1,293.75	1,206.25
240	Vogel Center, Mi.	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
241	Wallaceburg, Ont.	3,850.00		2,350.00	1,500.00
242	Walnut Creek, Calif.	15,949.54		2,093.30	13,856.24
243	Wappingers Falls, N.Y. - Immanuel	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
244	Washington, D.C.	20,000.00		2,000.00	18,000.00
245	Waupun, Wisc. - Bethel	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
246	Wayland, Mich.	8,400.00		2,600.00	5,800.00
247	Welland Junction, Ont.	11,333.36		1,416.66	9,916.70
248	Wellsburg, Iowa - 2nd	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
249	Whitby, Ont. - Hebron	2,375.00		1,000.00	1,375.00
250	Williamsburg, Ont.	1,250.00		625.00	625.00
251	Winfield, Ill.	3,000.00		3,000.00	none
252	Winter Haven, Fla. - Cypress Gardens		20,000.00		20,000.00
253	Winnipeg, Man. - Kildonan	2,000.00		1,000.00	1,000.00
254	Winnipeg, Man. - Transcona	7,500.00			7,500.00
255	Wisconsin Rapids, Wisc.	15,166.68		1,833.33	13,333.35
256	Wyoming, Mi. - Roger Heights	1,250.00			1,250.00
257	Wyoming, Mi. - W. 44th St.	10,000.00		10,000.00	none

<u>No. Church</u>	<u>Balance 12-31-77</u>	<u>New Loans</u>	<u>Repay</u>	<u>Balance 12-31-78</u>
258 Yakima, Wash.-Summitview	21,000.00		3,000.00	18,000.00
259 York, Ont. - Maranatha	10,133.38		1,266.66	8,866.72
	\$2,204,147.72	\$394,575.00	\$342,834.96	\$2,255,887.76

THE CHURCH HELP FUND  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
1978

## SCHEDULE "C"

## Administration Expense

Meetings and Mileage	\$ 339.39
Rev. Paul Bakker, Secretary	550.00
Marion Wiersma, Ass't. Treas.	1,200.00
Henry De Groot, CPA	75.00
Postage and supplies	207.19
Fidelity Bond	166.00
Total	\$2,537.58

## Schedule "D"

THE CHURCH HELP FUND  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
Orange City, Iowa

1978

## Statistical information on loans and repayments:

	<u>Beginning Balances</u>	<u>Loans</u>	<u>Repayments</u>	<u>Ending Balances</u>
1978	\$ 2,204,148	\$ 394,575	\$ 342,835	\$ 2,255,888
1977	2,206,382	321,000	323,235	2,204,148
1976	2,227,059	324,300	344,976	2,206,382
1975	2,263,746	262,000	298,687	2,227,059
1974	2,337,480	254,377	328,071	2,263,745
1973	2,288,987	360,000	311,508	2,337,480
1972	2,243,449	348,765	303,227	2,288,987
1971	2,288,873	233,000	278,424	2,243,449
1970	2,279,792	281,400	272,320	2,288,873
1969	2,171,778	334,000	225,985	2,279,792

## Delinquent payments on loans:

	<u>Delinquencies</u>	<u>Percentage of beginning of year total loans</u>	<u>Percentage of Repayments for year</u>
12-31-1978	\$ 71,289	3.2	20.8
12-31-1977	68,530	3.1	21.2
12-31-1976	65,084	2.9	18.9
12-31-1975	95,255	4.2	31.9
12-31-1974	74,069	3.2	22.6
12-31-1973	74,685	3.3	24.0

## REPORT 11

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES  
ABROAD (CEACA)

In order to encourage the growth of Reformed churches throughout the world synod established our committee to be its instrument in carrying out this ministry. The churches' contributions to this cause have been used to train persons designated by their churches for leadership positions in their home churches, and assisting persons to obtain specific training not available in their homelands. The forms of assistance include, besides educational and internship programs, distribution of theological books for use in building the libraries of overseas seminaries.

During the year 1978 we received an unprecedented number of urgent requests from overseas churches for assistance in securing training for their leaders. Although several congregations took special offerings for our work and we experienced a modest increase in contributions, we have had to be very selective in granting assistance only to very high priority requests. To more than a dozen other requests we have had to express our regrets that we are not able to grant assistance because our funds are already overcommitted. This is a very painful task since most of these requests are urgent and arise out of a desire of overseas churches within the Reformed fellowships to meet the challenges of their time and circumstance by means of trained nationals. In many instances these churches are desirous of initiating various ministries and establishing new or strengthening existing schools for nationals by means of their own members. They are additionally concerned that their present dependence on expatriate missionaries for such programs has not encouraged or provided the way by which their own members can best serve their church and homeland.

In the following survey of assistance granted and being granted you will rejoice with us for the splendid and exciting ways by which we share with others in the riches of Jesus Christ. Rich benefits come to our own denomination through the presence of these students in our schools and churches. The committee is interested in providing opportunities for our congregations to meet these persons and enlarge their vision through the contacts made. The cross cultural contacts in the classroom and socializing are meaningful experiences to the students in our seminary. How valuable this is is evidenced by a student initiated program of weekly pledges by the seminary students and staff so that another overseas student may be sponsored through the committee.

## I. PROGRAMS SUPPORTED AND COMPLETED IN 1978

MR. EMMANUEL ADE of Nigeria, a graduate of TCNN, arrived in Grand Rapids in late September to begin a two-year program of study at Calvin Seminary leading to the M.A.Th.S. degree. He will return as a

teacher to his homeland. Some financial assistance for Mr. Ade is received by means of the mission and church in Nigeria.

MR. AMOS ADDI, also of Nigeria, has completed his original program goals and is presently completing some work at Calvin College. CEACA's further commitments include only his return fare to Nigeria.

MR. MARIANO AVILA is a graduate of Juan Calvino Seminary in Coyoacan, Mexico. He is presently working toward the Th.M. degree at Calvin Seminary and hopes to complete this program in 1979. Mr. Avila is the first student sponsored by our committee from the Independent Presbyterian Church in Mexico. Through the generosity of a missionary, his wife and child can be with him. CEACA has accepted responsibility for the cost of his program support. His home church has met the travel costs.

MR. DAVID BURA arrived late September from Nigeria to begin the same program of study as Mr. Ade. He also is a graduate of TCNN and will return after two years. CEACA has accepted financial responsibility beyond the scholarship funds provided.

MR. MANO and MRS. SHIRIN DANIEL, a husband and wife team, are from South India and former students at RBC. They began a two-year program of study at Calvin Seminary leading to the M.C.E. degree. They will return to their homeland to serve with the Church of South India upon completion of their studies.

The REV. YASUNORI ICHIKAWA will complete his work for the Th.M. degree at Calvin Seminary in 1979. Mr. Ichikawa will then return to Japan to teach in Kobe Seminary. He returned home at his own expense for a brief period in the summer of 1978 in order to marry. CEACA has responsibility for his monthly support and educational expense. His home church has provided for his travel.

The REV. NEVILLE KOCH, a collegiate minister of the Dutch Reformed Church in Sri Lanka, is the eighth pastor of that church to receive training at Calvin. He completed a year's study in 1978 toward the M.Div. degree, specializing in pastoral counseling at the request of his home church. He returned in late 1978 to his homeland and is already putting this training into use in both the Christian and non-Christian communities. CEACA provided his entire support and travel because of the inability of his home church to transfer any foreign exchange.

The REV. FEZILE BENJAMIN MBENENGE is a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. Mr. & Mrs. Mbenenge arrived in November 1978 for a one-year program of study at Calvin Seminary. Mrs. Mbenenge, a teacher in her homeland, plans to take courses in education at Calvin College. Their travel and expenses have been underwritten by CEACA with a generous pledge of support of \$6,000.00 from the All Nations Christian Reformed Church in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The REV. HIDEAKI SUZUKI completed a four-month internship at Calvin Seminary from September to December, specializing in church polity and administration. Mr. Suzuki experienced splendid and helpful cooperation from our denominational boards and executives. This permitted him to observe the conduct of their ministries, as well as to consult with various board personnel. The Rev. Hideaki Suzuki is a pastor of the Reformed Church in Japan and has returned to his homeland and

church. Travel was provided by his church and tuition by the seminary. CEACA provided for his other expenses.

**COOPERATION WITH BACK TO GOD HOUR.** After consultation with the Back to God Hour, our committee was happy to work out arrangements whereby two persons closely associated with Back to God Hour foreign ministries will be enrolled at Calvin Seminary in early 1979. CEACA will provide counsel and other assistance:

The REV. JUNUS ATMARUMEKSA, from Indonesia and a graduate of Calvin Seminary, will arrive early in 1979 for a period of study and internship. After that he will return to Indonesia to continue his work for the Back to God Hour.

MR. CELSINO DE CUNHA GAMA, from Brazil, will also begin a period of study at Calvin Seminary in 1979. Partial assistance will be received from the Back to God Hour. The students at the seminary are also contributing to his program. CEACA has agreed to sponsor Mr. Gama.

**COOPERATION WITH THE BOARD FOR WORLD MISSIONS.** By arrangement with the Board for World Missions, the REV. WALDIR BERNDT, a gifted Presbyterian pastor from Brazil, will arrive with his family in February 1979 for a year's study at Calvin Seminary. The board, recognizing this strategic opportunity and knowing the inability of our committee to support additional persons, is assisting Mr. Berndt and his home church to make this possible.

We are deeply grateful that this year also our students have experienced good health and that there were no interruptions in their programs because of sickness or family circumstances.

## II. LIBRARY ASSISTANCE:

At present about twenty churches and seminaries receive the periodic lists of available theological books from which they can make their selections. Mr. Peter De Klerk, theological librarian of Calvin Seminary, manages this part of our assistance to churches abroad. In 1978, 374 volumes were sent out. The committee solicits contributions of good theological books. These can be sent as follows:

CEACA, c/o Mr. Peter De Klerk  
Calvin Theological Seminary  
3233 Burton Street, SE  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

## III. PROMOTION

Because of the increasing opportunities and limited support of the churches two appeals were made through separate mailings to consistories and diaconates during this year. A Banner article also detailed the challenges. The response was much appreciated but far below the needs of the program. Many congregations, we note, provide support to foreign student programs at other schools. We would like to see greater support for our denominational program of assistance. Although at present aid recipients are all at Calvin Seminary, students whose churches

endorse their request for scholarship aid are encouraged to enroll at the school that best meets their needs.

The committee also welcomes the adoption by a congregation of a specific student and the establishing of personal relationships with that student. We are prepared to make such suggestions to any interested church. Such personal involvement is of great benefit to student and congregation. The committee is also prepared in cooperation with the Board for World Missions to provide students to speak in the churches. Contact should be made with Mr. Ron Zoet, c/o Board for Christian Reformed World Missions.

#### IV. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The year 1978 provided opportunity to update our application forms and procedures in line with the regulations approved by the Synod of 1978. Correspondence with overseas applicants and their churches has required a considerable amount of time and effort but is an enjoyable task. The work of the treasurer has also increased with the increased number of students. Each committee member serves as advisor and counselor to one or more of the sponsored students, a pleasant but time consuming task since it involves caring for the needs of the students upon arrival and making arrangements for their accommodation.

In addition, our membership was depleted with the resignation of Dr. Martin Essenburg who left the area to become president of Covenant College at Lookout Mountain, TN. Consequently, the committee appealed to the Synodical Interim Committee to appoint a successor to Dr. Essenburg and to expand our committee by the appointment of two additional members. Their affirmative response was to appoint Mr. Aldrich Evenhouse as replacement for Dr. Essenburg to complete his unexpired term (to Synod of 1981), and to appoint Mrs. Ruth Hoekema and Mr. Mark Muller at the committee's request to serve as additional members until the Synod of 1979.

We come, therefore, with the request that synod increase the committee's membership from seven to nine members by electing two additional persons to the committee.

This will enable the committee to distribute its varied responsibilities to more individuals and make possible the appointment of persons with specific gifts and involvements for some of the special concerns which the committee has. Since our committee is selected from an area proximate to Grand Rapids, there will be no additional expense involved and we can still meet whenever necessary.

With the increased membership, three persons' terms will expire each year. Our present membership and terms of appointment are as follows:

*Terms expiring in 1979:*

Dr. Richard R. De Ridder (regular member)

Mrs. Ruth Hoekema (special appointee)

Mr. Mark Muller (special appointee)

*Terms expiring in 1980:*

Mrs. Edna Greenway

Mr. Wayne Medendorp  
Rev. Edward Van Baak

*Terms expiring in 1981:*

Mr. Peter De Klerk  
Mr. Aldrich Evenhouse (replacement for Dr. Martin Essenburg)  
Rev. Jacob Heerema

## V. HOUSING

The housing arrangements for students has always occasioned some difficulties and problems for the committee. Since dormitory space is not available for seminary students, private homes or cooperative arrangements with other students must be provided. It is not always easy to find suitable, low-cost housing for students, especially those who are married. The committee is presently researching the feasibility of the purchase of one or more homes for our students as an "International House." The committee welcomes the gift or loan of a home for this purpose in the Grand Rapids area. In lieu of students' wives accompanying them to the United States (which appears more and more appropriate), we are also discussing arrangements whereby a married student whose program requires at least two years will be assisted to return home for a short period after his first year to be with his family and reestablish contact with his home church.

## VI. MAJOR WORLD LANGUAGES STUDY COMMITTEE

This past year CEACA has given considerable attention to a review and evaluation of the areas of ministry and service which have been carried on by the committee in accordance with synod's mandate. Questions discussed included the nature of the assistance given, the adequacy of our regulations and guidelines, and whether our policies reflect the contemporary interchurch situation.

It was while these discussions were going on in our committee that CEACA was approached by the Major World Languages Study Committee (composed of representatives of several denominational agencies). We were asked to respond to a plan which would combine the kind of assistance provided Reformed churches abroad by CEACA (scholarships, internships, and library assistance) with the assistance of our denomination in the preparation and distribution of literature in major languages and for various areas of our mission.

CEACA's response was enthusiastic for some umbrella type committee for coordination, correlation, and consultation regarding the various types of assistance envisioned in the draft proposal. This was felt to be a better approach to the entire challenge rather than the establishment of still additional agencies and committees by synod. Significant degrees of autonomy (similar to that presently in force between the Board for World Missions and the Spanish Literature Committee) would be retained for specifically defined sub-committees. The final proposals will be presented to synod through the Board for World Missions. CEACA is

unable at this writing to respond to the board's possible proposal and therefore requests that it be permitted to present its reaction and response to whatever advisory committee of synod deals with this matter.

## VII. FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Wayne Medendorp functions as treasurer of our committee. Beginning this year our financial report covers the calendar year, January 1 through December 31, 1978. Commitments amounting to approximately \$40,000 have been accepted by the committee and must be met out of our balance on hand and receipts for 1979.

### A. STATEMENT OF CASH RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS FOR THE YEAR 1978

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES ABROAD  
Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements  
January 1, 1978 to December 31, 1978

Cash Balance, January 1, 1978 \$ 4,201.95

Receipts

Christian Reformed Churches and Groups	\$25,343.69
Personal Gifts	<u>4,814.00</u>
Total Receipts	30,157.69

Less: Canadian Exchange Loss	<u>(728.43)</u>
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Net Receipts	29,429.26
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Total Available Cash	33,631.21
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Disbursements

Support of Students	24,794.96
Library Assistance Program, Mailing Costs	692.73
Supplies, Publicity, Postage	<u>561.05</u>
Total Disbursements	26,048.74

Cash Balance, December 31, 1978	\$ <u>7,582.47</u>
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COMMITMENTS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1978

Support of Currently Enrolled and Approved Students ('79-'80)	\$61,000.00
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Fund Balance, December 31, 1978	( <u>\$53,417.53</u> )
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*B. REQUEST FOR QUOTA FOR 1980*

An analysis of receipts and disbursements, as well as of the number of urgent requests for assistance which we continually receive and the projection of the funds needed to meet these opportunities, leads the committee to request synod to establish a quota of 50¢ per family for the year 1980. This would be in addition to continuing CEACA on the list of denominational agencies for one or more offerings.

The analysis of receipts for 1978 (total = \$29,429.26) indicates that our funds were received from the following sources:

Church offerings.....	72%
Organizations.....	9%
Individual gifts.....	16%
Foundations.....	3%

The following is a quotation of our minutes regarding the above requests:

"1. CEACA requests synod to establish a quota of 50¢ per family for the year 1980 to fund foreign student commitments for the year 1980.

*Grounds:*

- a. Projected budget expenditures will exceed anticipated receipts from regular sources by \$30,000.00.
  - b. A quota will provide CEACA a financial base to assist churches abroad by providing support for the training of designated nationals for service in their home churches and countries, a number of which requests are currently denied because of the lack of funds.
  - c. This will underscore our denominational commitment to this ministry of the Christian Reformed Church and provide a means for all the churches to participate in its support.
- "2. CEACA requests synod to continue to keep CEACA on the list of denominational agencies for one or more offerings in 1980.

*Grounds:*

- a. The quota requested of 50¢ per family will not meet the entire needs of the committee if all our opportunities to assist Reformed churches abroad are accepted.
- b. Opportunity should be continued for individuals, foundations, and congregations to provide support through voluntary gift, acceptance of sponsorship of specific students, etc.."

VIII. SUMMARY OF ITEMS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ACTION

The committee requests:

- 1. *Representation at synod.* That its chairman, the Rev. J. Heerema, and its secretary, Dr. R. De Ridder, be recognized as its representatives at synod and that they be given the privilege of meeting with the advisory committee of synod and the privilege to speak at

- synod when this report is under consideration.
2. *Approval.* That synod approve the work of the committee.
  3. *Financial support.*
    - a. That synod grant CEACA a quota of 50% per family for the year 1980. (Cf. section VII-B.)
    - b. That synod approve the placement of our committee on the list of denominational agencies to receive one or more offerings and recommend this to the churches. (Cf. Section VII-B.)
  4. *Special requests.* That synod call the attention of the churches to the following matters:
    - a. The urgent need for the support of the churches in order to meet the opportunities for training persons for service in their homelands and churches.
    - b. The need for contributions of theological books to build the libraries of seminaries overseas.
    - c. The valuable opportunities for congregations to underwrite the support of individual students and to invite them to speak in the churches.
    - d. The urgent need for adequate housing of sponsored students in the Grand Rapids area.
  5. *Nominations for Committee Membership.*
    - a. That synod increase the membership of the committee from seven to nine members.
    - b. That synod approve the following nominations, and elect three of these nominees for three year terms (\*indicates incumbent, eligible for reelection):
      - \*Dr. Richard R. De Ridder and Mr. Charles Vander Sloot
      - \*Mrs. Ruth Hoekema and Mrs. Frances Dekker
      - \*Mr. Mark Muller and Mr. Herman Vande Riet

Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad

Jacob Heerema, chairman  
 Richard R. De Ridder, secretary  
 Wayne Medendorp, treasurer  
 Peter De Klerk  
 Aldrich Evenhouse  
 Edna Greenway  
 Ruth Hoekema  
 Mark Muller  
 Edward Van Baak

## REPORT 12

### FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES

#### I. MEMBERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION.

In keeping with the decision of the Synod of 1958, the committee is composed of three laymen and two ministers. The present membership of the committee is as follows:

- President—Mr. John R. Swierenga of Elmhurst, Illinois (1981)
- Vice President & Comptroller—Mr. George Vande Werken of Westchester, Illinois (1980)
- Secretary—Rev. John Vander Lugt of Palos Heights, Illinois (1981)
- Treasurer—Mr. H. Ray Schaafsma of Elmhurst, Illinois (1979)
- Vicar—Rev. George Holwerda of Highland, Indiana (1980)

The term of Mr. Schaafsma will expire this year. He is eligible for another term. The committee will present a second nominee along with Mr. Schaafsma.

#### II. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

##### *FNC Statistics for 1978*

- Applications processed—159
- Assistance granted—158 (1 pending)
- Children's allowances—315
- Years of service allowance—1343 (Average—8.5 years per church)
- New churches—16
- Churches no longer needing assistance—3

#### III. CONCERNS WHICH THE COMMITTEE DESIRES TO CALL TO THE ATTENTION OF SYNOD.

The FNC Committee informs synod that certain practices in regard to the FNC Committee should receive the serious attention of synod.

As you are aware the FNC Committee operates in close cooperation with the committee appointed by each classis (usually the Home Missions Committee) in processing the application. Since our committee is far distant from many of our churches we rely upon the committees of classes to study carefully the applications before recommending them to their classis and forwarding them to us.

Some of the committees of classes do a superb job. They question and probe, encourage and admonish. It is also apparent that many committees of classes merely endorse them and pass them on. We find churches seeking help from the denomination while supporting rather large faith-promise commitments; churches giving very large amounts to non-quota causes while failing to pay their full denominational quotas; churches supporting, rather substantially, evangelism projects apart from their

church; churches overpaying their required debt reduction while failing to pay full quotas and only the minimum per family for their pastor's salary. The FNC committee does not feel that these situations fit in with its purpose as expressed in its handbook: "The aim of this committee, by mandate of synod, is to urge churches to become self-supporting as soon as possible."

However, we feel that the blame should not rest entirely upon the committees of classes since neither the FNC Committee nor synod has given these committees guidelines by which to operate. We propose, therefore, that synod approve the following guidelines to be used by the processing committees of classes.

*Questions which the committee of classis is to ask the needy church:*

1. What specific plans or programs do you have whereby you aim to decrease your dependence upon FNC and eventually become self-supporting?
2. What are your prospects for growth? If they are very poor, is there the possibility of a merger with a neighboring CRC?
3. How did you arrive at the count of families listed on your application?

*Items to be examined in the financial report:* (The committee of classis should demand a clear financial statement listing all giving to non-quota causes):

1. Are quotas being paid in full? (Handbook FNC—"It is expected that needy churches participate fully in giving to synodically adopted quotas.") If the quotas are not being paid in full the committee of classis is to inform the FNC Committee what reasons are given for non-payment and what efforts are being made to correct the situation.
2. Are there expenditures in the financial report which conflict with becoming self-supporting or paying denominational quotas in full such as faith-promise commitments, overpayment of debt, disproportionately high gifts to a non-quota cause, etc.? These churches should be contacted by the committee of classis and urged to work toward becoming self-supporting. The committee of classis should also inform the FNC Committee why the request for aid should not be reduced.

We request the endorsement of synod so that these guidelines be enforced by the authority of synod.

Another situation which we feel compelled to call to the attention of synod is the fact that certain churches which receive help from the FNC also receive rather substantial grants-in-aid from the Home Mission Board in order to hire a second person. Our committee is of the opinion that churches which are able to raise the necessary funds to qualify for a grant-in-aid have not done everything possible to meet the minimum salary set by synod on their own. The committee requests the concurrence of synod in its judgment.

The committee has also been asked to fund a seminary student as a stated supply for an entire year in one of our churches. Feeling that we wish the advice of synod in this before this becomes a practice, the com-

mittee asks synod to concur in its judgment that such use of funds of the FNC should not be allowed, so long as there are candidates for the ministry who have not received calls. Under these circumstances, it is aid to a student to complete his seminary requirements rather than, or more than, aid to the church.

#### IV. MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ACTION.

A. We request that our secretary and treasurer be consulted on matters pertaining to the FNC when considered by synod or its advisory committee and they be given the privilege of the floor. In the absence of the secretary or treasurer, we request that the same privilege be given to the other members of the committee.

##### B. *Recommendations—Financial Matters:*

1. That the minimum salary for ministers serving churches which receive assistance from the FNC be set at \$12,500 for 1980.
2. That a service increment of \$100 per year for up to 20 years of service be granted.
3. That a child allowance of \$500 be granted for every child up to twenty-two (22) years of age, excluding those who have reached the age of nineteen (19) and who are no longer enrolled in an educational institution. Since Canada pays a child allowance to the parents, Canadian churches are to subtract the monies received from the Canadian government from their child allowance.
4. That a car allowance of \$1,000 be given out of FNC funds and that each church receiving aid from the FNC be required to pay an equivalent amount of \$1,000 from its own funds.
5. That the per family contribution toward the minister's salary in congregations receiving aid from the FNC in 1980 be not less (and, if possible more) than \$190 in both the United States and Canada.
6. That the quota for FNC for 1980 be set at \$21 per family and synod recommend the FNC to the churches for at least two offerings per year in 1979 and 1980 or synod set the quota at \$25 per family in 1980.

##### *Grounds:*

1. An over 10% (15) increase in the total number of churches receiving funds from FNC.
2. An anticipated increase in the number of churches applying for aid for 1980 (approximately 10).
3. A total depletion of our reserves at the request of the Advisory Finance Committee of Synod.
7. That the allowance for a stated supply be set at \$160 per week for 1980.

##### C. *Recommendations: Guidelines for Processing Committees for FNC Applications—*

1. That synod instruct the processing committees to ask the applying

churches the following questions:

- a. What specific plans or programs do you have whereby you aim to decrease your dependence upon FNC and eventually become self-supporting?
  - b. What are your prospects for growth? If they are very poor, is there the possibility of a merger with a neighboring CRC?
  - c. How did you arrive at the count of families listed on your application?
2. That synod instruct the processing committees to examine the financial reports carefully asking the following questions: (The committee of classis should demand a clear financial statement listing all giving to non-quota causes.)

Are quotas being paid in full? (Handbook FNC—"It is expected that needy churches participate fully in giving to synodically adopted quotas"). If the quotas are not being paid in full the committee of classis is to inform the FNC Committee what reasons are given for non-payment and what efforts are being made to correct the situation.

Are there expenditures in the financial report which conflict with becoming self-supporting or paying denominational quotas in full such as faith-promise commitments, overpayment of debt, disproportionately high gifts to a non-quota cause, etc.? These churches should be contacted by the committee of classis and urged to work toward becoming self-supporting. The committee of classis should also inform the FNC Committee why the request for aid should not be reduced.

*D. We request the concurrence of synod in the judgment of the committee on the following items:*

- a. That a church which is able to raise the necessary funds in order to qualify for a grant-in-aid is also able to raise the necessary funds to pay the minimum salary for their pastor.
- b. That the FNC should not support seminarians in year-long internships as long as there are candidates awaiting calls.

*E. Nominations:*

That synod elect a member of the committee from the following nominations, Mr. H. Ray Schaafsma, and Mr. Claire Van Zeelt. Mr. Schaafsma has served one three-year term and is eligible for reelection.

Fund for Needy Churches Committee  
Rev. John Vander Lugt, secretary

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.Canadian AccountStatement of Cash Receipts & DisbursementsFebruary 1, 1978 to January 31, 1979(In Canadian Dollars)

CANADIAN FUND BALANCE, February 1, 1978		\$ 56,057.90
RECEIPTS:		
Quota payments from Classical Treasurers	\$201,762.60	
Transfers from United States Account	39,110.25	
Exchange premium	7,113.91	
Refunds and gifts	<u>1,689.30</u>	
Total receipts		<u>249,676.06</u>
Total funds to be accounted for		\$305,733.96
DISBURSEMENTS:		
Salary subsidy payments	\$163,169.39	
Child allowance payments	37,516.56	
Automobile allowance payments	24,133.37	
Moving expense	<u>14,835.08</u>	
Total disbursements		<u>239,654.40</u>
CANADIAN FUND BALANCE, January 31, 1979		<u>\$ 66,079.56</u>
CASH ACCOUNT - Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce		<u>\$ 66,079.56</u>

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.United States AccountsStatement of Cash Receipts and DisbursementsFebruary 1, 1978 to January 31, 1979(In U. S. Dollars)

UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE, February 1, 1978	\$429,782.58
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## RECEIPTS:

Quota payments from Classical Treasurers	\$598,950.70
Interest on investments	18,278.87
Refunds and gifts	<u>3,548.48</u>

Total receipts	<u>620,778.05</u>
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Total funds to be accounted for	\$1,050,560.63
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## DISBURSEMENTS:

Salary subsidy payments	\$576,693.00
Child allowance payments	121,676.85
Automobile allowance payments	79,384.74
Moving expense	11,925.52
Stationery and supplies	248.91
Auditing expense	325.00
Honorariums	2,400.00
Committee expense	1,378.96
Postage	265.28
Transfers to Canadian account	39,110.25
Exchange discount	<u>266.46</u>

Total disbursements	<u>833,674.97</u>
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UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE, January 31, 1979	<u>\$216,885.66</u>
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## CASH ACCOUNTS:

First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Checking Account	\$ 11,313.03
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Savings Account	130,572.63
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Certificate of Deposit	<u>75,000.00</u>

	<u>\$216,885.66</u>
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### REPORT 13

## DENOMINATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

The activities of the Historical Committee continue to center about the work of Mr. E. R. Post and his assistants and advisors from the Heritage Hall staff working with the Colonial Origins Collection. In this report we shall focus on these general areas of activity, noting those in which the greatest needs exist.

Acquisition continues to occupy much of the time and energy of the committee and its personnel. Efforts aimed at gaining cooperation of all consistories meet with varying degrees of success. From time to time, another consistory submits valuable records and files for microfilming, prominent among which is the minutes of consistories. In some instances, actual microfilmed material is presented, thus obviating the need to transport actual minute books to Grand Rapids. Your committee is happy to think that additional segments of recorded history are thus preserved from our ever-present enemies of fire and flood and plain neglect.

Personal visits by Mr. Post have been made in all but the outlying classes, and such visits continue to be most productive in terms of obtaining materials. A good reception is accorded him, which indicates that there is a growing acknowledgment in the denomination of the need for the service being performed by Heritage Hall.

Not only are consistory minutes being submitted for placement in the files of the committee; related materials like anniversary booklets, programs, photos, souvenir items, news clippings, and write-ups are being amassed as well. Biographical data reflecting on the lives and careers of our spiritual leaders is also finding its place in the collection of materials whose value can only increase. This area of activity needs our continued attention, however, and our committee is hopeful that the general membership of the church will become increasingly sensitive to the value of this growing collection.

While the segment of minutes and related consistory and classes activities is in rather good shape, the area of denominational committees' activities as reflected in minutes and related documents is lagging behind. We are aware of the mandate of a previous synod to preserve these documents in an orderly fashion, and have found our attention and energies drawing us into related areas of work. We shall be pursuing this aspect of our task with a bit more vigor in the future.

Of immense help to your committee in obtaining materials has been the splendid cooperation of the agency known as Christian Schools International (CSI) and formerly known as our NUCS. This agency has produced and distributed broadly a brochure inviting member schools to submit documents of historical interest either to the Heritage Hall collection or to a newly-formed Educational Research Center in the new CSI

building. We are very appreciative of this kind of effort in encouraging a sense of history. No less than 180 member schools have submitted documents, especially minutes of boards. We salute the Christian Schools International!

Your committee continues to seek the services of qualified personnel for the work of translating many valuable books and essays from Dutch into English. We are most happy to be able to report that a goodly number of individuals has already stepped forward to undertake this task on a completely volunteer basis, for the service they perform as a labor of love will benefit future generations, if the Lord tarries, and the program has value we can only begin to imagine. We continue to pursue this aspect of our activities with zeal and pleasure.

We continue to rejoice as we see evidence of a growing sense of history on our congregational levels. Some local congregations evince an awareness of the value of this sort of activity as significant documents and memorabilia are preserved in suitable rooms and conditions, assuring the preservation of books and artifacts in good fashion. Setting a fast pace for the denomination is the congregation of Graafschap in Holland, Michigan. The historical committee of this congregation has been able to locate and place on display a number of documents and related artifacts for the inspiration of the congregation. Hopefully, all of our congregations will rise to the challenge by following the good example of this church.

With reference to one more matter about which we reported last year, namely, the matter of men who have served in the ministry of the CRC but who have left the ministry by unusual means, your committee has authorized the secretary of our committee to pursue this study by accumulating data as it may be available within the bounds of propriety and good taste. We are impressed with the importance of this project, and are hopeful, eventually, of publishing the information obtained by some means or other. In the judgment of your committee, the findings are important because they reflect significant contributions made to the ongoing work of the denomination, and, therefore, deserve a place in our physical files at least.

Your committee respectfully requests approval of the following

#### *RECOMMENDATIONS:*

1. that synod again endorse the projected goals of the Historical Committee and encourage it to proceed to function as in the past, and
2. that synod allocate \$10,000 to defray the costs incurred in the acquisition, administration, preservation, and cataloging of materials of historical value in the denominational archives, thereby continuing to help subsidize the preservation of our denominational heritage.

Historical Committee  
L. Oostendorp, chairman  
J. Leugs, secretary  
H. Ippel  
H. Zwaanstra

REPORT 14  
INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

During the past year the committee met on a monthly schedule. Dr. John Kromminga again served as president, the Rev. Clarence Boomsma as vice-president, and Dr. John Bratt as secretary. Dr. Paul Han is the new member on the committee.

With expanding ecclesiastical contacts, the work of the committee is increasing substantially. We operate constantly with a full agenda. It is our conviction however that this expenditure of time, effort and money is amply warranted. We believe that in voicing the plea in his high-priestly prayer "that they may be one" the Lord was giving high priority to the ecumenical concerns of his church and we are attempting to be faithful to that mandate. And as we look back over the last decade we are gratified by tangible progress being made toward that goal of the unity of the church of Christ.

*A. Fraternal Delegations*

Since the NAPARC churches met on the campus of Calvin College and Seminary in June of 1978, the commissioning of fraternal delegates to churches in the council was a simple one. Gerard Bouma served as our delegate to the Presbyterian Church of America General Assembly meeting in the Calvin Fieldhouse; John Stek to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, meeting in Calvin's Gezon Auditorium; William Buursma to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America Synod meeting in the Calvin Seminary Chapel; and Albert Bel to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church General Assembly in the Calvin Seminary Auditorium. In addition to the aforementioned, William Buursma served as our fraternal delegate to the Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church meeting in Bonclarken, North Carolina; John Bratt brought greetings to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America celebrating its 350th anniversary in New York City in June of 1978; and the Rev. Bernard Niemeyer, pastor of our Los Angeles I Church, represented our committee as delegate to the Second General Assembly of the Korean American Presbyterian Church which met in Los Angeles on October 17, 1978.

*B. NAPARC (North America Presbyterian and Reformed Council)*

*1. The Five Concurrent Synods/Assemblies*

Within the time span of June 12-23, 1978, the five denominations that currently form NAPARC met on the campus of our Calvin College and Seminary. Since all these denominations except the CRC and the OPC have "grass-roots" or congregational representation at their major assemblies, some 1200 delegates were officially registered.

Even though each denomination conducted its own ecclesiastical business separately, there was ample occasion for Christian fellowship, conversational interchange, forging of friendships and demonstration of the unity of the church of Jesus Christ. In addition to intermingling at meals, in the dorms and at the dessert socials on the campus lawn, members from all the denominations attended the Sunday afternoon organ recital by Dr. John Hamersma, participated in the women's luncheon meetings, the scheduled tours to various places of interest, and the breakfast meeting of the National Reformed and Presbyterian Fellowship with the Rev. John Perkins as speaker. Virtually all delegates, together with many other visitors, joined in the joint prayer and praise service on June 19 where Dr. Joel Nederhood was the main speaker. The offering taken for world hunger at this service amounted to some \$2,000. At the conclusion of the worship service, which was televised by The Back to God Hour for nationwide viewing, the moderators of the five major assemblies brought greetings from their respective denominations.

At the 156th General Synod of the *Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod*, Dr. Joel Nederhood of the CRC spoke at a worship service on Saturday evening on "The Challenge of Mass Communications" and Dr. Edmund Clowney of the OPC preached at the Sunday evening service. Morning devotions at the synod were conducted by the Rev. Leonard Bullock of the PCA, the Rev. R. H. McFarland of the RPCNA, and by the Rev. Don Stanton of the OPC. Dr. Roy Blackwood of the RPCNA led the Wednesday evening worship services.

On the same day that the CRC Synod voted to allow local congregations to ordain women to the deaconate provided that "their work is distinguished from that of elders," the RPCES narrowly defeated a resolution that would give local sessions of the churches the freedom to ordain women as deacons. This decision by the CRC and the close vote on the same issue by the RPCES occasioned a few ripples of apprehension on the part of some delegates to the General Assembly of the OPC. (NOTE: the RPCNA has ordained women to the diaconate for over 100 years, holding firmly to the distinction between the authority to administer mercy as exercised by the deacons and the authority to teach and rule as exercised by the elders.)

At the 149th Synod of the *Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America* (Covenanters) the concept of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, first proposed by the CRC and later recommended by NAPARC, was adopted. Continued membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod was approved even though some reservations were expressed to the effect that at least two members of the RES are members of the World Council of Churches; another member, the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands, is alleged to be reticent in the exercise of discipline; and there is an "apparent reluctance of some member churches to disown the racial policies of the South African government as this affects the integrity of the church." The synod also expressed some reservations about its membership in the *National Association of Evangelicals*. It deplored the deficiencies in doctrine of the latter organization but in view of the fact that the RPCNA, even though small in size, is able to wield considerable Reformed influence in the deliberations and decisions

of the NAE, continued membership was approved.

At its Sixth General Assembly the *Presbyterian Church in America* adopted a report on the biblical basis of church union calling for expression of visible unity as well as assertion of spiritual unity. Discussion about entering into union conversation with the OPC and the RPCES ensued. Of interest to the other churches is the tape library of Reformed theology, distributed by the Mount Olive Presbyterian Church of the PCA. This set of tapes has contributions by theologians of all five NAPARC denominations. The tapes are 60-90 minutes in length and deal with all facets of Reformed theology. Some 2,000 of the tapes are rented every month with distribution to both Reformed and non-Reformed churches. The PCA continues its joint venture with the OPC in the use of Great Commission Publications for the Sunday School (Grades 1-12). It also voted in its assembly to accept the offer of the RPCES for joint administration of Covenant College.

At its 45th General Assembly the *Orthodox Presbyterian Church* authorized its Committee on Ecumenicity to discuss with the interchurch relations committee of the PCA and the RPCES the possibility of a merger of the three churches. At the same time it agreed that in view of the proposed initiation of talks concerning a three way merger, it would not be advisable to present a plan of union between the OPC and the RPCES in the immediate future. The policy of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship as recommended by NAPARC to its member churches was adopted. On Wednesday, June the 21st, the OPC suspended its sessions in order to attend the CRC discussion on hermeneutical principles as they apply to women in ecclesiastical office.

Many acknowledgments of appreciation were sent to our committee by the leaders of the four other churches with us in NAPARC, and many of them suggested that the CRC serve as host once again in the next few years. The concensus is that, even though more interplay than we had on this occasion would be desirable, this was a significant ecumenical venture. We feel too that it was a noteworthy event. It demonstrated to some extent at least the unity of the church of Christ as represented by these churches of the Reformed faith.

## 2. The Annual NAPARC Meeting

The fourth annual NAPARC meeting was held in Philadelphia on October 27, 28, 1978, with John H. Kromminga, Wm. P. Brink, Albert Bel and John Bratt representing the CRC. Dr. Don McNair of the RPCES was elected president; Dr. Morton H. Smith of the PCA was reelected secretary (a stipend of \$150 per annum was voted the secretariat); and Mr. Albert Bel was reelected treasurer. A fine spirit of mutual confidence and congeniality characterized the meeting. There was a willingness to cooperate and learn from one another. The council added a few house-keeping amendments to the Bylaws of the Constitution. The council also noted that a Conference on Divorce and Remarriage, especially as it applies to officebearers in the church, was scheduled for 1979; that the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church had suspended for the time being its application for membership in the Council; that a conference on Diaconal Ministries had been held on October 4, 5, 1978 (with L. Van Ess

as the CRC representative) and that a conference on Theological Education was held at Westminster Seminary on October 13, 14, 1978 (John Kromminga, John Stek, Don Wisse and Louis Tamminga represented the CRC at that conference). The Council urged the Home Mission Boards of the constituent churches to arrange a conference on Reformed Evangelism; decided to recommend to the five churches that concurrent synods/assemblies again be held in 1982, preferably on the campus of Calvin College and Seminary; and decided to appoint a committee, two men from each denomination, to consider the feasibility of having a NAPARC study committee on Hermeneutics. Profs. John Stek and Gordon Spykman were appointed by our IRC committee to function on that committee. We continue to find NAPARC a fruitful and rewarding avenue of ecumenical activity.

### C. *World Alliance of Reformed Churches*

Our contact man with WARC is Dr. Fred Klooster, who is officially an "observer" but functions at the same time as an active member of the theological committee of the North American and Caribbean Area of the Alliance. His colleagues on the committee appreciate his contributions.

In reporting on the November 3-5, 1978, meeting of the alliance, held at the Interdenominational Theological Center in the Atlanta University complex where Dr. Klooster had considerable contact with black theology and with black theologians, he informed us that the previous project of study had been completed and had culminated in the publication by Eerdmans of a volume entitled *A Christian Declaration of Human Rights*. He also apprised us of the fact that a new program of study on the subject of the covenant had been initiated. The plan of study (a four/five year plan) comprises four stages: first, identifying the context; second, rethinking the traditions with biblical and historical research; third, exploring the central area; and fourth, formulating a theology of covenant. Dr. Klooster has been asked to do a paper on *Covenant, Church and Kingdom*. We regard him as an invaluable member of that study committee and are deeply appreciative of his willingness to serve.

### D. *Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

We have received the following denominations as Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship and are maintaining relationships with them in accordance with the rules established by synod: (dates in parentheses indicate the year in which this relationship was officially established)

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (1977)
2. Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia) (1974)
3. Christian Church of Nigeria (1974)
4. Dutch Reformed Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) (1974)
5. Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil (1974)
6. Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika (1974)
7. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (1974)
8. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (1975)

9. Presbyterian Church in America (1975)
10. Reformed Church in America (1976)
11. Reformed Church in Argentina (1974)
12. Reformed Church in Japan (1974)
13. Reformed Churches of Australia (1974)
14. Reformed Churches of New Zealand (1974)
15. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (1978)
16. Tiv Church of Christ (1974)

We are proposing to this synod that the NGKA, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (black) and the Korean American Presbyterian Church (see Sections G and F) be received as Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship and be added to the above list.

#### *E. The Reformed Church in America*

Subcommittees from the two denominations (four members of the Christian Unity Committee of the RCA and four members of our committee), have been meeting bimonthly during the past year. We have reviewed some of our current cooperative efforts (Youth Education—the Input magazine; the Bible Way Curriculum; Joint Statement on Evangelism; cooperation in such ventures as Pine Rest, Bethesda, Vietnam Relief, etc.) and are exploring other possible avenues of closer cooperation. At this writing we are programming a seminar on financial matters for pastors, treasurers and financial directors of the two denominations, this seminar to be held March 9, 10, 1979 and we are also promoting a meeting of agency and department heads of the two denominations. This meeting is also scheduled for March of 1979. The problem of joint ministries (Nardin Park, Ferris State College, etc) continues to be under study. We are pleased and gratified that since our formal recognition of the RCA as a Church in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, action that we took in 1976, our contacts as denominations have broadened and deepened perceptibly.

#### *F. The Korean Presbyterian Churches*

Two Presbyterian denominations from Korea, Hap-Dong and Koryu-Pa, had official delegations at our Synod of 1978. Both expressed a desire for closer ecclesiastical links with the CRC. Koryu-pa, with its center and seminary in Pusan in southern Korea, from its inception has had close ties with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. The Hap-Dong Church was once one of our "corresponding churches" (and we occasionally sent fraternal delegates to its General Assembly—usually missionaries from Japan served us in that capacity), but since the adoption of our new form of church fellowship, the relationship between the Hap-Dong Church and the CRC has been dormant. The Hap-Dong Church is the largest Protestant denomination in Korea. It has its center and major seminary in the capital city of Seoul. For many years it has been independent of any American churches whose mission initially evangelized the country. In recent years it has enjoyed rapid growth and today consists of some 5,000 congregations. Of late, however, certain tensions have arisen in

the church that threaten its unity. The problem centers around the administration and teaching at the seminary in Seoul. At the time that this report is written, the IRC is seeking to assess the situation in Korea before formulating any recommendation concerning our fellowship with the churches there.

The Synod of 1978 was also host to an official delegation from the newly founded Korean American Presbyterian Church. This is a Korean speaking denomination formed out of the thousands of recent Korean immigrants now settled in the United States and Canada—mostly in large urban areas. The members and ministers of this denomination have come from the Hap-Dong and Koryu-pa churches, but it is independent from those denominations. It presently includes six presbyteries: Southern California, San Francisco—Seattle, Chicago, New York, Toronto, Washington, D.C.—Baltimore. Further statistics concerning this new Presbyterian body on the North American scene are not at this time available to us but will be included in a supplementary report to synod.

The IRC recommends that synod extend to the Korean American Presbyterian Church an invitation to become with us a Church in Ecumenical Fellowship, with full privileges.

*Grounds:*

1. The KAPC is Reformed in its creedal commitment.
2. The KAPC has indicated a strong desire to enter into this relationship with us.

*G. The South African Reformed Churches*

The committee continues to be concerned over developments in South Africa. The decision last year by the quadrennial synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (white) to reject overtures from the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (black) and the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in South Africa (colored) to establish a unified church offers renewed evidence of that church's continuing commitment to apartheid, even within the fellowship of the church of Jesus Christ. Although relationship between races remains the one overriding concern of church leaders and members alike in that troubled land, change comes very slowly. That change must come appears to be a national consensus, but those holding the balance of political power seem determined to control the what, the when and the how. To us it appears that the white Reformed community continues to be guided too much by self-interest and fails to understand the radical demands of economic, political and social justice that ought to obtain in a human community that shares a common economy and geographic region.

Our Synod of 1978 "urged all the RES member churches in South Africa to heed the testimony of the Koinonia Declaration and to support its proposed reforms." It further "kindly requested each South African RES church to inform the Christian Reformed Church of its response to the above in order to pursue fruitful dialogue on the application of biblical principles to race relations in our respective countries" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 25, I, D, 2, 3; p. 25). The churches of South Africa

have been informed of these decisions.

To date replies have been received from two churches. From the office of the Registrar of the Church of England in South Africa has come a letter informing us that that communion has at present "a committee which has been instructed to consider the position of the church on matters which the Koinonia Declaration also deals with and it will be considered in that broader context." The writer urges us not to be hasty in our judgments and reminds us that in both Rhodesia and South Africa terrorist forces are at work seeking to halt the spread of the gospel and posing a constant deadly threat to ministers, evangelists, catechists and village congregations.

Writing on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (white), Dr. F. E. O'B Geldenhuys informs us that since the Koinonia Declaration was not prepared by an ecclesiastical body and has not been submitted to any church bodies for consideration, the church is "not in any position to pronounce on it." He reminds us that the DRC has issued an official report on human relations in the light of Scripture (*Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture*, Capetown/Pretoria: Dutch Reformed Church Publishers, 1976.) He further asserts that "if you study that document you may find that many of its pronouncements are to a certain extent in accordance with the general pronouncements you have found in the Koinonia Declaration. At other points we may differ, but that can be discussed on the basis of our publication if you so wish."

The IRC has taken note of these responses and continues to study how best to carry forward the dialogue. Meanwhile, we await replies from the other churches.

With respect to one of the Reformed churches in South Africa, the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (DRC in A), a black church, there have been some new developments. During the fall of 1978, the IRC met with two of the leading pastors of the communion, one of them the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Sam Buti, Jr. On behalf of their church they expressed a strong desire to establish closer ties with the CRC. Having studied that informal appeal, the IRC decided at its November 1978 meeting to recommend to synod that an official invitation be sent to the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa to enter with us into the relationship of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship, with full privileges. In view of the fact that the quadrennial synod of that church was to meet early in 1979, the IRC further decided to inform its Stated Clerk of this decision. And since opportunity afforded itself, we requested Dr. Paul Schrotenboer personally to convey our letter to the Rev. Mr. Buti.

The DRC in A came into being in 1863 as a result of the mission work of the large white Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (the most powerful Afrikaans church in SA having approximately 1.6 million members). Subsequently two other mission churches were established alongside the black church: the Dutch Reformed Mission Church in SA (colored), 1881, and the Reformed Church in SA (Indian), 1968, the latter still a very small communion.

In 1964 the black and colored churches became autonomous denominations although they have organized a "council of churches."

Some time ago the DRC in A (black) initiated action within the "council" toward a total integration of all the churches in the DRC "family," feeling that there was no justification for separate churches having the same confessions and the same polity—their vision was for integration right down to the congregational level. The white church watered down the proposal suggesting instead a united synod but later on even voted down that proposal.

The DRC in A has approximately 600 congregations with a total membership of some 650,000. Some 400 black and 100 white pastors serve the church. Its confessions are the three Forms of Unity of the Dutch Reformed tradition and its church order is essentially that adopted at Dordt. Its General Synod meets every four years; its regional synods meet every three years; and its classes meet once a year. The most serious handicap of this church is the widespread economic poverty of its members.

We have extended an invitation to its General Synod which met in January of 1979 to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with us. We now ask our synod to substantiate that action.

*Grounds:*

1. The DRC in A is Reformed in character, having the same doctrinal standards and church polity that we have.
2. The DRC in A, through its representatives who were present at a meeting in Grand Rapids in 1978, the Revs. Elias Tema and Sam Buti, Jr., expressed the desire of the DRC in A to become a Church in Ecclesiastical Fellowship with us.
3. The DRC in A is also a member of the RES.

In regard to the South Africa churches one more item needs to be reported. An invitation has been received from the Reformed Church in South Africa (Doppers) to send a fraternal delegate representing the CRC to their Synod of 1979. In response the IRC requested the Stated Clerk to send a letter of fraternal greetings to the synod of the Reformed Church in South Africa (Doppers) on behalf of the CRC. In view of the situation in South Africa and our growing concern about the Reformed churches there, serious thought should perhaps be given to sending a fraternal delegation from our church to the Reformed churches in that troubled land in the not too distant future.

*H. The Faith and Order Commission of the National Council of Churches*

For the past two years, Dr. Richard Mouw has served as our representative on this commission. It is his impression on the one hand that there are some discernible biases among the members of this commission and that some of the discussions tend to ignore basic questions, but on the other hand he appreciates some of the excellent theologians, persons with genuine biblical orientation, and the opportunity to make our basic positions known. The issues of human rights, Black Theology, Feminine Theology and theology of ecumenism are current "front-burner" con-

siderations. Dr. Mouw has the respect of his fellow-commissioners, is an articulate expounder of the Reformed position and we have asked him to serve for another two years.

### I. *The Reformed Ecumenical Synod*

The next meeting of the RES is scheduled to be held in Nimes, France in August of 1980. Our 1979 synod must name delegates. We are proposing the following slate:

Professors of Theology—Dr. Anthony Hoekema and Dr. George Vander Velde. For alternate—Dr. John Bratt and person not elected delegate.

Ministers—the Rev. Clarence Boomsma and Dr. John Timmer. For alternate—the Rev. John T. Malestein and person not elected delegate.

Elders—Dr. Thomas Greidanus and Dr. John Vanden Berg. For alternate—Judge John Feikens, Mr. Albert J. Bakker, and person not elected delegate.

We would also alert the Synod of 1979 to the fact that items for the agenda of the forthcoming meeting of the RES should be presented to the Interchurch Relations Committee prior to the meeting of our synod in 1980.

### J. *Canadian Reformed Churches*

A letter, in the form of a pamphlet, was sent to consistories by the Canadian Reformed Churches. The title page indicates that it was addressed to the synod, the consistories, and the members of the Christian Reformed Church. It was not addressed to the Interchurch Relations Committee. But since synod has entrusted its interchurch affairs to this committee it may be considered proper that the committee take some note of it in its report.

The letter rehearses the contact of the Canadian Reformed Churches with the Christian Reformed Church over the course of the past years. It notes that in the course of these contacts and in the hope of closer relations, some concessions were made by the Christian Reformed Church with respect to the Conclusions of Utrecht and the statement on Common Grace. It notes also that, although the Canadian Reformed Churches have some criticisms of the Christian Reformed Church Order, the Church Order is not an insuperable obstacle to closer relations.

The fundamental point of dispute continues to be the contention of the Canadian Reformed Churches that a judgment should be passed on the events of 1942 in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, and that relations with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical) should be terminated in favor of relations with the Gereformeerde Kerken (Liberated). To this criticism is now added a critique of more recent actions within the Christian Reformed Church and the Gereformeerde Kerken (Synodical).

The Christian Reformed Church has demonstrated its willingness to consider ecclesiastical fellowship with the Canadian Reformed Churches, through its former Contact Committee and through the Interchurch Relations Committee. What it has refused to do is to undertake this

fellowship on the condition of terminating fellowship with the Gereformeerde Kerken. Nothing in this communication changes that situation. In the light of experience it may safely be assumed that nothing less than this will produce anything more than another negative answer. In fact, the letter strongly suggests that by this time much more would be necessary in order to win the fellowship of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

In view of the above it is our recommendation that the synod not seek to answer the communication which has been sent to the Christian Reformed Churches.

#### K. *Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands*

Since our report to synod in 1978 not much has transpired by way of contact with the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. It is our intention to send a delegation of one or two members to the current synod of those churches at a time which is appropriate to the discussion of matters of mutual concern.

#### L. *Fraternal Delegations*

##### 1. Information

- a. Since Dr. Marten Woudstra expects to be in Australia at the time of the meeting of the Synod of the Reformed Church in Australia in 1979 (this church is in ecclesiastical fellowship with us) we have asked him to serve as our fraternal delegate on that occasion. We have also asked him to make inquiry about the Presbyterian Church of East Australia, a church that we invited in 1974 to enter into ecclesiastical fellowship with us but has not to date answered the invitation.
- b. The Rev. Jacob Uitvlugt expects to be in Nigeria at the time of the General Assembly of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria and we have asked him to serve as our fraternal delegate to that assembly.

##### 2. Change of Policy Suggestion

It is customary with many of the churches with whom we are in ecclesiastical relationship to set aside an evening during the meetings of synod to take up interchurch matters and present all of the fraternal delegates at that time. The IRC broaches this possibility to synod. If synod is of a mind to move in that direction it should designate the committee that should process that matter.

#### M. *Membership on the Interchurch Relations Committee*

The terms of three of our committee members, John H. Kromminga, Albert Bel and John Bratt expire at this time. The first two have served for six years and are not eligible for reelection. John Bratt has served for one term and is eligible for reelection. In view of that situation:

1. We suggest that synod thank Dr. J. Kromminga and Mr. A. Bel for their invaluable service on the committee; and

2. We present the following nominations:
  - a. Dr. John Bratt\* and Rev. Wesley Van Dyk
  - b. Rev. Arnold Brink and Rev. Tymen Hofman
  - c. Mr. James Knott and Mr. Marlin Van Elderen  
\*Incumbent

#### N. *Representation at Synod*

The president and secretary of the committee will be available for meeting with synod and we respectfully request that they be given the privilege of the floor and access to the advisory committee when matters pertaining to the report of this committee are being considered.

#### O. *Hospitality Committee*

As is our custom we have appointed a Hospitality Committee to care for the proper reception of fraternal delegates to synod and to be attentive to their needs. This committee will work closely with synod's Reception Committee as heretofore. We request that the members of this committee be given meal privileges while on duty at synod.

#### P. *Summary of Items for Synodical Action*

1. Comitée representation at synod—Section N
2. Comitée Membership—Section M
3. Delegates to the 1980 RES—Section I
4. New Policy on Fraternal Delegations—Section L,2
5. Invitation to Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the Korean American Presbyterian Church—Section F.
6. Invitation to Ecclesiastical Fellowship to the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (black)—Section G

#### Interchurch Relations Committee

John H. Kromminga ('79), president  
 Clarence Boomsma ('80), vice-president  
 John H. Bratt ('79), secretary  
 Albert Bel ('79)  
 Jacob Kuntz ('80)  
 William Buursma ('80)  
 Paul Han ('81)  
 John Stek ('81)  
 William P. Brink, ex officio

REPORT 15  
LITURGICAL COMMITTEE

In preparation for the material to present to this synod, the Liturgical Committee met on May 30 and 31, October 5 and 6, December 19, 20 and 21, 1978, and on February 6 and 7, 1979. We continue our work in response to the mandate given by the Synod of 1964 which instructs us as follows:

- a. "to review all our liturgical literature in the light of its history, its theological content, and the contemporary needs of the churches; and to recommend such revisions or substitutions as the results of this review might recommend;"
- b. "to study liturgical usages and practices in our churches in the light of Reformed liturgical principles and past synodical decisions, and to advise synod as to the guidance and supervision it ought to provide local congregations in all liturgical matters."

This year we present the following matters for the consideration of synod:

1. A recommendation regarding a new Form for Marriage.
2. A recommendation regarding a Form for Excommunication to be used on a provisional basis.
3. A recommendation regarding a Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons to be used on a provisional basis.
4. A recommendation regarding a Form for the Ordination of Evangelist to be used on a provisional basis.
5. A nomination for election of members to fill expired terms.

The committee is continuing its work on the preparation of a collection of prayers to be included along with our liturgical material. We intend to have some prayers ready for presentation to the Synod of 1980.

We planned to present to this synod variations on the Lord's Supper service which is now being used on a provisional basis. It was our intent to present services which are specifically adapted to the high points of the church year, namely, Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. We do not have these prepared at this time but anticipate presenting them next year.

This year three members of the Liturgical Committee are completing their terms of service. These three members have served on this committee longer than the usual six-year maximum because the Liturgical Committee was originally a study committee. When it became a standing committee, the six-year rule of maximum service applied.

Dr. Nick Wolterstorff and the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen were appointed to the original study committee by the Synod of 1965. Their terms expire this year. They have served the denomination on this committee fourteen years. The Rev. Nick Knoppers was appointed to the original study com-

mittee by the Synod of 1969. His term also expires this year. He has served the denomination on this committee for ten years.

Ms. Nell VanderArk was appointed to our committee in 1976. By way of exception we request that she be reappointed for a two-year term in order to adjust the expiration dates of committee members.

## I. THE PROPOSED FORM FOR MARRIAGE

A proposed form for marriage presented by our committee has been used in our churches on a provisional basis since 1977. The committee received approximately twenty-five communications from churches and individuals who wished to make suggestions on this proposed form. The primary thrust of more than half of these communications was positive in nature. Several correspondents expressed concern that the traditional roles of husband and wife were not as pronounced as they would like them to be. There was also some concern expressed about the concluding prayer.

The committee wrestled hard with the suggestions made and now presents a form which it believes is sensitive to the diversity of opinion regarding male-female roles. We recognize that a single form which emphasizes what each person would like to emphasize would be impossible to produce. We believe the form as now presented sets forth the biblical concept of marriage and urges the marriage partners to live in such union with each other that what God expects of them in marriage will be realized. The committee experienced considerable difficulty in arriving at consensus when it attempted to state explicitly how the husband and wife should conduct themselves in the marriage.

The final prayer we left as it was originally presented with the exception of the concluding words which are now left out. It is written in poetic form and that must be kept in mind when it is used. Those who prefer a different style of prayer are free to make a substitution. It is the opinion of the committee that the metaphors of the prayer are vivid and perceptive of biblical truth and human experience and therefore ought to be available for use with this form.

We again include the "Preface" which is presented with only minor change. It is our recommendation that this "Preface" be included with the marriage form. These words not only help explain the significance of the rubrics but also give some guidance to those who intend to write their own marriage form either in part or in its entirety. It is not our intention to encourage people to write their own forms. We are instead trying to give some direction to a practice that is already in existence.

## FORM FOR MARRIAGE

### *Preface*

This marriage form may be adapted for use according to the desire of those to be married. The form may be incorporated into the liturgy of a church worship service or it may be used in a non-ecclesiastical setting.

Elements of the form which may be omitted from the marriage service

are the following: *Parting from Parents*, *Exchange of Rings*, and *Promise of Support*. Additions to the service may also be made, such as the lighting of a unity candle, musical selections, reading from Scripture and comments by the persons to be married or by others selected by them.

Should items be added to the service or certain elements rearranged, care should be taken that there be a clear progression in the various steps. For example, a musical selection which makes reference to God's will for marriage could appropriately be used just before the *Declaration of Marriage* or just before the minister says the words of Matthew 19:6. A message by the minister could follow the *Institution and Meaning of Marriage* or could follow the *Declaration of Marriage*. The content of the message would probably depend somewhat on its location in the service.

Although some elements of the marriage service are optional, there are others which should not be omitted from a Christian marriage service. The *Declaration of Purpose* is used primarily for good order. However, prayers of invocation and intercession should take a prominent place in a Christian marriage service. There should be a clear and concise statement on what the Bible teaches about the meaning and purpose of marriage. Following this statement, the couple to be married should have opportunity to state their intention to have their marriage be one which is in keeping with the will of God. The marriage vows are, of course, an integral part of the service and should reflect the biblical teaching on marriage.

The *Declaration of Marriage* by the officiating clergyman, by which the couple is pronounced husband and wife, does two additional things. It declares that the requirements of the state for marriage have been satisfactorily met and that the state will recognize these persons as married to each other. It also declares that this is a marriage which took place before the triune God and in conformity to his will. It is therefore a declaration that a new covenant family has been added to the believing community. Should the wedding take place in a worship service, the *Promise of Support* may be reworded so that its words are more reflective of that setting. The wording given in this form has a non-ecclesiastical service in mind and elicits a general response of support and concern rather than a welcome into a specific congregational structure of God's people.

## FORM FOR MARRIAGE

### *Declaration of purpose*

We have come together before the face of God to join \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ in marriage. We seek to honor the will of God for marriage, the concern of the Christian church for its well-being, and the interest of the state for the orderly development of society.

### *Invocation*

God, our Father, we praise you for making and redeeming us to live together in love. We thank you for the love and trust which bring \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ to this their marriage day. Favor them with the honor of your presence at their wedding. Unite them by your Spirit so that together they may reflect the love of Christ for his church. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### *Parting from Parents*

Today \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ leave their parents to establish a new home.

Do you, Mr. and Mrs. (parents of the groom), give your blessing to them and promise them your continued love and support?

We give them our blessing, and so promise, God helping us.

Do you, Mr. and Mrs. (parents of the bride), give your blessing to them and promise them your continued love and support?

We give them our blessing, and so promise, God helping us.

### *Institution and Meaning of Marriage*

In marriage as instituted by God, a man and a woman covenant to live together in a lifelong, exclusive partnership of love and fidelity (Genesis 2:18, Matthew 19:5-6). The apostle Paul sees the union of husband and wife as a symbol of the union between Christ and his church (Ephesians 5:31, 32). If marriage is to be pleasing in the sight of God, those who enter in this covenant of life must share a common commitment to the Lord of life.

In putting his blessing on a marriage, God intended that it would provide:

a context within which husband and wife can help and comfort each other and find companionship;

a setting within which we may give loving and tender expression to the desires God gave us;

a secure environment where children may be born, and taught to know and serve the Lord; and

a structure that enriches society and contributes to its orderly function.

When these purposes are prayerfully pursued in union with Christ, the kingdom of God is advanced and the blessedness of husband and wife assured.

In Ephesians 5 the Apostle Paul admonishes all Christians to develop a mutual respect and love when he says, "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." When he applies this to the marriage relationship, he instructs the wife to be subject to her husband in a way which reflects the church's subjection to Christ, its head. He also instructs the husband to pattern his love for his wife after the example of Christ's love for his body, the church. He says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as to the Lord," and "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. . . ." In marriage this requires that the husband and wife serve each other by providing the love, nurture, and faith which will enrich their lives together and build a Christ-centered home.

Our sinful and selfish tendency to break down what God has built

threatens marriage with tensions, agony, and even with broken bonds. People who marry in the Lord, however, may trust that he will lead them and graciously provide for their needs when they follow the biblical pattern for love. "Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends." (I Cor. 13:4-8a)

### *Declaration of intent*

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, now that you have heard God's message concerning marriage, do you agree with it and do you commit yourselves to each other in accordance with it?

Each answers: I do.

### *Exchange of Vows*

In the presence of God and before these people I now invite you to exchange your vows.

Groom: I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my wife and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful husband, as long as our lives shall last. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop God's gifts in you.

Bride: I take you, \_\_\_\_\_, to be my husband, and I promise before God and all who are present here to be your loving and faithful wife, as long as our lives shall last. I will serve you with tenderness and respect, and encourage you to develop God's gifts in you.

### *Exchange of Rings (optional)*

Groom: \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of our covenant in Christ.

Bride: \_\_\_\_\_, I give you this ring as a symbol of our covenant in Christ.

### *Declaration of Marriage*

As a minister of the church of Christ and by the authority which the state has vested in me, I now pronounce you, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, husband and wife, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder (Matthew 19:6).

### *Promise of Support (optional)*

Do you who are present here promise to pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and support them as times and circumstances may require?

People: We do, God helping us.

*Pastor's Message**Intercessory Prayer (another prayer may be substituted)*

We thank you, God and Father of the whole human family, for making life abound throughout your creation so that the ever-changing, ever-returning, yet never-exactly-returning seasons make our lives at once predictable and adventuresome.

Grant the marriage of these your servants sufficient predictability that they may responsibly plan life for the future.

Grant this marriage sufficient adventure that this home may be open to your work of renewal.

We thank you, Lord Jesus, for making life abound by forgiveness.

Should these your servants fail to be the one flesh you intend, grant them—as often as they need it—a fresh start.

When their special relationship threatens to become commonplace, then change what has become commonplace into celebration, just as you change the commonplace water of Cana into a choice wedding wine.

We thank you, Holy Spirit, for making life abound in your church, where you perpetually renew the marriage bond between Christ and his bride.

Grant perpetual renewal to this couple.

May their love for each other be fired with love for you.

Oppose with Pentecostal wind whatever in this marriage opposes you. And loosen the tongues of bride and groom that what ought to be said, in love of each other and love of you, may not be left unsaid.

Take this family into your family, the church.

And may this bride and groom and all the children born to them, O triune God, celebrate forever the marriage supper of the Lamb in the family of heaven.

Amen.

*Benediction (optional)*

## II THE PROPOSED PROVISIONAL FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION

We hereby present to synod a new form for excommunication, along with three announcements to be made prior to the excommunication. In 1966 Classis Hudson overtured synod to "review and revise the current form for excommunication for approval by the Synod of 1968." Synod rejected the overture on the grounds that the request was unnecessary since the Liturgical Committee already had this mandate, but without a

definite time limit. In 1973 Classis Muskegon overtured synod to revise the form. In so doing, the classis pointed out a number of archaic, ambiguous and easily misunderstood phrases in the form. Synod referred this overture, along with its grounds to our committee.

It is your committee's request that the three announcements and the new form for excommunication be used for a trial period of three years, with a view to replacing the old form. The overtures from the two classes, correspondence to our committee, the fact that several ministers have extensively revised the old form or written their own form, indicate that for many the tone and language of the old form are a real hindrance. The desire is for a form that is more pastoral in tone and contemporary in language.

Article 86 of the Church Order calls for congregational involvement in discipline and three announcements prior to the excommunication itself. The new form takes this into account. In the first announcement we leave the mention of the name as optional, as permitted in the Church Order. We have specified one prayer before the act of excommunication, but not the prayer following the exhortation to the congregation. This last prayer is best left for formulation according to the local circumstance. The whole form, including the three announcements, has been kept brief, simple and sober.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND DECLARATION OF EXCOMMUNICATION

#### *First Announcement:*

Beloved in the Lord, it is our painful duty as officers of this church to share with you that one of our fellow members (name optional), has committed the serious and offensive sin of \_\_\_\_\_, and persists unrepentant to this day, despite our prayers and admonitions. Through his/her persistence, our brother/sister is breaking the covenantal bond with the Lord and his people. Since the Lord's Supper is a sign and seal of this relationship with our Savior and with one another, we have been compelled to bar our brother/sister from the table of holy communion.

As members of this church of Jesus Christ, we should be deeply concerned when one of our fellow members obstinately and impenitently turns his back on the Christian way. We are and remain our brother's keepers (Genesis 4:9; Galatians 6:1, 2; and I Corinthians 12:12ff). Therefore, let everyone of us pray that our brother/sister may respond positively to the admonitions of the church and return to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is seeking him/her in grace and faithfulness (Luke 15:24, 32; John 15:16).

#### *Second Announcement:*

Beloved in the Lord, previously we informed you that as officers of this church we barred a fellow member, \_\_\_\_\_, from the Lord's Supper. We did so because he/she committed a serious and offensive sin and failed to show true repentance despite our frequent admonitions.

With a heavy heart we must tell you that his/her suspension from the Lord's Table and all admonitions since that time have not produced in our brother/sister any evidence of a desire to be restored to the covenantal relationship with the Lord and his people.

We have discussed this matter with Classis \_\_\_\_\_ and were advised that if our brother/sister does not repent we may proceed to the extreme remedy of his/her excommunication from the church of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, everyone of us is urged to continue to pray for our brother/sister and to plead with him/her that he/she may mend his/her ways and return to the Lord and his people in genuine repentance and faith. Our Lord does not wish that the sinner should perish but desires that he/she should return from his/her ways and live (Ezekiel 18 and Luke 15).

*Third Announcement:*

Beloved in the Lord, the officers of this church have twice informed you of the sin committed and the offense given by our fellow member, \_\_\_\_\_. We informed you that our brother/sister was barred from the Lord's Supper because he/she failed to show true repentance.

All our loving concern since that time, however, has not led him/her to demonstrate any sign of true repentance and faith. Because he/she persists in breaking the covenantal relationship with the Lord and his people, we are compelled to proceed with the final step of discipline, namely, the excommunication of our brother/sister from the church of the Lord. If our brother/sister does not show any evidence of genuine repentance, he/she, to our deep sorrow, will be excommunicated in this church on \_\_\_\_\_. If any member of the church knows of a valid reason why we should not proceed, we urge that person to inform the consistory.

Let everyone of us once more pray for \_\_\_\_\_ and plead with him/her so that he/she may not harden his/her heart completely, but return to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with true confession of sin.

### FORM FOR EXCOMMUNICATION

Beloved in the Lord, you know that our fellow member, \_\_\_\_\_, has brought discredit to the body of Christ by his/her sin, and in spite of the patient care of this church remains unrepentant to this day.

Accordingly, we as officers of this church are compelled with great sorrow to proceed with the final step of discipline, namely, his/her excommunication from the church of the Lord. We do this in obedience to the command of God in his Word (Matthew 18:15-18; I Corinthians 5:1-5, 11-13; I Timothy 5:20).

This excommunication takes place so that we may maintain the honor of God and remove offense from the church of Christ. We pray that this action may cause our brother/sister to seek forgiveness of sin, union

with Christ, and restoration into the covenant family of God and his people.

*Excommunication*

*Prayer:* Holy Father, we are humbled before you at this time. What we are about to do grieves us as it does you. We do it, Lord, with fear and trembling, conscious of our creatureliness yet also of the responsibility you have given your church in using the keys of the kingdom. We pray that our action may be right in your eyes, cause none to stumble, and build up your church. This we ask in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

*Declaration:*

In the name and the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, this congregation through its officers excommunicates \_\_\_\_\_ from the church of our Lord.

We believe that God himself excludes him/her from the fellowship of Christ, the holy sacraments, and all the blessings of faith as long as he/she persists in his/her impenitence.

*Exhortation*

Let everyone of us pray that the Holy Spirit grant \_\_\_\_\_ grace to recognize his/her sin, work in him/her genuine repentance, and lead him/her to a restored life with the Lord and his people (Ezekiel 18:23, 32; 33:11; Luke 15:24).

Let us be saddened by this event and warned to fear the Lord and live close to him and his Word. Today we clearly hear God's voice of judgment. Let us not harden our hearts (Psalm 95:8), but place ourselves under the discipline of our Master, who lovingly and firmly renews our lives through the ministry of his Word and Spirit.

Since we are assured that there is forgiveness with the Lord, let us together call on him, with confession of sin and supplication for mercy (Psalm 130).

*Prayer*

III. THE PROPOSED PROVISIONAL FORM FOR ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Our committee recommends that synod adopt the following new form for three years provisional use in the churches.

As mandated, we have closely reviewed our historic form for the ordination of elders and deacons in the light of Scripture, confessions, the church order, and the form's history. We conclude, with contemporary and former scholars of Reformed worship such as Abraham Kuyper, that this is one of the weakest forms in our liturgy. A brief summary of our findings should substantiate this.

The original form was adopted by the provincial synod of The Hague in 1586. Prior to that time, the Dutch churches installed elders and deacons using three questions stipulated by early church order. These questions were substantially retained in subsequent editions of the form. The form itself contained a long didactic section which was biblically and theologically weak. For example, elders were by implication subordinated to ministers when the form compared them to Levites as assistants to the priests. It is questionable whether Romans 12:6-8, I Corinthians 5 and 12, and even Acts 6 can be used of ecclesiastical office in the way the form employs them. Also, its development of the office of deacon has virtually no theological basis of its own and has been accused of being paternalistic. Finally, its understanding of consistory as consisting of only elders and ministers was at variance with Article 30 of the Belgic Confession.

Nevertheless, the original form has many excellent features that obviously served the church well for over three hundred years. It was translated and used in the Dutch Reformed Church in North America (R.C.A.) before Hendrik de Kock drew his first breath. This translation was borrowed wholesale by the Christian Reformed Church and included in early editions of its *Psalter Hymnal*.

Some of the already mentioned problems were corrected in a substantially overhauled edition of the form adopted by our Synod of 1934. This revision is our currently used form for the ordination of elders and deacons. Major changes from the original include a dramatic shortening of the charges and the instructions, a great improvement in the biblical basis for the offices, and a modernization of the language. The questions asked the officebearers and the concluding prayer are very close to the old form.

In their changes, however, delegates to the 1934 synod injected new elements into the form. Some of these are questionable. The most serious is probably the use of the three-fold office of Christ as a model for the three special offices, minister, elder and deacon. The 1973 study committee on ecclesiastical office and ordination questioned the legitimacy of grounding the office of elder in the kingship of Christ and challenged the notion of ruling consistent with this emphasis (Acts of Synod 1973, 712-713). We point out that the derivation of the three-fold model as used in the form appears to be based on Lord's Day 12 of the Heidelberg Catechism. However, in the Catechism the model is applied to the office of all believers. We seriously question the legitimacy of transferring the model to the special offices. Not only does this overlook and blur the historically important distinction between the office of believer and the special offices, but it does not have biblical support and creates the false impression, particularly on a popular level, that there are only three possible special offices in the church of Christ.

Further, the 1934 edition of the form has a more formal, authoritarian and less pastoral treatment of the offices than does the 1586 form. In the older form latitude is left for diaconal service to those outside the church, while this work is consistently applied only to believers in the 1934 version. Also, Acts 6 is taken as such a clear basis for the institution of the diaconal office that the newer form states that from that point on the

church has recognized deacons as distinct office-bearers. There are historical and exegetical problems making such a dogmatic position questionable.

Although 1934 made many improvements in the form, it left us with a version which itself has serious weaknesses. We have made every attempt to capitalize on the strengths of both the 1586 and the 1934 editions of the form in drafting our proposed new form.

Before making a few comments on the proposed form itself, it should be noted that terms like "office," "rule," "ordination," "authority," and "service" have been much in discussion among us for the last decade. We point out that the theological posture from which we produced this new form is that framed by the 1973 advisory committee on ecclesiastical office and ordination, and adopted by that synod as the framework for accepting and interpreting the recommendations of its study committee. We emphasize this since this framework strikes a balance between authority and service regarding ecclesiastical office which the advisory committee found lacking in the study committee report (see Acts of Synod 1973, p. 62). It is this balance between service and authority in the special ministries of elder and deacon which we have attempted to capture in our proposed form.

The proposed form is shorter than our current one. It is decidedly more pastoral in emphasis and more contemporary in style. The instructional section is much shorter, while the charges are longer. This allows us to incorporate instruction in the charges by using biblical language and ideas in a pastoral and contemporary way and to avoid didacticism or biblicism in a lengthy introductory section. In keeping with other recent forms, the congregational response is employed. The questions retain the substance of those in our original form. The form retains the structure and movement of our historic liturgical forms.

The form is constructed in such a way as to give liturgical flexibility. Some options other than the way we traditionally use our forms follow.

1. Use paragraphs in conjunction with different elements in the service. The entire service is structured around the form.
  - Par. 1—with call to worship
  - Par. 2—with confession and assurance of pardon
  - Pars. 3 and 4—with Scripture reading and proclamation  
"The Ordination"—as conclusion of the service
2. Devote separate services (and sermons) to ordination of the two types of officebearers, using the appropriate paragraphs of the form in each case
3. Employ the laying on of hands in ordination. This has precedent in the days of a Lasco and Micronius.
4. Use an appropriate hymn at a meaningful point in the liturgical framework of the form.

## THE ORDINATION OF ELDERS AND DEACONS

Congregation of Jesus Christ: Today we celebrate God's gift of faithful leadership for his people. We joyfully thank him for elders and deacons

who have served well and completed their terms of office. And we praise him for providing their successors.

In the officebearers of the church we see the love of Christ for his people. As the Lord of the church he appoints leaders and by his Spirit equips them, so that believers may grow in faith, develop disciplined Christian living, serve others in selfless love, and share with all people the good news of salvation. He taught us the spirit of true leadership when he said, "Whosoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28)

Elders serve by governing the church in Christ's name. They received this task when Christ entrusted the apostles and their successors with the keys of the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 16:19). Thus elders are responsible for the spiritual well-being of God's people. They must provide true preaching and teaching, regular celebration of the sacraments, and faithful counsel and discipline. And they must promote fellowship among believers, hospitality and witness to all people, and good order in the church.

Deacons serve by showing mercy to the church and to all people. They received this task already in the early church when the apostles designated special persons for the work of mercy (Acts 6 and II Corinthians 8, 9). The deacons stimulate relief in Christ's name for victims of poverty, distress and injustice. Thereby they show that Christians live by the Spirit of the kingdom, fervently desiring to give life the shape of things to come (Matthew 25:31-40). In the household of God, deacons are therefore called to assess needs, promote stewardship and hospitality, collect and disburse resources for benevolence, and develop programs of assistance. Done with words of Christian encouragement, their work is done as unto the Lord himself.

These tasks of elders and deacons call for believers who are mature in the faith, whose lives are Christ-like and who exercise their offices with prayer, patience and humility.

Now we intend to ordain elders and deacons for terms of service in this congregation. Those appointed to the office of elder are \_\_\_\_\_.

Those appointed to the office of deacon are \_\_\_\_\_.

To express your acceptance of these offices, you are asked to stand, and here in the presence of God and his church to answer the following questions.

Do you believe that in the call of this congregation you are being called by God himself to these holy offices?

Do you believe that the Old and New Testaments, as confessed and taught in this church, are the Word of God, the completely reliable rule of faith and life; and do you reject every doctrine which contradicts them?

Do you promise to do the work of your offices faithfully, in a way worthy of your calling, and in submission to the government and discipline of the church?

*Answer* (by each office-bearer): I do so believe and promise, God helping me.

May God our heavenly Father, who has called you to these sacred offices, guide you by his Word, equip you with his Spirit, and so prosper your ministries that his church may increase and his name be praised. Amen.

#### *Charge to the Elders*

I charge you elders to "take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Be a warm friend and Christ-like example to children. Give clear, cheerful and unpretentious guidance to the young people, who often wrestle with the overpowering spirits of this age. By word and example invite God's people to lean on you in their pain and weakness and to celebrate their joys in your presence. Attentively and regularly encourage the aged with the hope of biblical promises. Be wise counselors who support and strengthen the pastor. Be compassionate, yet firm and consistent in rebuke and discipline. Master the Scriptures, which alone can make God's people wise unto salvation. Pray continually for the church. Remember at all times that if you would truly be spiritual fathers in the household of faith, your entire lives must be mastered by your Lord (I Timothy 3:2-7).

#### *Charge to the Deacons*

I charge you deacons to inspire faithful stewardship in this congregation. Remind us through creative challenges that "everyone to whom much is given, of him will much be required" (Luke 12:48). Weigh the needs of causes and use this church's resources discerningly. Prompt us to seize new opportunities to worship God with offerings of wealth, time and ability. Realize that benevolence is a quality of our life in Christ, and not merely a matter of financial assistance. Therefore, be ministers of mercy to rich and poor alike, both within and outside the church. Teach us to be merciful. Be discretely compassionate to the needy. Encourage them with words that create hope in their hearts and with deeds that bring joy into their lives. Guide them to resources beyond your own. Study the structures and patterns of modern society, that you may be counselors to their victims and prophetic critics of waste, injustice and selfishness. Let your lives be above reproach, lived as an example of Christ Jesus whose mind is being shaped within you (I Timothy 3:8-14).

#### *Charge to the Congregation*

I charge you people of God to receive these officebearers as Christ's gift to the church. Recognize in them the Lord's provision for healthy congregational life. Hold them in honor; take their counsel seriously; accept their help with thanks. Sustain them in prayer and encourage them with your support, especially when they feel the burdens of responsibility. Acknowledge them as the Lord's servants among you.

Do you pledge yourselves to receive them as you have been charged?

*Answer* (by the congregation in unison): We do so promise, God helping us.

### *Prayer*

Our merciful Father in heaven, we thank you that you have provided faithful and gifted people to serve as elders and deacons. As these new officebearers assume their responsibilities, fill them with your Spirit, endow them with your wisdom, and grant them strength from on high. May they be faithful workers in your vineyard. Under their guidance may your church grow in every spiritual grace, in faith which is open and unashamed, and in the committed service that promotes your reign in the world. Deliver them from an attitude towards office that is commonplace or self-assured. In their work, grant them a sense of sustained awe which is rooted in daily adoration of you, their Lord. Through them may your name be honored and your church be served.

May we your people accept them gladly, encourage them always, and respect them for the sake of your precious Son, our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

## IV. INTRODUCTION TO THE FORM FOR ORDINATION OF EVANGELIST

The Synod of 1978 decided to "establish the office of Evangelist with authority to administer the Word and sacraments in the work of evangelism of his calling church." Synod further declared that "the evangelist be acknowledged as an elder of his calling church" and that his work should be "limited to that emerging congregation in which he is appointed to labor only until the congregation is organized." Synod then instructed our committee "to propose a new form for the Ordination of Evangelists in light of the above decisions" (Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 77, 78). We herewith present such a form. Since we had no precedent to go on, the form is, indeed, entirely new. It does, however, have some readily observed similarities to the proposed new Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons. We propose that synod adopt this form for a trial period of three years and that the churches be asked to send comments to the Liturgical Committee prior to final adoption in 1982.

### FORM FOR ORDINATION OF AN EVANGELIST

Congregation of Jesus Christ:

For some time you have known that \_\_\_\_\_ has accepted the call of God and of this church to serve as evangelist in \_\_\_\_\_. Today we ordain him to that office.

The Bible tells us that Jesus began his ministry by declaring, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." He called disciples to follow him saying, "I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:15, 17). The gospel harvest was begun when the disciples received power at the Spirit's outpouring; and soon a large church was established in Jerusalem.

When the work of the church proved to be too much for the apostles, they appointed "seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom" to help them (Acts 6:3). At least one of these men, Philip, proved to be a gifted evangelist who "preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ" and who baptized new believers (Acts 8:12 ff.). Later the apostle Paul declared that Christ's gifts to mankind are that "some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God..." (Eph. 4:11-13).

The work of an evangelist is to preach the Good News, calling people to heed the voice of the Good Shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep, and urging them in the name of Christ to be reconciled to God. The evangelist gathers new believers into an emerging congregation where he ministers the Word and sacraments. In our congregation, \_\_\_\_\_ will take his place as an elder. Although every believer is called upon to bear witness to Christ, and every elder, deacon and minister is called to engage in the work of evangelism, the evangelist does this as his primary calling under the supervision of consistory.

\_\_\_\_\_, we now ask you to answer the following questions here in the presence of God and his people.

Do you believe that in the call of this congregation you are being called by God himself to the office of evangelist?

Do you believe that the Old and New Testaments, as confessed and taught in this church, are the Word of God, the completely reliable rule of faith and life; and do you reject every doctrine which contradicts them?

Do you promise to do the work of your office faithfully, in a way worthy of your calling and in submission to the government and discipline of the church?

*Answer:* I do so believe and promise, God helping me.

May God our heavenly Father, who has called you to your sacred office guide you by his Word, equip you with his Spirit, and so prosper your ministry that his church may increase and his name be praised.

#### *Charge to the Evangelist:*

\_\_\_\_\_, "I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who is to judge the living and the dead...: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching... Always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry" (II Tim. 4:1, 2, 5).

#### *Charge to the Congregation*

I charge you people of God to receive \_\_\_\_\_ as called by God to the office of evangelist. Recognize in him one way in which the church fulfills Christ's mandate to "make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). Hold him in honor as one called upon to seek and to save

the lost. Support him with your gifts and assistance. Sustain him with your prayers. Listen to him as one who brings good news. Encourage him in times of difficulty and opposition.

Do you pledge to receive him as you have been charged?

*Answer:* (By the congregation in unison) We do so promise, God helping us.

### *Prayer*

Merciful and sovereign Father, we praise and thank you for the good news of salvation which has come to us and must come to many more. We thank you for equipping and ordaining \_\_\_\_\_ for the work of evangelism as your ambassador and our representative. Fill him with your Spirit of truth, encourage him with fruitful labor, give him patience, understanding and love for those who are as yet sheep without a shepherd, and renew your mercies to him from day to day.

We pray for this congregation and each of its members. You have entrusted to us the message of reconciliation. Give us courage to declare your wonderful deeds and show your love to the world. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ and for the sake of his coming kingdom. Amen.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Representation at synod. We request that our chairman, Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff and the Rev. Clifford Bajema be given the privilege of the floor when the report of the Liturgical Committee is being considered.

2. We recommend that synod adopt the proposed Form for Marriage for use in our churches. (Note: we do not intend that this form replace the form now in use but will serve as an alternative form.)

3. We recommend that synod approve the new Form for Excommunication and the three forms of announcements for use in our churches for a trial period of three years, with the churches submitting their reactions to the committee by September 1, 1981. (Note: the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen does not join the committee in this recommendation. His reasons are given on page 568.)

4. We recommend that synod approve the new Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons for use in our churches for a trial period of three years, with the churches submitting their reactions to the committee by September 1, 1981.

5. We recommend that synod approve the new Form for the Ordination of Evangelist for use in our churches for a trial period of three years, with the churches submitting their reactions to the committee by September 1, 1981.

6. We recommend that the present term of Ms. Nell VanderArk be extended two years so that her term of service expires in 1981.

### *Ground:*

This will arrange the terms of office of the committee so that three

terms expire in 1979, two terms in 1980, and three terms in 1981.

7. The terms of office of the Rev. Alvin L. Hoksbergen, the Rev. Nicholas Knoppers and Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff expire this year. They are not eligible for reappointment. We present to synod the following nominations with three persons to be elected.

It is our recommendation that one person be elected from each of the following three groups:

- a. Remkes Kooistra—Waterloo, ON, Canada  
Thomas Oosterhuis—Edmonton, AB, Canada
- b. Shirley VanZanten—Lynden, Washington  
Jan DeWaal—Edmonton, AB, Canada
- c. Harry Boonstra—Holland, Michigan  
Henry Vellinga—Oak Forest, Illinois

Liturgical Committee

- N. Wolterstorff, chairman
- A. Hoksbergen, secretary
- C. Bajema
- J. DeJong
- D. Hart
- N. VanderArk
- N. Knoppers
- R. Wells

\*Please see page 568 for a note by the Rev. Alvin L. Hoksbergen regarding the Forms for Excommunication presented in this report.

## REPORT 16

## MINISTERIAL INFORMATION SERVICE

## I. PERSONNEL AND NOMINATIONS

A. The committee members are Mr. George Groen, chairman; the Rev. Gareth Kok; the Rev. Donald Negen; the Rev. Bernard Niemeyer; Mr. Carl Vander Brug; Mr. John Verhoeven.

B. The term of our records secretary, Mr. Carl Vander Brug, expires this year. He has served six years. We request synod to waive the six year tenure rule as it applies to him. He is our records secretary responsible for all duplicating of materials, all mailing of profiles to churches and ministers, and all efforts to keep our files current. This requires an alertness to the needs of churches and ministers which he has developed. It also requires hours of volunteer time which he is willing to give.

C. *Nominations*

1. Carl Vander Brug. Incumbent.
2. Lawrence R. Van Noord. Retired Vice-President Security Pacific National Bank, residing in Bellflower, California. Served as officer on council, school board, Christian Education Endowment Foundation, Rotary Club, Optimist Club.
3. William De Groot. Insurance and real estate agent, residing in Upland, California. Served on councils, Christian school board, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee. Is currently on the Reformed Bible College Board.

## II. STATISTICS

During the year 1978 we mailed a total of 1,574 ministers' profiles to 91 vacant churches. A high percentage of available ministers are now filing their profiles with us as a service to vacant churches.

## III. PASTORAL CONCERN

We are eagerly looking forward to the report of the Synodical Interim Committee on this matter because we are aware of the concerns of our churches and ministers.

## IV. SERVICES

The committee continues to provide services primarily in two areas. The first is the mailing of profiles of ministers to churches requesting information on specific men in whom they are interested. The other area of service is to suggest names of ministers and mail corresponding profiles

to vacant churches who request our help. High priority is given to those who desire a call.

#### V. FINANCES

The operating expense for the year 1978 totaled \$994.09. An audited financial report will be submitted under separate cover.

#### VI. REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

The committee secretary, the undersigned, is a delegate to synod this year and will attempt to answer questions which may arise.

#### VII. PRAYER REQUEST

We are conscious of our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide the committee, the churches and the ministers in making responsible decisions. Therefore we covet your prayers.

Ministerial Information Service  
Donald J. Negen, secretary

REPORT 17  
MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

I. INTRODUCTION

The Ministers' Pension Fund was established by synod to provide financial support for our ministers who are emeritated because of retirement age or disability and for widows and orphans of ministers as defined in the plan.

Synod of 1969 established the present plan to be effective January 1, 1970. Subsequent synods have adopted certain modifications and clarifications. These were all incorporated in one format adopted by the Synod of 1978. Subsequently a booklet was prepared by the committee. This booklet contains the exact wording of the plan adopted by synod. It is entitled "Christian Reformed Church in North America—Ministers' Pension Plan—Effective January 1, 1970 with revisions through July 1, 1978." Additionally, the committee prepared a "layman's" version of the plan with examples. This booklet is entitled "A Summary Plan Description of the Christian Reformed Church in North America—Effective January 1, 1970 With Revisions Through July 1, 1978." Both booklets were sent to all active and retired ministers and to all widows.

Additionally, in order to make phases of the plan and its administration clearer, a "paper" dated December 15, 1978 was addressed "To All Christian Reformed Ministers, Clerks of Consistories, Chairmen of the Congregation's Finance Committee, Classical Treasurers, Emeritated Ministers and Ministers' Widows." The minister, the clerk and the financial officer of the church each received a copy. Additionally, one copy each of the "Plan" booklet and of the "Summary" booklet was sent to the organized churches. Classical treasurers, retired ministers and widows also received a copy of the "paper." The "paper" is divided into the following topics:

1. Cash Control and Accounting
2. Sources of Income
  - a. The Per-family Quota
  - b. Contributions (Assessments)
  - c. Income on Investments
3. Disbursements of Income
  - a. Pensions
  - b. Funding
  - c. Expenses

One aspect of the plan which synod adopted in 1969 was the provision for funding. This is sometimes not understood and for that reason we present that section of the "paper" as follows:

- b. *Funding.* The disbursements to the trustees each year are partial payments for past services rendered by *both* active and retired ministers. Every sound pension plan should be funded. Synod came to

that conclusion in 1969 when it adopted the current pension plan which became effective January 1, 1970. The very instant synod set up the plan, it incurred a \$23,409,539 liability payable for past services already rendered by active and retired ministers. But the actuarial firm (William M. Mercer, Inc.) calculated that if this amount comes into the fund over a period of years, the amounts, as they are paid in, will earn interest so that such expected interest credits over the many years ahead were calculated as one large interest credit (as if already collected) to reduce the \$23,409,539 to a "present value" of \$16,532,758 as of January 1, 1970. The amount of assets on January 1, 1970 was \$491,693 so that after deducting these as already on hand, the unfunded portion of the "present value" accrued liability was \$16,041,065 (\$16,532,758 minus \$491,693). So now we come to January 1, 1978, for example and after these many years of payments to the trustees we could well expect the \$16,041,065 to be substantially reduced. Let us look at the record:

<u>JAN. 1</u>	<u>PRESENT VALUE OF ACCRUED LIABILITIES</u>	<u>ACTUARY'S BOOK VALUE OF ASSETS</u>	<u>UNFUNDED LIABILITIES</u>
1970	\$ 16,532,758	\$ 491,693	\$ 16,041,065
1971	17,174,199	838,541	16,335,658
1972	17,858,331	1,124,746	16,733,585
1973	18,557,580	1,666,112	16,891,468
1974	19,290,270	2,239,818	17,050,452
*1975	17,946,985	3,189,423	14,757,562
1976	19,650,469	3,932,862	15,717,607
1977	20,487,429	5,043,516	15,443,913
1978	22,409,457	6,234,674	16,174,783

\*The significant reduction in 1975 was because the actuary increased the assumed interest earnings rate from 5% to 6%.

What happened? Basically, the Accrued Liabilities increased as fast as the Assets which has left the Unfunded Liability still in excess of \$16,000,000. Why was this? Almost entirely because the basic pension was increased over the years from \$3,620 in 1970 to \$4,840 in 1978. This is not such a big increase. But, recall that every increase approved by synod applies retroactively to increase the amount due for past services rendered by both active and retired Ministers. The funding needed in 1979 is \$1,350,000. Just a concluding word about why funding is necessary for a sound pension plan:

(1) It is the setting aside of funds for *services already rendered* by active and retired Ministers. It is like payments on a mortgage. It is hoped thereby that the church will always be able to pay the retirement, disability and widow benefits promised to our ministers. Perhaps this sounds very businesslike, but the pension is deferred compensation which is assured to your ministers so that the instruction in Luke 10:7 and I Timothy 5:18 that "the worker deserves his wages" can be accomplished also in the retirement years in an orderly manner as the Synod of 1969 and subsequent synods mandated.

(2) It is expected that in a few years the CRC Pension Plan (as a church plan) will come under government rules in both the United States and Canada. When that probability materializes, then funding

will be a legal requirement. (In the United States the funding can be spread over 40 years for the initial portion and over 30 years for subsequent improvements. In Canada, such funding would need to be over a 15-year period.) Therefore, it is only proper that the plan be administered in anticipation of such legal requirements.

It is the intent of the committee to publish additional "papers" from time to time in order that our CRC members will have an increasingly clear idea of how the plan is being administered by the committee for synod. One such paper now being developed has to do with investment policy. Suffice it now to say that "return on investment" and "safety of principal" constitute two factors involving investment policy. Other important aspects have to do with "quality" of the investment, namely, that it be made in companies and governments that practice Christian principles of human rights and conservation and proper use of God's created resources.

Copies of the "Plan," the "Summary" and the "paper" are available to CRC members upon request. (Send your request to the Ministers' Pension Office, 2850 Kalamazoo ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49560.)

The plan provides that synod appoint a Pension Committee of seven (7) members, no more than three (3) of whom may be ministers. The term of each member is three (3) years and no member shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

As of December 31, 1978, our census of those receiving pensions was as follows:

Retired Ministers-----	168
Disabled Ministers-----	9
Widows-----	97
Orphans-----	1

The committee appointed Seidman and Seidman, Public Accountants, to audit the books for the twelve months ended December 31, 1978. The audited report will be available before the time synod meets.

Assets for funding are at the Michigan National Bank Trust Department, the National Bank of Detroit Trust Department and at the Bank of Montreal. The interest earned will be higher than last year as the audited financial statements will reveal.

## II. DEATHS AND EMERITATIONS

### A. Deaths in 1978

Mrs. Minnie Jonker-----	January 21, 1978
Rev. John H. Rubingh-----	March 18, 1978
Rev. Clayton Negen-----	May 21, 1978
Rev. Titus Heyboer-----	June 3, 1978
Rev. Louis Dekens-----	June 17, 1978
Rev. Martin Bolt-----	July 17, 1978
Rev. Reuben De Haan-----	July 21, 1978
Rev. Richard A. Rozeboom-----	August 4, 1978
Dr. Martin Wyngaarden-----	August 12, 1978
Mrs. Grace Schans-----	September 17, 1978

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Rev. Peter A. Spoelstra-----	October 26, 1978
Mrs. Alice Kolkman-----	December 11, 1978
Rev. Nicholas Jansen-----	December 15, 1978
Rev. John Ehlers-----	December 18, 1978
Mrs. Gertrude Dyk-----	December 29, 1978

### B. Emeritations

- Rev. Marinus Goote, because of age,  
 Classis Grand Rapids South, effective November 1, 1977
- Rev. Lambert Doezema, because of age,  
 Classis Kalamazoo, effective December 8, 1977
- Rev. William Dryfhout, because of age,  
 Classis Sioux Center, effective January 1, 1978
- Rev. Repko Popma, because of age,  
 Classis Quinte, effective January 1, 1978
- Rev. Henry De Moor Sr., because of age,  
 Classis British Columbia, effective January 1, 1978
- Dr. Harry R. Boer, because of age,  
 Classis Illiana, effective June 1, 1978
- Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema, because of age,  
 Classis Grand Rapids East, effective August 1, 1978
- Rev. Harold Bossenbroek, because of age,  
 Classis Pella, effective September 1, 1978
- Rev. Anthony Rozendal, because of age,  
 Classis Zeeland, effective September 15, 1978
- Rev. Arnold Brink, because of age,  
 Classis Grand Rapids South, effective September 24, 1978
- Rev. Garrett H. Vande Riet, because of age,  
 Classis British Columbia, effective September 25, 1978
- Rev. Robert Tjapkes, because of disability,  
 Classis Atlantic Northeast, effective September 28, 1978
- Rev. Felix Reinoso, because of disability,  
 Classis Hudson, effective October 1, 1978
- Rev. Rolf Veenstra, because of age,  
 Classis Rocky Mountain, effective November 30, 1978

### III. THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS ARE PRESENTED IN A SEPARATE BOOK PUBLISHED WITH OTHER DENOMINATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTS

### IV. COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The committee requests that the Synod of 1979 elect two committee members for regular three-year terms. The Rev. Henry De Bolster has served one three-year term and is therefore eligible to be one of the two nominees for this vacancy. Mr. Roger Helder has served two three-year terms. Therefore, two nominees are presented to fill his vacancy. Both of these men have made excellent contributions during their years of service on the committee. The remaining members and the Administrator express their sincere thanks.

## V. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

### A. *Privilege of Floor*

The committee respectfully requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to members of the committee, the Administrator and to Counselor Donald Oosterhouse when matters pertaining to the Ministers' Pension Fund are discussed.

### B. *New Members*

The committee requests synod to elect two committee members (one of which must be a minister) for regular three-year terms from the following nominees:

Rev. Henry De Bolster	Kenneth Olthof
Rev. Adrian A. Van Geest	Gerald Van Wyk

### C. *Housing Allowance*

The committee requests synod to designate \$3,000 of the ministers' pension as a reasonable housing allowance for United States Income Tax purposes (IRS Revenue Ruling 1.107-1).

### D. *Separate United States and Canadian Pension Plans*

The Ministers' Pension Committee recommends that synod adopt the following:

#### 1. *Recommendations* for two Pension plans:

- a. That the Ministers' Pension Plan be separated into two plans: one for Canadian participants, and one for United States participants. The plans would be related by a portability provision to permit ministers to move from one country to the other and to continue to accrue pension rights.

*Ground:* The increasing differences in other retirement benefits (Social Security in the U.S., Canadian Pension Plan, the Old Age Security pension in Canada), amount and taxability of contributions to and benefits from retirement plans, rate of inflation, cost of living, currency value fluctuations, government-provided health care, and government regulation, make it virtually impossible to achieve equity for participants in the two countries under one plan.

- b. That the administration be handled through one Pension Committee consisting of 14 members; 7 of whom are members of the Christian Reformed Churches in the United States; and 7 of whom are members of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. The committee will be divided into two subcommittees; one consisting of the Canadian members and one consisting of the United States members. The Canadian subcommittee will supervise administration of the Canadian Plan and the United States sub-committee will supervise administration of the United States Plan. Day-to-day administration and accounting for both plans will initially be handled at the Denominational Building. Investment decisions and legal matters, including registration, will be handled by each subcommittee for the plan it supervises. The entire Pension Committee would meet at least once per year and present one report to synod.

*Ground:* The proposed administrative structure preserves central

control by synod and provides adequate separate administration to function as two plans.

- c. That the assets in the present pension fund as of December 31, 1977 (the certified net assets "Available for Benefits" as of that date reported in the Acts of Synod 1978, page 371, in the amount of \$6,162,995) be divided between the Canadian Plan and the United States Plan as follows: As of December 31, 1977 (1978 Yearbook), there were 159 Canadian ministers in organized churches out of 663 total ministers in organized churches in the United States and Canada. The Canadian percentage of ministers in organized churches is 23.98%. That percentage we recommend be applied to the total assets to determine the portion of the assets as of December 31, 1977 to be placed in the Canadian Plan. This amounts to \$1,477,886. Canadian \$1,477,886 will be transferred to the Canadian Plan. In addition to that, the Canadian Plan will receive, as of the date separation of the plan becomes effective, an additional amount out of moneys received from 1978 and subsequent quotas and contributions. The computation will be made on an accounting approach starting with total receipts from Canada and adding a pro rata share of investment income. From that total there will be subtracted the total pension payments to Canadian beneficiaries and a pro rata share of expenses of operation. The Canadian portion of the investment income and operating expenses will be 23.98%. The net amount will be paid to the Canadian Plan in Canadian dollars. To illustrate:

Total 1978 and subsequent quotas and contributions received from Canada	\$ _____
23.98% of investment in- come from entire plan from January 1, 1978, to effective date of separation	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

**LESS:**

Pension benefits, includ- ing widow and disability, paid to Canadian beneficiaries	\$ _____	
Pro rata share of pension fund operation costs (23.98%)	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>Net amount to be paid in Canadian dollars</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	
(The precise definitions of income and costs will be determined by the parties involved.)	\$ _____	

*Ground:* Various methods of allocation were considered and the above represents an understandable rationale and an equitable division.

2. The following information is also submitted to assist in evaluating the above recommendations:
  - a. Possible effect of the operations into two plans and proposed division of assets upon quota may be illustrated as follows: *Assuming* the benefits level of 1978 and *assuming* other factors were unchanged, the United States quota is estimated to change from \$28.50 to \$30.80, and the Canadian quota is estimated to change from \$28.50 to \$21.26 (See Appendix A, pages 1 & 2). It is not assumed that the quota for Canadian families will be reduced; instead, the change would permit an increase of benefits in Canada required to adjust for the differences summarized in the Ground for Recommendation 1 above. The United States quota requirement is greater because the larger part of the past service liability is in the United States.
  - b. The Pension Committee informs synod that if the separation of the plan into two is approved by Synod of 1979, the Pension Committee will then appoint a subcommittee consisting of church member residents in Canada to work with the Pension Committee in development of the Canadian Plan and other preparation to implement the separation. Complete plans will be submitted to Synod of 1980.
  - c. The tentative effective date for the separations and the separate plans is January 1, 1981.

#### E. *Supplemental Fund Quota*

The committee requests synod to continue for 1980 a quota of \$0.75 per family for the Supplemental Fund of which two-thirds is estimated to be required to meet extraordinary "necessity of life" needs of retired or disabled ministers, widows and orphans and one-third of which is estimated to be required to pay "once in a lifetime" moves (as defined) of the retired ministers, or, if the minister has not been paid such an allowance, then for his widow.

*Grounds:* Since there is no experience under the 1979 quota of \$0.75 per family, the amount of the request for 1980 is held at \$0.75 per family.

#### F. *Benefits, Quotas and Contributions*

The Pension Committee, desiring to meet some of the needs of retirees and widows arising from inflation and at the same time trying to keep the quota increase reasonable, recommends to synod the following for 1980:

RESOLVED, that this committee recommends to synod that Part 5, subpart 2-B II of the RETIREMENT PLAN for Ministers of the Christian Reformed Church be amended, effective January 1, 1980, to read as follows:

II. One-twelfth of \$5,400.

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this committee hereby recommends that synod increase the per family quota to \$32.00 for 1980, and that synod increase Contributions-Other to \$1,400 for 1980.

## Appendix A

## ALLOCATIONS BASED ON MINISTERS IN ORGANIZED CHURCHES ONLY

Based on attached 1978 Budget &amp; Mercer's letter of 10-18-78

January 1, 1978 Division of Assets on basis of Ministers in Organized Churches only

<u>159 Canadian</u>	= 23.98%
663 Total	

\*\$6,162,995 x 23.98% = \$1,477,886 Canadian DollarsCANADA

Quota	15,664 families x 95% x \$28.50	\$424,000
Contributions	11 x \$1,200 each	13,200
Investment Income	\$388,000 x 23.98%	<u>93,042</u>
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>\$530,242</u>
Normal Cost		\$107,771
Disability Benefit Cost		23,059
Pre-retirement Widows Benefit Cost		39,066
**To Trustee for funding past service liabilities		237,044
Supportive Services (\$41,000 x 23.98%) low estimate		<u>9,832</u>
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>\$416,772</u>
Average Receipts in excess of Disbursements		
Based on 15,644 families at <u>\$7.24</u> per family		\$113,470

UNITED STATES

Quota	49,239 x 95% x \$28.50	\$1,333,000
Contributions	216 @ \$1,200 each	258,800
Investment Income	\$388,000 - \$93,042	<u>294,958</u>
	TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>\$1,886,758</u>
Pension Benefit Payments (\$1,193,000 - \$80,400 to Canadians)		\$1,112,600
To Trustee for funding past services (\$1,182,604 - \$237,044)		945,560
Supportive Services (\$41,000 - \$9,832 (low estimate))		<u>31,168</u>
	Sub-total	<u>\$2,089,328</u>
Less Canadian Excess of Normal cost over pensions (\$107,771 + \$23,059 + \$39,066 - \$80,400)		<u>\$ 89,496</u>
	TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>\$1,999,832</u>

Shortage Disbursements in excess of Receipts  
Based on 49,236 families at \$2.30 per fam. \$ 113,074

\*See Acts of Synod 1978, page 371, net assets available for benefits was \$6,162,995.

\*\*This is the same amount shown in Mercer's letter dated October 18, 1978. It is assumed that the accrued liabilities do not change as of January 1, 1978 despite the method used to transfer assets.

Appendix A

Revised Budget for 1978

(based on Mercer's January 1, 1978 Report and the number of families from the 1977 Yearbook)

QUOTAS - 64,900 families x 95% x \$28.50 per family	\$1,757,000
CONTRIBUTIONS - 227 @ \$1,200 each	272,000
INVESTMENT INCOME - estimated at 6.85%	388,000
TOTAL RECEIPTS	<u>\$2,417,000</u>
Pension Benefit Payments (Going Basis 1978)	\$1,193,000
To Trustees for funding past service liabilities per Mercer's Jan. 1, 1978 Report	1,183,000
Supportive Services (Expenses) - estimate	41,000
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	<u>\$2,417,000</u>

G. Budget for 1980

Attached hereto as Appendix B is the 1980 Budget reflecting Benefits, Quotas and Contributions proposed in F. above.

Ministers' Pension Committee  
 Roger Helder, chairman  
 Garrett C. Van de Riet, administrator  
 Henry De Bolster  
 Marinus Goote  
 Gerald Knol  
 Hendrik Kreeft  
 Julius F. Mellema

APPENDIX B

MINISTERS' PENSION FUND  
 TENTATIVE  
 SUMMARY OF PROPOSED BUDGET

PERIOD JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1980

<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>	<u>% OF TOTALS</u>
SUPPORT FROM:		
QUOTAS - Total (65,800 x 95% = 62,510 x \$32.00)	\$2,000,000	66.2%
Participant Assessments (273 x \$1,400 Each)	382,000	12.6%
OTHER REVENUE		
Estimated Investment Income	\$ 641,000.	21.2%
TOTAL SUPPORT & OTHER REVENUE	<u>\$3,023,000</u>	<u>100.0%</u>

## EXPENDITURES:

## PROGRAM SERVICES:

Pension benefit payments  
(\$5,400 basic)  
(176 Ministers & 98 Widows) \$1,374,000  
To Trustees for funding  
past service benefits \$1,569,000

TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES \$2,943,000 \$2,943,000 97.4%

## SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Trustee fees, accounting,  
legal, actuarial and  
office expenses.

TOTAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES \$ 80,000 \$ 80,000 2.6%

TOTAL EXPENDITURES \$3,023,000 100.0%

EXCESS (OR DEFICIENCY)

PAYMENTS (DESCRIBE)

TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS \$3,023,000 100.0%

## APPENDIX B

## 1980 - ESTIMATED RETURN ON INVESTMENT

## Investment Calculation:

Balance Jan. 1, 1978	\$5,663,142
Add Estimated Addition for 1978	1,159,000
Add Chaplains Deposit Fund	225,000
Sub-total	<u>\$7,047,000</u>
Estimated 1978 earnings 6½%	458,000
Add Estimated Addition for 1979	1,354,000
Sub-total	<u>\$8,859,000</u>
Estimated 1979 earnings 6½%	575,000
Estimated Balance Jan. 1, 1980	<u><u>\$9,434,000</u></u>

## Income Calculation for 1980:

\$9,434,000 x 6½% (Raised to 6.8% 1-1-80) \$ 641,000

APPENDIX B

PENSION CALCULATION  
FOR 1980 BUDGET

UNITED STATES MINISTERS	156
CANADIAN MINISTERS	10
DISABLED MINISTERS	<u>10</u>
TOTAL	<u>176</u>

UNITED STATES WIDOWS	89
CANADIAN WIDOWS	8
ORPHANS	<u>1</u>
TOTAL	<u>98</u>

176 x \$5,400 =	\$ 950,400
98 x 80% of \$5,400 =	<u>423,360</u>
Total Pension Estimate	\$1,373,760

## REPORT 18

## SERMONS FOR READING SERVICES

Our publishing of the Twenty-second Volume of Sermons for Reading Services was an encouraging and blessed experience. At the end of 1978 we were in the black, had gained back a number of old subscribers, and seemed to be on the road to stability.

At present our subscribers list looks as follows:

	English	English and Dutch
Alberta	21	7
British Columbia	12	3
Eastern Canada	6	
Ontario	57	24
Sask. & Manitoba	3	
United States	9	1
Independent	8	
Foreign	2	1
TOTAL:	118	and 36 = 154 subscribers

The price structure at the present time is: \$30,-for English sermons only, \$35,-for English and Dutch sermons together. Authors are paid \$20,-upon publication of their manuscripts. We have made some minor improvements: sermons are sent first class mail and sermons for special occasions are mailed out somewhat earlier than before.

One item has been of special concern to your committee. When you look at our list of subscribers you will immediately notice the very small number of American churches using the services of our committee. We may safely assume that the churches south of the Canadian border also have their proportionate share of vacancies, illnesses, ministerial holidays and the like. Your committee cannot help but wonder what material is used by churches in these situations. Perhaps synod could inquire of the delegates, or by way of a denominational survey, what the present practice is in the churches that do not use synodically approved sermons.

Due to the moving of one of our committee members, the Rev. Alvin Venema, our alternate the Rev. Martin Cantant became a regular on the committee. We would like to propose a duo to synod to fill the now vacant spot of alternate.

*Recommendations:*

1. That synod approve the publication of the *Living Word* sermon series from January 1, 1980 through January 1, 1981.
2. That synod fill the vacancy for alternate member of our committee

from the following duo: Rev. Markus Lise (Holland Marsh) and the Rev. Sieds VanderMeer (Newmarket).

3. That synod ascertain what material is being used by those churches who do not make use of synodically approved sermons.

4. That synod continue the Sermons for Reading Services Committee.

Sermons for Reading Services Committee,

M. N. Greidanus, chairman

H. D. Praamsma, secretary

P. Nicolai

M. Contant

## REPORT 19

## SYNODICAL COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are discernible signs that the Spirit of God has been moving in the midst of the Christian Reformed Church, building us up to obedience in the area of race relations. It is not that our record gives us any cause to boast; but neither does it give us reason to despair.

Synods of the Christian Reformed Church have recognized that racism is a sin which can destroy our confessional integrity. A number of denominational agencies and boards, as well as Christian educational institutions, have paid critical attention to their own patterns of racial discrimination. Most important, there is a small but discernable pattern of growth in minority and multiracial ministries and congregations. In some areas of the denomination multiracial fellowships and educational experiments are being pursued with considerable enthusiasm.

These and other factors combine to present some important challenges to the Christian Reformed Church in North America. Not the least of these challenges has to do with an important need to assess who we are as a denomination. At our American beginnings the Christian Reformed Church was an almost completely homogeneous Dutch ethnic group. But this is no longer the case. This means that we have made commitments from which there can be no turning back. The moment we admitted the first Scottish person into the full fellowship of our church, or the moment we baptized our first black child, we became obligated to define ourselves in inclusive ethnic terms. Percentages or numbers have nothing to do with obligations in this area. We are, in fact, a denomination which embraces people from a variety of ethnic, cultural and racial backgrounds. We have become a multiracial, "multinational" church.

This development is a cause for rejoicing. God's Word teaches us to hope for the coming of a kingdom into which the elect will come from many nations and many tribes. This hope is deeply rooted in the Old Testament, where Israel is given visions of a city inhabited by sons and daughters who will come from afar; in the enjoyment of life in this city God's people will be nourished by the wealth and splendor of the nations of the earth. This theme is reinforced by the New Testament's understanding of the coming kingdom.

It would be wrong to understand this as a hope whose fulfillment lies completely in the future. The Old Testament expectation of a city whose gates are open to all the peoples of the earth is already being fulfilled in the present age. The God who created out of one blood all tribes of the earth has now gathered together out of many nations a people who are redeemed by the blood of his own Son.

The church of Jesus is called to be a sign of the city that is to come. In our communal life as the New Testament people of God we are to

manifest the power of a Gospel which breaks down all racial, ethnic and cultural barriers.

This properly biblical conviction requires sustained efforts at implementation. The task of fulfilling our potential as a multi-racial church must be based on the recognition that "race relations" is not a matter that occupies only a small corner of our ecclesiastical life. Race relations is not merely an "ethical" or "social" issue—it is, properly understood, a theological issue. It is an issue which challenges us at the fundamental level of asking who we are and why we exist as a distinct denomination and why we think and act in the way we do. A church that is sensitive to its own multiracial identity will not discuss the gifts of the Spirit without raising profound questions about how that pattern of Christian thought takes shape among Black, Hispanic and Native Americans. When discussing "the women's issue" it will reflect carefully on the gifts and needs of red and brown and black women. In writing its educational materials and composing its hymns it will do so with an awareness of the patterns of life in the ghetto, the barrio and the reservation, as well as in suburban America.

We do not yet, as a denomination, operate with this kind of sensitivity. The need to begin doing so becomes even more urgent when we realize that the primary reason for developing these sensitivities is not so that white ethnic groups can "do more" for racial minorities. The truth of the matter is that white North American Christians desperately need the gifts and strengths which racial minority groups have to offer.

Black, brown and red North Americans have been, and continue to be, oppressed peoples. Their family structure, cultural patterns, and individual psyches have been the objects of a systematic assault on the part of the dominant white culture. In some important respects their history of suffering is simply incomprehensible to white North Americans. But this experience of oppression, with all of its horror and degradation, has produced important gifts and strengths in the oppressed peoples. Indeed, the experience of oppression has provided a unique context for receiving and understanding the Word of God. "Black theology," "Black spirituality," and their Native American and Hispanic counterparts, are not to be dismissed as mere expressions of passing fads in theology; they point to unique and profound patterns of Christian experience. The Christian Reformed Church needs to understand and assimilate these patterns; it needs to do so for the sake of its own communal mind and soul. The wealth of the peoples of the earth must be brought into our midst, lest we become an impoverished and impotent church.

This need for multiracial sensitivities must not be thought of as a kind of "ethnic sampling"—the ecclesiastical counterpart to an "ethnic recipes" column in a newspaper. What is called for is a profound dialogue among people of differing collective memories, social experiences and spiritual sensitivities. Such a dialogue can occasion new and exciting examinations of what it means to be a Reformed church: What does "black Calvinism" look like? Or "Chinese Calvinism"? Or "Navajo Calvinism"? How do they differ from "Dutch Calvinism"? How can these various Reformed patterns interact in such a way that the sovereign mercies of a covenant God can be better understood by all who

love the Reformed faith? How can we all be a "covenant people" together? How can we aid and support one another in our journey toward that city which alone has foundations?

One crucial element in all of this is leadership. We cannot be a covenant people together if the leadership of the church comes from only one segment of the church. Covenant partnership requires mutual trust, mutual submission, the sharing of power. This is not to imply that there are presently no leaders in the minority groups of the Christian Reformed Church in the United States or Canada. Minority communities have their own recognized leadership, with their own patterns of discerning, selecting and legitimizing those leaders. White Reformed Christians also have their own patterns for discerning, selecting and granting credentials to leaders. Unfortunately, but understandably, at the present time the white patterns are also the patterns for the denomination. This situation must change.

It will not do to insist that minority persons must simply "make it" with our present procedures for leadership selection. The church must be Reformed in this area—and this will happen only by discussing and experimenting together, in search of proper patterns for assigning authority in a multiracial Reformed church. And we must stress that it is not enough to hope that a predominately white church can make it possible for "them" to have "their" leaders. We need leaders for the whole church. A truly Reformed church cannot tolerate a segregated situation in which we establish patterns whereby second-class leaders are provided for second-class citizens. We must find ways of recognizing and affirming a multiracial leadership for a multiracial church.

The proposals which follow are offered in the conviction that our sovereign Lord is leading us into a new and exciting period in the Christian Reformed Church. We offer them in the hope that we will discern together what the Spirit is saying to the churches.

## II. BACKGROUND

SCORR's stance for eight years now has been to work with and through agencies, congregations, local groups, and individuals—to encourage and assist *them* to carry out the ministry of racial reconciliation. This stance has had two negative effects: it's very hard to report on, and it makes the committee's work almost invisible. It is hard to report on because it means that if we are successful, the credit rightly goes to others. It makes our work almost invisible because if we are successful, someone else rightly claims responsibility for the results.

This is all as it should be. A committee must never carry out the church's ministry of racial reconciliation. It must help the *church* to carry out that ministry. So there is something very wrong with SCORR's listing the results of its work. At the same time, there is something very right about it; the church has a right and a responsibility to know what the committee has done with its dollars, time and talents. Recognizing, then, that all the praise belongs to God, and that it is the *church* and its members who can rightly claim these ministries, we offer the following partial list of places in the denomination where the ministry of racial

reconciliation is being carried out and in which SCORR has made a contribution:

1. SCORR assisted over 100 minority students to attend Calvin, Dordt, RBC, and Trinity in the past 8 years through grants from the Minority Student Scholarship Fund. Gifts and offerings from God's people helped to make that possible.

2. Through consultation and money for conferences, SCORR helped the colleges find ways to serve minority students better.

3. SCORR's work with Calvin Seminary resulted in a commitment by the seminary to take specific steps to serve minority students and to prepare all students for ministry in a multiracial denomination. Today the seminary is implementing those commitments.

4. With SCORR's help, Chicago West Side Christian School has developed into a flourishing school in an urban Black neighborhood. With SCORR's help in consultation and money, it grew from one class, one teacher, and seven students—to fifty students, three teachers, two aides, in grades K through 7.

5. Because SCORR helped, Dawntreader Christian School, located in Paterson, New Jersey, in a beautifully revitalized old mill building, has tripled its capacity to do the fund raising mailings which are its lifeblood. This multiracial school in historic old Paterson has a multiracial teaching staff and this year added one teacher and seventeen students in its K through 6 program, for a total of five teachers and 87 students.

6. SCORR continues to provide annual grants to the Roseland Christian Ministry Center in the old Back to God Hour building in Chicago. This ministry is carried out under its own board with assistance from all three Chicagoland classes and three denominational agencies. In addition to Sunday worship, it offers a wide range of service and training programs which are designed to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ to children, teens and families. RCMC is located in a Black urban community which used to enjoy the presence of four Christian Reformed Churches, two Christian schools, the Holland Home, and the Back to God Hour. Of all those institutions only one Christian school remains. Four years ago SCORR offered planning assistance and financial help and worked hard to begin a ministry that would enjoy the support of Chicagoland churches and denominational agencies. RCMC does. Today a multiracial staff of skilled urban church leaders runs a center that far exceeds the hopes and dreams of four years ago.

7. Thanks to SCORR, in every Christian high school library there is a resource manual available to assist teachers to incorporate race relations into their course material. This resource book was produced by SCORR with the help of a group of Christian educators and sociologists.

8. The denomination has available to it a series of studies on race in the CRC and the Board of Home Missions has available to it a major study on Indian missions because SCORR produced those resource and reference materials for the CRC.

9. A group of CRC members in Grand Rapids incorporated for the purpose of rehabilitating houses in older neighborhoods and offering

them for resale. Assistance from SCORR enabled them to build into their program a skill training dimension, so that unemployed minority teenagers can learn job skills under the supervision of a Black Christian trainer.

10. SCORR worked with the Education Department of the CRC, to review the racial content of educational materials and to assist with materials and training for multiracial churches.

11. Last year SCORR brought the issue of congregations in racial transition to synod's attention, highlighting it as an important opportunity for the CRC. This year SCORR carried out a second, more complete, survey of these congregations, in order to provide a picture of where these churches are, what they are doing, how they are doing, and to note changes over the years. These congregations provide the CRC with a challenge and an opportunity for carrying out the ministry of racial reconciliation. During the past year SCORR provided advice and assistance to ten of these churches. Later in this report the formation of a leadership development advisory council will be recommended. Churches in transition may also be well served by having SCORR form an advisory council to help SCORR address their concerns. Such a council might, for example, be composed of leaders from local churches and appropriate agency personnel. This could help SCORR relate to local congregations, help to identify problems, and directly involve SCORR and local persons in serving the needs of churches in transition. During the coming year we will be evaluating that possibility. For now, the council on leadership development is the priority.

12. For three years SCORR worked intensively with the Baxter Community Center. Ten years ago Baxter began as a Christian Reformed community center in an urban Black neighborhood. Five years ago it was almost completely dependent on government money; two years ago it was lurching along to nowhere with no director and very little credibility. For two years SCORR provided Baxter with money to hire a staff person whose task was specifically to help Baxter renew its Christian identity. Last year it appeared that effort had failed. Today, Baxter has captured the support of a task force of Black and White clergymen from churches in its own area, its director is a Black member of the CRC, and it is moving away from dependence on government money.

13. In five cases churches received grants from SCORR to help them place minority persons on their staffs. We estimate that, in the last eight years, the number of full or part-time minority people on CRC church staffs has increased from seventeen to twenty-five.

In this list, the theme of developing minority leadership is clear. It is also clear that churches in transition will be a separate, though related, involvement for SCORR.

How do we keep up the momentum on developing minority leadership, sharpen the focus, build on what's been done, AND address the concern of churches in transition? In this report it will become clear that the support, interest, and recommendations of other CRC agencies must, and can, and do, help SCORR answer this question.

The issue of minority leadership development received strong impetus

from a conference last fall convened by the Calvin Seminary Alumni Association, to address the need for increased recruitment and retention of minority students at Calvin Seminary. The conference included persons from the seminary, Home Missions, SCORR, the Indian field, two colleges, and urban churches. For the conference to address that primary issue realistically, the agenda broadened to develop recommendations which were brought to the seminary and to SCORR.

During the conference discussions it became apparent that changes at the seminary without corresponding changes elsewhere would net little long-term gain. The seminary is not the only Christian Reformed institution which has resources needed by minority persons or needs which minority persons can help fill. Furthermore, conference participants' concern was not limited to the recruitment and retention of minority seminary students, but included the whole issue of minority leadership in our denomination. Seminary graduates may provide one kind of leadership, but what about all the other kinds of leaders and leaderships that are needed? That concern led to proposals which were presented to SCORR and which are herein presented to synod.

The conference recognized the need for a person to be appointed to the task of developing minority leadership in and around the CRC. This person would need to have direct contact with, and access to, appropriate agencies, and would need to carry out his work in close cooperation with the activities presently carried out by SCORR. He would meet the need, identified by conferees, for developing minority leadership.

Those conferees then made recommendations to SCORR, intended to meet the needs identified in the conference: To have a person in the denomination working with SCORR to develop minority leadership; and to structure the SCORR committee in such a way as to build closer ties with the denominational agencies. Thus the proposals presented herein are the result of SCORR's consultation with the conferees and agencies, and SCORR's decision to respond affirmatively to the specific needs identified in this process.

### III. THE PROPOSALS

#### A. The original *mandate* given to SCORR is as follows:

"To design, organize, and implement programs through which the denomination, individual churches, and members, can effectively use all available resources to eliminate racism, both causes and effects, within the body of believers, and throughout the world in which we live" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 113 ff.).

This mandate would continue unchanged under the proposals that follow.

#### B. *Purpose*

The mandate of SCORR translates to the following statement of purpose: The purpose of SCORR shall be to promote racial reconciliation in the CRC, and to help the church promote racial reconciliation in society.

### C. *Staff*

The SCORR committee will be responsible to set the specific objectives, identify the programs, and monitor the progress toward achieving this purpose. On a day-to-day basis, however, the primary responsibility belongs to the following two staff persons: One primarily responsible for multiracial congregational development; the other primarily responsible for multiracial congregational development.

#### 1. *Minority Leadership*

This person, possibly located outside of Grand Rapids, will maintain close contact with the minority ministries of the CRC, working especially with minority members who seek additional education or training; he will also work with the agencies and institutions of the CRC to ensure that those needs of minorities are met. His task will be to identify educational needs of minorities, and to identify or to design programs to meet those needs. His primary responsibility is, in summary, to increase the number and effectiveness of minority members of the CRC at all levels of denominational activity.

#### 2. *Multiracial Congregations.*

This person, located in the Grand Rapids office of SCORR, will be responsible for reporting to SCORR, monitoring progress toward goals, evaluating and monitoring grant programs, informing the denomination of the work of SCORR, and working with multiracial churches. His primary responsibility will be to increase the number and effectiveness of multiracial congregations.

#### 3. *Staff Roles*

These two staff people will of course work closely and cooperatively. Yet their roles are distinct. A couple of paragraphs may help paint the picture.

Churches in racial transition have special needs. They find themselves in the middle of an opportunity to carry on the ministry of racial reconciliation, yet almost paralyzed by the difficulties. In the past, the pattern has been that CRC congregations in transition have tried to minister for awhile and then have moved. In fewer than a dozen cases, churches have stayed. There are presently thirty to forty churches in the CRC whose neighborhoods are changing or have changed. These are opportunities we must not lose. One of SCORR's staff people will be a specialist on churches in transition. His task will be to help churches in transition to stay and to minister effectively. With training, with planning, with grant assistance, with encouragement, with the resources of other agencies, these churches can be helped to meet their opportunities. And they need to have available to them someone whose primary responsibility is to see to it that they get the help they need.

Now, imagine a young woman at Rehoboth Christian High, or a fifty year old Native American Christian at Teec Nos Pos. Or a young Black Christian in Paterson, or a Chicano accountant who

attends Sun Valley, Denver. Imagine them all asking a question that goes something like this: how can I get the training I need, with my cultural background and my stage in life, to do better service in God's kingdom? And then imagine the colleges and the seminary and Cadets and Home Missions and Christian Schools all asking a question that goes something like this: How can we more effectively meet the needs of red and brown and black and yellow Christians for training and education to do more effective service in God's kingdom? When you've got those two questions clearly in mind, then you know what SCORR's second staff person will be working at.

Then we are on the way to meeting leadership needs in multiracial congregations, and we are on the way to a denomination in which multiracial congregations will feel more at home.

Both of these staff people will be responsible to SCORR, and will report to the committee in writing on their activities.

D. *Committee Membership*

SCORR's present membership is thirteen, with members selected on the basis of geographical and racial representation, and expertise regarding the mandate of the committee. Of these thirteen, three are board members of other agencies—Home Missions, World Relief, and Publications—as stipulated by synod.

Under the new plan the size of the committee will increase by two to fifteen, and the new guidelines will ensure the presence on the committee of minorities, business and financial skills, whites with expertise in the area of race relations, and heads of staff representing participating agencies.

E. *Council of Participation Agencies*

An advisory council composed of agency heads of staff will be convened by SCORR twice annually to provide advice to SCORR, to highlight particular needs in denominational and related agencies, and to elect two officers (chairman and secretary) who will then also serve as the agencies' representatives on SCORR. Membership in this council may also include local agencies of ministry in multiracial situations, e.g. Council of Indian Churches, Roseland Christian Ministry Center, Evangelical Committee for Urban Ministries in Paterson, etc. Denominational agencies participating in this council will together share one-half of the cost of SCORR's staff person for minority leadership development.

This council will provide a means for directly involving agencies in the work of SCORR, for coordinating and improving efforts toward minority leadership and for offering a forum in which new avenues for the future can be planned.

F. *Budget*

The plan we are developing in cooperation with other agencies is that one-half of the cost of this new dimension of SCORR program will be borne by an increase in SCORR's quota, and the other half will be borne by participating agencies. Since the plan is for the program to be fully underway by September, this would mean that

in this calendar year (1979) one-third of the cost would need to be paid out of present budgets. In other words SCORR would receive payments this year totaling \$12,000.00 from the participating agencies. SCORR's budget for the next year reflects the new program fully integrated into the budget.

Agency staff heads have designed a formula for distributing the shared costs of the program, based on agency size and present level of involvement in minority leadership development. The scale (using numbers from 1 to 10) assigns a number of units to each participating agency, and that number is then divided into total cost to determine payment amounts. The formula and the amounts are shown on the following schedule.

*Anticipated Income From Agencies*

	<u>Units</u>	<u>This Year</u>	<u>Next Year</u>
Calvin College-----	10 (25%)	\$3,017.50	\$7,537.50
Calvin Seminary-----	5 (12%)	1,508.75	3,768.75
Christian Schools International	2 (5%)	603.50	1,507.50
Board of Home Missions-----	10 (25%)	3,017.50	7,537.50
Dordt College-----	4 (10%)	1,207.00	3,015.00
Trinity Christian College-----	3 (7½%)	905.25	2,261.25
Reformed Bible College-----	3 (7½%)	905.25	2,261.25
Cadets-----	1 (2½%)	301.75	753.75
Calvinettes-----	1 (2½%)	301.75	753.75
Young Calvinists-----	1 (2½%)	301.75	753.75
Synodical Interim Committee--	0	0	0
Local Agencies-----			
Council of Indian Churches			
Roseland Christian Ministry Center			
Evangelical Committee for Urban Ministry in Paterson			
etc.			
		<u>\$12,070.00</u>	<u>\$30,150.00</u>

Note: The financial participation of local agencies will need to be determined.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### A. Recommendations to Agencies

SCORR respectfully recommends to the agencies named in this proposal.

1. To authorize your head of staff to participate in the SCORR Advisory Council.
2. To approve expenditures for this year and next year for payment to SCORR, to be made quarterly in advance, on or before the tenth day of the quarter, beginning September 1979, according to the guidelines presented in this proposal.
3. To designate one staff person who will be responsible to assist SCORR staff with minority leadership development.
4. To include, if possible, your agency's decision on this matter in your report to synod 1979.

B. *Recommendations to the Synod of 1979*

SCORR respectfully makes the following recommendations to the Synod of 1979.

1. To approve SCORR's appointment of a staff person to the task of recruiting and developing minority leadership, for initial appointment of three years, from (a) names(s) to be presented by SCORR to synod.
2. To approve the following new guidelines for SCORR membership:
  - a. Two members who are heads of staff of participating agencies, to be appointed by the SCORR Advisory Council, to serve two-year terms.
  - b. Two members with expertise in the areas of business and finance, to be appointed by synod from nominations presented by SCORR, to serve three-year terms.
  - c. Two members who are white and have expertise in the area of race relations, to be appointed by synod from nominations presented by SCORR, to serve three-year terms.
  - d. Nine members who are minority and have expertise in the area of race relations, to be appointed by synod from nominations presented by SCORR, to serve three-year terms.
  - e. Present SCORR members shall serve out their normal terms and appointments to SCORR this year shall be staggered so as to ensure continuity on the committee.
3. To approve a quota for SCORR for 1980 in the amount of \$2.12.

Synodical Committee on Race Relations  
Karl J. Westerhof, Executive Secretary

Note: Two appendices are attached: one providing financial information, and the other providing a chart of the present and proposed SCORR.

## APPENDIX A

S.C.O.R.R.

## FINANCIAL REPORT AND PROJECTIONS

	Income				Distribution of Cost of Proposal '80
	Actual '78	Revised '79	Projected '80	Revised '80	
Quota	\$82,874.19	\$ 96,000.00	\$103,000.00	\$126,650.00	
Scholarship Gifts	12,849.64	16,000.00	16,000.00	20,000.00	
Miscellaneous	3,045.18	1,000.00	1,500.00	1,000.00	
Agency Payments	-0-	12,070.00	-0-	30,150.00	
TOTALS	<u>\$98,769.01</u>	<u>\$125,070.00</u>	<u>\$120,500.00</u>	<u>\$177,800.00</u>	
	<u>Expenditures</u>				
Wages & Benefits	\$28,173.51	\$ 44,370.00	\$ 37,000.00	\$ 67,000.00	\$35,000.00
Staff Expenses	1,342.05	5,300.00	2,500.00	12,400.00	9,900.00
Office	10,050.46	13,000.00	12,000.00	22,400.00	10,400.00
Meetings	4,038.65	5,000.00	6,000.00	6,000.00	
Program Grants	44,171.34	47,400.00	52,000.00	56,500.00	
Promotion	3,039.61	4,500.00	4,000.00	5,000.00	1,000.00
Education	7,065.48	4,500.00	5,000.00	6,500.00	3,000.00
Research	-0-	1,000.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	1,000.00
TOTALS	<u>\$97,881.10</u>	<u>\$125,070.00</u>	<u>\$120,500.00</u>	<u>\$177,800.00</u>	<u>\$60,300.00</u>
Cash Balance 12-31-78	\$2,077.41				

NOTES

1. The column "Revised 1979" reflects the committee's intention to have the proposed plan in place by September of 1979. SCORR's present quota is \$1.60. We are requesting other agencies to begin funding this year.
2. The column "Projected 1980" reflects what would have been SCORR's budget in 1980 had we not proposed the changes reflected in this report. Our quota request then would have been for \$1.72, based on 66,458 families with a 90% collection rate.
3. The column "Revised 1980" reflects the proposed new arrangement in cooperation with other agencies. SCORR's quota request for next year, based on this budget, is for \$2.12, based on 66,458 families with a 90% collection rate.
4. The column "Distribution of Costs of Proposal in 1980" shows where the minority leadership development costs are located in the total budget. These are the costs of the new proposal which will be divided between SCORR and other participating agencies.

APPENDIX B

PRESENT SCORR

13 Members: -racial & geographic representation  
 -includes one board representative  
     --from Home Missions  
     --from CRWRC  
     --from Board of Publications  
 Meets quarterly

Executive Secretary

PROPOSED SCORR

15 Members: -2 with expertise in  
                   business & finance  
                   -2 white with expertise  
                   in race relations  
 Meets           -2 heads of staff of  
 Bi-monthly     participating agencies--  
                   -9 minorities with expertise  
                   in race relations

Present Staff

New Staff

SCORR  
 ADVISORY COUNCIL  
 --heads of staff of  
 participating agencies  
 --meets at least twice  
 per year  
 -- elects two to SCORR

## REPORT 20

SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH SYNOD TRUSTEES

The Synodical Interim Committee, meeting corporately as the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees, meets regularly to fulfill the mandates assigned by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. This report is a summary of activities we have carried on in behalf of synod during the interim between the Synod of 1978 and 1979.

## I. ORGANIZATION

Synod elected the following to serve as SIC members and trustees of synod:

Mr. J. Van Andel, Rev. L. Dykstra, Rev. P. Van Egmond, Mr. F. Velzen, Rev. J. Kok, Rev. J. Klomps, Mr. W. Posthumus, Rev. D. Wisse, Mr. W. Sytsema, Mr. M. Ozinga, \*Mr. I. Slagter, Rev. L. Hofman, Rev. A. Vander Griend, Mr. K. Marcus. The Stated Clerk, Denominational Financial Coordinator, and Synodical Treasurer serve as *ex officio* members.

\*At the request of Dr. W. Spoelhof, regular member, Mr. I. Slagter serves in his place and Dr. Spoelhof is serving as an alternate.

The Synodical Interim Committee elected the following officers for the current year: President, Leonard J. Hofman; Vice-president, Ira R. Slagter; and Recording Secretary, Alvin J. Vander Griend.

The Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees, respectively, elected the following corporation officers: President, Leonard J. Hofman; Vice-president, Ira R. Slagter; Secretary, William P. Brink; Assistant Secretary, Alvin J. Vander Griend; Treasurer, Lester Ippel; Assistant Treasurer, Jack A. Peterson.

The Synodical Interim Committee elected the Rev. Alvin J. Vander Griend as the Alternate Stated Clerk for the year 1978-79.

The following subcommittees function for the Synodical Interim Committee:

*Church Polity and Program Committee*—L. Hofman, I. Slagter, A. Vander Griend, J. Klomps, M. Ozinga, W. Spoelhof, and *ex officio* members, A. Vroon and W. P. Brink.

*Finance Committee*—C. Ackerman, S. Harkema, K. Marcus, M. Ozinga, G. Raterink, A. Rodenhouse, W. Sytsema, and *ex officio* members A. Vroon and W. P. Brink.

The entire Synodical Interim Committee meets in October, February and May and the above subcommittees meet each month with additional meetings when necessary.

II. NOMINATIONS FOR SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

SIC members whose terms expire in 1978 are the following: Far West U.S.: Rev. L. Dykstra, member—Rev. T. Van Kooten, alternate; Central U.S.: Mr. W. Sytsema, member—Mr. G. Raterink, alternate, Rev. A. Vander Griend, member—Rev. J. Meppelink, alternate.

All of the above members are eligible for reelection with the exception of Mr. W. Sytsema.

SIC has consulted with the classes of the various districts and received suggestions for nominations. Some classes still to meet will send their profiles in March. The nominations for synod will be finalized at the May meeting of SIC and forwarded to synod in supplementary report 20-A.

III. INTERIM APPOINTMENTS

During the past year the Synodical Interim Committee has approved several appointments to boards and committees where memberships have been vacated.

A. Board Appointments

Board	Classis	Appointment
Synodical Deputy	Alberta North	Rev. P. Sluys, alternate
	Alberta South	Rev. P. Stadt, alternate
	Cadillac	Rev. K. Van Wyk, alternate
	Quinte	Rev. W. Dykstra, alternate
	Zeeland	Rev. J. Wesseling, alternate
	British Columbia	Rev. P. M. Jonker, member
Calvin College Board of Trustees	Cadillac	Rev. H. Numan, Jr., alternate
	California South	Rev. K. Tanis, member
		Rev. H. Hiemstra, member
		Rev. P. Kok, alternate
	Grand Rapids East	Rev. J. De Vries, alternate
	Grand Rapids North	Dr. B. T. Duthler, alternate
CR World Missions	Quinte	Rev. A. Van Geest, alternate
	Zeeland	Rev. H. Van Wyk, alternate
	Alberta North	Rev. G. Heersink, member
	Alberta South	Rev. G. Hogeterp, member
	British Columbia	Rev. H. Mennega, alternate
	California South	Dr. J. Lee, alternate
CR Home Missions	Columbia	Rev. O. J. Hogan, alternate
	Grand Rapids North	Mr. J. Brondsema, member
		Mr. H. Bratt, alternate
	Pella	Rev. R. Holwerda, member
		Rev. L. Vanderzee, alternate
		Rev. H. Numan, Jr., alternate
Board of Publications	Grand Rapids North	Rev. M. C. Groenendyk, member
	Kalamazoo	Rev. J. Boonstra, alternate
	Cadillac	Rev. C. Compagner, alternate
	Grand Rapids East	Rev. J. VandenHoek, alternate
CRWRC	Pella	Rev. R. Van Harn, member
		Mr. R. De Jager, member
		Rev. D. Draayer, alternate
	Illiana	Mr. L. Van Drunen, alternate
Pacific Northwest	Mr. J. Anema, member	
	Mr. D. Grothuis, alternate	

### B. *Committee Appointments*

1. Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee - in view of the fact that Mr. B. Fioole has been unable to attend meetings of the Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee, the committee requested that Mr. Bert Polman be appointed as his replacement on the committee. This appointment was approved by the Synodical Interim Committee.

2. Committee to Study the Dance - Dr. E. Roels, Mrs. R. Van Reken, and Mrs. K. De Mol wrote to the Synodical Interim Committee indicating that they were unable to serve on the Committee to Study the Dance in the Light of Scripture. In view of these resignations, the Synodical Interim Committee revised the synodical appointment so that the committee now consists of the following: Rev. R. Holwerda, Rev. C. Admiraal, Mr. V. Boerman, Rev. R. Oppewall, Mrs. S. Hoogstra, and Rev. J. Westerhof.

3. Synodical liaison representative to the Canadian Bible Society - the Rev. Kenneth Verhulst informed SIC that because of his acceptance of a call, he was no longer able to serve. The SIC appointed the Rev. Carl Tuyl to serve as our synodical liaison representative to the CBS.

4. Belgic Confession Translation Committee - Mrs. Jeni Hoekstra notified the committee that she was unable to serve. Her resignation is accepted and at the advice of the above committee, no replacement was made.

5. Synodical Interim Committee - In the fall of 1978, Mr. Albert Rodenhouse, a newly elected alternate of SIC (and member of the Finance Committee), found it necessary to resign his membership. After reviewing the list of nominations, the Synodical Interim Committee appointed Mr. Arthur Van Tuinen to replace Mr. Rodenhouse.

SIC also appointed Mr. Van Tuinen to replace Dr. Marvin De Vries (who found it necessary to resign) as chairperson of the committee to develop a Denominational Financial Policy Manual.

*C. The Synodical Interim Committee requests synod to approve the interim appointments made in behalf of synod in sections A and B above.*

### IV. COORDINATION OF DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAMING

One of the functions which synod has assigned to the Synodical Interim Committee in its mandate is the responsibility of "promoting the planning, coordinating, and the setting of priorities of programs by each of the synodical agencies and by all of them together, in keeping with synodical guidelines, and to serve synod with periodical analysis and overall review of programs and resources of the denomination after consultation with the agencies" (Rules for the Synodical Interim Committee).

During the church year the Stated Clerk, the Denominational Financial Coordinator and SIC committee have held many conferences and consultations with executive staff members and board, or committee, representatives of our denominational agencies. Not only in consultation with SIC, but also in conferences with each other our denominational agencies are seeking to realize the oneness of the mission of the church. The SIC staff and subcommittees have been happy to serve our agencies

with advice when requested and to assist in the total coordination of our efforts.

Meetings of the Interagency Advisory Council, made up of thirteen executives of our denominational agencies, were held regularly for discussion of our mutual objectives in the work of the Lord. Discussions have been held at the Council meeting on the need for multiracial leadership development. The efforts of our agencies, of Calvin Seminary, and of SCORR in addressing themselves to the development of minority leadership were helpful to all of the agencies. The Synodical Interim Committee has taken note of the excellent coordination of the planning with respect to this matter.

Note is also taken by the Synodical Interim Committee of the discussions which were held with the Rev. Arie Van Eek, the Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada, pertaining to the possibility of a common address and office of the denomination in Canada. The denominational agencies will report their views on this matter to the Synod of 1979 and will keep the office of the Stated Clerk informed.

During the past year the Missions Coordination Council, comprised of the heads of staff of the Back to God Hour, the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, the Christian Reformed Board for World Missions, and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, along with the president of SIC and the Stated Clerk have met for the sharing of pertinent board actions and information and the discussion of projected plans and goals of our agencies. One of the projects approved by the Missions Coordination Council was the publication of a joint periodical for a one-year period, replacing separate efforts of the four mission boards. The Missions Coordination Council has also provided a fruitful area for a joint review of activities, concerns and long-range plans of the four mission agencies. The SIC takes grateful note of the many areas of mission activity in which our boards are working together in the strategy of missions.

At the February meeting of the Synodical Interim Committee, conferences were held with the staff executives and board presidents of the Back to God Hour, Calvin College and Seminary, the Board of World Missions, the Board of Home Missions, the Board of Publications, the World Relief Committee and SCORR. Interviews were led by appointed members of SIC and opportunity for discussion was given both to SIC members and the representatives of the boards.

The several boards of synod directed the attention of SIC to new facets of their programming and reviewed as well some of the longstanding efforts of programming. In several cases, new administrative charts, or changes in administrative charts, were presented. It was noted with gratitude that the various denominational boards are achieving excellent results in their efforts to coordinate our total denominational programming.

The Synodical Interim Committee received a request from the Board of Publications to endorse the general outline of new staff structure adopted by the board at its meeting in February 1979. The SIC concurs with the Board of Publications that the new administrative chart is a

helpful step to efficiency and coordination, and endorsed the request of the Board of Publications.

#### V. SYNODICALLY ACCREDITED AGENCIES

The Synodical Interim Committee has studied during the course of this year the various programs of the agencies accredited by synod for financial support. Analyses have been made of these programs as they relate to our total denominational outreach. Program charts are maintained and updated for each of the accredited agencies and all changes of program are studied and noted. In accord with the mandate of synod, all agencies seeking accreditation must present their program materials to SIC for thorough review by its Church Polity and Program Committee before they are forwarded to the Finance Committee for study of the financial structure of the agency. When the reviews have been completed by the Finance Committee, recommendations will be made to the May meeting of the Synodical Interim Committee with respect to further accreditation of each of the agencies.

Special facets of the study of the accredited agencies are the studies being made by SIC with respect to the regional or local character of the various agencies which have been recommended. The programing, constitution, and financial reports of new agencies applying for accreditation are also under study by SIC and its subcommittees. A complete report on this matter will be presented in the SIC supplementary report to synod.

Synodical delegates will also receive reports of denominationally related educational and youth agencies in the Agenda for Synod. Other agencies will present materials outlining their material to synod through their executives or through the appointed synodical liaison representatives.

#### VI. SYNODICAL MANDATE RE HEALING MINISTRY

The SIC received a mandate from the Synod of 1978 to continue research into the matter of a healing ministry for ministers, consistories, and congregations in situations of stress. It was decided by the committee to form a subcommittee to work on this matter and to recommend a list of resource persons and/or committees who will be requested by the subcommittee of SIC to give their assistance in the contemplated study.

The study to be made by the appointed subcommittee shall include:

1. An evaluation of causes of stress leading to crises,
2. An evaluation of present structures with respect to crises of ministers in congregations,
3. An identification of resources which are presently available to assist in the problems of ministers and congregations.

The following members have been appointed to serve on the subcommittee appointed by SIC: Rev. Leonard Hofman, Mr. David Vander Ploeg, Rev. Harold Bode, Dr. Richard De Ridder, Mrs. Jacoba Hofman, Mr. Fred Hollebeek, Rev. Jim Kok, Mr. Ira Slagter, Mrs. Joanne De Jong and Rev. William P. Brink. Mrs. Gladys Hasper has been appointed an alternate to the above committee. A comprehensive list of resource per-

sons has been compiled and their input into the study will be sought by this committee.

Further reports on these studies will be forwarded to synod as the work progresses.

## VII. SYNODICAL MANDATE RE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS

The Synod of 1978 referred to the SIC for study and implementation the following observations and recommendations pertaining to the task of the Committee on Appointments.

### A. Mandate of Synod

1. *Observation:* As presently instructed the Committee on Appointments has two main areas of responsibility at different times during synod. During the first days of synod it processes all appointments and elections; during the latter days of synod it appoints all study committees which synod decides to establish. The first part of its assignment is essentially clerical, the second very vital.

#### 2. Recommendations:

a. That synod instruct the Synodical Interim Committee to study and revise the assignment presently being given to the Committee on Appointments in order to make this assignment more meaningful, especially during the first days of synod when the work of the other committees is being done.

##### *Grounds:*

1) Surveying all reports and correspondence for materials pertaining to elections and appointments and preparing a list of nominees for the approval of synod and subsequent election (Rules for Synodical Procedure, VI, B, 4, d, page 11) could be well done by clerical assistants of the Stated Clerk in advance of synod's meeting. Moreover, the tabulation of all appointments and elected persons for the Acts of Synod could also be done by a secretary during synod.

2) There may be other assignments in which the Committee on Appointments could be engaged more meaningfully during the first days of synod.

b. That synod instruct the Synodical Interim Committee to implement a more meaningful assignment for the Committee on Appointments beginning with the Synod of 1979, if possible.

(See Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 129, 130.)

### B. Analysis

The work of the Advisory Committee on Appointments has for many years been the processing of four types of appointments to be made by synod:

1. Listing for synodical approval nominations which have been made for synodical staff officers (Stated Clerk, Denominational Financial Coordinator, and Synodical Treasurer) and functionaries (Arrangements Committee, Archivist, and Convening Church for next Synod).

2. Listing for synodical approval the nominations which have been made for synodical deputies and denominational boards.
3. Listing for synodical approval the nominations which have been made for membership on standing committees of synod.
4. Preparing and listing for synodical approval nominations for membership on the study committees of synod.

It should be noted that it is only in this latter category that the Advisory Committee on Appointments does "original" work (preparing as well as listing nominations). This function generally applies only to new committees appointed by each synod. Such committees are few in number and the assignment generally comes near the closing days of synod, when the work of other Advisory Committees (who may propose a new committee) has been completed.

Each of the above classifications has its own defined method of processing as recorded below.

1. Nominations for officers and functionaries are made by the Synodical Interim Committee, in accord with synodical rules, with the exception of the convening church for the next synod. In the latter case, invitations are often received, or the SIC, after a study of all previous convening churches, presents suggestions to the nominating committee.
2. With respect to synodical deputies and delegates to denominational boards, nominations are sent to the Stated Clerk by each classis. These nominations are compiled in the synodical office and presented to each synod for approval.
3. With respect to standing committees, each committee of synod presents to synod through the Stated Clerk's office its nominations for synodical elections. Committees also present brief résumés with respect to each nominee. The consent of each nominee must be obtained before presentation to synod. Synod may add to the nominations, by a majority decision of its delegates.
4. It is largely with respect to the appointment of membership on new study committees that the Advisory Committee finds its task "original" and important, and this function generally cannot be undertaken until the last few days of synod.

From the survey above it may be observed that in the first three categories there is very little work to be done by the Advisory Committee on Appointments, and delegates to this committee generally feel that they are not sufficiently involved in the major work of synod. The grounds presented to the Synod of 1978 confirm this observation:

- a. Surveying all reports and correspondence for material pertaining to elections and appointments and preparing a list of nominees for the approval of synod and subsequent election (Rules for Synodical Procedure, VI, B, 4, d, page 11) could be well done by clerical assistants of the Stated Clerk in advance of synod's meeting. Moreover, the tabulation of all appointments and elected persons for the Acts of Synod could also be done by a secretary during synod.

- "b. There may be other assignments in which the Committee on Appointments could be engaged more meaningfully during the first days of synod."

### C. Recommendations

In order to implement the request that the members of the Committee on Appointments have a more meaningful assignment, the Synodical Interim Committee recommends the following changes in synodical procedure:

1. That nominations for the election of officers, functionaries, synodical deputies, boards and standing committees be compiled through the office of the Stated Clerk of Synod.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. The Synod of 1978 decided "that synod instruct all boards and standing committees to inform the Stated Clerk of all nominations for board or committee membership immediately after such nominations are made" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 129).
  - b. All classes are presently required to submit board nominations to the office of the Stated Clerk following each meeting of classis.
  - c. The work involved in preparing the above nominations can well be done by clerical assistants of the Stated Clerk, as has been observed in the grounds of the decision of the 1978 Synod.
2. That appointments to new study committees appointed by synod shall be drafted by the advisory committee which recommended the study, and the officers of synod. The advisory committee which recommends the appointment of a study committee should be in the best position to give early and competent consideration to the personnel of such a committee.
3. That with the exception of study committees (point 2 above), the President of synod shall appoint a delegate, or delegates, to serve as the reporter(s) to present all ballots, nominations, and other matters pertaining to appointments to the floor of synod.
4. That the ballots be tabulated by the secretaries of synod, working with the designated reporter(s).
5. That synod discontinue the practice of appointing an Advisory Committee on Appointments.
6. That synod revise the "Rules for Advisory Committee on Appointments" (Rules for Synodical Procedure, p. 11) to read as follows:
- "4. Rules for Appointments to Boards and Committees
- a. All study committees shall be appointed by synod from a nomination made by the advisory committee which drafted the mandate and the officers of synod.
  - b. All administrative standing committees shall be elected from nominations presented to synod.  
Standing committees in which vacancies must be filled shall present multiple nominees for election rather than a single name for appointment.
  - c. All secretaries of administrative standing committees as well as

stated clerks of classes shall present their nominations to the Stated Clerk immediately after the meeting at which nominations are made.

- d. Ballots of nominations for synod shall be prepared on which space is reserved for nominations from the floor (Acts of Synod 1952, p. 111).
- e. Ballots and nominations shall be presented throughout the sessions of synod."
- f.- i—No change.

#### VIII. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

The Synod of 1977 mandated the Synodical Interim Committee to propose to synod a "more appropriate method of sharing membership information when members move within or out of the denomination.

*Grounds:*

- a. The present form for transfer of membership has not officially been adopted by synod.
- b. The present form does not provide for adequate sharing of information in view of the need for continuity and care." (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 33.)

The Synodical Interim Committee has studied our current membership transfers and the necessity for increasing the amount of information contained on the membership transfers. It may be noted that although past synods have approved membership transfers and statements of dismissal (for baptismal members in 1942, for families in 1939, and for dismissals in 1959), the transfers currently in use are modifications which have been made with adaptation for changes in usage and have not been approved by synod, a fact noted in the grounds of the decision of 1977.

The Synodical Interim Committee *recommends* that synod approve the use of one simple form providing more adequate membership information to be used in the transfer of baptized membership, communicant members, single members, and families.

For more efficient usage the form to be used should be put out in a standard size (8½ x 11) and should be made with an attached duplicate copy to be removed and retained by the sending church in its archives. Along with the original copy a receipt form shall also be attached to be returned by the receiving church to the sending church as an official acknowledgment. A sample of such a form will be submitted to the delegates of the Synod of 1979.

The Synodical Interim Committee further *recommends* that synod commission the Stated Clerk in consultation with the Synodical Interim Committee to edit and update, when necessary or advisable, the statements of membership to be used by our churches in transferring members to our own congregations or to churches of other denominations.

The form proposed by SIC will provide the following:

The Consistory of the \_\_\_\_\_ Christian Reformed Church of \_\_\_\_\_, at the request of our member(s) listed below, presents this statement of membership to you, the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of

\_\_\_\_\_. We commend them to your Christian fellowship and request your congregation to receive them with Christian love and provide them with appropriate pastoral care and counsel.

The membership record shall provide for inclusion of the last name, address and phone number, as well as the given name(s) of the single person, husband, wife or child listed, and information with respect to the date of birth, date of baptism, date of profession and prior membership of the persons transferred.

Further space will be given on the page for additional information which the sending consistory may include as well as for the signatures of the officers of the consistory. A separate return receipt will also be attached.

#### IX. MANDATE RE SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Synod of 1978 decided "that synod through the Synodical Interim Committee, call upon its Christian Educational Institutions and agencies, its Board of Publication, CRWRC, and SCORR to enlist the skills of knowledgeable people to speak and to write publicly so that the church will be alerted to issues of social justice that challenge a Christian response."

It was also decided "that synod require each denominational agency specified above to include in its annual report what has been accomplished in alerting the church to the issues of social justice" (Acts of Synod, 1978, pp. 63f.).

In accord with the decision of synod a letter was sent to all the agencies mentioned by synod requesting them to enlist the skills of knowledgeable people to speak and write publicly so that the church will be alerted to issues of social justice that challenge a response. The agencies were also reminded in the letter that synod requires each denominational agency specified to include in its annual report what has been accomplished in alerting the church to the issues of social justice.

In accord with the decisions above, SIC made inquiry of each board in its February interviews as to the actions taken on issues of social justice.

#### X. PUBLICATIONS

##### A. *Acts and Agenda for Synod*

The Acts of the Synod of 1978 and the Agenda for Synod 1979 were edited and prepared by the Stated Clerk with the assistance of his staff. The increase in the amount of material being submitted for the Agenda makes it exceedingly difficult to edit all materials and have them printed by the deadline.

Synod has set March 15 for the latest date for materials for synod and has set April 10 as the deadline for the publication of the Agenda for Synod. Reports are due at an earlier date. The haste required in preparation requires a large number of corrections in the material for the Agenda for Synod before it is republished in the Acts of Synod. We are grateful for the opportunity to make these corrections as well as to add the supplementary reports where necessary before the Acts of Synod gains a wider distribution into libraries and areas beyond our denomination. The Stated Clerk has urged that every effort should be put forth by

reporters to keep the reports as clear and concise as possible. Consistories and classes as well as reporters should seek for clarity, conciseness, and should avoid unnecessary repetition or duplication. Every effort should be put forth to assist our delegates to synod in their study of the materials in the Agenda.

### B. *The Yearbook*

The Yearbook of 1979 was published under the editorial surveillance of the Stated Clerk and the direction of Mrs. Mary Braat of the Synodical Office Staff, whose services were loaned to the Board of Publication for work on the Yearbook.

One of the problems that faces the Yearbook staff is the lack of accuracy in the compiling of the Yearbook questionnaires. All of our consistories should be urged to count their families and their members accurately and to report in accord with the rules adopted by synod for the count of our families. The Yearbook statistics are a vital compilation of the membership of the Christian Reformed Church. They should not be looked at merely as data to be used for the determination of quotas.

Accuracy is indispensable in giving a true account of the membership of the church.

### C. *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church*

The Synodical Interim Committee sent to all of our consistories during this past year updated materials for the Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church, "Your Church in Action," a looseleaf notebook provided for each consistory. Once again this year several consistories ordered a new notebook because the old one had been lost, misplaced, or had never been used. We urge that the notebook be kept available in every consistory room. It contains the following materials:

1. *Quotas and Offerings*—financial data and a description of the program carried on by all our boards, agencies and recommended causes. Suggestions are made with respect to special offerings, their scheduling, and suggested announcements for use when such offerings are received.

2. *Denominational Insights*—a brief statement of some of the principles of our church government and how our church operates, with detail on the business of assemblies and particularly the work of synod. Suggestions are also given for a well organized consistory, its agenda, and rules for procedure. Many of our consistories have requested additional copies of this material and have used it for organizational improvements.

3. *Ministers' Compensation Survey*—Since 1974 the Synodical Interim Committee by mandate of synod has presented a compensation guide for ministers of the Word. This compensation guide is updated and approved by synod each year and compensation levels for all areas and many cities both in the United States and Canada. This survey is sent to our congregations with the urging of synod that it be used in computing a fair salary for the ministers of our denomination.

Worksheets are included for use of the Finance Committee of each church in computing the minister's salary. The use of these worksheets

will assist our ministers in filing reports for future surveys.

4. *Sight-Sound Programs*—a directory of sight/sound programs featuring the work of all of our denominational agencies. Every congregation should avail itself, when looking for interesting program materials or information, of the wealth of artistic and effective presentations of the work of our Lord being carried on by our denomination through its agencies.

5. *Doctrinal and Ethical Decisions*—a complete statement of all synodical decisions on doctrinal and ethical matters. This section is indispensable for all who wish to know the stand of the Christian Reformed Church on various matters.

6. *Your Church in Action: a slide/cassette program*—This program is designed for the use of every congregation in its congregational meetings and in other meetings of the church. Our members should become more completely informed about the work being carried out by our denomination and the blessings of the Lord given upon the work we do together through our denominational quotas and offerings. Our churches on the whole have indicated that they have used the slide/cassette program with profit.

In addition to the Handbook, SIC appreciates the assistance of the Editor of the Banner in placing a centerfold in a fall issue highlighting the total program of our denomination. Plans are being made for another such presentation in October of 1979.

#### D. *Index for Synodical Decisions*

In October 1976, the Synodical Interim Committee through the Stated Clerk's office published the Index of Christian Reformed Church Synodical Decisions 1857-1976. This Index is a completely revised work and makes available its decisions under a carefully indexed system of topics to our consistories, members and all others who are seeking to know the history or position of the Christian Reformed Church. Each decision is also identified as to its subject matter under the topic involved. Any person using this Index should be able to survey all decisions on a given topic made by the Christian Reformed Church during its first 120 years of existence.

Our consistories should try to have in their church libraries or consistory rooms a complete set of the Acts of Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. With the Index it is also possible to request a given page from the Acts of Synod by letter to the office of the Stated Clerk.

#### E. *Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*

SIC is happy to report that the Stated Clerk and Dr. Richard De Ridder have completed the manuscript of a Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government, a commentary on our Church Order, which will be published this year by the Education Department of the Christian Reformed Board of Publications.

#### F. *Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure*

In 1978 each consistory and synodical delegate received a loose-leaf edition of a revised edition of the Church Order and Rules for Synodical

Procedure. Updated pages of this loose-leaf edition were supplied to every consistory in the fall of 1978. The complete updated edition will be supplied also to each delegate to the Synod of 1979.

Consistories are urged to keep this loose-leaf edition as well as the Handbook for Christian Reformed Churches in a handy place in each consistory room.

#### XI. THE STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk has edited all official publications authorized by synod and the Synodical Interim Committee. His office has also processed all correspondence, surveys, questionnaires, reports, minutes, and materials produced for synod, and all of these items have been placed in the files of synodical materials.

The Stated Clerk serves as the general secretary of the denomination's corporate entities, the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Synod Trustees. He is also an *ex officio* member of the Synodical Interim Committee as well as its secretary.

Several thousands of letters are sent out and received each year in the office of the Stated Clerk.

Inquiries from many persons who wish to know more about the Christian Reformed Church are answered, correspondence is carried on regularly with all of our committees, and with many individuals both within and outside of our churches. In addition to the correspondence, numerous telephone calls are handled daily from individuals and organizations throughout our denomination and elsewhere.

To the best of his ability the Stated Clerk has given advice and information to all who have written or called with respect to the provisions of the Church Order and the decisions of our synod.

During the course of the year the Stated Clerk has received progress reports and/or minutes from all of the committees that have been appointed by synod. He has provided them with help or information whenever requested.

Conferences with representatives of our boards and agencies are frequent in the office of the Stated Clerk and a large number of callers are received regularly for consultation. The Stated Clerk also provides advice to our classes, consistories, committees, and to all of the members of our denomination asking his assistance.

Reports and minutes of our classes have been sent to the Synodical Office by the stated clerks of the various classes. These have been surveyed by the Stated Clerk and the Synodical Interim Committee has been kept abreast of various decisions, activities and problems of the denomination.

The Stated Clerk has many opportunities to represent the position of the Christian Reformed Church in contacts with other denominations as well as with the general public. He serves as an *ex officio* member of the Interchurch Relations Committee and has represented our church at various interchurch gatherings. During the past year he has served again on the steering committee of United States Church Leaders, an organization of denominational officers.

The Stated Clerk has maintained contacts with national, state and

local government leaders and agencies. This year he was invited to testify before the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of the United States with respect to the rights of Christians who have conscientious objection to Sunday labor. We note gratefully that the commission recommended to the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs an amendment to the flexi-time bill to provide for accommodation of employee religious beliefs.

As time and circumstances have allowed the Stated Clerk has preached in a large number of our churches, has conducted conferences, and on invitation has delivered addresses to congregations and organizations both within and beyond our denomination.

## XII. DENOMINATIONAL FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

### A. *Denominational Building*

1. The denominational building houses the following denominational agencies:

- Christian Reformed Church Home Missions
- Christian Reformed Church in North America Offices
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Ministers' Pension Fund
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Coordinated Services
- Christian Reformed Church Publications Offices
- Christian Reformed Church World Missions
- Christian Reformed Church World Relief
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Chaplain Committee
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, SCORR

During the year 1978 the cost of operations of the building exclusive of the printing plant amounted to \$112,988.02 or \$2.82 per square foot.

2. First mortgage bond indebtedness has been reduced to \$497,000 as of year end 1978. Payments of principal and interest are current and in compliance with the terms and conditions of our First Mortgage Bond Issue.

3. Our real estate tax appeal is still pending a hearing before the State Tax Tribunal. Our attorney, B. Sevensma, informs us that our case will probably be heard the latter part of this year. In the meantime real estate taxes are being paid to the City of Grand Rapids under protest, since we feel that this church property should be exempt from all taxes under the provisions of both the Federal and State constitution.

### B. *Coordinated Services*

The Coordinated Services department of our denominational agencies reports total service performed for all agencies amounted to \$338,728 for the year 1978. Close cooperation exists between all agencies. The coordinated services operation is a well-managed and efficient operation, a proven money saving entity overall.

### C. *Uniform Salary Policy—Salary Schedule and Fringe Benefits*

1. Synod's mandate for presentation of uniform salary policies between all its agencies is in the final stages of preparation for presentation

to the Synodical Interim Committee for review and recommendation to the Synod of 1979. Our denominational agencies, through the Coordinated Services Committee of SIC (business heads of all agencies), have agreed in principle as to the form and substance of the policy.

2. Salary Schedules and Fringe Benefits, also mandated by synod, are combined and included in the Uniform Salary Policy report with salary guideline schedules under which each agency will indicate its compliance as to its salary ranges within the agreed ranges of the salary guidelines and fringe benefits.

#### D. *Denominational Financial Policy Manual*

1. While a proposed draft of the policy manual has been prepared for discussion among our agencies, due to the resignation of the chairman of this special committee, M. DeVries, the committee has not yet entered into discussion of the provisions of the draft. At the SIC meeting of February 27, 1979, Mr. Arthur Van Tuinen was elected to replace Dr. De Vries so that work on this project may continue and hopefully be completed for presentation to the Synod of 1979 for approval.

2. Financial reporting procedures under AICPA Statement of Positions as mandated by the Synod of 1978 is being adhered to by all agencies in connection with their financial reports and budget proposals.

#### E. *Ministers' Pension Fund*

As indicated in Agenda Report 17 the Ministers' Pension Committee recommends to the Synod of 1979 that the Ministers' Pension Plan be separated into two plans, one for Canadian participants and one for United States participants. The Finance Committee of SIC will meet with members of the Ministers' Pension Committee to discuss the feasibility and implications of this proposal and will report its findings to the May meeting of SIC for review and recommendation.

#### F. *Other Projects Under Consideration for Presentation by the Denominational Financial Coordinator's Office*

1. Denomination wide comprehensive Group Life and Long Term disability coverage.

2. Denomination wide comprehensive hospital and medical insurance coverage.

3. Denomination wide comprehensive (blanket) hazard, casualty, and liability insurance coverage.

### XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That synod honor the request of the Synodical Interim Committee that its president, the Rev. Leonard J. Hofman, the Stated Clerk, the Rev. Wm. P. Brink, and the Denominational Financial Coordinator, Mr. Anthony Vroon, represent the committee before synod and its advisory committee when matters pertaining to its report are discussed; and that Finance Committee representatives also represent the committee when matters of finance are discussed.

B. That synod approve the interim appointments of SIC to various boards and committees. (See Section III.)

C. That synod take note of the efforts of SIC and the denominational agencies to effect coordination of programing, planning and setting of

priorities, noting also the endorsement of the new staff structure of the Board of Publications. (See Section IV.)

D. That synod receive the progress report of SIC studies re Healing Ministry. (See Section VI.)

E. That synod adopt the recommendations of SIC re the Advisory Committee on Appointments. (See Section VII.)

F. That synod approve the SIC recommendations to provide a new simplified form for membership transfers, providing more adequate membership information. (See Section VIII.)

G. That synod approve the work of SIC in response to the synodical decisions on social justice. (See Section IX.)

H. That synod urge our consistories to take special care that the statistics submitted for the Yearbook are up-to-date; accurate and fully in accord with the rules of synod. (See Section X, A.)

Synodical Interim Committee  
Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees  
William P. Brink, Secretary and Stated Clerk

COMBINED BALANCE SHEET

GENERAL FUND, DENOMINATIONAL BUILDING FUND  
AND COORDINATED SERVICES FUND OF  
THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

December 31, 1978

	<u>Combined</u>	<u>Eliminations</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Denominational Building Fund</u>	<u>Coordinated Services Fund</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>					
Cash	\$ 130,288		\$ 59,585	\$ 67,410	\$ 3,293
Land contracts receivable (Note F)	128,116		128,116		
Quotas receivable (less allowance for doubtful of \$45,900 and \$12,400) (Notes B and E)	183,565		145,906	37,659	
Notes and accounts receivable from agencies	37,695	\$ 21,565	5,561	14,349	39,350
Interest receivable	2,795		2,529	266	
Inventory of supplies and postage	23,446				23,446
Property, plant and equipment (Notes A and C):					
Land	415,000			415,000	
Building and improvements	1,447,455			1,447,455	
Furniture and equipment	128,129			128,129	
	<u>1,990,584</u>			<u>1,990,584</u>	
	<u>\$2,496,489</u>	<u>\$ 21,565</u>	<u>\$341,692</u>	<u>\$2,110,268</u>	<u>\$ 66,089</u>
<u>LIABILITIES AND FUND BALANCES</u>					
Liabilities:					
Agency advances, deposits and other	\$ 62,167	\$ 21,565	\$ 27,099		\$ 56,633
Accounts payable	7,282		266		7,016
Accrued wages and fringe benefits	2,440				2,440
Accrued interest	6,627			\$ 6,627	
Accrued property taxes	4,719			4,719	
First mortgage bonds (Note C)	497,000			497,000	
	<u>580,235</u>	<u>21,565</u>	<u>27,365</u>	<u>508,346</u>	<u>66,089</u>
Fund balances (Note B):					
Designated for specific agencies (Note F)	128,116		128,116		
Internally restricted for major repairs and replacements	3,752			3,752	
Unrestricted	1,784,386		186,216	1,598,170	
	<u>1,916,254</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>314,332</u>	<u>1,601,922</u>	<u>-0-</u>
	<u>\$2,496,489</u>	<u>\$ 21,565</u>	<u>\$341,692</u>	<u>\$2,110,268</u>	<u>\$ 66,089</u>

COMBINED STATEMENT OF SUPPORT, REVENUE AND EXPENSES

AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES  
 GENERAL FUND, DENOMINATIONAL BUILDING FUND  
 AND COORDINATED SERVICES FUND OF  
 THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Year ended December 31, 1978

	<u>Combined</u>	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Denominational Building Fund</u>	<u>Coordinated Services Fund</u>
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>				
<b>SUPPORT</b>				
Quotas	\$ 567,995	\$451,412	\$ 116,583	
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Investment income	11,115	8,471	2,644	
Gifts and bequests	160,580	160,580		
Services and other charges billed to agencies	484,091		145,363	\$338,728
Other	<u>6,255</u>	<u>2,885</u>	<u>3,270</u>	
Total support and revenues	1,229,936	623,348	267,860	338,728
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
<b>Program services:</b>				
Synod assembly	138,914	138,914		
Synod standing committees	33,561	33,561		
Synod study committees	19,557	19,557		
Reformed Ecumenical Synod	16,849	16,849		
Deferred giving	54,691	54,691		
Denominational building	<u>194,907</u>		<u>194,907</u>	
Total program services	458,479	263,572	194,907	-0-
<b>Supporting services:</b>				
General administration	<u>491,395</u>	<u>152,667</u>	<u>-0-</u>	<u>338,728</u>
Total expenses	<u>949,874</u>	<u>416,239</u>	<u>194,907</u>	<u>338,728</u>
Excess of support and revenue over expenses				
	280,062	207,109	72,953	-0-
Equipment purchased - Coordinated Services	6,684		6,684	
Fund balances at beginning of year (Note B)	<u>1,629,508</u>	<u>107,223</u>	<u>1,522,285</u>	<u>-0-</u>
Fund balances at end of year	<u>\$1,916,254</u>	<u>\$214,332</u>	<u>\$1,601,922</u>	<u>\$ -0-</u>

## REPORT 21

## UNORDAINED EMPLOYEES' PENSION FUND

Your committee continues to supervise the administration of the Unordained Employees' Pension Fund which serves eligible employees of all of the denominational boards, employees of Christian Laymen's League, some Classical Home Mission Committees, and several churches. The Relief Fund administered by your committee continues to provide support for former employees or their dependents in cases where there is no pension or a pension is inadequate.

Your committee has submitted the Unordained Employees' Pension Plan with accumulated amendments to Internal Revenue Service. A favorable determination letter, dated October 17, 1978, has been received.

Pursuant to the system of rotating representation of the agencies on the committee, the term of the Calvin College representative will expire September 1, 1979, and that position on the committee is to be filled by a representative from the Board for World Missions. The term of committee member Donald F. Oosterhouse expires September 1, 1979. He has served two three-year terms and is not eligible for reelection.

The Synod of 1973 approved a minimum pension benefit for retired employees who were participants under the former plans. Because of inflation, your committee is recommending improvement in the minimum benefit.

Your committee also serves as the administrative agent for a group life insurance plan and a disability insurance plan for employees of the same entities and agencies served by the Pension Plan. All costs of these programs are paid by the employing units. Effective July 1, 1979, the group term life insurance schedule for full-time employees will change to provide life insurance benefits in an amount equal to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  times annual salary, with a maximum of \$50,000 through age 60. After age 60, to age 70, the insurance would be at  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the foregoing amount. In addition, the employee, at his or her cost, may purchase an additional amount of insurance equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the amount furnished by the Employer.

The financial report for 1978 is attached.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY SYNOD

1. Your committee requests that any member of the committee be accorded the privilege of the floor when the recommendations for action are considered by synod.
2. Your committee recommends that Mr. Donald Zwier be appointed to the committee for a three-year term, as representative of World Missions.
3. Your committee recommends that Lynwood P. Vanden Bosch be appointed to the committee for three years.

4. Your committee recommends restatement of the minimum pension policy to go into effect September 1, 1979, as follows:

Each participant in the retirement plan for the unordained workers of the Christian Reformed Church who was an employee of the Christian Reformed Church in North America or one of the following agencies of the Christian Reformed Church:

- Board for World Missions
- Back to God Hour
- Christian Reformed World Relief Committee
- Calvin College
- Board of Home Missions
- Board of Publications

on or before January 1, 1967, shall, upon retirement, be entitled to a minimum pension equal to the pension he would otherwise be entitled to under the current plan or prior plans, increased by 5 percent for each full year of employment from January 1, 1967, to date of retirement. The amount so computed will be increased on a one-time basis by 10 percent. However, the minimum shall not exceed \$165.00 per month. This minimum shall be applicable to persons who have retired prior to this date, if qualified. The minimum pension and its maximum, shall be computed on the basis of the benefit for 120 months certain and life at normal retirement date. Adjustments resulting from election of a different option or from early retirement shall then be applied. This minimum pension program will continue to be funded by the supplemental fund administered by the insurance company.

Unordained Employees' Pension  
Fund Committee

- Donald F. Oosterhouse, chairman
- Lawrence D. Bos
- Lester Ippel
- Harry Vander Meer
- Gerald J. Borst

CHRISTIAN REFORMED UNORDAINED PENSION FUNDFINANCIAL STATEMENTSRECEIPTS and DISBURSEMENTS, 1/1/78 - 12/31/78

Cash Balance 1/1/78		\$	779.62
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RECEIPTS:

Premiums	\$ 361,236.53		
Interest	5,725.61		
Insurance Refund	8,190.00		
6% C.C. Notes - cashed in	<u>18,000.00</u>		<u>393,152.14</u>
		\$	<u>393,931.76</u>

DISBURSEMENTS:

Premiums (Pension)	\$ 295,301.09		
Premiums (Life)	50,760.88		
Relief	8,986.00		
Investment - C.C. 6% Notes	18,000.00		
Investment - C.C. 8% Notes	18,000.00		
Auditors	675.00		
Honesty Bond	31.00		
Postage	<u>1.30</u>		<u>391,755.27</u>

CASH BALANCE, 12/31/78		\$	<u>2,176.49</u>
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BALANCE SHEET - 12/31/78

Cash	\$ 2,176.49
Accounts Receivable	(.10)
Union Bank Certificates	15,000.00
G.R. Mutual S. & L.	15,000.00
Mutual Home S. & L.	20,000.00
Calvin College & Sem. 8% Notes	41,000.00
Calvin College & Sem. 6% Notes	<u>2,000.00</u>

Total Assets and Fund Balance	\$ <u>95,176.39</u>
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Total assets in possession of Occidental Life Insurance Company as of December 31, 1977 (the date of our last report from Occidental) are

\$1,778,565.48

## Reports of Denominationally Related Agencies

### REPORT 22

#### ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

##### *Campus Outreach*

During the past year the AACS and its Institute for Christian Studies have moved more vigorously into helping university students with Christian academic perspective. The need for this has come to us directly from those students, as they write, phone and visit the Institute, and it has also come through many requests for help from Christian Reformed campus pastors and Christian university professors.

In many places students are increasingly active in demonstrating their Christian conviction through class papers for non-Christian teachers. They ask for help in developing a Christian perspective both for their own benefit and as a witness.

The Institute sends these people one or more of a growing list of academic papers written by its own staff and students or by people with a kindred Reformed spirit. It also sends helpful bibliographies of books and papers in the fields in which the Institute is active. A number of cassette tape recordings are also used.

In 1978 the Institute produced a special "Christian Perspective" course for use on secular campuses to help students grow in Christian thinking while they grow in professional development. Designed to be taught by a mature Christian on any campus, the instructor assisted by a teaching manual leads students through the reading of a series of papers. Institute students have been teaching this course for three years at universities near Toronto. This year they are teaching it to six different groups at five locations.

This campus outreach is being carried out in cooperation with Christian Reformed campus pastors. Our work focuses on academic Christian development of students as a complement to the more pastoral and theological work of the campus chaplains. We regularly supply campus pastors with papers and books from the Institute.

##### *"Worldview" Program*

In 1978 the Institute for Christian Studies started a special one-year course for college graduates. It is designed to help students sharpen their Christian world-and-life-view and bring it to bear more effectively in the specific work they are doing or will be doing. The Worldview program provides integrated study of theology, philosophy and social sciences in such a way that those who take the program can develop tools to bring

their Christian theory to practical cultural application. It is being well received by the initial class of students.

### *Master of Philosophy Degree*

This degree program is being revised so that students will regularly be able to earn the degree in two years. Its unique program of study is interdisciplinary with emphasis on Reformed theology and philosophy as a foundation for the arts, history, psychology, political science, economics, and the like. This (post)graduate study carries forward at a deeper level the Christian academic development a student can get at a Christian college, and helps prepare people to teach at Christian colleges. Graduates of secular universities come to the Institute for a more substantial re-orientation of their thinking to biblically-rooted patterns.

### *Conferences*

A feature of the AACCS for twenty years has been its weekend family conferences. The largest, held each year near Niagara Falls, drew over one thousand people this year from the United States and Canada. Dr. George Vandervelde, Systematic Theologian at the Institute, was the featured speaker, dealing with the eschatological subject of our living in God's Kingdom in lively expectation of Christ's return. Other family conferences were held in the western Canadian provinces and the United States Atlantic seaboard.

### *Publications*

In early 1979 Oxford University Press released Dr. C. Thomas McIntire's new book presenting essays of the eminent British historian, Sir Herbert Butterfield, in which Butterfield discusses his understanding of history as shaped by his Christian convictions. Under the editorship of Dr. Arnold De Graaff and Dr. James Olthuis, the AACCS has published in book form a series of papers giving a Reformed view of the nature of man, useful as a foundation for theoretical thinking in psychology, sociology and education. This follows by a year the AACCS publication of a related book dealing with a Christian view of man and psychology.

### *A Reformed Christian Educational Witness for the Church*

The special witness of AACCS and the Institute for Christian Studies is the Kuyperian message that all of life must be lived as a religious response to God's revelation. The Institute's research, teaching and campus outreach try to make that effective in higher education, knowing that higher education gives direction to the church and to society. This Reformed witness of the Institute is receiving a good response from many Christians who are not Reformed, and it is being heard as a Christian testimony by many students and teachers who are not Christian. The church can do this kind of missionary outreach only through the work of higher education that it supports. The Institute is happy to serve the church in this way, and is thankful also for the support of the church.

Robert E. VanderVennen, Executive Director

REPORT 23  
DORDT COLLEGE

It is our privilege to report to the Synod of 1979 concerning Dordt College. The Christian Reformed Church and Dordt College have very close theological, philosophical, and structural ties. All instruction at Dordt College must arise out of commitment to the Reformed faith as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity of the Christian Reformed Church; the bylaws of the board of trustees require that board members be members of the Christian Reformed church; and 92% of the student body are members of the Christian Reformed Church.

Presently there are 1,100 Christian Reformed young people attending Dordt College; they represent one fourth of the Christian Reformed young people attending the three institutions of higher learning affiliated with our denomination. As a result of this significant proportion of the denomination's youth being entrusted to the school, we are deeply aware of our responsibility to the church as well as to the Lord for the spiritual growth and direction of these students.

With that in mind, we are grateful to report that the blessings of the Lord have been bountifully evident since our last report to synod.

This past year will probably be remembered as a "year of expansion" for Dordt College. A record high fall enrollment of 1,218 students, 9½% higher than the previous year, served to remind the entire college community and constituency of the need for the comprehensive building program already in progress.

The new chapel-music center was completed providing a 1,200 seat multi-purpose auditorium for meaningful chapel services, concerts and special programs, as well as a large new building for the music department. Other building projects being constructed or completed during the year included five new student apartment buildings and significant additions to the gymnasium, library, and science building. In addition, the former music building was remodeled into quarters for the new Art Department, and the classroom auditorium was converted into classrooms, offices, and workrooms for the new Theatre Arts Department. As a result of these new and remodeled buildings, Dordt now has a very complete campus with attractive and functional facilities to serve all the school's program and activity needs.

The Forward Thrust campaign for the building expansion program received considerable attention during the year. Close to \$2¼ million has been committed to the campaign with the final total expected to reach nearly \$2½ million. Dordt is humbly grateful to the Lord for this tremendous outpouring of love and concern from God's people.

At the annual voting members board meeting, copies of the proposed revision of the Dordt College Statement of Purpose were distributed to board members for study during the year.

The revised Statement of Purpose attempts to more clearly set forth the principles that are to direct the college in the performance of its educational task. Summarizing the nature and extent of the college's task, the statement concludes, "As an institution of higher learning, Dordt College addresses itself to the task of Christian education. It seeks to acquire and transmit genuine Christian insight, that is, to develop and implement an understanding of the entire creation in the liberating light of the Scriptures. Dordt College desires to be an institution of Christian learning for the benefit of both the attending student body and the entire Christian community, so that the Lord's kingdom may come to greater expression."

Working from the principles set forth in the Statement of Purpose, a number of significant activities and developments have taken place in the past year:

- (1) The establishment of a Dordt Press. The goal of the Dordt Press is to publish respectable, timely works which reflect and promote the biblical, Calvinistic world-and-life perspective. Two books have already been published and a third is ready for printing.
- (2) A political science major was added to the curriculum to help students develop a biblically-directed perspective in the field of political science.
- (3) The college produced the first in a series of approximately ten record albums which will contain renditions of the Psalms from the Psalter Hymnal. The arrangements and performances will be provided by the Dordt Music Department.
- (4) An International Christian Political Conference was cosponsored by Dordt and the Association for Political Justice last summer. Under the theme, "Jubilee for Justice," the conference concentrated on the biblical demands for a Christian political witness.
- (5) The college sponsored its annual Okaboji Retreat in September. The theme of the retreat was "The Christian and Leisure Time." The 450 student retreaters studied the meaning of sports, recreation and leisure in terms of a Christian perspective.

Most important, the faculty and students of Dordt have diligently and sincerely attempted to be an academic community which provides an authentic integrated Christian perspective in all areas of study and which provides a wholesome Christian environment for young people. We request the prayers of the churches for the coming year so Dordt may continue to be an effective tool for Christ's kingdom in the sphere of higher education.

Dordt College  
B. J. Haan, president

REPORT 24  
REFORMED BIBLE COLLEGE

The Reformed Bible College served 532 persons through the following educational programs during the 1978-79 academic year: fall and winter semesters, spring session, Mexico Summer Training Session, August Institute, and evening extension courses in Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, and Zeeland. In addition, a new field training program was inaugurated in the Middle East, namely, Middle East Training Session (METS). Fifteen students enrolled for this course in Bible, missions, language study, and field education assignments which began December 27, 1978, with the final phase of study on campus ending April 27, 1979.

Walters Campus Center was dedicated on Saturday, September 16, 1978. This new facility provides a dining area and lounge, bookstore, offices, as well as indoor recreation space. We are grateful for this added building which fulfills many needs on the crowded campus.

We thank God for the concern and support of many Christian Reformed people, pastors, and congregations so that workers may be trained for the mission of the church at the college. RBC covets the prayers of the pastors and churches for guidance in terms of seeking new faculty members, attracting a growing number of dedicated students, and expanding our services to the church and community.

Information concerning RBC and its training programs will gladly be sent upon request. Inquiries and visitors are welcome from individuals and groups at any time.

Reformed Bible College  
Dick L. Van Halsema, president

## REPORT 25

## TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Trinity Christian College celebrates her 20th anniversary in 1979. We ask that you join us in thanking our faithful covenant God for his abundant blessings over these twenty years.

One of the initial communications to develop support for establishing Trinity in 1959 contained these words:

"Business, industry, society, the witness of the church, all of these increasingly demand educated leadership and participation. . . . If we believe in Christian education at all levels of learning, then we must continue to grow with the growing need of our children and young people in these times; to grow with the need is to provide for the need. This is why Trinity Christian College was organized. This is why Trinity Christian College will open its doors in September, 1959."

Twenty years of history clearly demonstrate the continuing validity of this original vision. In fact, on this anniversary it is worth noting that it is precisely the ringing biblical world and life view of this vision which exposes a most troublesome dilemma for the Christian Reformed Church and its membership today. The historical Calvinism of our churches, schools, and homes appears indeed to have motivated and prepared our people to be successful in business and industry. But has it increased our dedication to "Christian education at all levels," including Christian higher education, when available statistics indicate that only about one-third of our Christian Reformed high school graduates going on for more education attend one of our Christian colleges? Or what must be said about the validity and dynamism of our Reformed world and life view in an urbanized society in which the power centers shaping that society are located in large, mature metropolises such as those in the New York and Chicago areas? Perusal of denominational and Christian school statistics of the past twenty years indicates that our churches and related kingdom institutions are generally not maintaining the same vigor and growth in these large metropolitan power centers as in rural and small to medium sized urban areas.

So on her twentieth anniversary, Trinity Christian College must, we believe, rededicate herself to the same resounding biblical world and life view expressed in the twenty year old vision quoted above. *As the only Reformed Christian college with direct access to one of the world's largest and most powerful metropolitan areas, Trinity seeks broader, deeper, and more vigorous support from the entire Christian Reformed Church and all of its members.* Only with such expanded support can Trinity utilize the abundant and unique educational resources of the metropolitan area to equip our Christian young people for responsible Christian living in our renewed efforts to claim our increasingly "metropolitanized" world for Christ.

It would not be difficult to list a whole catalog of readily available

metropolitan educational resources which are uniquely fitted for motivating and equipping our Christian young people to shape these power centers of our world according to the mandates of Christ's kingdom. I shall select only three of several concrete current situations which could be cited as manifestations of the larger issue.

For example, in addition to God's blessing, Trinity needs *only one thing* to establish a Reformed Christian nursing program leading to a college degree, and that one thing is broader and deeper financial support from the Christian Reformed Church and its entire membership. A nearby comprehensive 900 bed hospital has for a year been soliciting Trinity's partnership in such a nursing program. But to date we sense no surge of the broad and vigorous Reformed world and life view needed to provide financial support for such a program. Meanwhile, throughout our denomination Christian Reformed young people wishing to serve their Lord in the field of nursing continue to be frustrated because they cannot find or be admitted to a degree-granting nursing program offered by one of our Christian colleges.

Another example is Trinity's Metropolitan Studies Program. It provides unique seminars and internships for as many as 35 full-time students each semester. From the beginning, Trinity has developed this program so that students from our other Christian colleges can enroll in it for one semester, and thus benefit from the abundant metropolitan-based educational resources readily available because of Trinity's unique location. Only lack of broader financial and student support from the Christian Reformed Church makes it necessary to limit this unique program to its present size.

Or again, as a Christian Reformed Church, we admit to being largely unsuccessful in the important task of educating minority young people in our Christian colleges. Trinity Christian College is pleased that a program for improvement in this area is being recommended to synod by the Synodical Committee on Race Relations. Trinity will cooperate with other denominationally-related agencies in the support of this program, since already some 8% of Trinity's students come from minority groups, and the educational success record of these students is impressive, although still in need of improvement. Here again, a program which already provides promising leadership in a difficult and important denominational task could easily be expanded by Trinity Christian College. But meeting of this need awaits broader and more vigorous financial and student support which should accompany the frequently expressed denominational interest in the successful Christian higher education of minority young people who are a major concern of many local, classical, and denominational ministries.

Anniversaries provide a time for looking both backward and forward. In looking backward, we note with much thanksgiving the rich blessing of God upon a church whose confession and action demonstrate a deep conviction that Jesus Christ is *both Savior and Lord*. This conviction has created a system of Christian schools from kindergarten through college and beyond. However, these schools and their supporters who belong to the Christian Reformed Church have yet to demonstrate that our deep confessional commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord can flourish in the large

metropolitan centers which increasingly dominate our entire society and culture. Trinity Christian College is uniquely situated to assist the Christian Reformed Church in giving major attention to this unfinished task. On this twentieth anniversary, Trinity specifically requests the Christian Reformed Church to find ways to provide more vigorous support for this task which we believe is critically important for the entire Christian Reformed Church. We at Trinity are eager to cooperate fully with the Christian Reformed Church in carrying out more effectively and self-consciously our confession of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in a society dominated by large metropolitan centers of influence.

Should the Synodical Advisory Committee on Educational Matters wish to consider more formally and in a detailed way some of the concerns raised in this report, representatives of Trinity Christian College are available to discuss these matters in greater detail.

Trinity Christian College  
Dennis Hoekstra, president

REPORT 26  
UNITED CALVINIST YOUTH

*Calvinettes*

With a deep sense of gratitude we report another year of growth in the Calvinette organization. We now have 657 clubs in our membership. This represents a growth of over 4% in the past year.

We are grateful that the revision of the Busy Bee (grades 2-3) program was completed and has been very well received. This part of the Calvinette program has been an especially effective evangelism tool of our churches. In the next year one of our goals will be to provide counselors of the older girls with additional help as they too, reach into the community. We also plan to revise parts of the achievement program to meet the changing needs of our young people.

We have been blessed with the dedicated work of over 4,200 Christian women who give of their time and of themselves to serve 17,000 Calvinettes, helping bring girls into a living relationship with Jesus Christ. Last summer 525 of these counselors met in London, Ontario for three days of fellowship, inspiration, and training. This year we expect an even larger number to attend the convention at the Hope College campus in Holland, Michigan.

Our training for council presidents has continued. In the past year twenty-one women attended a three-day seminar of intensive training at the Calvinette office. The Lord has blessed this work as these women return better prepared to lead counselors in their areas.

*TOUCH* magazine has continued its ministry to girls, with the circulation reflecting the growth in membership. Each month *The Cable*, a newsletter for counselors, is published with suggestions for conducting Bible lessons and ideas for club activities.

We thank God for the opportunity he has given the Calvinette organization to serve him. We are grateful that the Christian Reformed Churches have an interest in youth ministry, and ask your continued prayers that Calvinettes will continue to be effective in ministering Christ's love to girls in the church family and in the community.

Joanne Ilbrink, Executive Director

*Calvinist Cadet Corps*

We praise God that during 1978, total CCC Club membership approached 550 Clubs—an increase of 10% over last year. Our popularity continues to increase in not only the Christian Reformed Church, but also the Reformed Church in America and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

In December our first annual Youth Ministry in The Urban Church Conference was an overwhelming success. This conference brought together youth leaders and pastors from urban churches throughout the midwest for the purpose of sharing problems and joys of effective urban youth ministries.

Six hundred men and boys from all over North America called the Manistee National Forest "home" for seven days in July. This unique wilderness camping experience provided an excellent opportunity for boys to not only develop and sharpen various skills, but also confirm that "God Is For Real" in their lives.

Ongoing counselor education continues to receive a large block of attention as numerous additional Counselor Aids are developed. Plans were also made to add a total of twenty new film strips to the Counselor Education Audio-Visual library. The Chicago Counselors' Convention was a delight for all who attended. We are looking forward to four inspiring and challenging days in Grand Rapids this summer.

At the annual board meetings in January, the Cadet Congress radically changed the methods of funding itself. Rather than asking all participating churches to contribute a \$1.70 per family "fair share" to balance its budget, the CCC is asking each church for a modest registration fee plus a minimum of one special offering. We proceed in faith that the remaining \$20,000.00 needed to balance the \$200,000.00 budget will come from God's people throughout North America.

For your continued support, 12,500 boys thank you. They covet your prayers as the challenge to live the "Christ-like life" is presented to them throughout their Cadeting experience.

Calvinist Cadet Corps  
David J. Koetje, Executive Director

### *The Young Calvinist Federation*

This report is due just before our annual YCF Board meeting at which we set the course for the coming year. Basically, that course will remain much like the past; for the ministries of YCF continue to be a blessing to thousands of young people. And to adults who are parents of or who are working with our young people.

The annual convention in 1978 was held in Kingston, Ontario under the theme, "Get Peace From The Rock." About 2100 attended. In August of 1979 the convention will be in Eugene, Oregon; hosted this year by our Columbia league (one of 49), the theme is "Bread Or Stone"—an obvious follow through of our church's recent concern with world hunger.

The Summer Workshop in Ministries also continues to be a useful program for both the young people who participate and the churches involved (both fields and home churches of SWIMers). This summer 307 SWIMers are expected to work on sixty-six fields in the United States and Canada. Our Servicemen's Ministry assists about 700 men and women.

A new Young Adults Ministry packet, published four times each year, has proved to be a helpful resource to many concerned with that area of ministry. Other publications, Insight (for young people), Input (for

leaders) and special leadership publications in the "Good Things for Youth Leaders" series also receive a ready acceptance.

We have been working with a management consultant this year as part of a re-focusing of our ministry. The extraordinary efforts in the development of United Calvinist Youth (which now finds three strong divisions co-laboring in one legal entity, but each with its own program and funding) and societal changes in the early '70s brought new questions which had to be worked through; questions like "what is the purpose of Insight" and "how aggressive should we be in enlarging our membership beyond the boundaries of the CRC" etc. These have now been worked through and realistic staffing has been accomplished so that we find a full complement of staff now working toward agreed upon goals articulated by the YCF Board.

We continue to appreciate the close relationship YCF has in its 680 youth groups and 49 leagues with the CRC. The support of the people of the church through the annual campaign and church offerings is the financial life-blood of YCF.

I would be pleased to meet with any of synod's advisory committees if needed and request, as in the past, opportunity to speak briefly to our synod in behalf of this voluntary youth ministry in which we all have such a great investment.

In this year, 1979, the Young Calvinist Federation is completing sixty years of service to our Lord. We trust that synod will note this with gratitude, for God has truly blessed the efforts of this ministry as a part of the spiritual development of thousands of our young people.

The Young Calvinist Federation  
James C. Lont, Director

## Reports of Study Committees

### REPORT 27

#### CHURCH ORDER REVISIONS RE OFFICE OF EVANGELIST

When the office of evangelist was created, the Synod of 1978 brought to resolution a problem of over thirty years standing. Certain basic concepts and office regulations were adopted. These decisions "were referred to an appropriate committee" whose mandate is "the revision of the Church Order which is necessitated by the above decisions."

#### I. OBSERVATIONS

1. A fourth office, that of evangelist, has been established. This is an office in addition to those of minister, elder, and deacon. For some, we discover, the distinctive nature of the office is not fully clear. Undoubtedly this is due to the companion decision which specifically states that the evangelist "shall be acknowledged as an elder of his calling church with corresponding privileges and responsibilities." The phrase, "acknowledged as an elder," was a way to incorporate the evangelist into the governing structure of the church, particularly as a member of the consistory. However, synod has expressly decided the office is a fourth office, distinct from the other three offices.

The new office is not that of elder-evangelist, that is, an elder functioning under a specific mandate "to evangelize." Rather, as an evangelist he is to be acknowledged as an elder in the same manner that a minister is presently acknowledged as an elder. In some sense, the elder, minister, and evangelist are all elders. They are ruling elders. However, in more carefully describing the functions for elder, minister, and evangelist, there are differences which require the recognition of three offices. In the proposed church order articles we recognize the evangelist, as a fourth office, in accord with the decision of synod.

2. In its treatment of The Offices in the Church, the Church Order embodies two sections following the general provisions: "Ministers of the Word" and "Elders and Deacons." Consideration was given to incorporating the office of evangelist under one of these sections. The longer the committee worked with this idea, the more it became convinced that incorporating the office of evangelist in either section would be illogical and ill-advised.

a. Placing the evangelist under "Ministers of the Word" would not be conducive to clarity nor in line with synod's decision about the distinctiveness of the office. Evangelists are men who are called to a specialized ministry of evangelism as professionals on a full time basis, just as the ministers of the Word are professionals on a full-time basis. It would first appear that additional paragraphs would be in order under "Ministers of the Word" describing the office of evangelist. Despite the similarities between minister and evangelist, this was rejected because the scope of the

office of minister is so broad it requires more articles than does that of evangelist. Specifically this would result in some of the articles 6-22 having paragraphs regarding evangelist and others would not.

b. Adding other paragraphs re evangelist to "Elders and Deacons" would also create confusion and imbalance in classification. Elders and deacons are elected by the congregation on a term basis of two or three years. These are men having other vocations and employment, who are appointed by the congregation to special ministries which they fulfil in addition to their regular vocation and employment. Moreover, contrasting with elders and deacons, the ministry of the evangelist is not among the members of the congregation, but on behalf of the congregation among people presently outside the congregation.

The articles relating to elder focus on the ruling character of the office. The office of evangelist focuses much more on the ministries of teaching, preaching, and pastoring. Articles for the office of evangelist do not match with the descriptions of the office of elder.

The primary advantage of incorporating evangelist under elder and deacon articles would be to retain the present numbering of articles in the Church Order. The question we finally had to ask ourselves was: which is more important, to retain a numbering system or to create a section in which evangelist would come into its rightful focus as an office. With strong convictions we opted for the latter.

Your committee has reached the conclusion that both options a. and b. should be rejected. They are not consistent with synod's decision about the distinctiveness of the office of evangelist. Moreover, either option would create confusion and imbalance in a document as important in the life of the church as the Church Order.

3. The question arose whether to create one new article or to create several new articles to be added in the section of the Church Order, "Offices in the Church." Your committee opted for the latter. To create one article would be to formulate a "catch-all" article with a number of dangling descriptions. To create several articles would be to formulate a series of more orderly statements paralleling those already in the Church Order re the office of minister (Arts. 6-18) and as such give due emphasis to this distinct office.

4. Articles in the Church Order are in their very nature rather permanent regulations, descriptions, and guides. Applying this observation to the office of evangelist, the new articles must include the full scope of the office.

Historically the office of evangelist arose out of the context of the layworker being employed in a "chapel" type situation. As has been restated so many times during the last thirty years, the layworker was doing the work of the church outside the authority of office. In all too many cases he ministered the Word within at best a tenuous and loose relationship to the governing bodies of the church. That there should be a preoccupation with the person in this situation is perfectly understandable. This preoccupation comes through strongly in the decision of 1978. This is not to say, however, that the synod did not bring into purview other settings of the office of evangelist.

Your committee considered another setting and has included the

evangelist in this setting within our recommendation. We have in mind particularly the person who functions as a minister of evangelism, better termed evangelist, within the congregational geographical territory or parish on a full-time basis, doing the same work. The fruits of his labors are channeled into the existing congregation, whereas the evangelist (formerly layworker) whose presence in our denomination extends much farther back into history, sees his fruits forming a new congregation in another locale. Both settings are included within the scope of our recommendation.

The Synod of 1978 established the office of evangelist with authority to administer the Word and sacraments in the work of evangelism of his calling church (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 77). The grounds adduced are:

a. "In the discharge of the basic evangelistic task of the church, one who has been chosen by the church to perform this specialized ministry on behalf of the local congregation should be ordained to an office which enables him to fulfil the specific function to which he has been called by the church (Guideline 7, Acts of Synod 1973).

b. Because the Scriptures do not present a definitive, exhaustive description of the particular ministries of the church, and because these particular ministries as described in Scripture are functional in character, the Bible leaves room for the church to adapt or modify its particular ministries in order to carry out effectively its service to Christ and for Christ in all circumstances (Guideline 12, Acts of Synod 1973)."

Your committee would note these circumstances. Today churches call evangelists (layworkers) not only to work in another locale in behalf of the consistory and congregation, but also within the geographical bounds of the congregation. Statistically at the time of our study we counted some fifteen men as parish evangelists, some eleven men in emerging churches on the Navajo field, and some twenty-two men in emerging churches sponsored by neighboring consistories and churches. Advertisements and notices in *THE BANNER* indicate the number of parish evangelists will significantly increase. Consequently it is needful to include them in Church Order articles. We cannot well ordain evangelists in one setting and leave them unordained in another setting.

We have also taken into account the emerging churches among the Indians of our Southwest. They constitute a third setting which we describe as transitional. Prior to 1965 the Foreign Mission Board (Heathen Missions earlier) and since 1965 the Home Missions Board provide a history of ambivalence in the matter of organized churches. For instance, established congregations at Crown Point-San Antone, Farmington-Toadlena, and Tohatchi, all in existence for approximately twenty years, were dissolved because of a policy change re native churches. More recently organized Indian churches are again appearing, albeit very slowly. Today the Board of Home Missions through special studies is reviewing this phenomenon of long-standing groups of believers in unorganized status in the light of a long history. The study committee is proposing a course and goals to challenge these groups of believers. In the light of this study and challenge it would severely hamper the progress of the work of the indigenous church to insist that an evangelist may not be the pastor of newly organized congregations. The decision of the Synod of 1978

would insist on this. Recognizing the abnormal situation in the Southwest and being convinced these emerging churches are in a transitional stage of development, we are recommending an exception be made during this transitional stage.

5. The Synod of 1978 adopted the following regulation: "The membership of the emerging congregation shall be held by his (evangelist's) calling church" (Acts of Synod 1978, p.78). Your committee judges this to be a restatement of Article 38a of the Church Order: "Groups of believers among whom no consistory can be constituted shall be under the care of a neighboring consistory, designated by classis." Consequently this regulation already exists in the Church Order and is properly placed under "Assemblies," and more particularly under the consistory. It would be misplaced with regulations concerning the office of evangelist.

Your committee would point out that the statement in the Home Mission Order on this particular matter needs clarification. In groups of believers now termed "emerging churches," the "membership papers shall be deposited with the missionary as the duly appointed office-bearer of the church which he represents" (Home Mission Order 1965, Art. 11, Sec. 3, d). The Mission Manual apparently interprets this to mean that professions, reaffirmations, and transfers are received by the home missionary and by the steering committee in the field. The calling church appears as the depository for the home missionary's credentials. Consequently his status as minister is overseen by the consistory. However, his work is under the supervision of the Board of Home Missions. This board places the responsibility of membership reception and care in his hands together with the steering committee. Almost without exception the only office-bearer involved with membership is the home missionary. It follows that the same regulations will prevail in emerging churches under the evangelist. Accordingly believers are not placed under the direct care of the elders or consistory. Yet the 1978 decision insists these believers be placed under the care of elders. This is Presbyterian polity.

Your committee has taken no survey to determine how this situation is handled in emerging churches which are not under the jurisdiction of the board of Home Missions and are instead under the jurisdiction of local churches as mission projects of these churches. It is our impression that in most cases these groups of believers are placed officially under the care of sponsoring consistories. In some cases we have knowledge that the elders do exercise a direct care even to the point of family visits, hearing professions and reaffirmations, and accepting transfers.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. That synod give the privilege of the floor to the Revs. Howard Spaan and Peter Jonker when matters pertaining to the report are discussed.
- B. That synod approve the following Church Order revisions:

### Article 2

The church recognizes in its ministry the offices of the minister of the Word, the evangelist, the elder, and the deacon. These offices differ from

each other only in mandate and task, not in dignity and honor.

#### D. THE EVANGELISTS

##### Article 26 (new)

The completion of a satisfactory training in biblical theology and evangelism and a demonstrated ability to function adequately in evangelistic outreach shall be required for admission to the office of evangelist.

##### Article 27 (new)

a. The evangelist shall minister solely in the work of outreach in an emerging congregation or within an existing congregation in parish evangelism.

b. The office of evangelist shall correspond to his term of appointment by the calling church. However, in working with an emerging congregation, his office will terminate when the group of believers is formed into an organized church. —Cf. Supplement, Article 27.

##### Article 28 (new)

a. The classis to which the calling church belongs shall examine the candidate for the office of evangelist concerning his doctrine and life according to synodical regulations. —Cf. Supplement, Article 28.

b. A subsequent appointment as evangelist to another field shall require such an examination as is considered appropriate by classis before he will be ordained in his new field of labor.

##### Article 29 (new)

The task of the evangelist is to witness for Christ and to call for a comprehensive discipleship through the means of the preaching of the Word and the administration of the sacraments and through the use of approved evangelism methods, church education for youth and adults, and pastoral care, in order that the church may be built and unbelievers won for Christ. Any service or assignment beyond his specific field of labor requires the authorization of his consistory and the approval of classis.

##### Article 30 (new)

a. The evangelist, besides being a member of his calling church, shall also be a member of its consistory and as such discharge his responsibilities in accordance with his particular calling. As a member of the consistory he shall have the privileges of an elder.

b. The evangelist shall function under the direct supervision of the consistory. He shall give reports regularly to the consistory and be present at the meetings of the consistory whenever possible, and particularly when his work is under consideration.

##### Article 31 (new)

The calling church shall provide for the proper support of the evangelist. —Cf. Supplement, Article 31.

##### Article 53 (renumbered 59)

a. In the worship services the minister of the Word or the evangelist shall officially explain and apply the Holy Scriptures.

**Article 54 (renumbered 60)**

a. In the worship services the minister of the Word or the evangelist shall officially explain and apply the Holy Scriptures.

**Article 55 (renumbered 61)**

The sacraments shall be administered upon the authority of the consistory in the public worship service by the minister of the Word or the evangelist with the use of the prescribed forms.

**Article 74 (renumbered 80)**

b. The consistory may call an evangelist to assist in fulfilling this task more effectively. (Present section to "this task may be executed," etc. becomes Article 74c.)

**Article 88 (renumbered 94)**

a. Elders, ministers, evangelists, and deacons, besides being subject to general discipline, are subject to special discipline which consists of suspension and deposition from office.

**Article 91 (renumbered 97)**

a. The suspension or deposition of an elder, evangelist, or deacon shall be imposed by the consistory with the concurring judgment of the consistory of the nearest church in the same classis.

b. If the neighboring consistory fails to concur in the position of the consistory concerning the elder, evangelist, or deacon involved, the latter consistory shall either alter its original judgment or present the case to classis.

C. That the articles 26-96 of the Church Order be renumbered in line with the insertion of the new articles 26-31.

D. That synod approve the following additions to the Supplement of the Church Order:

**Supplement, Article 27b**

Recognizing their special needs, the Indian churches are exempted from the requirement in Article 27b throughout their transitional stage of development. An evangelist may serve as pastor of an organized church subject to the approval and regular review of the classis.

**Supplement, Article 28a**

The classical examination required for the ordination of an evangelist shall include the following elements:

a. Presentation of the following documents:

1. A consistorial recommendation from the church in which the appointee holds membership.
2. Evidence (diplomas, transcripts, etc.) of formal general education and of specialized training in biblical theology and evangelism.
3. A copy of his letter of appointment from the church which is requesting his ordination as evangelist.
4. A copy of his letter of acceptance.

b. An oral presentation of a message based upon an assigned text of Scripture, a written copy of which shall be examined by a committee of classis. Special attention shall be given to biblical exegesis. The length of

the oral presentation shall be left to the discretion of classis.

c. Examination in the following areas:

1. Knowledge of Scripture
2. Knowledge of Reformed doctrine
3. Knowledge of the Standards of the Church and the Church Order
4. Practical matters regarding Christian testimony, walk of life, relation to others, love for the church, interest in evangelism and the promotion of Christ's kingdom.

#### **Supplement, Article 31**

An optional pension plan is available for evangelists, which is an employer paid plan. It is administered by the Unordained Employee's Pension Fund.

E. That synod be apprised of the inconsistency within its own decisions by requiring memberships in emerging churches to be held by the calling consistories and by requiring home missionaries to hold memberships in their persons.

F. That synod discharge the committee.

Committee on Church Order Revisions  
re Office of Evangelist

Peter M. Jonker, chairman  
Howard B. Spaan, reporter  
Henry Numan, Jr.  
John A. Petersen

## REPORT 28

**BIBLICAL TEACHINGS ON MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE**

The Synod of 1977 appointed a new committee to reexamine the biblical teachings on divorce and remarriage, and to formulate pastoral guidelines concerning this matter. Synod referred to the committee the following materials: the report of the previous study committee (Report 35), and the report of the advisory committee which differed at key points from the study committee regarding divorce and remarriage.

The committee has met regularly and has made considerable progress. However, the differences between Report 35 and the comment of the advisory committee are very fundamental and require a basic reexamination of familiar biblical passages and commonly held understandings. Consequently, we have not yet completed our work and ask that our mandate be extended for one year. In view of the progress we have made thus far, we are confident that a report will be ready by the end of the year. We ask for your continued interest and prayers.

**Biblical Teachings on Marriage  
and Divorce Committee**

Wilbert Van Dyk, chairman  
David Holwerda, secretary  
Robert Baker  
Linda Dykstra  
George Gritter  
Mel Hugen  
James Vander Laan  
Thea Van Halsema  
Peter Van Katwyk

## REPORT 29

## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

## MANDATE

The Synod of 1976 considered an overture from Classis Orange City which requested the synod to address our national governments urging them to continue (or reinstitute) capital punishment. Synod did not accede to the request but decided to place the matter into the hands of a study committee with the following mandate:

1) to study the matter of capital punishment and make appropriate recommendations to synod.

2) to answer such questions as:

a. What is the biblical view of justice?

b. Is retributive justice a biblical idea?

c. Who has the authority and responsibility to exercise punishment?

d. Has capital punishment been a just form of punishment?

e. In the light of the fullness of New Testament revelation and redemption, should we assume that capital punishment is a just form of penalty for crimes (murder in particular) which the state must implement in the New Testament era?

f. What is the responsibility of the church in the light of the above?

Your committee supplemented its study of the Scriptures with a consideration of various ecclesiastical statements. We discovered that there is a considerable divergence in the way in which churches understand the Scripture's teaching with respect to capital punishment. This is by no means novel. The esteemed English Presbyterian divine, John Brown, writing in 1853 said,

Whether in any case it be either lawful or expedient to take away life as punishment of crime, is a question on which wise and good men are not agreed.

(*Discourses suited to the Administration of the Lord's Supper*, p. 125)

Although one may hardly expect unanimity on this subject in the church, we hope that our report will be useful in promoting careful and clear thinking and in furthering our continuing effort to know more perfectly the will of the Lord for social and political behavior. We are grateful for the spirit of understanding which prevailed in the committee and the fraternal spirit which led us to agreement on the subject.

The committee agreed that the subject could be discussed most effectively by asking three questions. The questions supply the outline for our report.

I. Does the biblical data *require* that capital punishment be administered for murder?

II. Does the biblical data *permit* the administration of capital punishment for murder?

III. Is the administration of capital punishment for murder *desirable*?

We judge that our address to these three questions is also an address to the specific questions asked in the mandate.

In summary form the question may be stated as follows:

In the Christian view, ought, may, or should the state, in the interest of justice, by having regard for love and redemption, and observing due process, punish by death a person who is adjudged guilty of first degree murder?

## INTRODUCTION

Capital punishment is a species of the genus *punishment*. It is, in addition, unlike the punishment a parent may inflict upon a child, or a teacher upon a pupil; it is judicial punishment inflicted by the *state*. It is, finally, punishment inflicted, not necessarily or exclusively for religious or moral faults, but for legal offenses, i.e. for *crimes*. This being the case, it appears desirable, before considering the specific issue of capital punishment, to make a brief preliminary inquiry into the nature and function of the state, of crime, and of punishment.

### A. The State

1. It is not necessary, in this context, to determine when civil government was ordained or instituted; whether it is a creation ordinance, or whether it was a post-lapsarian or even a post-deluvian provision for the regulation of the public affairs of fallen man. What is necessary to observe is that the state is not in itself an evil, but a divinely sanctioned thing, the governing authorities having been instituted by God (Rom. 13:1; I Peter 2:13, 14).

2. The state, it should be noted, is not to be equated with *society*. Society is variously organized, and each of the organizations within it—family, church, school, and the like—has its own relatively autonomous sphere and function: Yet, as Josef Pieper rightly says, "The state . . . occupies a unique place in the scale that extends from the individual to the whole of mankind; more than anything else it represents the 'social whole' . . . A nation ordered in a state is a proper, historically concrete image of man's communal life . . . Political community is community in the highest [i.e. broadest] degree."<sup>1</sup>

3. The *function* of the state can be variously described. Its chief task, it appears, is to harmonize and integrate the legitimate interests of the various individuals and organizations comprised within it, and in so doing to establish the rights and freedoms of every social component. Another way of putting this is to say that the state is required to establish and preserve a just order, within which every citizen is given opportunity for self-fulfillment and by which each is enabled to lead "a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way!" (I Tim. 2:2).

4. The *authority* to establish this order of freedom and justice, and to preserve the rights and impose the duties thereto is, as has already been noted, vested in the state by God. Not being the result of a social contract, the state does not exist by the sufferance of its citizens, but by the

will of God. Although the state is the representative of the "social whole," its governors are even more basically the representatives of God, who is the source and guarantor of their authority.

5. There is no effectual authority without *power*, and the Lord has accordingly put a sword into the hands of the state. The sword of Romans 13 need not necessarily kill; it may simply wound, as, for example, in the exacting of a simple fine. It is nevertheless a symbol of power and its conferment licenses and enables the state to exercise coercion. Such coercion is rendered necessary by the existence of evil. There are those in the commonwealth who disobey the laws and disrupt the existing order, and these, because they are not restrained by conscience, law, or education, must be restrained by force. This forcible restraint must be exercised because without it the order of society is destroyed and every right that creation affords the human person is by lawlessness put in jeopardy.

6. The power and force at the command of the state is, when things are rightly ordered, exercised in behalf of the "Common Good." It has, as it were, a utilitarian function: the welfare of all concerned, including the offender. But the power accorded the state has another function as well. It is by God's design appointed to "avenge evil and reward the good." The state, it appears, has a judicial as well as a merely regulative assignment. It must be concerned not only with the protection of itself and its citizens; it must, as an agency of God, make a judgment about good and evil, and *recompense* the evil with evil, and the good with good. This means that it must inflict *punishments* and accord *rewards*. It must, in justice, deal with merits and demerits. It must do this because, according to the Scriptures, God does this and because God has appointed magistrates to implement on the earth his judgments upon good and evil doers. As St. Peter says: "Governors are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" (I Peter 2:14).

## B. Crime

1. In the matter of wrong-doing a distinction should be made between injuries, crimes, and sins. We do an injury to an individual, commit a crime against the state, and sin against God. Now, it frequently happens that in a single act we do all of these things at once. Nevertheless to obscure the difference between them is to introduce unallowable confusion.

2. In cases where we suffer personal injury, we are forbidden by the apostle to avenge ourselves. "Beloved," he says, "never avenge yourselves but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Rom. 12:19). There is no such thing as punishment in purely nonauthoritative, interpersonal relations. In these contexts we are forbidden to repay evil with evil. (vs. 17). We are enjoined instead to forgive, and to overcome evil with good (vs. 21).

3. Vengeance belongs to God, and also, by his delegation, to the state. But the wrongs that the state is authorized and empowered to avenge are limited in number. The state may punish only crimes. What shall count as a crime is determined by political legislation and enactment. In many instances offenses that are thus designated as crimes are in themselves

neither moral faults nor sins against God, except of course indirectly, by virtue of the fact that we are to be "subject to the governing authorities." Parking for twenty minutes in a fifteen minute zone is a "crime," but not in and of itself something forbidden by the moral law. It is an offense created on grounds of expediency. It should be further observed that there are genuinely moral faults and religious offenses that in enlightened states are not, and in any state ought not to be, posited as crimes. To falsify one's golf score is a moral offense, and to take the Lord's name in vain is a religious offense, but the state has no proper jurisdiction over these. It has no authority over private morals or religious practices, except as these manifestly affect the common weal. Idolatry is a sin, but in and of itself it should nowhere be made into a crime subject to penal sanctions.

4. It remains true, however, that the state has wide jurisdiction over public behavior. Commissioned to preserve a just order, to protect the rights of all its citizens, and to enhance the well-being of society, the state is authorized and enjoined to attach penal sanctions to a long list of actions, which by that token become crimes subject to punishment. There are, however, lesser and greater crimes, and punishments should be large or small in proportion to the offenses. In the course of history some crimes have by legislative enactment been designated as capital, that is, of such seriousness and magnitude as to be punishable by death. The Old Testament Mosaic Code lists a great many of these, many of which we should regard not only as not capital, but not even as crimes, for example, picking up sticks on the sabbath and reproaching parents. In medieval times heresy was a capital crime, and for it one could be sent to the gibbet or the pyre. In 18th century England, pickpocketing and a hundred other crimes were punishable by death. In most contemporary penal codes the list of capital offenses has shrunk to include only three or four: murder, piracy, treason, and sometimes kidnapping and rape.

5. In the discussion of capital punishment which is to follow, the committee will restrict itself to a consideration of the crime called murder. The justification for this restriction lies in the fact that, as John Murray rightly observes, "Of all the sins which are concerned with our relations to our fellowmen, murder is *the* capital sin." It is this because as he further points out, "it is in a unique category because, as far as this world is concerned, there is no way of being reconciled to the victim of our wrongdoing."<sup>2</sup>

Before proceeding to a discussion of capital punishment it is necessary, however, to attain a clearer understanding of what is meant by punishment.

### *Punishment*

1. There is an ongoing dispute among moral theologians concerning the nature and function of punishment, and also concerning the warrant for it. Two fundamental theories occupy the field, and whether one favors the one or the other depends, it appears, on whether one sponsors a deontological or a teleological ethic.<sup>3</sup> The deontologist asks what is "right"; the teleologist asks what is "good." The one seeks to satisfy the

demands of justice; the other seeks to satisfy the demands of love. The deontologist thinks that punishment is an end in itself; the teleologist thinks it is a means to some further end. The one goes by Law; the other goes by the Gospel. The deontologist thinks punishment need do nothing more than balance accounts; the teleologist thinks that it ought to further the welfare of society. The one rejects utilitarianism; the other rejects legalism. The deontologist thinks that punishment is justified even though it serves no ancillary purpose; the teleologist thinks it is justified only if it serves to deter others, protect society, or reform the criminal.

2. Where in this conflict ought the Reformed Christian to stand? Is there a position which transcends both of these alternatives? The committee thinks there is. It would appear that all that is required is the recognition of a distinction between two quite different questions. The one question is: What is the *ground* of punishment? The other question is: What is the *purpose* of punishment? When these two questions are distinguished a real possibility of rapprochement is created.

3. What, then, are we to say to the question concerning the *ground* of punishment? What *justifies* the state to fine, incarcerate, or, in extremes, to execute a citizen? What *entitles* the state to deprive a citizen of his liberty, and exact from him a painful penalty? The teleologist, it appears, has no good answer to this question. If the state punishes merely to *deter* others from committing certain crimes, the fining, imprisonment, and even execution of innocent persons will serve the purpose, providing only, the public is, by appropriate propaganda techniques, persuaded that the alleged offense is painfully punishable. If the state punishes merely to *reform* or *rehabilitate* the offender, what is to prevent it from trying to "cure" a citizen who, on ideological or religious grounds, rightfully opposes the inequities and discriminations sponsored by the state? If the state punishes merely to *protect* itself, what is to prevent it from punishing not only the guilty but also all criminally prone people, and to do so *in extremis*, without regard to the magnitude of their real or supposed offense?

4. It appears, therefore, that punishment cannot be *grounded* on utilitarian considerations. What entitles a state to punish a citizen is the simple fact that he is an offender. If a citizen violates the law, if he disturbs the social order, if he subverts justice, he is liable to punishment. What authorizes the state to punish such a person is the requirement it is under to satisfy law. Punishment, therefore, is at the center retributive; it seeks to balance the scales of justice. In punishment it is not the sick that the state is out to *cure*; in punishment it is not the potential but non-actual criminal it is out to deter; in punishment it is only the offender, the guilty one, the one who has accumulated demerit, that the state may touch with its sword. And it may do so on no other ground, with no other license.

5. When once it has been established that only the guilty shall be punished, and when the principle of such punishment is recognized to be retribution, compensation, expiation, satisfaction, and the like, what of the other question, the question concerning ends? If punishment is once grounded on the principle of retribution, cannot the kind, and quality, and quantity of it be accommodated to the ends of deterrence, societal

protection, and rehabilitation? The committee thinks it can. It thinks so because it believes that Christian ethics has risen above the dichotomy of deontological and teleological motifs, and has sponsored a morality in which law and love, justice and benevolence, obedience and mercy have coalesced in the principle of obedient love.

6. After these preliminary observations on the state, crime, and punishment, the issue of capital punishment awaits determination. In what follows we shall, in the light of Scripture, address ourselves to three questions:

- I. Is capital punishment *mandatory*? That is, is the state unconditionally required to execute a person found guilty of murder in the first degree?
- II. Is capital punishment *permissible*? That is, is the state, under appropriate conditions, authorized or licensed to deprive a citizen, not merely of his liberty, but also of his life?
- III. Is capital punishment *prudent*? That is, is it under the circumstance prevailing in contemporary Western society, and in view of our knowledge about criminal pathology, advisable that the death penalty be attached to the crime of murder?

#### I. IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT *Mandatory*?

Is the state *unconditionally required* to execute a person judicially found guilty of murder in the first degree?<sup>4</sup>

##### A. *General Observations*

1. The issue here is not whether the Scriptures and Christian principles permit or prohibit capital punishment. The issue is whether they *demand* it, whether states are *obligated by God* to punish the responsible and guilty murderer with death. The issue is whether capital punishment for those who deliberately kill a human being is an *inviolable law of God*.

2. The question whether states are *obliged*, are in duty *bound*, to execute persons guilty of murder in the first degree is a complex and ambiguous question. It therefore can be answered only after it is restricted by definition and reservation.

3. If the established and operative criminal law of any state does *in fact* attach the penalty of death to the act of deliberate murder, then a faithful judge is by that very law *obliged*, after due process, to pass the death sentence upon the offender. The state is obviously *obliged*, by the principles of logic and prudence, to *enforce* through its courts and its police agents the laws it has enacted, as long as they are legally *in force*.

4. It is, of course, another question whether states are *obliged* to introduce or retain capital punishment into their penal system, that is, whether they are in duty *bound* to provide in law for the execution of murderers guilty in the first degree. But even this question is complex.

It is a sound principle of jurisprudence that no law should be enacted which has no or very little prospect of finding moral support and consequent observance within the community. Such a law should not be imposed upon the people, even though it be in theory a good law, which from an ideal point of view *ought* to be enacted. This sound jurispuden-

tial principle was applied in the construction of the Israelitish penal code. In an ideal or near-ideal state slavery *ought* to be outlawed, polygamy prohibited, and divorce strictly regulated. However, when Moses, under divine direction, framed laws for the people of Israel, he did not in fact enact such legislation. Although God wills monogamy, detests slavery, and is against divorce, Moses, who among the saints is eminent for faithfulness and obedience, recognized *no obligation* to embody these divine judgments in legal enactments. As a legislator he did not in fact prohibit all divorce, nor allow it only on the ground of adultery, willful desertion, or extreme cruelty. As the chief magistrate of a "stiff-necked" people he had to suit his legislation to the level of that people's moral awareness (cf. Matt. 19:7, 8). And this he did, allowing easy divorce on what appears to us the slimmest of grounds (Deut. 24:1-4). No doubt for the same reason, he did not—nor felt *obliged* to—prohibit by law such things as polygamy and slavery. Moses apparently understood that not everything that is "right" in God's sight is politically or jurisprudentially expedient, wise, and good.

5. But, it may still be asked, is not a morally disciplined people, alert and responsive to the will of God, and are not its magistrates who are similarly disciplined and responsive, *obliged* so to structure the laws of the state as to provide for the death penalty upon the crime of murder? Is it not God's will that, in a well ordered state shaped by Christian principles, the murderer should not merely be imprisoned, but executed? And is it not his will that the murderer be executed, not merely because his death keeps him from repeating his crime, or because it deters others from committing like offenses, or because in some general way it enhances the stability of the state, but simply because it is *right* that he *die*? In other words, should he not be executed because the divine righteousness *demand*s his death? Indeed, has the Lord not explicitly *commanded* his execution?

6. In the tradition of Reformed theology and ethics these questions have usually been answered in the affirmative. The literature, from ancient times up to the present, abounds with assertions that states which have abolished capital punishment are not merely unwise or imprudent; they are unmindful of or disobedient to the divine *command*. It is repeatedly said that capital punishment, at least in the case of murder, is *mandatory*; it is not only the right, it is the *duty* of states both to enact capital punishment laws and conscientiously to enforce them.

7. The arguments advanced in support of this thesis are formidable, and they are often conducted by men eminent for wisdom and piety. But now that we are considering the issue anew these arguments must be subjected to critical review and responsible assessment. What, then, are the arguments for the *mandatory* character of capital punishment?

### B. The Old Testament

1. Some Evangelicals, though very few Calvinists, seek to establish the case for compulsory capital punishment by citing the provisions of the *Mosaic Code*. In this code, they argue, murder was punishable by death, and since this penal provision enjoyed divine sanction, it should

be incorporated in the legal structure of contemporary states. The argument, of course, does not hold.

2. In the first place, it proves too much. Its force compels one to attach the death penalty to a host of other offenses, almost all of which the Christian would consider unworthy of this extreme punishment. If this should be denied, and it should be maintained that, while the penalty of death for witchcraft, blasphemy, Sabbath desecration, and the like have been cancelled, such penalty for murder remains in force, the reply would be that then one is not basing one's argument upon the Mosaic Code, but upon some other principle or instruction which entitles one to be selective relative to the code's provisions.

3. In the second place, it must be remembered that the civil code was intended for Israel's theocracy, not for our society. The moral law articulated in the Old Testament remains in force, but the civil law fell with the theocracy, just as the ceremonial law fell with the coming of the promised Savior (cf., *The Letter to the Hebrews*). As Richard Bodey says (in the *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, Vol. II, p. 347): "the civil jurisprudence of the Mosaic economy was a provisional aspect of the Jewish theocracy not binding outside ancient Israel." With this every responsible Reformed theologian would agree. No argument for capital punishment can be based upon the Mosaic Code as such.

4. The provisional nature of the Mosaic Code, it may be noted, bears also upon the arguments sometimes advanced by *opponents* of capital punishment. Adultery was punishable in Jewish law by death (cf. Lev. 20:10). There are abolitionists who therefore maintain that Jesus repudiated capital punishment when he did not deliver the woman taken in adultery into the hands of the authorities, but forgave her and sent her home with the admonition "sin no more" (cf. the disputed text, John 8:1-11). But this conclusion is untenable. Jesus did not address himself in the instance cited to the question that engages us. At the most his action testifies to the fact that Christian faith cancels the civil prescriptions of the Torah.<sup>5</sup>

5. When the Old Testament is invoked for support of the thesis that capital punishment for murder is divinely enjoined, the passage massively relied upon is contained in the ninth chapter of the book of Genesis, particularly verse six. This text, it is observed, relates to a time and circumstance which predates the Sinaitic covenant made with Moses; it reports provisions included in the covenant made with Noah. Since Noah is the second father of the human race, the covenant made with him is in essence made with all mankind. Its provisions are therefore universally relevant; they confer benefits and enjoin duties upon all peoples throughout all times. Among the duties it enjoins, so it is asserted, is the duty of men to execute murderers. The Genesis text—and its context—accordingly deserves the closest scrutiny.

*C. Genesis 9:6a—"Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed."*

1. On its face this text does indeed seem to provide a clear mandate for the imposition of the death penalty upon murderers. One can accor-

dingly generate initial sympathy for the traditional interpretation of it. Expressions of this interpretation abound, and to quote them all would take volumes, but the following may be taken as typical: "This passage gives man a *charge* to execute the death penalty" (J. Murray). "Genesis 9 establishes the fact that God has laid upon governments the *duty* to impose the death penalty" (M. Noordtzy).<sup>6</sup> "CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WAS DIVINELY decreed for first degree murder in Genesis 9:6" (G. A. Carey). "The government which fails to inflict the extreme penalty on the murderers is *sinning* against God" (H. J. Kuiper). "The Bible imposes upon the state the *solemn duty* to execute all persons duly convicted of murder" (C. Pronk). It is not pleasant to differ with one's brethren, and it is not comfortable to challenge an established tradition, but it is questionable whether the reigning interpretation of this sacred text can really stand up. There are several considerations which cast serious doubt upon it, and these considerations will now be passed in review.

## 2. Contextual Considerations

a. The pericope (Gen. 9:1-7) in which verse six stands has to do with human life (and death). Analysis seems to disclose that it deals with 1) the *propagation* of human life (verses 1 and 7), with 2) the *status* or *rank* of human life (verses 2 and 6b), with 3) the *sustenance* of human life (verses 3 and 4), and with 4) the *protection* or *preservation* of human life (verses 5 and 6a).

b. If this analysis is correct, it would appear that the *focus* of meaning in verse 6a (the passage we are considering) is not on retribution, but on societal *protection*. The emphasis is not on the shedding of the murderer's blood, but on the *purpose* (human preservation) which such shedding of blood may serve, and which in ancient times, when prisoners were non-existent, it no doubt did serve.

c. It is plain from verse 6b "for God made man in his own image. . ." that God places a high value on human life and that he wishes to safeguard it even at the price of executing those who destroy it. But if this goal of making life secure could be attained by the imposition of restraints short of execution, would he really be offended? Would not his gracious intent still be honored and his central purpose still be served, if by *any* means the offender against human life were effectually restrained?

d. Light is cast upon this issue by what is said in verse 5a. There we are told that God will require of every *beast* a reckoning of man's life blood. In other words, the text says that if an animal kills a man the animal is to be slain by man. But why? To *punish* the animal? To satisfy *retributive justice*? Of course not! Animals, especially those who slay and devour, act from impulse, and are not morally responsible. Quite obviously the animal is to be slain as a *safety measure*, in order to protect human life, and not to satisfy law. But the "command" concerning the offending animal is couched in the same terms as that concerning offending man. What, then, are we to conclude? Are we not entitled to conclude that we are here confronted not with a *command*, but with an allowable way in which we are enabled to serve God's purpose of protection and preservation? Certainly, we are *permitted* to kill animals that violate the human right to life, but are we *compelled* by a solemn divine

*commandment* to put them to death? If the offending animal can be suitably restrained, or rendered docile, are we yet *required* to end its life? It is unlikely that we are. By the same token we are not *required* to take the life of the human murderer.

### 3. Dietary Considerations

One wonders about the provision in the pericope about eating strangled animals whose blood has not been poured out. Verse 4 is couched in the same absolute terms as is verse 6. But what does it command? It seems to exclude blood in any form from the diet of mankind, and the Jews apparently understood the verse in this way. One cannot conclude that the Jerusalem Council so understood it; it was probably trying merely to effect a temporary truce between Jews and Gentiles when it bade the latter to abstain from "what is strangled and from blood" (Acts 15:20). However that may be, to go "kosher" cannot be a universally binding command of God. If there is a command in verse 4, as there doubtless is, it is the command to treat *life* ("blood") in any form with respect, and to manifest this respect by refraining from the savage habit of eating live flesh. Respect for life is indeed the theme throughout the whole pericope, but just as this respect need not take the form of eschewing *blut-wurst*, so it need not take the form of capital punishment.

### 4. Historical Considerations—The Case of Cain

a. It is said by those who find a timeless command in Genesis 9:6 that God wills every deliberate murderer to forfeit his life in recompense for his crime. But they encounter trouble when they consider the case of Cain. God, it will be remembered, sheltered Cain. The first murderer was banished indeed; he was ostracized from his erstwhile community; but he was not slain; "the Lord put a mark on Cain, lest anyone who came upon him should kill him" (Gen. 4:15).

b. There are those who say that before the time of Noah God dealt with murderers according to his own good pleasure, but that after the flood he commissioned *men* to vent his wrath upon them. This reasoning seems forced, but if it be valid it would still indicate that God considers times and circumstances, and that his will cannot in Greek fashion be statically eternalized.

c. J. P. Lange, accordingly, finds in the Cain incident "a proof that in the Christian humanitarian development the principle [that the murderer has forfeited his right in human society] may be realized in another form than through the literal, corporeal shedding of blood" (*Commentary on Genesis*, p. 331). This opinion is shared by Gordon C. Clark who, respecting the issue at hand, declares: "God's dealing with Cain. . . indicates that it is not absolutely necessary to execute every murderer" (*Christianity Today*, February 1, 1960, p. 353).

### 5. Historical Considerations—The Pre- and Post-Flood Periods

Professor Aalders in *Korte Verklaring (in loco)* suggests that if God did actually prescribe capital punishment in the immediate post-deluge era, this may have been for prudential reasons: to discourage resumption of

the pre-deluge violence. These are his words: "The explanation may well be herein that in the pre-deluge era violence had so dominated that it was now necessary, in order to prevent a recurrence of such violence, to still murderous passion with the threat of execution. "The implication is, of course, that in other times, and in other circumstances, such measures may not be necessary.

#### 6. *Historical Considerations: Be Fruitful and Multiply*

a. If there be in Genesis 9:6 an inviolable and universally binding command to execute murderers, then there is in Genesis 9:1, 7 a similar command to "be fruitful and multiply and to bring forth abundantly on the earth." But the latter command (if indeed it is a command!) is obviously time conditioned, and it would appear that, by the same token, so is the former one.

b. The statement "be fruitful and multiply" occurs several times in the Bible: It is first addressed to animals (Gen. 1:22) then to two people at the very beginning of human history (Gen. 1:28), then again to the animals as they disembark from the ark (Gen. 8:17), and then to the eight people who alone survived the Flood (Gen. 9:1, 7). The very fact that these words are addressed to animals makes it very doubtful that they should be viewed as a command; it is better to understand them as a blessing. But if one interprets them as a command (and many do) then in these historical situations the command was meaningful; God surely willed to have the nearly empty earth populated with human beings (and animals). And no doubt he still so wills to compensate for the toll that death regularly takes, he wants the human race to reproduce itself.

c. But human reproduction, from the nature of the case is always individualized; it occurs when in free association within the marriage bond two individuals, male and female, engage in sexual relations. Are we then to declare that a contemporary husband and wife who are joined in sexual union are *obliged* by God not only to reproduce but to "bring forth abundantly"? Surely not! A Christian couple has every right, by the employment of contraceptive means, to limit the number of children to be born. Indeed, in a day when over-population threatens to compromise the true quality of human life, many Christians feel that their duty to society requires such limitation upon reproduction.

d. In analogous fashion, a contemporary state may, in the exercise of its discretionary powers and with due regard to the historical situation, hold as non-binding what has sometimes been understood as the injunction of Gen. 9:6. It is important to recognize that our response to divine revelation is not to be mechanical, but rather such that the letter of the law does not destroy the spirit of it.

#### 7. *Juridical Considerations*

a. When Genesis 9:6 is considered from a juridical point of view the first thing to be observed is that the death penalty is here attached exclusively to the offense of killing, or murder. If capital punishment be advocated for other crimes—e.g., for kidnapping, rape, mutiny, or treason—such advocacy can not rest upon the text under consideration. It could, of course, be argued on other grounds that there is more than

one offense against society which deserves the penalty of death. It could even be argued that, since it tends to put many lives in jeopardy, treason is a *form* of murder and therefore within the purview of this text. But, strictly speaking, only the actual spilling of blood is contemplated in Genesis 9. Warrant is here provided neither for the wide-ranging penal provisions of the Mosaic code, nor for the non-homicidal capital crimes embodied in the codes of many modern states.

b. That we are not dealing in our text with a strictly *legal* prescription divinely imposed upon modern states is evident from the fact that the "blood-spilling" which is to be avenged lacks juridical specification. No distinction is made between accidental, negligent, and willful homicide; and within willful homicide no distinction is made between crimes of passion and those which are planned with scheming malice. Those, however, who consider Gen. 9:6 to be a *law* binding upon magistrates tend to ignore this fact. Almost without exception they modify the text and read it as saying that only deliberate first-degree murder deserves the death penalty. For this there is no excuse. This is to put into the text what is simply not there. If we are dealing here with a law, a legal enactment, then, without any qualification whatever, "whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed." But no one really believes that this is God's will. It will, of course, not do to appeal to the rest of the Old Testament for a more specific commentary on this text. It will not suffice to cite the distinction made in the Mosaic Code between accidental and non-accidental homicide, and declare that in these later disclosures God clarified the previously unspecified intention he embodies in the Noachian covenant. We should in that case be bound to declare that by these same later disclosures God exempts from capital punishment a man who beats his slave to death (Exodus 20:13; 21:20, 21) or commits a homicide in which there are less than two witnesses (Numbers 35:30). God no doubt wills us to distinguish between accidental and non-accidental homicide. But neither Genesis 9:6 *as such*, nor Israelitish legislation *as such*, provides warrant for the distinction. An argument *based* on the Mosaic penal code commits the one conducting it to more than one can Christianly bear. An argument *based* on Genesis 9:6 commits one to demand the death penalty for any and every homicide, whatever the circumstances may be. The latter cannot therefore be taken as a law, or as a juridical requirement. If it were so taken it would license unjust executions and subvert righteousness.

c. If it is not to be taken as a law or legal enactment, how is it to be taken? The *form* of the expression, "Whoever sheds the blood of man by man shall his blood be shed," suggests an answer. The text embodies the chiasmic *structure* typical of Hebrew wisdom literature, as the following literally translated order demonstrates:

Shedding    blood of    man    by    man    his blood    will be shed

We seem to be dealing here, accordingly, not with a piece of legislation but with something like a proverb. Expressions falling into this literary

genre are familiar to all, and are not foreign to the Bible. We are told, for example that "He who lives by the sword shall perish by the sword;" or again, "What a man sows that shall he reap." There is profound truth in these utterances, and a wise man will give them due heed. But they are not juridical in nature, and are not to be taken as legal prescriptions. By the same token, neither is Genesis 9:6a.

d. Of singular juridical interest and importance is the question concerning the *agent* of the vengeance contemplated in our text. "By *man* shall his blood be shed" we are told. Now it is a curious fact that those who discover in this text a mandate to execute murderers almost invariably translate "man" by "duly constituted governmental authorities." It is recognized, of course, even by them, that there is no warrant in the text for such a translation. They accordingly find warrant for it in other biblical passages, notably in Romans 13:4, where the governing authorities are declared to be "the servants of God to execute His wrath on the wrongdoer." No Bible believer would of course care to call into question the plain teaching of Romans 13, but he might well ask whether justice is done to the Genesis passage by ignoring or slighting its historical context. It is clear from the account in Genesis 9 that no state furnished with a penal code and judicial system was in existence. The word that came to Noah about "man" as "avenger" could therefore not have been taken by him as meaning "established government," even though he must have retained in memory a knowledge of the artistic and industrialized city states established by Cain's descendants (Gen. 4:17-22). What Noah understood, and what the word addressed to him really meant *at the time*, was that the vindication of justice lay in the hands of the *go'el* (the Avenger), the nearest relative of the victim of the crime. As is stated in *Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Vol I, p. 422):

The avenger of blood is a figure that appears in primitive justice. By ancient custom it was the right, indeed the duty, of persons (the nearest of kin) to avenge the slaying of a relative. This is perhaps why Cain feared for his life after slaying Abel (Gen. 4:14), and why Lamech sought to justify himself (Gen. 4:23,24). It also is likely that Jehovah sanctioned this kind of retributive justice in the still un-institutionalized society of the immediate post-flood period when he announced the principle of reckoning and reprisal reported in Genesis 9:5,6.

Since individual blood vengeance was widespread in the Near East before the formation of the people of Israel, it is evident that Moses did not institute the custom. The Mosaic legislation did, however, recognize and allow [regulate] it [Numbers 35:19,21; Deut. 19:12; Judges 8:18-21]; the Avenger of Blood was a figure well known in Israel at least until the time of David (2 Sam. 14:7,8).

Of course, no Christian would today sponsor the ancient Avenger of Blood. By the same token every Christian should hesitate to ground a case for mandatory capital punishment on Genesis 9:6.

e. In considering whether in Genesis 9 a specific law ("murderers *must* be executed") is imposed upon modern states by God, we might ask, finally, whether God is truly honored or rightly conceived when he

is apprehended as a political legislator or as a framer of penal codes. God is indeed the King of kings, and for their guidance he has enunciated truths and published principles which he wills that they observe. Human magistrates could know, accordingly, that they are obliged by God to esteem men highly, to cherish personal life, to protect the innocent, to curb violence, to punish criminals, to maintain order, to foster peace, to establish justice and equity, and the like. But they could also know that God does not supplant them, depriving them of their responsibility to arrange the affairs of state in accordance with divinely revealed principles of equity and order. God wills that people should be governed by human agents responsive to his will, but he accords these agents freedom to enact legislation suitable to time and circumstance, and he leaves them in full possession of their *discretionary* powers in the administration of distributive and punitive justice. God, in short, does not dictate penal laws or prescribe court procedures. He leaves this in the hands of his appointed servants.

It is gratifying to observe that this is widely recognized by those in the Reformed community who have been most active in Christian politics—the Dutch Calvinists. Professor Aalders, for example, while acknowledging that the state has the *right*, and even in some cases the *duty*, to inflict capital punishment upon murderers, concedes that “one is not entitled to say that every one who deliberately deprives another of his life *must* be executed. The state has the right to delineate in its penal laws the cases in which it shall or shall not impose the penalty of death. It may and must reckon with time, place, and circumstances” (*Korte Verklaring*, Comm. on Gen. 9:6). It should be noted, too, that in the Program of Principles enunciated by the Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands it is declared: “Punishment is administered primarily in the interest of restoring the order of justice that has been violated. To this end the death penalty may *if necessary* [*zonodig*] be applied.” The platform of the Christian Historical Union says virtually the same thing, but employs the Dutch word *desnoods* (“if necessary” or “in a pinch”). Commenting on these declarations Professor Klaas Runia observes: “It is clear how *careful* both programs are. One should notice the words ‘if necessary’ [*zonodig*—*desnoods*]. Neither party pleads for a multifarious application of the *right* to administer capital punishment” (*De Wachter*, 8 Maart 1977).

## 8. Other Considerations

a. The committee is, of course, aware of the fact that the Hebrew verb *yishshaphik*, translated “shall be shed,” may also be translated “will be shed.” Being in the imperfect tense it can be understood in the descriptive or predictive as well as in the prescriptive sense. The committee has not wished, however, to exploit this circumstance or rest its case, even in part, upon the latitude which the grammar affords. While denying that Genesis 9:6 imposes a timeless and unqualified (and unqualifiable) obligation upon states, it concedes that the imperative form of the ambiguous word is most consonant with the thrust of the entire passage. But the imperative *form* alone is not decisive. Many utterances, like “be careful” or “take route 80” are in this form but they are hypothetical im-

peratives; they say, "if you want to avoid injury, be careful," or "if you want to get to Des Moines take route 80." Utterances like these are quite unlike *categorical* imperatives, which impose unconditional obligations. As we have contended in the foregoing, there is no warrant for regarding Genesis 9:6 as a categorical imperative.

b. The committee is also aware of the fact that in the Mosaic legislation the execution of the murderer had an expiatory or cleansing function. The death of the criminal served to "purge the guilt of innocent blood from Israel" (Deut. 19:11ff). Also, as is well known, the Israelites abstained from the consumption of blood, presumably on the ground that it was the seat of life, and as such belonged to its Giver; wherefore it was offered in sacrifice to God. With this in view some have argued that since "blood" figures prominently in the Genesis passage, capital punishment is there also meant to be expiatory. And therefore, so the argument continues, capital punishment is not only not mandatory, it is not or no longer permissible, for "the sacrifice of Christ is the end of all expiatory killing."<sup>7</sup> The committee wishes not to employ this argument, nor even to endorse it. As has at several points been made clear, no good purpose is served by confusing the Mosaic and pre-Mosaic areas. And, in addition, it is unwarranted to hold that the suffering incident to punishment serves to expiate the guilt either of the criminal or of the society that penalizes him.

#### *In Summary*

Not taking recourse to the *grammatical* and *theological* argument sometimes employed by those who contest the traditional interpretation of Genesis 9:6, the committee nevertheless holds that on the other grounds adduced (i.e., 2. Contextual Considerations, 3. Dietary Considerations, 4-6 Historical Considerations, 7. Juridical Considerations—cf. above) it is clear that Genesis 9:6 may not be appealed to as providing a timeless, universal, and unqualified divine mandate upon the civil magistrate to execute the murderer.

#### *D. The New Testament*

1. Those who hold that modern states are *obliged* by God to execute criminals found guilty of murder in the first degree, do not normally base their case on the New Testament. For them Genesis 9:6 is basic and determinative. If they do appeal to the New Testament at all it is usually to Romans 13:1-4. We shall, accordingly, have to deal seriously with this crucial passage. But before doing so we shall consider certain other New Testament texts which, while generally inconsequential to our study, are nevertheless sometimes cited in defense of capital punishment.

##### *2. Matthew 5:31, 32*

John Murray mounts a *general* argument for mandatory capital punishment on the basis of this text. He declares: "Nothing in the New Testament pertaining to this institution [of capital punishment] is parallel to what must be interpreted as our Lord's abrogation of the death penalty for adultery" (*Eternity*, June 1961, p. 23). Murray is here saying that, while at least one New Testament text abrogates the death penalty for

adultery, no New Testament text abrogates the death penalty for murder. This is doubtless true, but the fact is not germane. The argument *assumes* that Genesis 9:6 *demand*s the death penalty for murder and then concludes that since the New Testament does not cancel the Genesis text the *command* still stands. However, all that Murray's argument in fact establishes is that the Genesis passage is not in the purview of the New Testament writers, and that no New Testament judgment is made concerning it.

### 3. *Matthew 5:21-22*

This passage is adduced by Jacob C. Vellenga in an article in *Christianity Today* (12 October 1959). He argues: "Christ speaks of hate and murder: 'You have heard that it was said of old, You shall not kill, and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment (capital punishment). But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment (capital punishment). It is evident that Jesus was not condemning the established law of capital punishment, but was actually saying that hate deserved capital punishment'" (p. 8). The speciousness of this argument is patent. The equation here of "judgment" with "capital punishment" is totally gratuitous and exegetically absurd. Certainly magistrates are not hereby obliged to execute a man for being angry with another.

### 4. *Matthew 10:28*

The same Dr. Vellenga judges that on the basis of this text people who challenge the alleged mandatoriness of capital punishment display an undue squeamishness about the death of a criminal, and a certain blindness to the redemptive value of penal executions. He says: "We, who are supposed to be Christian make too much of physical life. Jesus said, 'and do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.' Laxness in law tends to send both soul and body to hell." Whatever may be the case respecting the overvaluation of physical life and the consequences of laxness in law, nothing in the text cited bears upon these issues. Jesus is here saying that we should fear God rather than man, since our ultimate destiny rests in divine rather than in human hands. However, in the proffered interpretation Jesus is, by a most curious exegetical move, made to pronounce on the desirability of capital punishment, and to do so on the ground that the soul is worth more than the body. The argument is spurious and is not unlike that employed by some medieval theologians who alleged that soul destroying heretics are more deserving of capital punishment than body destroying murderers. But who would today plead for the execution of religious dissenters?

### 5. *Matthew 26:52*

In a rather recent article C. Pronk writes: "Christ said to Peter: 'Put up again thy sword into his place; for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.'" Jesus refused to be defended by the sword. . . . Yet, notice that in the same breath he asserts that there is also a proper use of the sword" (*The Outlook*, April 1976, p. 29). But does he so assert? Here, in this place? It would appear that he does *not*. Jesus is here making a generalized statement to the effect that rashness usually has dire consequences. He is asserting that men of violence may expect to be paid back

in kind. Or, if not this, he is saying that under existing Roman law an assault upon the emperor's law enforcement agents, to say nothing of their slaying, will subject a man to the death penalty. There is here no hint of a value judgment. There is here no reference at all to the propriety or non-propriety of capital punishment.

6. *Mark 7:9-13*

In an unsigned essay entitled *Should the Death Penalty be Retained in Canada* the writer cites Jesus in support of mandatory capital punishment. He says: "In Mark 7:9-13 he [Jesus] referred to the Law's penalty of death for evil speech against parents as 'the commandment of God.'" The author goes on to say: "While claiming authority to amend the Jewish legal and moral code, Jesus . . . never amends it by way of relaxation . . . but by tightening up, declaring that God requires more" (p. 5, 6). In this long essay a number of admirable things are said, but the author's interpretation of this Markan passage is seriously mistaken. Is Jesus now to be enlisted as a sponsor not only of the death penalty for evil speech against parents, but for even more besides? All Jesus declares in this passage is that the Mosaic law did in fact require the death penalty for the verbal abuse of parents. He does not enjoin a similar prescription upon modern magistrates. He reports; he does not oblige. Is it even remotely possible that there is a jurist among us who, in obedience to Christ, would advocate imposing the death sentence upon disrespectful children?

7. *Luke 23:41*

John Vriend cites the words of the penitent thief on the cross in support of the thesis that capital punishment for thieves is only just. He says: "When his eyes and heart opened to the Sin-bearer next to him he acknowledged the justice of his own execution and rebuked the mocker on the other side. . . . This is the judgment of a sanctified conscience" (*Christian Courier*, April 22, 1966). We doubt whether the writer would wish to make thievery a capital crime. In any case, all the thief was doing was acknowledging that Roman law attached the death penalty to theft and that his own execution was in accordance with that law, and therefore *legally* just.

8. *John 19:10-11*

The text reads: "Pilate said. . . 'do you not know that I have power. . . to crucify you?'. Jesus answered him, 'you would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above.'" These words have been construed by some as indicating that Jesus *approved* of capital punishment and even that he considered the infliction of such punishment a *duty* laid upon magistrates by God. The anonymous essayist cited earlier, remarks: "Our Lord's acknowledgment. . . involved a measure of *approval* of some of the sanctions employed by Roman administrators. . . including the use of the sword in the execution of murderers" (p. 5). Another commentator remarks, "Jesus refers to this power [to execute a man] as a divinely given power in order to impress upon Pilate his *duty* to exercise it in accordance with the canons of justice" (J. Vriend, *Christian Courier*, April 22, 1966). But this is surely to read into the text what is not to be found in it. It is a fact, of course, that God opposes anarchy, wills government, and empowers

magistrates. The power they possess is not in the last instance derived from the governed through a social compact; it is derived from God. Jesus in this passage acknowledges this fact, or better, he discloses it. But he does not here express himself on the use (or abuse) of this God-given power. He does not impose on Pilate the *duty* to use this power in the way Pilate proposes to use it; nor does he *approve* (or disapprove) of such use. He merely accepts at face value Pilate's claim that he is authorized and empowered by Roman law to crucify offenders, and reminds (or informs) him of the fact that behind all states and all law is the God who wills government and who empowers governors even when they abuse power and do evil, as e.g., when they crucify the sinless Savior of the world.

9. *Acts 25:11*

Paul said to Festus, "If then I am a wrongdoer, and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death." On the basis of this text several writers have recruited Paul in support of capital punishment. John Murray thinks that in this utterance "Paul recognized that some crimes were *worthy of death*" (*Eternity*, June 1961, p. 23). C. Pronk endorses this view by declaring that Paul's statement "clearly implies that in his judgment there were offenses for which the appropriate penalty is death" (*The Outlook*, April 1976, p. 30). These writers are joined by a writer in the *Sunday School Times* (April 25, 1959, p. 6), and by another in the *Christian Courier* (April 22, 1966). There is, however, no warrant in this text for these conclusions. It seems clear that in this place Paul is merely declaring, as most Christians today would declare in similar circumstances, that his respect for God instituted government and its tribunals is such that if he were found guilty of some offense he would obediently submit himself to the verdict of the court, even though the death sentence were attached to the alleged offense and he knew himself to be innocent of the charge (cf. vs. 10). Lewis B. Smedes puts the matter quite accurately and succinctly when he declares that Paul is here saying that "if he has indeed committed what was in fact a capital offense (according to existing law) he would not run. All it tells us is that Paul had no intention of being capital punishment. All it tells us is that Paul had no intention of being from martyrdom" (*Action*, December 1964, p. 19).

10. There remains to be considered as the last item in this section an argument which rests, not on some one New testament text, but on a momentous *event*, the central event in redemptive history, *the crucifixion of our Lord*. The Cross of Christ, it is said by some, validates the institution of capital punishment. The argument goes something like this: Since without the shedding of blood there is no redemption, and since redemption is the goal of God's saving plan, God sanctions the judicial shedding of blood, and is in fact dependent on it for the realization of his beneficent purposes. We accordingly find Dr. Vellenga saying: "It is significant that when Jesus voluntarily went the way of the Cross he chose the capital punishment of his day as his instrument to save the world" (*Christianity Today*, October 12, 1959, p. 9). To this Gordon Clark adds the following: "Dr. Vellenga's reference to the crucifixion as a point in favor of capital punishment is not so irrelevant as the opposition

alleges, for the death penalty was not merely Pilate's decision to be regarded as mistaken; rather it was God who had foreordained that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin!" (*Christianity Today*, February 1, 1960, p. 9). In an almost unbroken series of dubious arguments for capital punishment this is surely among the most unacceptable. There is a mystery in redemption that eludes our comprehension, and we cannot penetrate with our finite intelligence the secrets of God's providential arrangements, but we do know that in a broken world God often attains his good ends by making men's evil deeds serviceable thereto. And we also know that such evil deeds are not on this account rendered any the less evil. The sin of Adam remained a sin even though it became the gateway for a new and dwondrous display of God's love for mankind. The sale of Joseph into Egypt was a sin even though it made possible the physical and spiritual salvation of God's elect people. These things going so, we are emphatically not entitled to declare that God approved of Pilate's judicial verdict and his cruel sentence, or sponsored capital punishment, on no other ground than that it became the channel of redemption. Was not our Lord's crucifixion, in fact, the world's greatest crime, even though it mediated God's greatest gift?

#### E. Romans 13:4

1. Romans 13:4 with its companion text (I Peter 2:13-14) is not in a class with those just passed in review. It quite obviously bears centrally on the issue of capital punishment. The message of the text is not apprehended in the same way by all, but there are few, if any, who deny its relevance to the question under consideration. It therefore deserves careful attention. Because it does, it will be considered not only here, but also in the second main division of this report. At this point in our discussion, however, we shall, in accordance with the basic outline which has been established, inquire, not whether Paul (and Peter) *authorize* states to execute criminals, i.e., confer on them the *right* to inflict capital punishment, but whether they, as messengers of God, impose upon states the *duty* to do so.

2. There are those who find capital punishment *mandated* in Romans 13. The controlling word and phrase underlying and ostensibly sustaining this view are "sword" and "not in vain." The argument goes something like this: The "sword," while symbolizing also lesser punishments and sanctions, extends by every rule of language and logic to beheading or some other forms of execution. The phrase "not in vain" signifies that the magistrate must make the sword *effective*, i.e., the phrase obliges him to *exercise* the power of death with which he has been furnished; it obliges him to *practice* capital punishment. Thus J. C. Sikkel is quoted in *De Wachter* of April 5, 1960 as saying, "It is the duty of the state to bear the sword. . . in order to shed the blood of those who shed the blood of man." And C. Pronk declares, "As the ancient symbol of the civil magistrate's power over life and death, the sword has its necessary function in human society. . . The Bible imposes upon the state the solemn duty to execute all persons duly convicted of murder" (*The Outlook*, April 1976, pp. 29f.). These contentions are supported by John Vriend, who says: "The sword is a symbol, as it was once an instrument,

of the power to take the life of a wrongdoer. This sword the government is to make effective, as is implied in the words 'not in vain' " (*Christian Courier*, April 22, 1966).

3. Leaving aside for the moment the question whether the state is *authorized* by Romans 13 to execute criminals, can it rightly be said that the state is *obliged* by this Scripture to execute even the most deliberate and responsible murderer? It would seem not. It may be conceded that the word "sword" indicates the *obligation* the state is under to avenge wrongs and inflict punishments. It may also be conceded that the phrase "not in vain" *obliges* the state not to be remiss or lax in the administration of penal justice. But these expressions do not oblige the state to "go the limit" when in its responsible judgment the ends of justice and security can be attained by lesser restraints. We maintain, therefore, that there is nothing in Romans 13 (or in I Peter 2) which says that every state, in every time, and under any and every circumstance *must* execute a first degree murderer, or else become guilty of disobeying a divine command.

#### F. The Creeds

Since we should regulate our life and thought not only by the sacred Scriptures, but also by the Creeds to which we have freely assented, we shall here set down the credal pronouncements which bear upon the issues of justice, punishment, and civil government, and, by indirection, upon the death penalty in modern jurisprudence.

##### 1. The Heidelberg Catechism

- a. *Lord's Day 4—Answer 11*  
God's justice demands that sin, committed against his supreme majesty, be punished with the supreme penalty—eternal punishment of body and soul.
- b. *Lord's Day 5—Answer 12*  
God requires that his justice be satisfied. Therefore the claims of his justice must be paid in full. . . .
- c. *Lord's Day 6—Answer 16*  
God's justice demands it: man has sinned, man must pay for his sin. . . .
- d. *Lord's Day 36—Answer 100*  
No sin is greater [than blasphemy], no sin makes God more angry than blaspheming his name. That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.
- e. *Lord's Day 40—Answer 105*  
I am not to belittle, insult, hate or kill my neighbor. . . rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge. . . . Prevention of murder is also why government is armed with the sword.

##### 2. The Belgic Confessions

###### a. Article 20

We believe that God, who is perfectly merciful and just, sent his Son to assume that nature in which the disobedience was commit-

ted, to make satisfaction in the same, and to bear the punishment of sin by his most bitter passion and death. . . .

b. *Article 36*

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 evildoers and for the protection of them that do well.*

3. *The Canons of Dort*

a. *Second Head of Doctrine—Article 1*

. . . His [God's] justice requires . . . that our sins committed against his infinite majesty should be punished, not only with temporal but with eternal punishments, both in body and soul. . .

b. *Second Head of Doctrine—Article 2*

. . . He [God] has been pleased . . . to give his only begotten Son for our Surety. . . that he might make satisfaction to divine justice on our behalf.

4. *Comment*

- a. In the creeds we clearly profess that God is just, that his justice requires satisfaction, and that his justice is satisfied only when sin is duly punished.
- b. By the Catechism we are committed to declare that God commanded the death penalty for blasphemy (L.D. 36). Subscribers to this creed will doubtless acknowledge that this commandment pertained to the Israelitish theocracy, and does not oblige Christian legislators and magistrates to make blasphemy a capital crime.
- c. It is interesting and instructive to observe to what extent the deterrence principle colors the language of the creeds when the civil government is under discussion. The Catechism (L.D. 40) arms the government with the sword for the purpose of *prevention*, and the Belgic Confession does so for the purpose of *restraint* (Art. 36).
- d. Most germane to the inquiry we are presently conducting—whether modern states are obliged by a divine command to execute first degree murderers—is the fact that the creeds commit no one to an affirmative answer.

G. *Justice—"an eye for an eye"*

1. If no biblical text or group of texts *demand* that murderers shall be executed, and if no article in the creeds requires such punishment, perhaps some fixed principle does, for example, the principle of justice. After all, at the heart of justice is the notion of *equality* of balance, and it seems only fair that he who takes a life should forfeit his own. There is also in justice the notion of *desert*, and it can plausibly be argued both that the murderer deserves to die, and that he should be given what he

deserves. It is not surprising, therefore, to find in the literature on capital punishment a steady appeal to the principle of justice, particularly by those who favor the retention of the death penalty, and especially by those who regard the exaction of that penalty as a God imposed duty.

2. Typical of such appeals are the following: "It is just that the killer must himself be killed. . . to restore the just order of society which he has made unstable by his bloody deed. . . 'as a man soweth so shall he reap' (Gal. 6:7)" (H. Taylor, *The Biblical View of the Death Penalty*, p. 4). "The whole idea of a just sentence. . . is to inflict upon the wrongdoer an injury, symbolic or real, equivalent to that of which he is guilty" (J. Vriend, *Christian Courier*, April 22, 1966). "The Word of God. . . clearly teaches that the murderer deserves to die. . . *Any punishment short of the taking of life leaves the crime of murder unavenged and unatoned* (H.J. Kuyper, *The Banner*, April 3, 1931, p. 309). "Capital punishment is the only way whereby the justice of God can vindicate itself against the murderer. . . . Because the murderer has forfeited his right to live in human society, divine justice demands that he die" (R. Bodey, "Capital Punishment," *Encyclopedia of Christianity*, Vol. II. p. 348). "God is just and. . . he rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked in exact proportion to their deeds. And he demands the same from his ministers, the civil authorities. Any nation therefore which allows the murderer to live in its midst. . . is held guilty before God of that very crime" (C. Pronk, *The Outlook*, April 1976, p. 30). A full response to these representations would require such a thorough treatment of the complex question of justice as would draw this report out to inordinate lengths. Perhaps the following comments will suffice to clarify the issue, and assist the reader to assess the force of the proffered arguments.

3. There are three basic kinds of justice, corresponding to the three basic relations or fundamental structures of communal life. These are: (a) *Reciprocal*, contractual, or commutative justice, which orders the relations between individuals; (b) *Distributive* or ministering justice, which orders the relations between the community as such and the individuals who are its members; and (c) *General* or legal justice, which orders the member's relation to the social whole (cf. J. Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, pp. 71-72). *Retributive* justice is, as is evident, a branch of distributive justice. What is worth noting is that distributive (and retributive) justice do not, like reciprocal or commutative justice, aim at exact equality. The latter, which deals with exchanges, seeks to establish a strict balance of accounts—a *quid pro quo*. Distributive or retributive justice does not do this. In the words of R. C. Mortimer, "It endeavours to assess what is the just *proportion* of the total wealth, or honor, or whatever it may be, of the community which an individual should receive, having due regard to the amount to be distributed and to the value and need of the recipient" (*Elements of Moral Theology*, p. 198). What this means, relative to the current discussion, is that in retributive justice (just punishment) attention must be given not only to the individual, nor only to some abstract law, but also to the social whole, in particular to the "good" of that whole—the *Bonum Commune*. In determining what punishment is just one may not ignore either the complicity of society in the crime, or the effects the proposed punishment

will have on the welfare of the social whole.

4. Justice requires that every man be given his "due." In general, what is due a man is to be treated as a "person." As a person he is both "like" and "unlike" every other person: "like" in that as a creature made in God's image he enjoys with all men an "equal" dignity and worth; "unlike" in that as a unique *individual* he enjoys an unshared particularity which requires that he be treated "differently" and "unequally." What is "due" a man is thus a quotient of both his generic nature and his specific identity. In distributive justice what is due a man is such a share of goods, services, offices, rewards, and punishments as is commensurate with his generic-specific status and achievements. In retributive justice what is due a man is such punishment for offenses against the moral or legal order as will "right" the imbalance his offenses have created, or such mitigation of penalties as shall enable the offender to redress, by positive contributions, the wrongs he has committed. In general, retributive justice requires that the punishment "fit" the crime. In no case should it exceed what is commensurate with the ill-desert incurred. There is nothing in retributive justice as such which requires that punishment be *identical* with the offense. Retributive justice is satisfied when the punishment *symbolizes* the offense and is proportional to it, or when the punishment, if shortened, leads to social healing.

5. This may be the place to give attention to the Old Testament *lex talionis*, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" (Exodus 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21).

a. The first thing to be observed is that this law is not to be taken literally. No one is by this law entitled to suggest that if a man assaults another and deprives him of his sight, the offender's eye should be removed. The justice which the law enunciates is not the "justice" of "life for life" which the supporters of mandatory capital punishment usually rely upon. The expression "an eye for an eye" enunciates a principle, the *principle of compensation*, the honoring of which is accomplished in commensurability; it does not enunciate a policy, or make a concrete practical proposal.

b. The second thing to be observed is that the *lex talionis* was from the outset a *negative* law. It was designed to *restrict* punishment. It said to magistrates, "exact no more than an eye for an eye." It said, "no penalty may be in *excess* of the crime." It did not lay down a *positive* rule, a rule authorizing and compelling magistrates to demand the last farthing. It was because the Pharisees mistakenly interpreted the law in this strict way that they aroused the anger of our Lord. As D. Martin Lloyd Jones says in his *Studies in the Sermon on the Mount*, the Pharisees whom Jesus addresses in Matthew 5:38-39 "regarded it, in their typical *legalistic* manner as a matter of *right* and *duty* to have 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' To them it was something to be insisted upon rather than something which should be restrained. They were turning a negative injunction into a positive one" (pp.272-273).

6. A good deal of confusion has been introduced into ethics by those who fail to discriminate between *love* and *justice*, and we have no wish to compound that confusion. But one or two things pertaining to the love-justice relation may here be suitably considered.

a. It may be pointed out, in the first place, that in the dispensing of justice one cannot go by law alone. As Emil Brunner says: "Law of necessity generalizes; it embraces in one rule a multiplicity of cases. Every law is a *scheme*. It does not discriminate, and therefore can never 'do justice' to the single human being as a unique individuality. Only love can do that" (*Justice and the Social Order*, p. 22). The Biblical term *righteousness* connotes a similar profound commingling of justice and love (cf. Ps. 31:1, "in thy righteousness deliver me"; cf. also Ps. 37:21; 71:2; 85:10; 116:5; etc.). As Joseph Sittler says, "Righteousness is a term used to designate human life springing from, determined by, and accountable to the life of God. It is a thoroughly theonomous term. That is why, although faith-active-in-love ought to relate itself to all in human life which seeks justice, this faith can never... be at rest with the achievements of justice" (*The Structure of Christian Ethics*, p. 79).

b. There is, in the second place, the matter of *forgiveness* or *pardon*. One hears it said that the pardoning of a guilty criminal is not within the competence of a magistrate; for him to forgive and not to punish is, we are told, to grossly subvert justice. Hebden Taylor, for example, declares: "Only God... can forgive murderers and for any civil or criminal judge or ruler to exercise such prerogatives of forgiveness in the sense of letting the convicted criminal free without first having made proper expiation and satisfaction is blasphemous, since God alone has the moral authority to forgive men of their trespasses" (*The Biblical View of the Death Penalty*, p. 7). Ignoring the fact that the last clause in this statement is irrelevant, since the issue is not that of "forgiving sins" but of "remitting punishment," we may rightly ask whether "judicial pardons" are really "blasphemous." To pardon means to accuse; it is only the guilty who can be forgiven; it is only he who has been convicted of an offense who can be treated with judicial mercy. Does justice outlaw such mercy? Can forgiveness never be lawful? Does the retributive theory of punishment—which we endorse—preclude all remission of due punishment? Is it not rather the other way around? Is it not the case that, if punishment were exemplary alone, forgiveness would always be wrong, and that only on the basis of retributive justice can it ever be right? We believe that there is room for judicial mercy and pardon, although we acknowledge that they must be exercised to promote and not subvert justice.

7. It would appear from all this that justice can not be made to sponsor the mandatoriness of the death penalty in every case of deliberate murder.

#### H. *The Sancitivity of Human Life: The Image of God*

1. Another principle appealed to in support of mandatory capital punishment is that of the dignity and worth of human life.

a. Basic to the argument here conducted is the admitted fact that man is made in the image of God. Human life is not only God-given' it is God-like. If a murderer slays a man, he assaults not only man, but also God who is uniquely manifest in man. As Calvin says "Men are indeed unworthy of God's care, if respect be had only to themselves; but since

they bear the image of God engraven on them, he deems himself violated in their person" (*Commentary on Gen. 9:6*).

b. From these basic facts—that man is made in the image of God, and that an assault upon man is an assault upon God—an inferential argument is framed concerning legal punishments. Ignoring or minimizing the fact that even the slightest assault upon man (usually unattended by legal sanctions) violates his dignity and demeans both him and his Maker, it is contended that a mortal assault upon man is so utterly demeaning that God's honor and man's dignity can be vindicated and restored only by putting the murderer to death. The contention centrally is that only by imposing the death penalty upon murderers can society and the state keep alive in the public consciousness an awareness of man's true dignity and stature. Expressing this view is Leonard Verduin, who says: "... human life is so precious (because man is the image bearer of God) that he who takes it must make amends by forfeiting his own." And he asks "Have we begun to think so lightly of the image of God that we are prepared to ask no more than a year or two in jail (perhaps), when a lifetime in jail is still too short in the sight of God?" (*The Reformed Journal*, Sept. 1976, pp. 8f.). In like fashion, Dr. Hebden Taylor declares: "Deliberate destruction of this image in man is not only an act of rebellion against God's sovereignty, but an assault on the life of God in man, for which no punishment can be too drastic." And he adds: "If we abolish the death penalty... [society will take] a less serious view of the sanctity of human life" (*The Biblical View of the Death Penalty*).

c. But there is more. Besides the socio-political argument that capital punishment witnesses to and enhances man's dignity while fostering respect for human life, there is the biblico-theological argument which makes a direct appeal to special revelation. When God spoke to Noah—so the argument goes—he did not merely issue a command requiring the death penalty for murder and then leave to theologians the task of fashioning a suitable rationale for the injunction. In the very moment that he instituted capital punishment, God himself supplied the *ground* for it: "For God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:6b). John Murray states the matter quite explicitly: "The final clause in verse 6, 'for in the image of God made he man,' when taken in conjunction with the requirements expressed in verse 5, provides the reason why man is to inflict the death penalty upon the murderer" (*Eternity*, June 1961, p. 18). With this Gordon Clark concurs. He says: "The death penalty for murder is a most proper form of wrath for the revenger to impose... because the man murdered was made in the image of God" (*Action*, September 15, 1957, p. 10).

2. As respects 1a, above, that God made man in his own image is for Christians beyond dispute. Although the image-bearing character of man is infrequently declared in specific terms within the Bible, it is openly declared in Genesis 1:26,27; Genesis 9:6; and James 3:9, and it is everywhere presupposed (cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; and many other places). This image is no doubt mal-affected by the Fall, but it is not erased, and through Christ it is being renewed in all believers. To men of every class and condition it accords a high dignity which serves to distinguish them from the animals, to place them in a special relationship

to God, and to impose upon them unique responsibilities. The image also erects before the face of all despisers a barrier against discrimination, oppression, slander, violence, and kindred evils. On this we are agreed.

3. As respects 1b, above, it is doubtful that capital punishment either enhances the public's regard for man's special status in God's world, or is one of the better ways in which the state can give expression to its esteem for human-kind. Plausible reasons have been adduced for sentencing murderers to death—reasons involving the security of the state, or the claims of justice, and the like—but the socio-political reason which asserts that capital punishment witnesses to and enhances man's inherent stature is certainly to be numbered among the least convincing of these reasons. The deep fault inherent in the argument is that it is two-edged; it cuts both ways. If proponents of capital punishment argue for their position by citing the value of human life, opponents may reasonably point out that the criminal too is human, and that his life is also sacred. There is no doubt a moral difference between the innocent and the guilty, but there is no ontological difference between them: both are image bearers of God, and each is endowed with dignity. Penal execution is, however, an odd way of witnessing to this fact. Judge John Feikens puts the matter succinctly:

... to rest the ethical or moral justification for the death penalty upon the sanctity of human life is to state a paradox. Murder is the greatest of crimes because the life of the victim is considered sacred. Is the life of the murderer any less sacred because he has taken life? Does society properly respect the sanctity of one life by taking another? However deliberate and premeditated a murder might be, it cannot surpass in deliberateness and cold-bloodedness the execution of a death sentence by the state. It is not passion murder but murder in cold blood—where the killer "could have done otherwise"—that is most severely condemned. Should not those who share a belief in the sanctity of human life similarly approach the death penalty by asking, "Can the state not do otherwise?" (*Reformed Journal* July—August 1976, p. 17).

4. As respects 1c, above, the biblico-theological argument outlined there is clearly of great importance. Its direct appeal to the covenant with Noah is challenging, since it compels Bible-believers to give careful attention to Genesis 9:6, which everyone acknowledges to be the classical biblical text bearing upon capital punishment. This report (under section I, C) has already devoted many pages to a consideration of the first clause of this text ("Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed"), and it has judged that these words do not oblige modern states either to institute capital punishment or to practice it. But this report has postponed until now a consideration of the second clause in Genesis 9:6, believing that it could be best studied at this juncture and under this heading. How, then, are we to interpret the words, "For God made man in his own image"? Does this sentence present us with a God-given *reason* for executing murderers, or does it give expression to something quite different?

a. What was said under point 3 above naturally gives rise to an initial doubt that God could present as a *reason* for the death penalty the

fact that man is made in the image of God. If human life is sacred, as it manifestly is, and if it should not be deliberately terminated except to preserve or enhance other human life, it seems apriorily unlikely that God should establish these facts as the basis for capital punishment, when the whole aim of the latter is to extinguish life, and to do so without regard to the possible enhancement of other life. With eyes opened by these considerations certain features of the text take on a new significance.

b. The first thing to be noticed is the *difference in grammatical form* between Genesis 9:6a and Genesis 9:6b. Genesis 9:6a, as has been previously pointed out (cf. C-7-c) falls into the genre of wisdom literature and bears a consequent proverbial cast. Genesis 9:6b, on the other hand is a straightforward theological statement enunciating a simple, though profound, matter of fact. In addition, 6b is unique in that it is written descriptively in the third person, whereas 6a and the entire rest of the pericope is written in the first person as a direct address by God. It is not our purpose to consider all the ramifications of these facts; it will suffice to say that the one thing they do entail is that the connection between 6a and 6b is not as close, or as exclusive, as it would on first sight appear to be.

c. What then is the *connection* between 6b and 6a? The answer is that 6b is no closer in meaning and warrant to 6a than it is to the entire pericope (Gen. 9:1-7). Genesis 9:6b is grammatically distinct from the whole pericope in which it stands in order to alert us to the fact that it undergirds the *whole* pericope. It is because man is made in the image of God that he must be creative (reproductive vv. 1,7), exercise sovereignty over the lower creation in management and use (vv. 2,3,7), and protect himself and his fellows against the violence of man and beast (vv. 5,6). By engaging in these activities, man imitates God or acts in behalf of God who is the sovereign creator and governor of the universe, and who, while He jealously guards his exclusive diety, appoints man as his agent.

d. It is interesting and instructive to note in this connection the marked similarity between Genesis 1:26-28 and Genesis 9:1-7.

Genesis 1:26-28	Genesis 9:1-7
26 - let man have dominion (over fish, birds, cattle)	2 - relationship with animals established
27 - so God created man in his image	6 - for God made man in his own image
28 - and God blessed them and said, Be fruitful	7 (also v. 1) - God blessed . . . and you be fruitful.

The absence in the Genesis 1 passage of provisions for punishments and protections stems of course from the fact that the Fall had not yet occurred; man still lived in Eden. But this circumstance in no way affects the meaning of "image bearer" in both places. The substantial parallelism between Genesis 1 and Genesis 9 justifies the conclusion that 6b reiterates the reason why God has a concern for the life of man, its care, its propagation, and its protection. The "image of God" does not give a rationale for the death penalty; it highlights the sanctity of life, and the reason for

God's interest in it. As was previously noted (cf. 7-2-b), the focus of meaning in Genesis 9:5,6 is not on retribution, but on societal protection. That man is made in the image of God is the reason why his life should, wherever possible, be preserved, redeemed, fulfilled. In a broken world this is always difficult, and sometimes impossible. Sometimes, as in war, or in organized crime and political terrorism, people will be, and frequently must be, killed in order to secure the public good. But these killings are a desperate measure of last resort. They are not something either God or man can posit as a goal or establish as a plan. They cannot be this, for human life is God's gift, and because this life—in some sense—resembles his own it is precious in God's sight.

### I. Conclusion: Capital Punishment is Non-Mandatory

1. We have arrived at the end of this section. In it we have been considering a single question: Is the state unconditionally required to execute a person judicially found guilty of murder in the first degree? In an effort to answer this question responsibly we have investigated every source known to us, and have passed in review every argument which through diligent search has come to our attention. In sub-section A we sought to analyze the meaning of "obligation." In B we inquired into the relevance of the Mosaic Penal Code. In C we subjected the classical text of Genesis 9:6a to a close and detailed scrutiny. In D we considered a variety of New Testament texts advanced in support of obligatory capital punishment, and in E we considered the chief of these, Romans 13:4. In F the creeds were consulted. In G we sought to disclose the bearing upon our subject of the principle of justice, and in H we considered the significance of the fact that man was created in the image of God. In this long process of study and reflection we have tried to confront all available data. And, as is now well known, we have concluded that the single question we were constantly asking must be answered in the negative. We have concluded that modern states are *not obligated* by Scripture, creed, or principle to institute or practice capital punishment.

2. We have in the course of this study quoted many writers who have adopted a view different from ours. We respect their opinion and take no pleasure in differing with them, but we do think they are mistaken. And, of course, we are not alone in so thinking; many evangelical and Reformed scholars share our view. We end this section by calling upon a few of them to bear witness.

a. J. O. Dykes says: "Death by public justice is permissible . . . yet it is by no means obligatory" (*The Law of the Ten Words*, 1884, pp. 130).

b. W. Elert says: "Notwithstanding the biblical text, we cannot convince ourselves that capital punishment should be continued as a permanently valid divine command" (*The Christian Ethos*, 1957, p. 114).

c. Edward J. Carnell says: "There is no specific biblical evidence to prove that premeditated first-degree murder must automatically carry the death penalty" (*Eternity*, June 1961, p. 20).

d. C. S. Lewis says: "I do not know whether capital punishment should or should not be abolished: for neither the natural light, nor Scripture, nor ecclesiastical authority seems to tell me" (*The Church Times*, December 1, 1961).

e. Lewis B. Smedes says: "The Bible does not give us clear and sufficient evidence for saying that God wills the state to take the life of murderers. Christians should not insist on capital punishment as if there were a divinely given mandate for it. If they claim God's Word requires the state to inflict the final, irrevocable, absolute form of punishment on any man, they will have to find far more support in Scripture than anyone has given to this day. I believe it is safe to say the Bible does not prescribe capital punishment for anyone" (*Action*, Dec. 1964, p. 19).

f. The Commission on Theology and Church Relations, Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod says: "Neither the Scriptures nor the Lutheran Confessions state that the government must impose the death penalty in order to serve as the 'minister of God' by punishing flagrant wrongdoing, including murder. Therefore Lutheran Christians may have their own reservations concerning the necessity of government exercising the right of capital punishment as it strives to carry out its responsibility to provide a quiet and peaceable life for society. Should government decide that justice and order, as well as the general welfare, would best be served by some other form of punishment, this would not necessarily constitute a denial of God's will for government or a surrender of its mandate" (Received by the 1977 Convention).

g. With these sentiments your committee concurs.

## II. Is Capital Punishment *Permissible*?

Is the State morally licensed to execute murderers?

### A. *General Observations*

1. The issue here is not whether states are obliged to execute murderers, but whether they have a right to do so. Also, the issue is not—or is not yet—whether the actual infliction of capital punishment is practically expedient or generally advisable, but whether it is in principle *allowable*. At issue is the question of basic *authorization*.

2. That there is *legal* authorization for the death penalty in many states is a simple matter of fact. Although some states have outlawed capital punishment, most states make provision for it in their penal codes. In these states judges and juries are accordingly *permitted* to impose the sentence of death upon a murderer; the law *allows* it.

3. We are here concerned, however, not with existing law, but with desirable or permissible law. We are considering not whether states *do* allow capital punishment, but whether they *may* allow it. We are asking whether there is *moral* warrant for the legalization of capital punishment.

4. Your committee takes the position that there is such warrant. In doing so it joins the vast majority of Christians who throughout the ages have held that capital punishment is in accord with the Scriptures and, by that token, with the highest moral principles.

5. There are those, of course, who take the opposite view and vigorously oppose capital punishment. Among them are humanists who regard capital punishment as a relic of barbarism; ethical utilitarians who believe it is disharmonious with the nature and function of penal

restraint; and Christians who are convinced that it is in conflict with the law of life and with the gospel of redemption.

6. This being the situation, we shall in what follows attempt first (B) to establish the biblical and moral permissibility of capital punishment and then (C) estimate the weight of the objections that are raised against it.

## B. *Capital Punishment is Permissible*

### Introduction

As was stated above, the question in this section is whether states have the right, the authorization, the permission to execute murderers. We judge that on the basis of the Scriptures and the creeds that capital punishment is permissible.

#### 1. *The Witness of Scripture*

a. From where does the state get the right, the authorization, the permission to execute murderers? A large part of the Christian community answers quite simply, "From the Bible." The key text in this regard is Romans 13:4, "... for he [the governing authority] is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer."

b. This passage occurs within the pericope which has become the *locus classicus* for the biblical perspective on the state. The text and its context establishes, at least, the following:

- 1) The individual Christian has no right to punish offenders of the judicial codes but is rather to repay evil with good (Romans 12:19-21).
- 2) The state does have that right because it is invested with that authority by God (Romans 13:1-2).
- 3) The state is God's servant for the good of society (Rom. 13:4).
- 4) The state also functions as God's servant in the punishment of evildoers, in which activity the state is said to "execute his [i.e., God's] wrath on the evil-doer, (Romans 13:4).
- 5) The state, thus, *may* punish evildoers and is remiss in its duty if it does not (Romans 13:4).
- 6) This punitive function of the state is described in terms of "bearing the sword," which symbolizes the authorization of punishment but not necessarily its form or extent (Rom. 13:4).<sup>8</sup>

c. Romans 13:1-4 certainly establishes the right, authority and even the duty of the state to punish wrongdoers. But does the state have the right to punish capitally, i.e., with capital punishment? The key consideration in answering this question is the interpretation given to the word *sword* in Romans 13:4, "for he [the state] does not bear *the sword* in vain." Certainly in the New Testament the word *sword* [*máchaira*] is used not just in a figurative sense of "power" or "authority." The word is also used to describe violent death: Jesus warns all who take the sword that they will *perish* by the sword (Matt. 16:52b); Hebrews 11:34 recalls

the Old Testament saints who "escape the edge of the sword"; the fate of the Judeans in the last days is described in these terms, "they shall fall by the edge of the sword" (Luke 21:24); and Herod is reported to have *killed* James the brother of John with the sword (Acts 12:2). Michaelis further states that "*machaira* is also a pregnant term (perhaps for execution) in Romans 8:35 [Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation . . . or persecution . . . or sword?]; hence its use for the dreadful bloodshed of Rev. 6:4" (*T.D.N.T.*, IV. p.525).

Consequently it would seem appropriate to conclude that the *sword* used in Romans 13:4 may also be interpreted to embrace capital punishment. Your committee is of the opinion that the scriptural *permissibility* of the state to execute murderers lies precisely in this interpretation.

d. With this John Murray concurs, "... the teaching of the New Testament regarding the power and use of the sword as the prerogative of the civil magistrate carries with it express warrant for the infliction of death. To suppose that the sword (Rom. 13:4; cf. I Peter 2:14) can be restricted to lesser forms of punitive infliction and does not imply the extreme penalty is to go in the face of that which 'the sword' properly and obviously symbolizes. This passage (Rom. 13:4), therefore, distinctly implies that the civil magistrate is given not only the power but, as the minister of God, the right, the authority, to use the sword for the infliction of death as the penalty for crimes which merit this retribution" (*Eternity*, June 1961, p. 23; cf. *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 119-120).

e. I Peter 2:13-14 likewise establishes government as an arm of the Lord, his emissaries "sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right." This passage, however, while supporting the punitive right and duty of government vis-a-vis wrongdoers does not in any way spell out the form which such punishment may take. The passage does not prescribe nor limit the form of legitimate and permissible punishment.

However, given the interpretation of Romans 13:4 above, this passage speaks to the issue of capital punishment in so far as punishment is related to the role and function of the state.

## 2. *The Witness of the Creeds*

We have argued above that the Reformed creeds do not *obligate* modern states to execute first degree murderers (cf. I.F.). We now confirm that the creedal statements of the Reformed faith do *permit* modern states to execute first degree murderers. The pertinent material is found in the *Heidelberg Catechism*, L.D. 40, Answer 105 and the *Belgic Confession*, Article 36, both of which use the language of Romans 13:4, i.e., the "government is armed with the sword" [*Heidelberg Catechism*] or "invested . . . with the sword" [*Belgic Confession*]. While the *Heidelberg Catechism* declares that the government is armed with the sword for the purpose of prevention and the *Belgic Confession* emphasizes the purpose of restraint, this one perspective is clear: the government *may* according to the Reformed Confessions inflict capital punishment on first degree murderers.

### 3. *The Nature and Function of Punishment: Retributive Justice*

a. We have seen that one function and duty of the state is to punish wrong-doers, and that this authorization of the state to requite evil permits the exercise of capital punishment. In this section we are concerned with the legitimacy of capital punishment vis-a-vis our notion of the nature and function of punishment. We are asking, does retributive justice *permit* the exercise of capital punishment?

b. In I.D.4 it is said that "justice requires that every man be given his due, and that in retributive justice what is due a man is such punishment for offenses against the moral or legal order as will 'right' the imbalance his offenses have created, or such mitigation of penalties as shall enable the offender to redress, by positive contributions, the wrongs he has committed." Retributive justice demands that order be reestablished by the criminal being required to pay for his crime, that he be required to suffer some loss so that he will not gain from his breaking of the just order and the hurt he did to society will be balanced by a hurt suffered from society. Thus the concept of fairness and proportionality are central in retributive justice. But there is nothing in retributive justice which *requires* that punishment be identical with the offense. Retributive justice which *requires* that punishment be identical with the offense. Retributive justice, as we said above, is satisfied when the punishment *symbolizes* the offense and is proportional to it, or when the punishment, if modified, leads to social healing. Consequently retributive justice does not *demand* or prescribe capital punishment for those found guilty of first degree murder, but *neither does it prohibit* it. We therefore conclude that, in terms of retributive justice, capital punishment is *permissible*.

### 4. *The Right of the State to Protect Itself (self-defense)*

a. Reformed scholars are in general agreement regarding the question of the purpose and function of the state—the God-given role of government in society is to pursue justice. In the pursuit of justice the state has been entrusted with "the sword," which we have interpreted as meaning that capital punishment is a legitimate or permissible exercise of the state according to the Bible. Are there other or additional bases upon which to establish the *permissibility* of the exercise of capital punishment by the state? We judge there are—one of them being the state's right to societal self-defense.

b. If the very nature and function of the state is threatened and the carrying out of its task is in jeopardy, what is a state to do? It is the judgment of this committee that in such a case the state may kill—not now in the sense of going to war, but in the sense of being permitted to execute criminals. The state possesses this right, says E. Brunner, "for the sake of its necessary function. But this function does not *require* the killing of the murderer. . . . Under certain circumstances the state may have no other means [than capital punishment] at its disposal, therefore the state ought not to be deprived of this right altogether" (E. Brunner, *The Divine Imperative*, p. 477).

c. Lewis Smedes agrees that the state has this right. He says, "... may not a *society* defend itself from attack against itself? . . . An

orderly, civilized community is undermined by today's wave of violence and terrorism. Civilization needs defense. . . . If executing murderers is an effective means of self-defense, the Christian would have to approve." (*Reformed Journal*, July-August 1976, p. 20).

### 5. Conclusions

Your committee concludes on the basis of the above study that states do have the right, the authorization, the permission to execute murderers—in other words, capital punishment is permissible. It does so *primarily* on the basis of Scripture, especially the word of the Lord regarding the role and function of government as this is spelled out in Romans 13:1-4. Furthermore we find this to be correctly reflected in the Reformed Confessions. Moreover, both the ideas of retributive justice and the right of the state to defend itself *allow* for the exercise of capital punishment. We therefore do not agree with those who would argue for the total abolition of capital punishment. We address the objections to our position in the next section.

### C. The Objections Considered

*Introduction.* The position we have just defended, that it is permissible for the state to execute murderers, is rejected by many. Typical is the position adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church in General convention in 1958 and reaffirmed in 1969: "The church believes that each individual is sacred, as a child of God, and that to legalize killing of an offender is to deny the basic Christian doctrines of forgiveness of sin and the power of redemption, and that mercy is a Christian duty."

Positions such as this have often been defended in the name of Christianity. Thus we believe it important to consider some of the key objections which have been raised to our position. We consider five.

1. *Capital Punishment Violates the Sixth Commandment.* One objection to capital punishment starts with the fact that persons are created in the image of God, or, as the Episcopal Church declared, "each individual is sacred, as a child of God." Thus God has commanded: "You shall not kill." It is hard to think of killing which is more fully premeditated, and self-conscious, than the judicial execution of an individual. And, therefore, so it is argued, capital punishment should be strictly forbidden. But such a position suffers from at least three defects.

First, almost all biblical authorities are agreed that the key word in sixth commandment as given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 can best be translated "murder" rather than "kill." Many of the more recent translations of the Bible, such as the New English Bible, translate it thus. The clear intent of the Ten Commandments is not to forbid all killing, but the type of killing which can be considered murder. Throughout the era of Bible history and down to the present, the execution of a person through judicial decision, following due process of law, has not been considered murder.

A second difficulty with the above position is, as we have argued in section B, that the state is specifically entrusted with the power of the sword, i.e., with the power to punish wrongdoers, which punishment

may include capital punishment. The Bible clearly teaches that capital punishment is among the array of punishments God has entrusted to his servants, the state.

Finally, the fact of the sacredness of human life, that persons have been created in the image of God, cuts two ways. It points to the extreme seriousness and the grave nature of the crime committed by a murderer. In light of retributive justice, one balances the other since the taking of a human life is involved in both murder and capital punishment.

2. *Capital Punishment Ignores the Atoning Work of Christ.* The argument has been made that to execute a murderer is to require someone to pay for a crime whose penalty Christ has already paid by his atoning death on the cross. Christ has already died, the righteous for the unrighteous. Therefore, the unrighteous no longer need die.

But such a position rests upon very shaky ground. It confuses civil justice and God's justification. There is no basis to presume that when a person sins, and then experiences God's forgiveness on the basis of Christ's substitutionary death, that this satisfies the demands of civil justice if the sin involved breaking the civil law. To argue otherwise would be to argue that the state has no authority to punish the repentant wrongdoer, which conclusion runs directly counter to the teaching of Romans 13:1-6 and to the whole nature of retributive justice. God calls all his children to forgive the wrongdoer—even when they have been the ones wronged—but he calls the state to heal or restore the fracture the wrongdoer has caused in society. One may experience God's forgiveness, but that does not mean the wrong and the hurt one has done to another person and to society as a whole has been made right. To accomplish this God has instituted the state and established its role in enforcing retributive justice.

3. *Capital Punishment Contradicts the Principle of Love.* Some have argued against capital punishment on the basis that it is incompatible with the teachings of the Bible to love one's neighbors and to show forgiveness and mercy. In 1965 the Synod of the Reformed Church in America took this position when it stated: "The taking of a person's life, even within the context of the law, is a denial of the command to love your neighbor as yourself." The law of God can be stated in one word, love. Love God above all and one's neighbor as one's self (see Matthew 22:37-40). In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught us not to insist on our rights, but to turn the other cheek, and to love our enemies (Matt. 5:38-48). Surely, it is argued, the deliberate, premeditated killing of a person by the state cannot be squared with this ethic of love.

To respond to this line of reasoning we must carefully examine the relationship between love and justice. At the outset it is clear that love and justice are not mutually exclusive. Both Christ and Paul have said that love is the fulfillment of God's law. If love and justice were mutually exclusive one could love and thereby fulfill God's law and yet practice injustice. Yet God requires justice. Thus at the least we know the two are related.

But they are different. Justice involves fulfilling one's duty and giving another what in fact that person deserves. Emil Brunner says: "When we

are just, and deal justly, we render to the other what is his due. Justice makes no free gift; it gives precisely what is *due* to the other, no more and no less" (*Justice and the Social Order*, p. 127).

Love—in the sense of agape—goes beyond justice; it goes beyond extending to another what that person deserves. Love unselfishly accepts another as he is and seeks his or her good. Love does not ask what the object of one's love justly deserves, but what that person needs or desires.

Yet justice and love are related. First, love goes beyond justice; it does not replace it. "Love can only do more, it can never do less, than justice requires. . . . True love is always more than just, it fulfills first the important law of actual justice" (Brunner, p. 129).

Second, love is a powerful force compelling the Christian to act justly. Under some circumstances the Christian's love will compel him to go beyond justice in treating his fellow human beings, but it will always demand that at least justice be done.

The issue then becomes whether the state in punishing murderers ought to act on the basis of justice, love, or both. Although we believe that both love and justice should be involved, justice should be the guiding factor. Brunner asserts: "The man of love can only serve the state with justice. He must transform his love entirely into justice for as long and insofar as he acts in the state" (Brunner, p. 129). Love should be a motive requiring the state to act on the basis of justice, yet it is justice and not love which guides the state.

The basic problem with the state acting on the basis of love beyond the requirements of justice lies, we believe, in the nature of political actions. For a judge or legislator to act on the basis of love and not justice would be to act on the basis of a "cheap love" quite different than the love of the Bible. For the political official does not act for himself and at a cost to himself. He acts for society and society bears the cost.

The judge who in love forgives and imposes no penalty on the rapist, or a policy-maker who allows a struggling business to continue to pollute the air out of love and concern, both get off cheap—the consequences or costs of their "love" are borne by society, not by themselves. Yet the very essence of love is its self-giving, self-sacrificing nature. In such circumstances the love or mercy the state shows a rapist or polluter turns into an injustice for those in society who must bear the consequences. One is driven back to the conclusion that the state must be guided in its decisions by justice and not by love or mercy in violation of justice.

Thus biblical passages such as the Sermon on the Mount which require forgiveness and forbearance do not apply or apply differently to the state and the political official in his official capacity than to the individual Christian. A Christian judge, whose wife has been murdered, would be required as a husband, to forgive and to show acts of kindness to the murderer, and at the same time as a judge to mete out punishment to the same person—perhaps even the death penalty.

The issue or question is not what mercy or love demands, but what justice demands. Justice must be true justice—it must take into account particular circumstances and conditions. Love requires that it do so. But when extenuating circumstances have been taken into account, it is then

justice—and not love alone—which must be followed. Thus we conclude it is too simple to say that the biblical ethic of love forbids the state to execute murderers.

4. *Capital Punishment is Inherently Unjust.* There are those who argue that capital punishment is inherently unjust. We believe, however, that capital punishment is not in principle unjust.

The concept of retributive justice has its roots in the *lex talionis* of the Mosaic code and is reflected in Romans 13:4 and elsewhere in Scripture. It is based on the principle that persons are morally responsible beings who can and should be held accountable for their actions. Under this principle it is held that convicted criminals have taken something to themselves they have no right to take. They have failed to live up to their God-given duty as persons and have thereby denied others their rights and have hurt all society by breaking the just order that makes human well-being possible. Therefore, retributive justice demands that order be reestablished by criminals being required to pay for their crimes, that they be required to suffer some loss so that they will not gain from their breaking of the just order and the hurt they did to society will be balanced by a hurt they suffer from society. It is the state which has been called by God to be his agent of retributive justice.

Central to the concept of retributive justice is proportionality. To be truly just the state, in punishing the criminal, must assure itself that the punishment fits the crime. Thus it is unjust to hang a pickpocket, or to fine a murderer.

But is it unjust to take the life of a person who has with premeditation taken the life of another person? It is hard to answer that question with a flat yes or no since circumstances and conditions vary greatly. On the one hand there can be a situation where a person accepts \$5,000 in order for him, willfully and calculatingly, to stalk a person and then shoot him down. On the other hand, there can be a case of a person with a history of mental instability getting into a violent argument with someone who has grossly wronged him, rushing next door to get a gun, and shooting the other person. In both of these cases premeditated murder in a technical sense was committed. Yet the circumstances and conditions varied greatly.

Under the concept of proportionality we believe retributive justice would not permit capital punishment in all cases of premeditated murder, but that it would in some. It is impossible to draw an exact line between permissible and impermissible use of capital punishment since the variety of circumstances are infinite. Each case must be considered on its own. Nevertheless, to say it is inherently and necessarily unjust to require that one forfeit his life in cases of even the most heinous, cold-blooded killings is clearly not warranted.

But this is not to say that retributive justice requires capital punishment to satisfy the principle of proportionality even in cases of the most heinous murders. There is, we believe, an area of overlap where either life imprisonment (if truly for life or for 40 or 50 years) or death could satisfy retributive justice's principle of proportionality. In either instances the punishment, the loss, suffered by the murderer is sufficiently

severe that justice is satisfied.

5. *Capital Punishment Preempts God's Prerogative.* The Bible says, "Repay no one evil for evil. . . . Beloved never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'" (Romans 12:17-19).

It is argued that in exercising capital punishment man is taking to himself that which God has reserved to himself. It is God's prerogative to judge the murderer; he in his own good time will mete out the murderer's just punishment. For man to attempt to do so takes unto himself what God has reserved to himself.

But this position suffers from a fatal flaw. It totally ignores the state as God's agent for the punishment of wrongdoers. Romans 12:17-19 is quickly followed by Romans 13:1-6, which states that the authorities are "God's agents for punishment, for retribution on the offenders."

The clear teaching of Scripture is that we are to eschew personal vengeance or personal retribution. As individuals we are to forgive and to repay evil with good. As noted earlier we are to act on the basis of love, not in anger which delights in the hurt and humiliation of others.

But the state is called by God to be his agent of justice. Even the state should not act on the basis of a revenge which is motivated by anger and delights in extracting the maximum hurt. Instead the state is to act on the basis of love, in its role this love must be translated into justice. Thus should conditions exist which lead the state, in its pursuit of justice, to conclude that even the extreme penalty of death is called for, it is not preempting God's prerogative; it is fulfilling its God-given role as his agent here on this earth.

### III. IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT *Prudent?*

Is it, under the circumstances prevailing in contemporary Western society, and in view of knowledge about criminal pathology, advisable that the death penalty be attached to the crime of first-degree murder?

#### A. *The Issue*

1. In section I, we concluded that modern states are *not obliged* by Scripture, Creed, or principle to institute or practice capital punishment. In section II, we concluded that modern states *are permitted* by the same standards to institute and practice capital punishment. At issue here, now, is whether it is prudent, whether it is wise, for our society to exercise this scriptural permission to execute murderers.

2. It should be noted that when this issue is confronted a shift must be made from principle to practice; and it must be further noted that practice, even when principled, must be suited and fitted to time and circumstance. Where there is permission, but no obligation, there *discretion* comes into play; there *practical wisdom*, informed by principle, yet sensitive to situational and pragmatic considerations, must decide the issue.

3. Having respect, therefore, to the conditions prevailing on the North American continent, to the complexities of human existence, to the vagaries of jurisprudence, to the creaking machinery of the courts, to the changing attitudes of juries, to the pathology of criminality, to the

variable force of social conditioning, to the possibilities of repentance and amendment among offenders, to the need for societal self-defense, and to other matters of this sort, we must in all seriousness ask: What *practice* should states follow in dealing with those who commit murders within their boundaries?

### B. Abolition

1. Not being *bound* to execute murderers, states could decide *never* to do so. This decision could take either of two forms. It could be made by simple resolution or by legal action.

2. Judges and juries, aided and abetted by popular sentiment, could decide, by simple resolution, *never* to *apply* the existing capital provisions of the penal code. Juries could simply refuse to find anyone guilty of a capital crime. A societal resolution of this sort would, however, be unfortunate, and most unwise. In matters of grave concern courts cannot decide, without loss of integrity, *never* to do what the law permits. Nor should they apriorily and prematurely foreclose the possibility or necessity of imposing the death sentence in extraordinary circumstances.

3. States could enact new legislation totally *prohibiting* capital punishment. This too would be unwise. By such legislation discretion would be abandoned, courts would be unduly bound, and society would be deprived of at least one means of restraint and deterrence. States should not completely surrender their God-given jurisdiction over life and death; they should not totally give up their *right* to exact the ultimate penalty for crimes. We believe, therefore, that states should retain the legal right to exercise capital punishment in those extreme cases in which the first degree murderer poses a threat to the very existence of the state.

### C. Alternatives

1. When it is asked, however, what practical policy states and their courts should adopt in dealing with first degree murderers, we have entered another arena of inquiry. When states have not, by social resolution or legal action, decided to sheath the fatal sword, the question of its use remains, and in particular that of the frequency of its use. Being *permitted* both by moral principle and by legal statute to execute murderers, but being under no religious or moral *obligation* to do so, states are forced to inquire how their *freedom* to spare or take life should be used. They are forced to inquire why in any given instance they should or should not resort to capital punishment. Things being what they are states, in short, are thrown back upon their discretionary powers, and must ask what grounds for action are relevant and germane. Faced with the question whether or not a convicted murderer should be executed, states are bound to ask: What good would it do? What ends would it serve? And, conversely, they are bound to ask: What indignities might such action entail? What values might it destroy? Once it is granted that capital punishment is *not mandatory*, there is no escaping these teleological questions. Where there is *freedom* of action, there the *consequences*, as well as the grounds, of action must be seriously considered.

2. Now, it is possible even on utilitarian grounds, to maintain that

every person found guilty of first degree murder should be executed. It is possible to maintain that capital punishment should be a regular and constant element in our judicial system on the ground that the prompt and routine execution of the criminal will best serve the ends of justice, and will best secure the safety and stability of the state. It is also possible, however, to maintain that these ends are best served by a sparing use of the destroying sword. It can, in particular, be argued that humane considerations point in the direction of judicial restraint, toward the minimal use of the sword, toward the bracketing of capital punishment as a rarely used weapon of last resort.

3. Your committee is impressed by these humane considerations and consequently believes that capital punishment should not pertain to the routine administration of justice, but only to those *exceptional* instances of such administration as are called forth by a dire threat to the very existence of the state. We believe that capital punishment should be put under severe restraint and imposed only *in extremis*, only when elements of anarchy threaten the existence of society, only when the murderer (and his terrorist associates) jeopardizes not merely the well-being but the very being of the state. In so doing we forge, relative to capital punishment, a position between retentionists and abolitionists, a position which we believe embraces principles which are both scripturally sound and socially expedient. In justification of this position we adduce the following considerations.

#### D. Considerations

1. Human life is sacred, and the sixth commandment demands that wherever possible it should be preserved and enhanced. This weighs the scales against all killing that is not required for the preservation and enhancement of other human life. By this token, wars are justifiable only as a last resort (when arbitration fails), and only in so far as they preserve the rights and freedoms of a people and maintain society in being. Likewise, the slaying of criminals can be justified only as a last resort (when other restraints fail) and only in so far as it is required to secure the continuation of a viable state charged with maintaining a just order within which its citizens can find protection.

2. The magistrate is a servant of God, but he is not God, and his judgments are fallible. It can and does happen, therefore, that innocent persons are put to death by judicial procedures. But in such instances no effort can be made to right the wrong committed; the victim of the court is dead. On this account alone capital punishment should be most sparingly used. Only when the very existence of the state is in balance should the *risk* of unremediable judicial error be hazarded.

3. States are not called upon to convert sinners or even to reshape them, but they ought, in so far as possible, to leave room for repentance and amendment, and not unnecessarily shorten the time in which these wholesome things can occur. Death should therefore not be visited upon a person unless this extreme measure is necessitated by over-riding social considerations.

4. Justice alone does not require the death of the murderer. Justice requires only that he be punished, and that his punishment be, not

equivalent to, but in proportion to, his crime. Justice will be served when the murderer is appropriately incarcerated. Only when his incarceration causes others to employ terrorist tactics to secure his release and to force the state into abject compliance in all sectors of society, only when his execution will mollify the insurgents and avert social disaster, might capital punishment be prudently resorted to. And again, only when his incarceration provides him with the opportunity and inducement to kill his guards or fellow-prisoners, might his execution be necessitated.

#### E. Conclusion

Given that human life is sacred, that the magistrate is fallible, that time for repentance is desirable, and that incarceration will normally satisfy the demand of justice, we conclude that it is not prudent for the state to impose capital punishment except under extreme conditions.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### YOUR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS:

1. That the synod refer this report to the churches for study and guidance.
2. That the synod declare:
  - a. that the Scriptures lay no mandate on modern states to exercise capital punishment.
  - b. that the Scriptures do permit modern states to inflict capital punishment.
  - c. that according to the spirit of Scripture capital punishment is prudently exercised only under extreme conditions and not as a general rule.
3. That synod urge the members of the church, working as individuals and through appropriate organizations, to use their influence to encourage their respective governments to adopt criminal justice systems in keeping with the scriptural principles presented in this report.
4. That synod discharge the committee.

#### Committee on Capital Punishment

Henry Stob, chairman  
 Clarence Vos, secretary  
 Hessel Bouma III  
 Stephen Monsma  
 Louis Vos

#### END NOTES

1. J. Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues*, (NY: Harcourt Brace, 1965, p. 85).
2. J. Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957, pp. 118-119).
3. Deontological ethics is the theory of study of moral obligation or commitment approached from the perspective of that which is the necessary or binding duty of man; teleological ethics is the theory or study of moral obligation or commitment approached from the perspective of the ultimate end or purpose for action.
4. In this report, "murder in the first degree" shall refer to the act in which the death of the

victim was coldly calculated (premeditated) and carried out by a morally responsible individual.

5. In the Graeco-Roman world the runaway slave was punishable by death—at the whim and will of his owner. According to Roman law the master had absolute authority over the person and life of his slave. Opponents of capital punishment often cite Paul's advice to Philemon regarding his runaway slave Onesimus (cf., Philemon vs. 15-18) to indicate that he too repudiated the legal rights which Philemon holds over Onesimus. In fact, Paul writes with delicate recognition of Philemon's legal rights. Nevertheless Paul appeals to Philemon on a personal basis to accept Onesimus as a "brother in Christ." The legal right remains unchallenged; the moral response is tactfully expressed (cf. vs. 21).

6. All quotations from Dutch writers have been translated by the committee.

7. Cf. John Howard Yoder, *Christianity Today*, February 1, 1960, pp. 347 ff.

8. Cf. Michaelis, *TDNT*, "Machairo," IV p. 525, n. 11, "the sword as a symbol of the penal power of the state."

## REPORT 30

## NEW CONFESSIONS COMMITTEE

The Synod of 1978 continued the New Confessions Committee to complete the one remaining item on its agenda, the production of a new translation of the Canons of Dordt. Dr. Ford Lewis Battles, an expert Latinist, has agreed to undertake the work of drafting a translation to be submitted to synod for approval. The assistance of Peter De Klerk, theological librarian, will be sought so that a properly annotated text can be provided.

There appears to be no need for continuing the full committee for this reduced mandate. Furthermore, for the sake of accuracy, the name of the committee should now be changed. The committee now recommends that the present committee be discharged. The committee further recommends that a new committee be appointed and designated as the Committee for Translation of the Canons of Dordt.

The committee further suggests to synod that this new committee consist of Dr. Lubbertus Oostendorp, Dr. John Kromminga, Dr. Ford Battles, and Mr. Peter De Klerk. A committee so constituted will provide continuity with the former New Confessions Committee and will provide for easy consultation between committee members.

*Recommendations:*

1. That the New Confessions Committee be discharged.
2. That a new committee be appointed to carry out synod's mandate to produce a new translation of the Canons of Dordt.

New Confessions Committee  
L. Oostendorp, chairman  
M. N. Greidanus, reporter  
H. Arends  
F. Van Houten  
J. Kromminga

## REPORT 31

## SERVICE COMMITTEE FOR USE OF MEMBER'S GIFTS

## I. PROGRESS REPORT

This committee has made significant progress in 1978 towards fulfilling its mandate which is:

- A. To identify barriers, both organizational and attitudinal, to the church's use of the gifts of all its members and to recommend to synod and to local congregations ways consistent with Scripture in which those barriers can be removed,
- B. to encourage committees, classes and boards to continue to expand the practice of nominating and electing members of groups currently not being fully used,
- C. to maintain the data bank, keep it up to date, enlarge it to include any interested member of the church, and encourage its use by church organizations and others approved by synod or the various classes,
- D. to work with the Education Department of the Board of Publications to continue developing adult educational materials that will encourage fuller use of gifts,
- E. to respond to consistories and local groups when they request advice, materials, or names of resource persons to help them bring about fuller use of all members of the local congregation.

## II. PROJECTS

Several projects are underway with gratifying results in some areas.

A. *"Every Member Conferences"*

The conference by this name was originally held under the auspices and encouragement of the Committee on Women's Gifts. The positive results of this conference held in Chicago in 1977 have led our committee to believe that these should be developed throughout the United States and Canada. Through the data bank the names of 69 potential leaders from various parts of the United States and Canada were contacted. These persons were asked to consider organizing an "Every Member Conference" in their areas. The intent of the conference is to stimulate, inspire and inform church people toward wider use of human resources in Christian service and to develop new ideas for using untapped or under-used persons and gifts for the expansion of Christ's kingdom. Our committee has compiled a packet of information based on the previous conference in Chicago which is sent to interested persons and enables them to set up a similar program using the ideas and methods of that first conference. Since undertaking this project two such programs have been held, one in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada and one in Holland, Michigan.

### B. "Every Member a Member"

A new Banner department entitled "Every Member A Member" has become a reality. Many articles have already been published. These have as their goal a greater understanding of all members whose gifts can be valuable resources to the church and they provide information about successful projects which make use of members' gifts.

Considerable study, discussion, and consultation focused on the first paragraph of this committee's mandate (see "A" above). The members of the committee then decided to focus their energies and attention on specific categories of persons whose gifts are often neglected because of prejudice, ignorance, or for some other reason. We focused first on the church's senior members—those who are 65 or over. One issue of *The Banner* was devoted to helping the church identify the barriers to the full use of the older person and to explore the problems, opportunities and resources of our senior members.

The following articles have been published from July 1978 through January 1979:

1. Dismemberment, by Claudia Beversluis  
The introductory article to our column. We hope that it will be a communication link between congregations trying to discover and use the varied gifts of the members of our denomination.
2. Our Societies: the Same Old Thing Again?, by the Rev. Lammert Slofstra.  
The description of a project within a congregation to stimulate desire and energy for a new season of church activity.
3. Thinking About Christmas, by Martha Tibbe  
How a congregation wrote a booklet of daily meditations for the Advent season.
4. THEOS—They Help Each Other Spiritually, by Audrey Wierda  
"They" are the recently widowed men and women . . . who need each other and who need meaning and hope to face the challenges and problems of their new situation.

#### Six Articles on senior members:

5. Where Generations Meet, by H. David Dekker  
The church represents one of the few American institutions where young and old still gather together on a regular basis.
6. Meeting the Needs of 30,000 Members, by the Rev. Ralph Heynen  
If we would expend as much effort and love for the aged members as we do for the young people, we would find avenues of service that have never yet been explored.
7. Shedding Moldy Attitudes, by Chaplain Jim Kok  
The age of retirement is . . . an age in which we are free to do other kinds of things . . . a time of growing and serving in the Lord.
8. Why Not an Elderhostel Program in Our Schools? by Dr. Dennis Hoekstra  
For those of retirement age who would like to expand their

educational horizons, the Elderhostel programs offer an exhilarating opportunity to grow.

9. *Open Doors to Service*, by Claudia Beversluis

Through interviews and correspondence older men and women tell about their work in church, community, and in church agencies.

10. *The Golden Age Club Is a Lot of Fun*, by the Rev. Lammert Slofstra  
Why not a ministry for the elderly *BY* the aging themselves? By being of service to each other the urge to complain about loneliness disappears.

C. *Educational Materials*—Conversations have been held with the Education Department of the Board of Publications with regard to the development of a study booklet concentrating on the use of women's gifts in the church. This booklet is scheduled to be published in 1979.

D. *Resource Files*—The committee is compiling resource files on categories of persons whose gifts this committee considers as under used. These files will be available to individuals and churches as they undertake projects of action or study, developing the gifts of particular groups.

E. *Responses to Requests*—Many requests have been received from all over the United States and Canada and from New Zealand for additional information about programs or projects mentioned in the various Banner articles. For example, Lammert Slofstra received 34 requests for a 20-page booklet offered in his article "Our Societies: The Same Old Thing Again?". We consider this a tremendous response.

F. *Gift Emphasis Project*—We have reviewed what the Home Missions staff is recommending to its board concerning the development of a gift emphasis project for the denomination. We fully endorse their program and plan to meet together regularly in order to share ideas and to avoid overlapping of effort.

G. *Data Bank Expansion*—In 1978 this committee in its report to synod stated that it intended to develop the data bank for improving the use of volunteers and persons interested and willing to serve on various boards, committees, and projects. We are proposing to the Synod of 1979 the development of a denominational file for volunteer services which will be used by all boards and committees. We feel this has great potential to facilitate the use of members' gifts in the church. Our proposal follows:

### III A PROPOSAL FOR THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Reflection on the mandate to us by the Synod of 1977 has led us to come to the Synod of 1979 with a proposal to develop a Volunteer Resource Bank which matches the abilities of volunteers with denominational needs.

#### A. *Preamble to this Proposal*

The Lord has entrusted his people, his servants, with talents each according to his or her ability (Matthew 25:15). All members of our

churches are expected to use their talents or opportunities to serve to the best of their ability. It is our sincere conviction that many members in our churches would love to make their gifts, talents and time available to the Lord by serving their local churches or the church at large as volunteers. However, they do not always know where their services are needed and how their talents could be best put to use. They are not aware of the many opportunities for service in the wide field of the Kingdom of God. They want to seek the glory of God in all that they do (I Cor. 10:3) but they would like to be told what they could do.

Though we need not work in order to be praised, yet it will be tremendously gratifying to hear the Lord say one day "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness" (Matthew 25:23 NIV). The praise extended by Paul to the congregation of Corinth for the generous gift which they promised is extremely stimulating. He writes, "This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people, but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you, their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!" (II Cor. 9:12-15 NIV).

Your service committee for the Use of Members' Gifts would love to serve the members of our churches by helping them to serve the Lord with their different gifts in varied ways using manifold opportunities.

As Christ came "not to be served but to serve," so all members should consider it a privilege "not to be great, but to be servants" (Matthew 20:26-28). The question is: how can volunteer servants be put to use in the most effective way? Your service committee is eager to mobilize all these gifts to serve as volunteers and make these gifts available for the church and for the glory of our God. It is for this reason that we are enthusiastic about this presentation to synod of a proposal to utilize the gifts of volunteers to fill the multiple needs of the denomination.

### *B. Background*

In 1975 synod established a Synodical Committee on the Use of Women's Gifts in the Church, and asked the committee to help churches make all possible use of the talents and abilities of women. The committee initiated a Data Bank which contained the names and qualifications of women throughout the denomination who were interested in serving on various committees and boards. Classes, boards, and parachurch organizations were urged to use the Data Bank in their search for nominees.

Because the use of women's gifts is related to the use of all members' gifts, Synod of 1977 appointed our committee, the Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts, to facilitate the church's use of its members'

gifts. We were asked to "maintain the data bank, keep it up to date, enlarge it to include any interested member of the church."

During 1977, a representative from Christian Reformed Home Missions met with us to present a plan for a volunteer resource bank which matches the abilities of volunteers with denominational needs. This plan was called VISION, an acronym for Volunteer, Information, Services, Interest, Opportunities, Needs. Last year we reported to the Synod of 1978 that we had adopted VISION as a way to expand the data bank.

During 1978 and 1979 plans to enlarge the data bank have continued. We have changed the name of the plan from VISION to "Volunteer Resource Bank".

### C. Rationale

1. This project will promote the effective use of members' gifts within the CRC. Individuals with a desire to use their gifts in the church are often not aware of specific needs and opportunities for service. At the same time, church agencies, boards, and committees often look for people with specific gifts to meet specific needs, but they must rely on "grapevine" information to find people they need. This project will bring together the members of the CRC who desire to volunteer their time and talents with churches, agencies, and boards who need and can make effective use of the services of these volunteers.

2. This project will tap a large reservoir of skills, gifts, and abilities which would make possible the expansion of existing programs, the institution of new projects, and the discovery of new avenues of service.

3. The Synodical Committee on the Use of Women's Gifts found the Data Bank to be a useful tool for finding women interested in, and capable of, serving the church on its many committees, subcommittees and boards. However, the current Data Bank is outdated, includes only the names of women, and stresses ecclesiastical and administrative gifts.

4. The Synod of 1977, recognizing the need for an expanded and updated Data Bank, mandated our committee "to maintain the data bank, keep it up to date, enlarge it to include any interested member of the church, and encourage its use by church organizations and others approved by synod or the various classes." An enlarged Data Bank entails operating expenses, and we have been hampered by the lack of funds for such a project. This proposal would allow us to fulfill our mandate.

5. The need for an expanded Data Bank is still evident:

- a. Our committee continues to receive requests from CRC organizations and classes for names of people who are willing to serve their church in various capacities.
- b. Denominational agencies (such as Home Missions, World Missions, CRWRC) have endorsed the establishment of a central data bank for recruiting volunteers.
- c. No coordinating volunteer committee now exists in the CRC. A

volunteer may contact one or more organizations within the church, but miss the one that could make use of her/his service.

6. This project allows for the continuation of the Data Bank in the event that this committee is not re-established by Synod of 1980.

#### D. *Implementation*

1. Volunteer Coordinator—We would need a Volunteer Coordinator to be recruited as soon as possible, to be appointed by and responsible to the Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts.

a. Place of the Volunteer Coordinator in the Christian Reformed Church

1) The Volunteer Coordinator would be responsible to the Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts as long as this committee is continued by the Synod of the CRC.

2) The Volunteer Coordinator would serve all the members of the CRC and the agencies, boards, churches and organizations within the CRC or officially endorsed for support by the CRC.

3) The Volunteer Coordinator would function as an information and resource coordinator to assist in securing volunteers to meet the needs of the agencies, boards, churches, and organizations within the CRC or supported by the CRC.

4) The Volunteer Coordinator will not preclude these agencies, boards, churches and organizations from making direct contacts and efforts of their own to obtain volunteers.

5) The Volunteer Coordinator services would be provided at no cost to these agencies, boards, churches and organizations in securing and referring volunteers to them.

6) The Volunteer Coordinator would refer all volunteers to the respective agency, board, church or organization, who will then make all arrangements for the services of the volunteer, including reimbursement of the expenses (if any) of the volunteer.

7) If possible, a small work area should be provided for the Volunteer Coordinator in the Denominational Building.

b. Responsibilities of the Volunteer Coordinator

1) To encourage members of the CRC to volunteer their services to agencies, boards, churches and organizations within the CRC or supported by the CRC.

2) To record needed data regarding volunteers, their skills, work histories, education, and availability as to time.

3) To obtain specific requests and information on needs for volunteer talents, skills required, cross cultural requirements, language requirements, location of the need, time and duration of the need from the agencies, boards, churches and organizations of the CRC or supported by the CRC.

4) To devise a system of data recording and data retrieval for use of agencies, boards, churches and organizations with the CRC or supported by the CRC.

5) To encourage creative thinking about the use of gifts of volunteers and to devise projects which can be carried out by

volunteers as necessary.

6) The Volunteer Coordinator may secure the services of other volunteers as necessary.

c. Qualifications of the Volunteer Coordinator

1) A person who is committed to the effective use of volunteers in the CRC.

2) A person with a strong, clear and positive Christian commitment and conviction.

3) A person with organizational and administrative ability, who is resourceful and who will assume initiative.

4) A person who has been active in the work of the CRC on the local level and who is familiar with or has served on one or more boards or agencies of the CRC and/or organizations supported by the CRC.

5) A person who is familiar with the work of the major agencies of the CRC including CRBHM, CRWRC, Back to God Hour, Calvin College and Seminary and United Calvinist Youth, etc.

6) A person who is sensitive to the mandates, responsibilities, and work of the major agencies of the CRC, their boards and administrative staffs, and who has the capacity to communicate and work harmoniously and effectively with these agencies and their boards and staffs.

7) A person who has ability to communicate clearly, effectively and tactfully, both in written correspondence and in-person conversations.

8) A person of good physical and mental health.

9) A person with personal integrity, the ability to keep commitments and the maturity to face and handle personal and institutional frustrations.

10) A person who can serve without acclaim and desire for public recognition, and who desires to be used by God in the work of His church.

2. Budget—We would need a budget.

The personnel requirements of the Volunteer Resource Bank will be supplied by volunteers. There will be expenses for office supplies, stationery, postage, telephone, and computer time. There will also be expenses to publicize the need for volunteers. An estimate of the annual expenses is as follows:

Office supplies, stationery . . . . .	\$1,000
Postage . . . . .	300
Telephone . . . . .	1,200
Computer time (if used) . . . . .	1,200
Advertising . . . . .	750
Expenses of the Volunteer Coordinator . . . . .	800
Office furniture and files . . . . .	500
Miscellaneous . . . . .	250
Total . . . . .	\$6,000

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS:

A. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to Mrs. Rose VanReken, chairperson of the committee, and to the Rev. Jim Kok, reporter of this committee.

B. *That Synod Approve Of:*

1. The proposal to develop a volunteer resource bank which matches the abilities of volunteers with denominational needs.
2. The appointment of a Volunteer Coordinator (whose place responsibilities and qualifications are described in this report) by the Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts.
3. The budget as presented in this report for a period of one year after the operation of the Volunteer Resource Bank has started.

*Grounds:*

a. The operation of the Volunteer Resource Bank will promote the effective use of members' gifts within the CRC. Individuals with a desire to use their gifts in the church are often not aware of specific needs and opportunities for service. At the same time, church agencies, boards, and committees often look for people with specific gifts to meet specific needs, but they must rely on "grapevine" information to find people they need. This project will bring together the members of the CRC who desire to volunteer their time and talents with churches, agencies, and boards who need and can make effective use of the services of these volunteers.

b. This project will tap a large reservoir of skills, gifts, and abilities which would make possible the expansion of existing programs, the institution of new projects, and the discovery of new avenues of service.

c. The Synodical Committee on the Use of Women's Gifts found the Data Bank to be a useful tool for finding women interested in, and capable of, serving the church on its many committees, sub-committees and boards. However, the current Data Bank is outdated, includes only names of women, and stresses ecclesiastical and administrative gifts.

d. The Synod of 1977, recognizing the need for an expanded and updated Data Bank, mandated our committee "to maintain the data bank, keep it up to date, enlarge it to include any interested member of the church, and encourage its use by church organizations and others approved by synod or the various classes." An enlarged Data Bank, which we call the Volunteer Resource Bank, entails operating expenses, and we have been hampered by the lack of funds for such a project. There will be expenses of office supplies, stationery, postage, telephone, and computer time, although the personnel requirements will be supplied by volunteers.

e. The need for the Volunteer Resource Bank is still evident:

- 1) Our committee continues to receive requests from CRC organizations and classes for names of people who are willing to serve their church in various capacities.

2) Denominational agencies (such as Home Missions, World Missions, and CRWRC) have indicated a desire to use the services of a central data bank for recruiting volunteers.

3) No coordinating volunteer committee now exists in the CRC. A volunteer may contact one or more organizations within the church, but miss the one that could make use of her/his service.

f. This project allows for the continuation of the Volunteer Resource Bank in the event that this committee is not re-established by the Synod of 1980.

C. That synod appoint one or two members to augment this committee's membership.

*Grounds:* We need help!

Service Committee for Use of Members'  
Gifts,

Rose Van Reken, chairperson  
Jim Kok, reporter  
Bernice VandenBerg, secretary  
Claudia De Vries Beversluis  
Donna Tinholt Hekman  
Lammert Slofstra

## REPORT 32

## CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY COMMITTEE

## I. HISTORY

The Synod of 1971 was asked to "declare that it is necessary and desirable to re-express the faith of the church in a new confession. . ." (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 624; Cf. p. 672). Synod did not adopt this overture. It did, however, appoint a committee to answer such questions as: "How should our faith be expressed in the contemporary situation?" "Do the churches consider it necessary to augment our creed?" "If so, in what areas do the churches desire to augment the confession?" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 109 & 110).

The committee polled the churches and reported in 1972. Out of 367 responses, 135 churches considered it necessary to augment the historic confessions, but 213 did not see any need for such action. However, 96 out of 116 ministers, not serving regular congregations, thought that the church ought to write an additional confession.

It was evident that the questionnaire of the fall of 1971 took the churches by surprise. They had not thought much about the desirability of adding a confession to the Three Forms of Unity and there was no particular issue to which the churches could react. Therefore, the questionnaires supplied "little clarity," no focus, and widely divergent advice. Synod concluded that "the Christian Reformed Church is not ready to augment its confessions" (Acts of Synod 1972, p. 30).

At the same time, the synodical committee on a new confession submitted some pertinent observations "on what the Bible says about confessing, on the role of confessions in church history, on creedal development and on the world to which we are called to proclaim the Gospel" (Acts of Synod 1972, pp. 407-414).

A confessional document, the committee said, is the biblical truth set forth as a witness to the world, a teaching instrument for church members, and a test of the orthodoxy of those who are to propagate and defend these truths. A confessional church is a church in which the confession fulfills this threefold function. This is the kind of church we want to be. Therefore we continue to confess the historic creeds as our own faith, we make new statements and pronouncements when occasions arise, and we confess our faith in actions that are consistent with the truths we believe.

Yet, the committee continued, the time may come when the church must write a new confession. Such a need exists, of course, when the church finds that the historic creeds are in error. But such action is also required when the confessions are found to be inadequate and incomplete. If the church faces a new crisis and if it finds itself in a condition that was neither addressed nor envisioned by its confession, the church may have to make a new, major confessional response.

All three of our confessions, the committee said, are responses to

critical threats, especially those posed by Roman Catholicism and Arminianism. The issues to which the confessions speak have not entirely disappeared and the truths which they formulate are still valid. But all three of our confessions, even the least crisis-oriented parts of them reflect an assumption which is now strange to us. The distance is due to the fact that the confessions concentrated on the Europe of long ago, in which it was assumed that all society was at least formally Christian. Virtually all the pronouncements of our confessions are addressed to rival theologies within the context of a life-embracing "Christendom." But that notion is no longer valid. Our world is different: "the modern crisis is the secularization of society; the modern challenge is the mission of the church in the world."

The Synod of 1972 was convinced that it should do more than draw the conclusion that the Christian Reformed Church was not ready to augment its confessions. Therefore it expressed "the judgment that the confessional task of the church requires the church's attention at this time." The New Confession Committee was therefore continued.

During the next five years the committee did what it could to update and revive the confessions by new translations and versifications, and by seeking avenues for better communication. The committee kept synod informed of creed-writing in other church bodies. And it submitted evaluations of some of these efforts. In 1973 the question was raised, what confessional status, if any, should be assigned to the doctrinal and ethical pronouncements which our synods make from time to time. A special committee reported to the Synod of 1974. (Its report said in effect that synodical decisions are authoritative and binding, but that the relevance of these decisions is subject to change.) A booklet containing the *Synodical Decisions on Doctrinal and Ethical Matters* was published in 1976.

Finally, in 1977, the Committee on a New Confession said that it was "time to consider once again the need for a new confession." The committee suggested that the church needs "a new document which will enter into crucial areas which are not covered" by our current confessions. The committee based its case for a new confession on four propositions (pp. 659, 660).

Synod agreed.

## II. MANDATE

The Synod of 1977 declared:

"a. that there is a need to move in the direction of formulating a contemporary testimony in view of the secularization of modern life and culture.

"Grounds:

- 1) Current society, becoming pervasively secular, presents both dangers and challenges to the church—dangers and challenges not focused on in the Reformed creeds.
- 2) A contemporary testimony can guide and direct the church in remaining truly Reformed, and in speaking to the current world situation."

The synod also outlined a procedure by which the contemporary testimony ought to be written:

- "b. that synod implement its declaration by appointing a preliminary committee of five members to make recommendations to the Synod of 1979 on pertinent matters relating to a contemporary testimony. These matters are to include:
- 1) the specific areas to be covered by the testimony
  - 2) the relationship between the testimony and the creeds
  - 3) the procedure to be followed in producing the testimony
  - 4) the desirability of seeking to involve other Reformed churches
  - 5) the qualifications of the personnel for a testimony committee.

*Grounds:*

- a) the appointment of a preliminary committee will serve to examine the concrete factors involved in the preparation of a contemporary testimony.
- b) this will enable the church to reflect on the subject prior to the actual preparation of the testimony" (Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 89, 90).

From a careful reading of our mandate we understand, first, that we are a preliminary of procedural committee. Our work is supposed to aid the Synod of 1979 in appointing another committee for the formulation of a contemporary testimony.

Secondly, the contemporary testimony envisioned by synod is going to be a confessional statement which may become as broad and deep as the Reformed faith itself. Our mandate itself does not define the testimony. However, the argument of the New Confession Committee and the observations of synod's advisory committee illuminate our mandate. Thus understood, the testimony may eventually involve a restatement of our faith concerning the doctrine of man, the Christian hope the relationship of church and society, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit and the nature of the Christian mission, because all these examples are mentioned in the report of the study committees (p. 660) or in the observations of the advisory committee (p. 88).

Thirdly, we infer that synod intended the contemporary testimony to be a comprehensive confessional statement, because it is to be written "in view of the secularization of modern life and culture." Synod must have agreed with its study committee that secularism poses a new crisis situation, unforeseen by our current confessions. Synod reached this conclusion after it had been served by its New Confession Committee for a period of six years. The same synod relieved that committee of any further responsibility (except for the completion of a translation of the Canons of Dordt) and declared that the church needs to move in the direction of formulating a contemporary testimony. We do not think that a "testimony" that is issued in view of a "pervasively secular" society, could be an item by item, piece-meal address to isolated secular practices. Secularization is not a force that manifests itself occasionally in contemporary life. Secularism is the matrix of modern life and culture; worldliness is the substance that colors all thought and action in our society. Therefore it is our understanding that, when synod said that we

"need to move in the direction of formulating a contemporary testimony in view of the secularization of modern life and culture," we were being mandated to begin preparations for a radical and comprehensive attack on an enemy that was not yet around when our ancestors formed our creeds.

As for the personnel of our committee, synod initially decided to appoint a committee of five members (p. 89), but in a later session (p. 150, point F) it appointed seven men. Subsequently the Rev. J. Eppinga found it impossible to serve on our committee. With the advice of the Synodical Interim Committee, we refrained from seeking a replacement for the Rev. Eppinga. Your mandate therefore was carried out by the six men whose names appear below.

### III. REFLECTIONS ON THE DIFFICULTIES AND POSSIBILITIES OF A CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY

At the outset some committee members had strong reservations about the feasibility of our assignment. But after the exchange of many viewpoints and several papers, we gathered a measure of enthusiasm. It may be helpful, at this time, to set forth some of the considerations which we found convincing as a rationale for the formulation of a confessional document.

(1) In the past the church has issued confessions out of a burning desire to address critical situations with the Word of the Lord. Such a desire is not obviously nor generally present among us at this time. In other churches of like tradition we have seen some efforts at confession making that do not offer much encouragement: the 1967 document of the United Presbyterian Church generated controversy, and the attempts of the Gereformeerde Kerken seem to be stalled.

Nevertheless, there have been important examples of meaningful confessional activity in recent decades. The Barmen Declaration of the Confessing Christians in Nazi Germany is a classic example of an address to a crisis situation with a Word of the Lord. Also the various documents of the Second Vatican Council are, in many respects, a significant church confession. We took note of the Chicago Declaration of Evangelical Social Concerns, the Hartford Appeal, and the Boston Affirmations. These three have been widely discussed on our continent. All three originated outside the ecclesiastical processes. Ad hoc groups and Christian coalitions seem to be filling a vacuum caused by the confessional silence of churches. Yet, the Reformed Church in America is composing its "Song of Hope;" and even as modest an attempt as "Our Testimony" (published in *The Outlook*) is another indication that our times call for a confessional testimony.

In short, while we note with dismay that confession-writing can lead to strife (UPC) or stalemate (GKN), there are also many indications that the time is ripe for a Reformed testimony to our present world.

(2) In recent years our ecumenical relationships have multiplied. Due to our participation in the RES and in the NAPARC, and due to an ever widening group of churches with which we hold ecclesiastical fellowship, new items appear on our denominational agenda. We are now related to churches whose history is quite different from ours. With them we are united in opposition to theological liberalism. But this growing group of

Reformed churches is also heir to quite different experiences, employs different language, and shows various "minds."

Thus there are new themes and challenges resulting from our ecumenical relationships. These matters deserve to be addressed out of our understanding of the Reformed faith.

(3) The Christian Reformed Church is quickly becoming a "North Americanized" church. This process, which is neither surprising nor alarming, presents us with challenges we did not face earlier. We used to rely on ethnic bonds to supply a network of loyalty and understanding. Our self-understanding was determined not only by our confessions; the "immigrant experience" also gave us a strong sense of uniqueness. However, for better or worse, these supports are failing. We are shedding our isolation and we must be prepared for new confrontations. Not only do we find it easier to experience a sense of oneness with other Christians in North America; we are also wide open to the influences of various religious movements: fundamentalism, liberalism, dispensationalism, the human potential movement, the charismatic movement, and so on.

The uniqueness we assumed in the past will survive only if we articulate it confessionally.

(4) Looming large over all these considerations, and cutting across all other issues is the nearly overwhelming phenomenon of secularism. Our society shows patterns of disobedience, apostasy, perversion and dehumanization that could not have been imagined by our forebears.

Our committee then constructed a list of topics which are of current concern in the church and in various areas of society in order to measure the scope of the testimony. This list, incomplete in itself, is dominated by questions which could not have been anticipated by the writers of earlier confessions.

All this led us to the conclusion that by means of the proposed testimony the Christian Reformed Church has a far-reaching opportunity to profess its faith anew. We are not only convinced of the present need for a contemporary Reformed testimony; we are also hopeful that certain features may be present in a new confession, among them the following:

*First*, we hope for a testimony that is boldly *orthodox*. We do not look for a mere repetition of orthodox confessional statements. Yet we believe that a testimony that confronts the apostasy of the present day should reaffirm the contents of the historic faith: that Jesus is the pre-existent Son of God, born of a virgin, fully human and fully divine, that he lived a life of perfect obedience to God's law, that he suffered and died under God's wrath in our place, that he arose to reign and makes us share in his victory; and so on. A Reformed testimony, we hope, will be pointed enough to be of help in contemporary argument, but also basic and orthodox, so that it commands the agreement of all Bible-believing Christians.

*Secondly*, we believe that a contemporary testimony must be recognizable as an expression of Reformed *piety*. It must recapture the God-fearing tone of our earlier confessions, the trust of saints who knew the faithfulness of our Savior's love and the desire for righteousness

among a sanctified people. The testimony will no doubt incorporate certain matters that are argued in detail in synodical reports. But these materials would be blended into the confessional flow of the testimony, omitting the arguments, footnotes and word studies. We hope that the contemporary testimony becomes usable in teaching, worship, and liturgy, so that it may become a vehicle for, and stimulant to, the daily piety of God's people.

*Thirdly*, we hope for a testimony that will articulate the *kingdom* vision of our unique strand of Calvinism. If that vision should determine the document, the testimony will not only join orthodoxy with piety but it will also insist on the inseparable connection between "that which is to be believed" and "that which is to be done." Today the "social application of the gospel" and the insistence that a Christian is a "born-again" person are often presented as new insights, imported from the left and from the right wings of Christianity. However, if the testimony could be shaped by the biblical principles of the coming kingdom, these "insights" would appear as integral features of the Reformed confession.

*Finally*, a formal point: we hope that our testimony will be an *ecclesiastical* confession that addresses current issues. As such it will differ from declarations by groups dedicated to Christian political action or educational activity. Yet it should be supportive of such declarations. Its address to current issues must be general enough so that it is not too quickly dated. But it may not be so general that it leaves burning issues undecided. Silence on abortion or the shape of Christian education would relegate these issues to the realm of Christian freedom—matters on which the church has no clear word of the Lord. The church itself will have to make the final decisions on the scope of the testimony and on the particular issues that should or should not be addressed. The contemporary testimony must become the church's response to God's word—the best and most obedient answer we are able to give in the eighties.

#### IV. AREAS TO BE COVERED BY THE TESTIMONY

Synod asked our committee to recommend "specific areas to be covered by the testimony." In order to fulfill this part of our mandate, we began by constructing a "gross list" of topics. We gathered these topics by listing the issues and challenges that have been matters of concern over the past decades to the following communities: (1) the Christian Reformed Church, (2) the larger Reformed community, (3) the larger Christian community, (4) human society in general. The resultant list was extensive. Yet we always felt it was incomplete.

Next we attempted to classify these topics. Although we ourselves are not satisfied with the divisions or the completeness of the topics, we pass on this list, because it may give some indication of the possible scope of the contemporary testimony.

##### A. THE CHURCH

1. *Issues of doctrine*: (a) the Bible (b) two testaments; relation to the Jews (c) creation/evolution (d) atonement (e) sufficiency of revelation; claims of other religions and Christian cults (f) the mission of the church (g) syncretism.

2. *Issues of worship*: (a) proclamation (b) sacraments (c) liturgy (d) charismata (e) Sabbath/Sunday.
3. *Issues of practice*: (a) office, laity (b) life style (c) evangelism (d) orthodoxy/orthopraxy.
4. *Issues of ecumenical fellowship*: (a) church/denomination (b) ecumenism (c) Roman Catholicism (d) Anabaptists.
5. *Issues concerning the future*: (a) our hope (b) dispensationalism, millennium (c) kingdom, future/realized (d) new creation.

#### B. BASIC ISSUES IN HUMAN RELATIONS

1. *Related to sexuality*: (a) marriage, family, divorce (b) homosexuality (c) feminism, female role.
2. *Related to respect for life*: (a) abortion (b) euthanasia (c) genetic engineering.
3. *Related to societal responsibility*: (a) racial relations (b) substance abuse (c) individualism (d) human potential movement (e) communication and truth (f) pornography and censure (g) gambling.

#### C. FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN NEEDS

1. *A right to exist*: (a) human dignity (b) poverty (c) work, unemployment.
2. *A right to enjoy*: (a) luxury (b) recreation and amusement.

#### D. ISSUES IN LARGER PUBLIC DOMAIN

1. *Philosophical issues*: (a) ideology (b) totalitarianism, collectivism (c) liberation movements.
2. *Creation Resource issues*: (a) ecology (b) redistribution.
3. *Political issues*: (a) church and state (b) politics (c) war (d) civil disobedience.
4. *Societal issues*: (a) literacy, education (b) mass media.

We are not suggesting that each of these topics must be treated or even mentioned in the testimony. Such decisions must be made by those who actually set out to write the testimony.

Your committee also raised the question: How are these topics related to our current confessions? Do our confessions give us guidance or do we have synodical pronouncements on these particular issues? We even attempted to construct a list of topics, "rating" each topic on a scale of 1 (no guidance) to 4 (adequate guidance) as to whether our present creeds offer the church real confessional guidance. These working papers we will gladly hand over to the testimony committee. But some issues and topics, mentioned above, we wish to highlight at this time in order to demonstrate the need for a contemporary testimony.

#### The Bible

Our confessional statements on the Bible (B.C. 2-7; Heid. Cat. q. 19) were made in an environment of universal acceptance of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. Now we have had more than 200 years of higher criticism. We have also received great linguistic and historical enrichment in our knowledge of the biblical text. Our synods have made pronouncements on infallibility in the sixties and on hermeneutics in the seventies. At this time the gains must be articulated confessionally and

the rejection of heresies should be brought up to date. Especially the uniqueness and sufficiency of the Bible need to be emphasized, not only in view of scientific relativism, but also with respect to the two-sources theory of Roman Catholics and claims of inspired revelation, for examples, by the Mormons.

We must also bear in mind that until recently we knew only that there were distant people who did not know the gospel. Today the comparative study of alien religions and their sacred books is widespread in our society.

### **Christ**

The person and work of Christ constitute the heart of our confession. Many truths need to be reiterated today in view of new heresies surrounding the atonement. On the other hand, we need a fresh and relevant address to the biblical teaching on Christ as the exalted head. The confession of the Reformation is still ours. But the surrounding clouds of controversy (for example, on the distinction between the divine and human natures of Christ) which had such deep influence on the way in which the Reformers confessed Christ's exaltation, have somewhat dissipated. Now it is time to bring other aspects in clearer focus.

### **Holy Spirit**

Although the confessions are much richer on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit than is often alleged, a profound and clear testimony is called for by the incessant attention to the Spirit's gifts and works during the twentieth century.

### **Creation**

The evolution theory is now an all-pervasive assumption in nearly all fields of human endeavor. This theory was not yet known when the confessions were formulated.

### **Church**

This is one of the most obvious areas waiting for confessional address. Denominations are unknown in the New Testament and divisions in the body are condemned. From the perspective of our creeds the matter is relatively simple: apart from certain fanatical Anabaptist fringe movements, there are only two manifestations of the church of Christ, and one of these places the authority of the papacy above the authority of God's Word. The true church is therefore easily found by applying a simple test (B.C., Art. 29). The testimony should reflect on the three marks of the true church, and how they have functioned in our history, and how they ought to function today.

It is not your committee's task to present a complete analysis. We merely point out that the "doctrine of the three marks" has functioned independent of its own context (the marks of Christians) and without relationship to the doctrine of the Holy Catholic Church (Heid. Cat. L.D. 21). In some Reformed churches the doctrine of the three marks became so formalized that passing this test was tantamount to that church considering itself Christ's only address in the world. Most of our people, however, operate with only a vague notion of a world-wide church of Christ as the sum of their ecclesiology. For the present generation of

Christians on our continent the relationship between "being Christian" and "being churchmember" is problematic. And most Reformed people are surprised to learn that the ancient Catholic saying, "Outside the church is no salvation," is a part of our confession (B.C. Art. 28).

### **Missio Dei**

Mission, mission boards, mission fields, mission orders, mission policies, mission education, and mission promotion are frequently mentioned in the Agenda and Acts of our synods. Our classic confessions say nothing on this topic. The Heidelberg Catechism has some incidental references to the spread of the gospel and the power of God to add to the church. The Canons of Dort has a curiously un-missionary line in III, IV Art. 15. Yet the Synod of 1973 urged the churches to give evangelism priority on its roster of activities. Since that year we have tried to formulate the church's missionary task in an *Evangelism Manifesto* (see Acts 1975, p. 52 and 534ff) which has quasi-confessional and more than denominational weight. Many other testimonies have already been formulated by mission boards and conferences. The reasons for this work were not only found in the needs of the world, but also in the lack of confessional guidance.

Theologically speaking our thinking about the church has shifted to a redemptive historical line. We see how the Lord of history uses us in the period between his ascension and return to accomplish his purpose. It is time to give this profoundly biblical insight confessional form.

### **Eschatology**

Our churches function in an environment where they are confronted with detailed eschatologies from various fundamentalist groups and pseudo-Christian cults. While our confessions speak in clear and often moving tones of the blessed hope of our Lord's return, the North American religious environment requires that we provide a fuller eschatological confession.

### **Education**

Although education in home, church, and school has received much synodical, classical and consistorial attention, we have no confessional statement on this topic.

### **Family**

Synods speak of marriage and family only when they have to speak on divorce. A testimony on marriage and sexuality could bring together what has been said at various synods about birth control, homosexuality, abortion, and divorce.

### **Justice**

In the 1980's the church will have to speak of the obligation to love our neighbors as we love ourselves in a context that is radically different from continental Europe in the 1560's.

We believe, then, that there are topics and issues that are obvious candidates for confessional address. Other items on our list may have to be ignored or dealt with by implication. These matters await the decision of the committee to be appointed. We hope that our list, along with these

comments, provide a place to start and a context for further reflection.

#### V. BASIC STRUCTURES FOR A CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY

Your committee explored two possible forms which a contemporary testimony might take. We lay both formats before synod with a view to passing both of them on to the future drafting committee for its consideration. Both approaches would include an address to contemporary *issues* as well as the biblical-confessional basis upon which the church should stand in its witness to a secularizing world. These two dimensions would be worked out differently, however, depending on which of the two structuring principles were followed. A call to repentance as well as confession would come to expression in either form of the testimony.

A. *The one form we shall call an "issue-oriented" approach.* Its structuring principle would be that cluster of issues which secularism has thrust upon us. These would be addressed quite directly in the proposed testimony. This approach would involve more, however, than a catalogue of errors to be condemned. In its witness concerning these secular threats the testimony would draw upon the biblical-confessional truths which give substance to our faith. But its organizing principle would be the issues to be confronted rather than a full and orderly exposition of our biblical-confessional heritage. This is the form which most Reformed church testimonies have taken over the past 300 years (see, for example, the Conclusions of Utrecht of 1905, the Three Points on Common Grace of 1924, the testimony on Worldly Amusements of 1928, the Barmen Declaration of 1935, the Guidelines on the Film Arts of 1967, the Pastoral Advice on Biblical Authority of 1972).

Perhaps a sampling of how such an "issue-oriented" structuring principle could be worked out may be helpful. Your committee offers the following:

1. *Poverty:* before God and a hundred million hungry neighbors, we call upon the church and all men in our western world to repent of our obsession with affluence, economic expansionism, undisciplined consumption, and hedonistic immersion in luxurious life-styles born of unconcern about our needy neighbors and gained at the expense of poor peoples; and to confess that Christ's claim of discipleship rests upon us in our dealings with the starving and oppressed peoples of the world, remembering that God hears the cries of the poor, the widows, the orphans, the downtrodden; and to support programs of world relief and the reforming of societal structures so as to encourage a more equitable sharing in the resources of creation.

2. *Education:* confessing our corporate responsibility for the dominance of secular humanism in most educational programs today, acknowledging our shortcomings in making a truly Christian alternative in education available to our fellowmen on a large scale, and protesting the educational injustice and inequity in the public order; thankful nevertheless for the opportunities we have for promoting Christian education and scholarship; we commit ourselves anew to the ongoing task of biblically-directed learning at all levels of education, opening up for students the meaning of our life in God's world in the light of his Word, thus to equip the Christian community for full-fledged kingdom service.

3. *Mission*: repenting of our lack of diligence in missions, for our failure to make the gospel believable because of inconsistent ways of living it out, and for our tendencies to pour the gospel in the molds of western ideologies; and recognizing that increasingly our mission fields lie near to home as well as far away; we reaffirm the world's need of the renewing power of God's Word; and rededicate ourselves to proclaiming the gospel in all its fullness, in word and deed, to our fellowmen in all their life-relationships.

B. *The other form we shall call a "full perspective" approach.* This is the form made familiar to us in the classic sixteenth century reformational creeds of the church (for example, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession). Its structuring principle would be the basic biblical-confessional truths of our Reformed tradition. This format would also speak to the issues which confront us today in our secularizing world. But the address to these issues would be incorporated into a more orderly and comprehensive witness to the full message of the gospel. Such a testimony might be formulated under an over-arching, central, unifying theme such as "The Good News of the Kingdom," as the only real answer to the bad news of secularism. The testimony could be developed along the lines of the crucial biblical motifs of creation, fall, and redemption, on the way to the consummation of all things in Jesus Christ. Such a theme and such motifs would then serve as the organizing principle for a contemporary testimony. Again, a sample of how such a "full perspective" format could be worked out may be helpful. While various central, unifying themes might be advanced (e.g. Covenant, Mighty Acts of God, Christian Hope, etc.), we submit, as our working theme "The Good News of the Kingdom."

1. *Creation*: "In the beginning . . ." God created his kingdom. Thus we confess the creation of the world as counter-point to the prevailing dogma of evolution; the creation of man as image of God over against contemporary views which reduce man to a highly developed animal, a victim of chance, or a creature of the state. We affirm the fundamental unity of the human race in opposition to all idolatrous notions of racial superiority and ethnic prejudice. We affirm the meaningfulness of life and history in opposition to philosophies of despair and "life-boat ethics"; respect for life in the face of current abortion practices; also the communal character of covenant life over against rugged individualism; and the cultural mandate as the basis for man's stewardship of the rich resources of God's creation.

2. *The Fall*: rebellion in God's kingdom. Thus we confess that the problems of the world are not superficial, arising merely out of psychological, sociological, economic, or political maladjustment; but that our problems are radically religious, calling for a radical remedy. Repenting of putting our trust in salvation by moral self-improvement, or cultural utopianism, or messianic politics, we must proclaim that redemption from our estrangement from God, ourselves, and the creation is possible only in Jesus Christ.

3. *Israel*: God chose Israel as a nation over which he himself would rule; through Jesus the Messiah, a Jew according to the flesh, God has in-

corporated all believers into a restored Israel, a holy nation under God. We honor the covenant-keeping Jews, our older brothers and sisters, in whose inheritance we share through Jesus Christ our Peace. We reject the dreams of Zionists that are reinforced by the dispensationalists' misunderstanding of the Scriptures, because they destroy the unity which Christ has effected and reduce the kingdom He has already established.

4. *Redemption* in Jesus Christ: he is the Son of God. His death on the cross was not only evidence of our sinful rejection of goodness and holiness; his death was designed by God as an atoning sacrifice for all our sins. Now Jesus lives and he rules us by his Spirit and through his Word, as the true Shepherd-King, hailed by the prophets and confessed among the nations.

These are sample presentations illustrating two ways in which the contemporary testimony might be structured, the "issue-oriented" approach and the "full-perspective" approach. Your committee favors the latter. As a matter of fact, we would strongly urge the testimony committee to use "The Good News of the Kingdom" as the most potent address to the bad news of secularism.

#### VI. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TESTIMONY AND OUR PRESENT CONFESSIONS.

The Synod of 1977 instructed us to say something about the relationship that would obtain between the contemporary testimony and our historic confessions.

As we "move in the direction of formulating a contemporary testimony," it would be well to bear in mind that this task is not being undertaken because we find fault with the Three Forms of Unity. Our new task is occasioned by the emergence of a new and critical situation and it is undertaken in reliance on the ongoing work of the Spirit. We are not motivated by a desire to criticize the work of our fathers, but we are compelled to build upon their confession, speaking the word of the Lord in our situation.

As to the future status of the testimony, we cannot make any predictions. If it turns out to be a better formulation and an up-to-date address which is clearly biblical and recognizably Reformed, the new testimony will tend to supersede the old confessions, wherever they speak on the same matters. But it would be premature to speculate on the relationship between the testimony and the confessions, or to define beforehand what measure of authority it ought to carry. We should simply proceed to do the work which we believe God requires. At a later date God's people will decide on the status of the testimony.

A few things may be learned from the manner in which our present confessions gained the status they now possess. The Belgic Confession was written by one individual as a contemporary testimony. Within ten years it received creedal status when the Synod of Emden (1571) required its member churches to adhere to this document. Other classes and "particular synods" followed suit. But it was not until the closing session of the Synod of Dort (May 6, 1619) that the three creeds became "doctrinal standards of the church." Unanimously that synod declared that the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism were "agreeable to the Word of God;" and the Canons, which that synod had adopted, were

judged to be "in agreement with the Word of God and the Reformed confession." According to the guidelines of this same synod, the Heidelberg Catechism was to function as a teaching instrument, the Canons became a test of orthodoxy for the teachers in the church, and the Belgic Confession functioned, more or less, as the witness to the world, the *apologia* of the Reformed churches. But the different roles of the creeds were not premeditated. The Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession became "doctrinal standards" only because they had been "gladly received" as soon as they became known and had served well for many years as a bond of unity among those who held to the Reformed faith.

It would be unwise if the Synod of 1979 should seek to determine beforehand the ecclesiastical status and authority of the testimony that is yet to be composed. Among us the authority of ecclesiastical documents always depends on their content, not on their signatories or solemn pronouncements. And the church of God, to whom the word of the Lord has been entrusted, will have to judge the content before it agrees on the authority of the testimony.

Meanwhile, the committee, mandated to write the testimony, should begin its work in the expectation that the result of its efforts will not be relegated to the position now held by the documents collected in the booklet *Synodical Decisions on Doctrinal and Ethical Matters*. The committee should know that the church is aiming for a contemporary testimony that might eventually gain confessional standing.

#### VII. PROCEDURE FOR DRAFTING THE CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY.

We must also make recommendations with respect to "the procedure to be followed in producing the testimony" and "the desirability of seeking to involve other Reformed churches" in the formulation of a Contemporary Testimony.

It is not necessary to argue the desirability of involvement of other Reformed churches. Our hope is, of course, that the testimony will be shared by the church of Jesus Christ on a broad, ecumenical scale. But the question concerns the feasibility of other Reformed churches being involved in the framing of the document. We present the following options and evaluations:

A. *Joint Effort*. Ideally all the churches with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship should be involved in the formulation of the testimony, so that the document would be the product of joint action.

However, we do not see a "mind" for such endeavor in the sixteen or more churches that would be involved. An attempt to create such a readiness, even if successful, would take much time and effort, with the result that the actual formulation of the testimony would not follow until many years beyond our contemporary situation.

B. *A CRC Effort with Delegates of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship*.

Synod could ask each church in ecclesiastical fellowship to name a person from its membership to serve the CRC as a member of its committee. This would include the churches outside of North America and would involve us in much expense. If this approach were to be chosen, we could still go in either one of two directions:

- (1) All committee members, including those "in fellowship," could

have equal status in the committee, with membership likely consisting then predominantly of non-CRC members. This would mean that the mind and the concerns of the CRC might not be adequately reflected in the committee and the actual formulation of a testimony might be seriously hampered.

- (2) Limit the participation of the non-CRC members to a "working role" while reserving the voting powers for the CRC delegates. Such an approach would lessen the possibility of division and stalemate, but it would discourage the appointment of representatives by the other churches.

*C. A CRC Effort with Other Reformed People by Invitation of our Synod.*

Synod could select committee members from the other churches (informing those churches of our actions). This would protect the committee against too great a divergence of "mind" and commitment and the committee could probably do its work more expeditiously than if the other Reformed people were delegated by their own churches. But this procedure would reduce the degree of actual ecumenicity in the undertaking.

Using this approach, one would have the same option as in "B" above: the non-CRC members could be full members of the committee or the voting power would be reserved for the CRC members only.

*D. A CRC Effort Submitted to the Other Churches before Final Adoption.*

This is the method your committee favors. The testimony would be produced as expeditiously as possible and would then be submitted to all churches in ecclesiastical fellowship with the request that each church favor us with its review and criticism before the testimony would be adopted. A further goal for even broader acceptance could be the submission of the final document to NAPARC and RES churches for their information and possible acceptance.

In exercising this option the drafting committee could be instructed to make broad and significant use of resource persons from churches outside the CRC whose spiritual insight and ability could enrich the thinking and expedite the work of the committee. The consultation of resource persons could take place by conversation or by correspondence.

*E. Qualifications of Personnel*

The mandate of synod also requires that we make recommendations on "the qualifications of the personnel of a testimony committee."

It stands to reason that the membership of the committee should not be of such close affinity and theological kinship that alternate viewpoints receive no hearing. At the same time, composition of a testimony cannot be done in an atmosphere of polemic confrontation.

We suggest that the committee consist of nine members. These must be men and women who share a commitment to the confessional approach to the faith and life of the church, who have appreciation for the validity and relevance of the Three Forms of Unity, and who are convinced of the need for a contemporary creedal expression of the Reformed faith.

The members of the committee must possess maturity of insight. They should be alert to the challenge of witnessing in a new age. It is desirable, of course, that the committee embody a diversity of gifts. But the com-

mittee must also possess a unity of spirit that ensures uninhibited wrestling with the issues involved. Therefore synod should seek to staff its testimony committee with people who are known for their ability to work together and who would be eager to express our faith with a united voice.

#### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the chairman and reporter be permitted to represent our committee when synod discusses this report.
2. That the Committee for the writing of a Contemporary Testimony be named from the members of the Christian Reformed Church who meet the qualifications set forth above; and that the committee consist of nine members who are willing to commit themselves for the full term of their assignment.
3. That the committee be instructed to make broad and significant use of resource persons, both from within and from outside the CRC whose spiritual insight and proven ability would enrich the wisdom and expedite the work of the committee.

*Ground:* By this method the committee would be assured of having access to the spiritual resources of the world-wide church of Jesus Christ.

4. That synod adopt the following procedure as a guide for the preparation of a testimony:
  - a. The committee is required to submit annual progress reports to synod and is expected to present a draft of the Contemporary Testimony within four years (1983).
  - b. After the committee has done its basic study, it is authorized to designate one person who will engage in the special task of writing the testimony for a specified period of time, while freed from all other duties.
  - c. The draft of the testimony, to be presented to synod in 1983, shall then be submitted to the congregations for discussion and response; the draft shall also be presented to the churches with which we have ecclesiastical fellowship with a request for their written evaluation.
  - d. After a three year period of reflection by our churches, the testimony shall be re-written and presented to synod for final approval.
  - e. The final draft of the Testimony shall be presented to the churches in ecclesiastical fellowship, to NAPARC, and to the RES for their information and possible endorsement.
  - f. The ultimate goal of the contemporary testimony is to make a contribution to the world-wide church of the Lord.

Contemporary Testimony Committee

Gordon J. Spykman, chairman  
Andrew Kuyvenhoven, reporter  
Morris N. Greidanus  
Tymen E. Hofman  
Richard J. Mouw  
Carl D. Tuyl

## REPORT 33

## BELGIC CONFESSION TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

## I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Statement of Mandate*

The Synod of 1977 appointed this committee to prepare a new translation of the Belgic Confession. It decided to do so as a result of a report from the "New Confession Committee" which recommended "that synod instruct a committee to prepare a new translation of the Belgic Confession to increase its usefulness within the churches and to keep pace with the other two confessions which do and will appear in new translation" (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 657). The New Confession Committee cited, in the context of this recommendation, the "archaic language" and "cumbersome style" of the current translation of the Belgic Confession, which "do not allow this confession to be as accessible to the church as it might be."

Synod acceded to the wishes of the New Confession Committee by adopting the following recommendation and mandate: "That synod appoint a committee with the mandate to prepare a new translation of the Belgic Confession, incorporating the textual references. *Grounds:* (a) A new translation of the Belgic Confession would increase its usefulness for church education. (b) It would benefit the churches and pastors who use the Belgic Confession for preaching purposes, as recommended by the Synod of 1973 (Acts of Synod 1973, Art. 67, B, 4). (c) It would match the contemporary language of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort (translation of the latter in progress)" (Acts of Synod 1977, Art. 59, V, B, p. 88).

B. *Description of Committee's Work*

The committee began its work in the fall of 1977.\* At its first meeting it adopted provisionally the "principles of translation" formulated and used by the Heidelberg Catechism Translation Committee in its earlier work, insofar as these were applicable to our translation of the Belgic Confession (see Acts of Synod 1970, p. 461). Especially the following four of these principles have guided us in our task:

1. We take it to be our task, in keeping with the mandate of synod, to prepare a new translation and not only to revise or correct the present translation. And therefore we shall try, as objectively as possible, to understand fully what the original is trying to say, and then, as fully and accurately as possible, to relay that meaning into contemporary English. We believe we ought to make this translation into English wholly

\*Mrs. Jeni Hoekstra and Dr. Stanley Wiersma were originally appointed to our committee but did not meet with us, largely because of schedule complications. Dr. Wiersma has examined our translation, however, and we gratefully acknowledge his helpful suggestions.

modern and idiomatic, yet without being colloquial, dignified without being archaic.

2. We further believe that there is no virtue *per se* in attempting to transmit into English matters of style, syntax, structure, word order, sentence division etc., which are part of the natural characteristics of the original, but which are less natural when brought over into English. In such matters the demands of good style for contemporary English should be followed.

3. And we believe that it follows from this that the main unit of translation must be, not the individual word or phrase, but the larger unit of thought which so frequently helps determine the meaning of individual words and phrases, viz., the sentence.

4. We assume that this is to be, in the full sense, a translation, and not a paraphrase, and furthermore that this is to be a translation aimed at no particular goal, e.g., ease of memorization, other than one which can with dignity bear the name of an official translation.

Another important decision made early in our meetings pertains to the form in which the translation is presented. We decided to adopt the strophic or versified form for several reasons: to make our translation formally consistent with that adopted in the new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism; to make the appearance of the Belgic Confession less intimidating and more attractive on the printed page; and to facilitate the reading of the Confession both in public and in private use. The principle generally followed in this format was to bring the main ideas of the Confession out to the left hand margin and to indent words and phrases that are somewhat more subordinate to the central thrust of the statement. Initial versions were done by individual members of the committee, with the "final" version hammered out in full committee sessions.

We are submitting herewith the results of our efforts, but we are not yet asking for synod's final stamp of approval on our work. We are asking, instead, for provisional approval and for authorization to complete the final stages of our task along the lines we have followed thus far. There are two main reasons why we are not asking for ultimate approval at this time. First, a part of our mandate is to "incorporate the textual references." We have not yet finished that part of our task. But the second, profoundly more complicated reason has to do with an enduring problem that the committee has wrestled with since the very beginning of its work. It is the problem of the *textus receptus*—i.e., which text we should use as the standard, authoritative original. The committee has reached full agreement on this issue, but we want synod to be completely aware of the problem and fully apprized of its implications for our officially-adopted English translation. This report will continue, therefore, with a description of the problem and our proposed action.

### C. *The Problem of the Textus Receptus (Early History of the Text)*

1. The early history of the Belgic Confession is much more complex and confusing than that of the Heidelberg Catechism and Canons of Dort. From the outset your committee was confronted with a problem

that did not present itself with such force to the translation committees of our other creeds: Which of the early texts were we to take as the official *textus receptus*?

Our first decision was to work with a French text. We were led to that decision by the very constituency of our committee. The Synod of 1977 saw fit to appoint to our committee several persons proficient in the French language. We were influenced also by the precedent set by the Heidelberg Catechism Committee which enunciated this principle: "We recognize that the original language of the Catechism is German, and so we take as our standard and authoritative text the original German." We decided to do the same, *mutatis mutandis*. We also decided, as did the Catechism Committee, to "let early translations, e.g., Latin and Dutch, illuminate, clarify, or give detail to our understanding of the [original] text."

But with that matter settled the more complicated problem presented itself: Which French text were we to adopt as our "original"? Were we to go back to the earliest text, printed in 1561 (hereafter referred to as the text of 1559/61) or were we to follow one of the early revisions that apparently gained support in Reformed churches by the end of the sixteenth century? Or were we to take the text that was funneled through the Synod of Dort as a composite of preceding revisions and those made by the synod itself?

We found that problem difficult to resolve. The crucial point is that the Belgic Confession was first written in a political and theological climate that appears to have changed soon after its publication in 1561. Guido (or in French, Guy) deBres wrote in the context of the *kruiskerken*, as Reformed churches were called while they still suffered persecution and were forced to operate underground. But soon afterward a new and different era dawned. It was the era of "magisterialization"—of official support, approval, and even espousal of Reformed churches, and established Reformed theology, by civil powers. It was an era in which significant theological shifts took place. (We shall indicate some of these in Part III of our report.)

In a sense, the Christian Reformed Church has already entered the debate between these two main traditions by rejecting the revised reading of Article 36 as channelled through the Synod of Dort. The issues at stake there lie very much at the heart of the entire problem. But it still is incumbent upon us in this report to sketch the course of conflict between two schools of thought that apparently locked horns already some two decades before deBres put his Confession on paper.

2. We begin by observing that John Calvin made his debut in the southern Low Countries with a tract in which he reproached the Flemish evangelicals for failing to work toward an established status for their version of the faith (see *Corpus Reformatorum*, Vol. 34, pp. 540ff.; also *Opera* VI, pp. 537ff.) This tract was immediately translated and published in the Flemish language, and it apparently drew wide attention. But it was not well-received, and elicited a published complaint that Calvin was asking, in fact, the impossible. To that complaint Calvin replied in a second tract, similar in spirit to the first (*Opera*, VI, pp. 589ff.). Again he

asked the Flemish evangelicals to put forth an all-out effort to magisterialize the reform in the Low Countries. He summarized his argument in the following words: "If all they whom the Lord has enlightened would with one accord have the fortitude rather to die, to leave all behind . . . , then he would come to their aid with means which we do not see as yet. . . ." Those "means" were "the conversion of the princes and their officers, for the destruction of idolatries and the instituting of the true service and adoration of God."

In a letter written at this same time to the consistory of the underground church at Antwerp, Calvin voiced the same complaint and spelled out the same advice (Bonnet, II, 112). By lodging that complaint against the Flemish evangelicals he also lodged a criticism against Guido deBres—for deBres too was then guilty of wrong conduct in not seeking a governmentally-supported cult. He was quite willing to conduct conventicles or off-the-record gatherings for exercising faith. DeBres apparently paid no attention to Calvin's criticism and continued to conduct his conventicle-type meetings. He made no effort to enlist the government's sword to insure his own interpretation of the faith and oppose competitors.

Less than two decades after Calvin spelled out to the Flemish how they should conduct themselves, deBres wrote his Confession, in 1559, from within that very camp that Calvin had chided. Again, he apparently paid little attention to Calvin's call for a different policy. In the same year a copy of his Confession was carried to Geneva by Adrian Saravia, who persuaded deBres to let the Genevans pass judgment on what they thought of it. We need not be surprised that Calvin and his colleagues were not elated over the evidence that the delinquent Flemish were now rallying around a creed of their own. Geneva reacted negatively and advised the Flemish not to publish their new confession. That advice was carried back orally and by written communication to deBres. Thereupon he set his creed aside, it seems, for two years, after which time, on the prodding of his compatriot, Godfrey van Wingen, he gave it to the printers at Rouen. Saravia tried to intercept that move, but deBres had support of the Church at Emden. In view of the fact that his confession was ready for publication in 1559 but was actually not printed until 1561 we refer to the original text as "1559/61."

When deBres' Confession began to circulate in printed form steps were taken, almost at once, to divest the delinquent Flemish of their new creedal symbol. As early as 1565 it was proposed, by individuals who had begun to heed Calvin's advice, that "at each and every meeting of synod henceforth the Confession is to be read in its entirety, as much to give opportunity for expressing our unity as to give opportunity for changes and improvement." This proposal was adopted—and now revision was legally possible at any and every subsequent ecclesiastical assembly. The words "as much to give opportunity for expressing our unity" seem to have served to assuage the bitter taste of those other words, "to give opportunity for changes and improvements."

The very next year, in 1566, an "occult" synod convened for the express purpose of revising the Confession. To this synod Saravia was "summoned," and at it several conspiring nobles were present, not as

spectators, it seems, but as voting members—for they were among those who “signed” the revised Confession that emerged. Although this synod made a number of significant changes (so that Abraham Kuyper, in his day, spoke of the revision as “*een duchtige revisie*”—notably in Article 36) the prime purpose of the 1566 revision was apparently to give the creed, to which Flemish evangelicals now rallied, a new sponsor and to make it over into the product of the faction that was, by this time, advocating magisterialization of the reform. As a result there were from this time on virtually two confessions, each with its own sponsor or its own place of publication (the revised version was printed at Geneva). In the light of that bifurcation we should see Saravia’s claim to be “one of the first authors” of the Confession, though he added that is “was originally drawn up by . . . Guido deBres.”

From this point on we observe a tug-of-war between these two confessions. Some in Flanders began to side with the proponents of the new theology, and it seems that “before the Synod of 1566 there was a certain amount of grumbling [*“eenig gemor”*] about the Confession.” Some Reformed people said it should not have been accepted, seeing that the Genevan theologians did not approve it in 1561. This friction between the two schools became apparent repeatedly in the ensuing years and was manifest in a preference for either one or the other of the confessions. We read in the minutes of a provincial synod at Dordrecht in 1574: “We shall for certain reasons leave the Confession as it is; and if any words are to be altered, so as to bring it in line with the edition printed at Geneva, we will wait with that until the General Synod meets.” At a general synod held at Middelburg in 1581 the question was asked: “Which are the thirty-seven articles that ministers and elders and deacons are required to sign?” That question shows that people were aware of an option and the existence of at least two confessions. The answer is also significant: “They are the ones which the Dutch churches handed to King Philip.” It was also added: “and since these have been badly misprinted [the original has “*seer misdruet*”] Daniel de Dieu is instructed to translate the said articles out of the French into the Dutch, with a view to having them printed after the Classis of Brabant has checked on them.” It must be observed that in this instance the existence of widely divergent texts is ascribed to slovenly printing, and the question must be asked if this assembly even knew that an “occult” synod had tampered with the text. It would seem that the “occult” synod had been “occult” indeed, and quite far off the record.

At a synod held at Walcheren the following declaration was made: “It is held to be desirable . . . to examine the Belgic Confession and to make it conform to the edition recently put out by Beza.” That is strange language—for as far as we know Theodore Beza never “put out” a version of the Belgic Confession. The question emerges whether this synod did not know there had been an “occult” synod and therefore ascribed to Beza the text deviating from the 1561 Confession. The reference is doubtless to the text of 1566. It was published, as we have seen, at Beza’s Geneva.

3. As late as the time of the great Synod of Dort the “*gemor*” had still not died down, for toward the end of the sessions a note was pressed into

the hand of Johannes Bogerman, the chairman, requesting "that the blot which has been cast on Geneva for having printed the Confession in bad faith (*mala fide*) be erased and that the city government of Geneva at least be declared not responsible for the matter." We have indicated above that the Christian Reformed Church—doubtless unaware of the scope of the problems involved—has already committed itself, in a sense, in the argument between these two camps. It has taken a position. It did that when it repudiated the wording of Article 36 as recast by the proponents of magisterialization. It therefore has seemed reasonable to us to assume that by so doing the church has inclined to look on 1559/61 as the *textus receptus*. Yet we are aware that significant problems remain which have not been presented to the church until the present time.

At the Synod of Dort in 1618-19 the magisterial view was in control. Significantly, the synod was convened by the civil authority, the States-General, and the sentence eventually passed on the Arminians, who opposed the established Reformed views of God's sovereignty in salvation and related themes, was civil and coercive in nature. For they were banned from the land. In the text adopted by Dort and inherited by the Christian Reformed Church the magisterial view is evident especially in the revised Article 36, but there are other important revisions, in harmony with that view, that run throughout a number of articles. These include, as we shall see, the concepts of election and reprobation, the doctrine of man, the sacraments, and the doctrine of the last things.

The revised text has come down to us by way of the Synod of Dort. In time the text of 1559/61 was almost forgotten and was actually lost until a copy was found in rather recent years.\* So scarce did the original version become that it is doubtful if the fathers of Dort were even acquainted with it at all. So muddled was scholarship on these matters, and so confused on the "*Compromis*" of 1566, that even an historian like Uytenbogaert, in the late sixteenth century, saw the origin of the Belgic Confession in connection with events of that "*wonderjaar*." He added that up to that time "the Reformed had no confession of their own but got along with the Augsburg Confession." And so, for the following two centuries no one was in position to say with certainty precisely what de

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\*Actually, this copy was known already in 1855, but it generated little interest because of the assumption in established Reformed communities, down to our own time, that the revised text of Dort was the *textus receptus*. In *Guido de Bres, Zijn Leven en Werken*, L. A. Van Lageraad states in regard to the original text: "As to the year of publication we are no longer in the dark. For since a copy of the first edition was discovered at the book dealer I. L. C. Jacob, of The Hague, it is certain 1561 is the year in which it first appeared" (p. 94). Van Lageraad adds a footnote in which he states that "a carefully-executed facsimile of this exemplar, purchased by Jonkheer Trip van Zoudtlandt and was donated afterward to the Royal Library at The Hague, where it is now on hand, was put out by the Genevan book dealer Jules Guillaume Fick, in 1855." See also J. J. Van Toorenenbergen, *Eene Bladzijde uit de Geschiedenis der Nederlandsche Geloofsbaelijdenis*, p. 3, n. 1. Van Toorenenbergen refers to the significant publication of "De Synoden der Nederlandsche Hervormde Kerken Onder het Kruis, Gedurende de Jareen 1563-1577," by Professor N. C. Kist, in the *Archief voor Kerkelijke Geschiedenis*, XX, pp. 113ff. Kist affirms, rightly, that the Belgic Confession was used as a formula of unity already before 1563. Our own translation, in this report, was made from copies of the original "Confession de Foy" as found in Van Toorenenbergen, under "Oorspronkelijke Stukken," pp. XV-XLVI. The early history of the text can be found, in some detail, in Van Lageraad and Van Toorenenbergen.

Bres had actually written. Our present report is, to the best of our knowledge, the only comprehensive comparison ever made of the original text and the later revision as channelled through the Synod of Dort.

4. After studying this checkered history, your committee has decided, tentatively, to take the deBres original of 1561 as the *textus receptus* and to ask synod to approve or endorse our action in that regard. We present the following considerations.

First, in taking the original as *textus receptus* we are simply following a time-honored policy in all translation work—namely, to return to the earliest version available. We are following the precedent of the Heidelberg Catechism Committee, as approved by Synod of 1970. Now that copies of the original have been found, we believe it impossible to deal with the text of the Confession responsibly without giving priority to the 1559/61 version.

Second, little by little the concept of magisterialization and the rationale for related alterations have eroded. We no longer believe it the duty of civil authority to punish dissenters from the "right" religion. Today we are actually closer, in many ways, to the view of things that prevailed in the *kruiskercken* when the Confession was first written. We find it impossible to go along with Beza—one of the chief architects of magisterialization—who said that the teaching that gives equal legal right to diverse religions is a "diabolical doctrine." We find it impossible to subscribe to the words of Bogerman, written two decades before he chaired the Synod of Dort: "They who wish to keep the Christian magistracy out of the care of religion and particularly out of the punishment of heretics, despise the express Word of God and the authority of the ages." These words were penned in his introduction to the translation of the *Defensio*, written in defense of the Servetus execution. So it is that virtually all Reformed churches have felt obliged to repudiate such teachings as contained in the revision of Article 36. A return to the original would seem a step in the right direction and would follow in line with actions already taken by synods of the Christian Reformed Church (see footnote, on Article 36, in the Psalter Hymnal, and footnote below, under III, A, 6, Article 36).

A third consideration is also important. By returning to the version of 1559/61 we would be reaffirming a confession of Christian faith written in times described by a recent scholar as follows:

The spirit which we see possessing our ancestors in this pre-1566 period is one of inner piety, of holy zeal, of persevering faith, a spirit not as yet tainted with political admixture. Here we have no occasion to ask the question that keeps coming back as we trace the activities after 1566 and keeps dimming the lustre with which the historian would like to adorn them, the question namely what it is that impels men to this or that activity: the power of the truth or dislike for Spain? The struggle of the earlier reformers was one that concerns the highest in man, and that only. . . . Not dissatisfaction with the civil affairs as they were, nor with the powers that be, nor with the condition of trade and husbandry. . . . no, this one thing makes them count all civil

privilege as of little worth and brings them to depart their native-land, namely deep-seated religious conviction. (De Hoop Scheffer, *Studien en Bijdragen*, p. 5.)

We should observe in this connection that, interestingly, Reformed churches in the Netherlands were able to live in peace with the revised text of the Confession, especially Article 36, only until the time of the secessions—and no longer. The secession of 1834 was in part a protest against magisterialization and grew out of the conviction (fed largley by Pietism) that the old equation of state and church was unsound and untenable. Small wonder that on the heels of the secession came a call to revise Article 36 of the revised Confession.

Finally, by returning to the original text of the Belgic Confession, we bestow, in our judgment, well-deserved honor on a hero or martyr to that faith which we, by the grace of God, still hold dear. Guido deBres was one of the few in his day who did not shy away from cross-bearing; he was ready and even eager to suffer for his faith and was willing to pay the ultimate price of his life. That fact is worthy of consideration—the more so because by adopting the text as he wrote it we lose nothing, in our judgment, of what must be positively retained; we come clear of some things that rightly embarrass us; and we have a more adequate statement than the revised text on a number of issues that have rightly concerned, and still do concern, the Reformed community.

#### D. *Outline and Comments*

In the next part of our report we present a provisional translation of the deBres original. For purposes of comparison with the text currently in use (hereafter referred to simply as the "Revision") it is important that the church have this provisional translation available.

Following the translation, we shall indicate the main differences between the deBres text and the revision and shall specify what appear to us the theologically significant issues in those differences. We want to stress (1) that our analysis or interpretation of historical materials is also, of course, provisional and ought to be regarded in that light. Our desire is only to give synod an adequate indication of where we have come, in our study, to see important theological issues and how we have come to identify those issues. Why are they important and how do some revisions relate to others? We want to emphasize (2) that we have no desire, in what follows, to make an airtight case for the 1559/61 Confession in contrast to later revisions. The complications of history and historical rootedness of all man's efforts, including the very best, will not allow us to put this issue in black and white terms. We underscore (3) that not all the revisions were made at Dort or any single synod between the time of deBres and 1618-19. No synod must bear the onus completely. We have made no attempt to trace out precisely when each change was made, not seeing that study as having any great value to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. We are convinced that we serve synod best by comparing only the original Confession of deBres and the composite revision that we have inherited. Synod will have to decide between those two alternatives.

In the final part of our report we shall present four recommendations for synodical action.

## II. A PROVISIONAL TRANSLATION OF THE 1559/61 CONFESSION

### ARTICLE 1

#### THE ONLY GOD\*

We all believe in heart  
and confess with mouth  
that there is a single  
and simple  
spiritual being,  
whom we call God—

eternal,  
incomprehensible,  
invisible,  
unchangeable,  
infinite;

completely wise,  
just,  
and good.

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\*The 1559/61 Confession did not have headings for the various articles. We supply them in our provisional translation to enhance clarity and understandability of the content and structure of the creed and to maintain some continuity with the form of the revised Confession as currently printed in the Psalter Hymnal. Note that our proposed headings are sometimes the same as in the current Confession; at some points they are simplified without sacrificing their description of the content covered; and throughout they have a parallel structure (each beginning with the article *the*).

### ARTICLE 2

#### THE MEANS BY WHICH WE KNOW GOD

We confess that we know him as such  
by two means—

First, by the created, directed, and governed world,  
for it is before our eyes as a beautiful book  
in which all creatures,  
great and small,  
serve as so many letters  
intended to make us ponder

the hidden things of God;  
namely,  
    his eternal power  
    and his divinity,  
    as the holy apostle Paul says in Romans 1:20.

These are enough to convict men  
and to leave them without excuse.

Second, he has made himself known to us  
more openly and clearly  
by his holy and divine Word,  
    in which he reveals himself to men  
    as plainly as is needful  
    in this life  
    and for their salvation.

### ARTICLE 3

#### THE WRITTEN WORD OF GOD

We confess that this Word of God  
was not sent nor delivered by the will of men  
but that holy men,  
    moved by the Holy Spirit,  
spoke from God,  
    as Peter says.

Afterwards God—  
    because of the remarkable care he has  
    for us and our salvation—  
commanded his servants,  
the prophets and apostles,  
to commit his revealed Word to writing.

Indeed, he himself wrote  
with his own finger  
the two tables of the law.

Therefore we call such writings  
the holy and divine Scriptures.

## ARTICLE 4

## THE CANONICAL BOOKS

We understand the Holy Scripture to be the two volumes  
of the Old and New Testament.  
They are canonical books  
with which no one can quarrel.

The list is as follows:

the five books of Moses;  
the book of Joshua, of Judges, and Ruth;  
the two books of Samuel, and two of Kings;  
the two books of Chronicles;  
the first book of Ezra; Nehemiah, Esther, Job;  
the Psalms of David;  
the three books of Solomon—  
Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song;  
the four major prophets—  
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel;  
and then the others—  
the twelve minor prophets.

In the New Testament:

the four gospels—  
Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John;  
the Acts of the Apostles;  
the fourteen letters of Paul;  
the seven letters of the other apostles;  
and the Revelation of the Apostle John.

## ARTICLE 5

## THE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

We receive all these books only  
as holy and canonical  
for the regulating and founding of our faith,  
and we believe without a doubt  
all things contained in them.

We do this

not so much because the church  
receives and approves them as such  
but above all because the Holy Spirit  
testified in our hearts  
that they are from God,

and also because they prove themselves to be from God  
in that when they say something  
it comes to pass.

## ARTICLE 6

### THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CANONICAL AND APOCRYPHAL BOOKS

We separate these holy books  
from the apocrypha  
and other churchly books,  
which the church can well read  
and learn from  
in matters that agree with the canonical books.

But the Church cannot quote them  
to prove any point of the faith  
or of Christian religion.

## ARTICLE 7

### THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

We believe  
that this Holy Scripture contains  
perfectly within it  
the will of God,  
and that everything a human being must believe  
for salvation  
is sufficiently taught within it.

The entire manner of serving God,  
which he requires of us,  
is described in it at great length.

Therefore, no human beings  
ought to teach otherwise than we have already been taught  
by the Holy Scriptures—  
even if they were apostles,  
or even an angel from heaven,  
as Paul says.

For since it is forbidden  
to add to or detract from the Word of God,  
this plainly demonstrates  
that the teaching is completely perfect.

Everyone must therefore take care  
 not to add to it  
 or subtract from it  
 by missing human wisdom with divine wisdom.

Therefore we must not put the writings of men—  
 whatever saints they might have been—  
 above the divine writings;  
 nor put custom,  
 nor the majority,  
 nor venerability,  
 nor the passage of time,  
 nor councils, decrees, or decisions  
 above truth—  
 for truth is above everything else.

For all human beings are liars  
 and their wisdom cannot be in subjection to God.  
 They are more vain than vanity itself.

Therefore, we reject everything  
 that does not agree  
 with this infallible rule,  
 as we are taught to do by the apostles  
 when they say,  
 "Test the spirits to see if they are of God"—  
 thus showing that it is by their writings  
 that we know them.

In a similar way,  
 "If anyone comes to you  
 and does not bring this doctrine,  
 do not receive him into your house."

## ARTICLE 8

### THE TRINITY

In keeping with this truth and Word of God  
 we believe in one God only—  
 one in essence and substance  
 but three in persons:  
 Father,  
 Son,  
 and Holy Spirit.

The Father  
is the cause  
and origin  
and source of all things,  
visible as well as invisible.

The Son  
is called the Word,  
the wisdom  
and image of the Father.

The Holy Spirit  
is the eternal  
power and might.

Nevertheless,  
such distinctions do not cause  
the unity of God to be divided into three gods  
since Scripture teaches us  
that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit have,  
each one,  
his own distinct subsistence  
and his own particular property—  
yet in such a way  
that the three are only one God.

It is obvious that the Father is not the Son  
and the Son is not the Father;  
likewise, that the Holy Spirit is  
neither the Father nor the Son.

These persons,  
thus distinct,  
are neither divided,  
nor confused,  
nor mixed together  
with each other.

The Father did not take on flesh,  
nor did the Spirit,  
but only the Son.

The Father was never  
without his Son,  
nor without his Holy Spirit.

All three are equal in eternity and essence—  
there is neither a first nor a last.  
For all three are alike

in truth and power,  
in goodness and mercy.

## ARTICLE 9

### THE SCRIPTURAL WITNESS ON THE TRINITY

The testimonies of Holy Scriptures  
which teach us to believe in this Holy Trinity  
are written in many places of the Old Testament,  
as in the book of Genesis where God says,  
"Let us make man in our image  
and after our likeness."  
And so God created man in his image—  
that is, he created him "in the image of God."  
"Behold, the man has become like one of us."

It appears from this  
that there is a plurality of persons  
within the Deity,  
Since he says,  
"Let us make man in our image"—  
and afterwards he demonstrates the unity  
when it is said,  
"God created. . . ."

It is true that it does not say here  
how many persons there are—  
but that which is obscure to us  
in the Old Testament  
is very clear in the New.

For when our Lord was baptized in the Jordan  
and the voice of the Father was heard saying  
"This is my Son,"  
and the Son was seen in the water,  
and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove,  
there are three, are there not?

So too we read,  
"Baptize all nations in the name  
of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit."

In the Gospel according to Luke  
the angel Gabriel speaks in this way to Mary,  
the mother of our Lord:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,  
and the power of the Most High will overshadow you;  
therefore the Lord,  
who will be born to you,  
will be called the Son of God."

Here we see the Father,  
called the Most High  
then the Son,  
who is born of the virgin;  
and the Holy Spirit,  
who overshadows the virgin.

In a similar way:  
"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God,  
and the communion of the Holy Spirit  
be with you."

And here three are clearly named:  
"There are three who bear witness in heaven—  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—  
and these three are one."

All these passages teach us fully  
about three persons in one God—  
and although this doctrine goes beyond human understanding,  
we still believe it now,  
through the Word,  
waiting for the enjoyment of it  
in heaven.

Furthermore,  
each of the three persons of the Trinity  
has his work in reference to us:  
the Father is called our Creator;  
the Son is our Savior and Redeemer by his blood;  
the Holy Spirit is our Sanctifier by his dwelling  
in our hearts.

This doctrine of the holy Trinity  
has always been maintained in the true Church,  
from the time of the apostles until the present,  
against Jews, Mohammedans,  
and certain false Christians and heretics  
such as Marcion, the Manichaeans,  
Praxeas, Sabellius, Samasatenus,  
and others of that sort,  
rightly condemned by the holy fathers.

In this matter we willingly accept  
the three ecumenical creeds—  
the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—  
and also what has been decided  
by the holy councils.

## ARTICLE 10

### THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ,  
as to his divine nature,  
is the only Son of God—  
    begotten from all eternity,  
    not made nor created,  
    for then he would be a creature.

He is one in essence with the Father;  
he is co-eternal;  
he is the very image of the substance of the Father  
    and the reflection of his glory,  
    being in all and through all,  
    like him.

He is the Son of God not only after his birth  
but from all eternity,  
as the following texts teach us.

Moses says that God created the world,  
John says that all things were created by the Word,  
    which he calls God,  
and what John calls the Word  
is called the Son by Paul,  
    who says that God formed the ages through his Son.

Moreover, Paul says that God created all things  
by Jesus Christ.  
He could not have created all things by his Son  
if his Son had not been already present.

And besides, the prophet Micah says  
that his origin is "from ancient time,"  
    from eternity.  
He is the firstborn, before all creatures,  
without beginning of days or end of life.

In Psalm 2 we read,

"You are my son, today I have begotten you,"  
and "Kiss the Son. . . ."

He is the true, eternal God,  
the Almighty,  
whom we invoke and adore  
as long as we live.

## ARTICLE 11

### THE DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe and confess also  
that the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally  
from the Father and the Son—  
neither created  
nor begotten,  
but only proceeding  
from the two of them.

He is the third person of the Trinity—  
of one and the same essence,  
and majesty,  
and glory,  
with the Father and the Son.

He is true and eternal God,  
as the holy Scriptures teach us.

## ARTICLE 12

### THE CREATION OF ALL THINGS

We believe that this one God  
has created heaven and earth and all creatures  
from nothing,  
when it seemed good to him,  
by his Word—  
that is to say,  
by his Son.

He has given all creatures  
their being, form, and appearance,  
and the various functions among them  
for serving their Creator.

He also sustains and governs them all,  
according to his eternal providence,  
and by his infinite power,  
in order to serve man to this end:  
that man may serve his God.

He has also created the angels good,  
that they might be his messengers  
and serve his elect.

Some of them have fallen  
from the excellence in which God created them  
into eternal perdition;  
and the others have persisted and remained,  
by the grace of God,  
in their original state.

The fallen ones,  
whom we call devils and evil spirits,  
are so corrupted  
that they are enemies of God  
and of everything good.  
They lie in wait for the Church,  
with all their power,  
to destroy and spoil everything  
by their deception,  
even causing themselves to be worshipped by everyone  
by promising great things to men.

And that is not strange,  
seeing that Satan was bold enough  
to present himself to Christ,  
in order to cause himself  
to be worshipped by him.  
Therefore they are condemned  
by their own malice  
to everlasting damnation,  
awaiting their torment.

For that reason  
we detest the error of the Sadducees,  
who deny that there are spirits and angels,  
and also the error of the Manichees,  
who confess that the devils  
had their origin in themselves,  
being evil by their own nature,  
without having been corrupted.

## ARTICLE 13

## THE DOCTRINE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

We believe that this good God,  
once he created all things,  
did not abandon them to chance or fortune;  
but he leads and governs them,  
according to his holy will,  
so that nothing happens in this world  
without his orderly arrangement.

Yet God is not the author of,  
nor can he be charged with,  
the evil that occurs.  
For his power and goodness  
are so great and incomprehensible  
that he even arranges and does well and justly  
what the devil and men do unjustly.

In regard to what he does  
that surpasses human understanding,  
we do not wish to inquire,  
with curiosity,  
beyond our ability to comprehend.  
But in all humility and reverence  
we adore the just judgments of God,  
hidden from us,  
being content that we  
as Christ's disciples  
are to learn only what he shows us in his Word,  
without going beyond those limits.

This doctrine gives us unspeakable comfort  
since it teaches us  
that nothing can happen to us by chance  
but only by the arrangement of our gracious  
heavenly Father.  
He watches over us with fatherly concern,  
keeping all creatures in subjection to himself,  
so that every tiny hair on our heads is numbered.  
A little bird will not fall to the ground  
without the will of our Father.

In this thought we rest,  
knowing that he holds in check  
the devil and all our enemies,  
who cannot hurt us  
without his permission and good pleasure.

For that reason we reject  
the damnable opinion of the Epicureans,  
who say that God no longer involves himself in anything  
but leaves everything to chance.

## ARTICLE 14

### THE CREATION AND FALL OF MAN

We believe  
that God created man from the earth  
and made and formed him in his image and likeness—  
good, just, holy, and completely perfect in all things;  
able, by his own will, to conform  
wholly and in all things  
to the will of God.

So God created him  
and composed him of two parts—  
body and soul.  
The body was made from the earth  
and the spirit or life was inbreathed from God  
in such a way that in man we see an excellence so great  
that human understanding cannot explain it.

David said he is like this:  
Not much was lacking for him to be like God.  
He is crowned with glory and honor.

But when he was in honor  
and knew it not,  
he did not recognize his excellence;  
and so, in lending his ear  
to the word of the Devil,  
he became like a beast  
that perishes.

He transgressed the commandment of life,  
which he had received,  
and by his sin he separated himself from God,  
who was his true life,  
having corrupted his entire nature.

And he, body and spirit,  
rendered himself guilty  
of physical and spiritual death.

And he became evil, perverse,  
blind in understanding,  
corrupt in all his ways.  
And he lost all his excellent gifts,  
which he had received  
from God.

And nothing remained to him  
but the small traces of those gifts  
that are enough to render man  
without excuse.

But they are not enough to enable us to find God,  
since everything in us is turned into darkness,  
as the Scripture teaches us:  
"The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness did not receive it."  
Here John calls men "darkness."

In a Psalm it is said,  
"In you, Lord, is the fountain of life,  
and in your light we see clearly."

It seems quite apparent  
that the free will of mankind is a slave of sin—  
for a human being cannot receive a thing  
unless it is given him from heaven.

Christ says,  
"No one can come to me  
if my Father who sent me  
does not draw him."

Paul says that "the natural man cannot comprehend  
the things that are of the Spirit of God,  
but they are foolishness to him."  
He calls "natural" the man who is like the one  
that Adam brought into being by his fall.  
He says also that we are "not able to think anything  
about ourselves,  
by ourselves,  
but our ability is from God."

To "think" is much less than to "do,"  
and therefore the Apostle says  
so very rightly  
that "God works within us both to will and to do."

Christ says,  
"Without me  
you can do nothing."

Christ also says,  
"He who sins  
is a slave of sin."

So where then is his "free will"?

## ARTICLE 15

### THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

We believe  
that by the disobedience of Adam  
original sin has spread throughout the human race.

It is a corruption of all of nature.  
It is an inherited fault which infects even small infants  
in their mother's womb.  
It is the root which produces in man  
all kinds of sin.

This fault is so vile  
that it is enough to condemn the human race,  
and it is not abolished even by baptism.  
Yet for all that,  
thanks to God's grace and mercy,  
sin is not imputed to his children  
for their condemnation.

The awareness of this corruption  
often makes believers groan  
as they long to be rid of their bodies.

In this regard we reject the error of the Pelagians  
who say that this sin is nothing else than  
a matter of imitation.

## ARTICLE 16

### THE DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

We believe  
that when all Adam's descendants  
had thus fallen into perdition and ruin  
because of the transgression of the first man,  
God showed himself to be as he is—  
merciful and just.

He is merciful  
 in removing and saving from this perdition those whom he,  
 in his eternal and unchangeable counsel,  
 has elected and chosen,  
 by his pure goodness,  
 in Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 without any consideration of their good works.  
 In leaving the others in their ruin and fall,  
 into which they had stumbled,  
 he shows himself,  
 in so doing,  
 a compassionate and merciful God  
 toward those whom he saves,  
 to whom he did not owe a thing.

And likewise he declares himself to be a just judge'  
 in demonstrating his completely just severity  
 toward the others.  
 In the meantime he does them no wrong,  
 for when he saves any at all  
 it is not because they are better than others.  
 For all have stumbled into the very same ruin  
 until God separates them and draws them back  
 by his eternal and unchangeable decree,  
 founded in Jesus Christ  
 before the world was created.

And so we understand  
 that no one can attain to this glory by himself,  
 since by ourselves we are incapable  
 of thinking any good thing unless God,  
 by his grace and pure goodness,  
 takes the initiative.

So greatly is our nature corrupted.

## ARTICLE 17

### THE RECOVERY OF FALLEN MAN

We believe that  
 by his marvelous wisdom and goodness—  
 seeing man had thrust himself  
 in this manner  
 into both physical and spiritual death  
 and made himself completely miserable—  
 our good God himself set out to find him,

though man was fleeing from him,  
trembling all over.

And he comforted him,  
promising to give him his Son,  
born of a woman,  
to crush the head of the serpent,  
and to make him blessed.

## ARTICLE 18

### THE INCARNATION

So then we confess  
that God fulfilled the promise,  
    which he had made to the early fathers  
    by the mouth of his holy prophets,  
when he sent his only and eternal Son  
into the world  
at the time arranged by him.

He took the "form of a servant"  
and was made in the "likeness of man."

He truly assumed a real human nature,  
    with all its infirmities,  
    except for sin,  
being conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary,  
    by the power of the Holy Spirit  
    and not by the act of a man.

And he not only assumed human nature  
but also a real human spirit  
    in order that he might be a real human being.  
For since the spirit had been lost as well as the body,  
he had to assume them both  
    in order that he might save them together.

And we confess,  
    against the heresy of the Anabaptists  
    who deny that Christ assumed human flesh,  
that he shared in the same flesh  
as little children.

He is fruit of the loins of David,  
    according to the flesh.  
He is born of the seed of David,  
    according to the flesh.

He is fruit of the womb of the Virgin Mary.  
He is born of a woman.  
He is seed of David.  
He is flower from the root of Jesse.  
He is the offspring of Judah.  
He is descended from the fathers,  
    according to the flesh.  
He is from the seed of Abraham and David.  
He has taken on the seed of Abraham.  
He was made like his brothers in all things,  
    except for sin.  
He was born of Mary in such a way  
    that he became our Immanuel—  
        which is to say,  
        "God with us."

## ARTICLE 19

### THE TWO NATURES OF CHRIST

We believe that by being thus conceived  
the person of the Son has been inseparably united  
and conjoined  
with human nature,  
in such a way that there are not two Sons of God,  
nor two persons,  
but two natures joined together in a single person,  
with each nature retaining its own distinct properties.

His divine nature has always remained uncreated,  
without beginning of days or end of life,  
filling heaven and earth.

His human nature did not lose its properties.  
It continued to have those of a created being,  
having beginning of days and end of life,  
being finite;  
retaining the properties of a true body.  
Even though he,  
by his resurrection,  
gave it immortality,  
he nonetheless did not change  
the reality of its true nature.

These two natures are united in such a way  
that together they constitute one person—  
    they were not even separated by his death.

What he committed to his Father  
was a real human spirit  
which left his body.  
But still his divinity remained  
conjoined with his humanity,  
even when he was lying in the grave.

His divinity never ceased  
to be hidden in him,  
just as it was in him when he was a small child,  
without showing itself for some time.

These are the reasons why we confess him  
to be true God and true man—  
true God in order to conquer death,  
and true man in order to be able to die for us.

## ARTICLE 20

### THE JUSTICE AND MERCY OF GOD IN CHRIST

We believe that God—  
perfectly merciful  
and also very just—  
sent his Son to assume the nature  
in which disobedience had been committed,  
to make satisfaction  
and punish sin,  
in this nature,  
by the most bitter passion and death  
of his Son.

So God made known his justice  
against his Son,  
who was charged with our sin;  
and he poured out his goodness and mercy  
on us,  
who are guilty and worthy of damnation,  
giving up his Son to die  
for us,  
by a most perfect love,  
and raising him to life  
for our justification,  
in order that we,  
by him,  
might have immortality  
and eternal life.

## ARTICLE 21

## THE ATONEMENT

We believe  
that Jesus Christ was a high priest for ever,  
by an oath,  
according to the order of Melchizedek,  
and that he presented himself  
in our name  
before the Father,  
to appease his wrath with full satisfaction  
by offering himself  
on the altar of the cross  
and pouring out his precious blood  
for the cleansing of our sin,  
as the prophets had predicted.

Isaiah wrote that "the chastisement of our peace"  
was placed on the Son of God  
and that "we are healed by his wounds."

He was "led to death as a lamb."  
He was "numbered among sinners"  
and condemned as a criminal by Pontius Pilate,  
even though Pilate had declared before all  
that he was innocent.  
He paid back what he had not stolen.  
He suffered—  
the just for the unjust,  
in his body and soul—  
in such a way that  
when he sensed the horrible punishment due to our sins  
he sweat "blood and water."  
He cried "My God, my God,  
why have you abandoned me?"

He endured all this for the forgiveness of our sins—  
and for that reason we say rightly with Paul  
that we "know nothing but Jesus and him crucified."  
We consider all things as "dung  
for the excellence of the knowledge  
of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We find complete comfort in his wounds,  
and we have no need  
to seek or invent  
some other means of reconciliation with God,  
apart from the one and only sacrifice,  
once made,

which renders the believer perfect,  
perpetually.

This is also the reason he was called "Jesus"  
by the angel of God—  
that is, "Savior"—  
because he would save his people  
from their sins.

## ARTICLE 22

### THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH

We believe that  
by the true knowledge of this great mystery  
the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts  
a true faith  
that embraces Jesus Christ  
with all his merits,  
so that we belong to him,  
no longer looking for anything  
apart from him.

For either all that is necessary for our salvation  
is not at all in Christ,  
or, if all is in Christ,  
he who has Christ by faith  
has everything  
and lacks nothing at all.

To say that Christ is not enough  
but that something else is needed as well  
is a most enormous blasphemy against God.  
For it then follows that Christ is only half a Savior—  
and therefore we say  
with good reason,  
with Paul,  
that we are justified "by faith alone"  
or by faith "apart from works."

We do not contend,  
properly speaking,  
that we are justified because of faith—  
for faith is only the instrument  
by which we embrace Christ,  
our righteousness.

And so Jesus Christ is our righteousness,  
with all his merits—  
all the holy works he has done for us.  
And faith is the instrument  
that puts us in communion  
with all his benefits.

When those benefits are ours  
they are more than enough to absolve us.

## ARTICLE 23

### THE JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS

We believe  
that our happiness lies in the forgiveness of our sins  
because of Jesus Christ  
and that in this our righteousness before God is contained,  
as Paul and David teach us  
when they describe the blessedness of those  
to whom God grants righteousness  
apart from works.

The same apostle says  
that we are justified freely by grace  
through redemption in Jesus Christ.  
And therefore we cling to this foundation,  
firm and for all time,  
giving all glory to God,  
humbling ourselves,  
and recognizing ourselves as we are;  
not claiming a thing for ourselves or our merits  
and relying and resting on the sole obedience of Christ crucified,  
which is ours when we believe in him.

That is enough to cover all our sins  
and to give us confidence,  
without doing what our first father did,  
who trembled as he tried to hide himself  
behind the leaves of a fig-tree

If we had to appear before God relying—  
no matter how little—  
on ourselves or some other creature,  
then, alas, we would be swallowed up.

Therefore everyone must say with David:

"Lord, do not enter into judgment with your servants,  
for before you no man living shall be justified."

## ARTICLE 24

### THE SANCTIFICATION OF SINNERS

We believe that this true faith,  
engendered by the hearing of God's Word  
and by the operation of the Spirit,  
regenerates us and makes us "new beings,"  
causing us to live the "new life"  
and freeing us from the slavery of sin.

Far from making people cold  
toward good and holy living,  
this justifying faith so works within people that  
apart from it  
they would never do a thing out of love for God  
but only out of love for themselves  
and out of fear of being condemned.

So then, it is impossible  
for this holy faith to be unfruitful in a human being.  
We do not speak of an empty faith  
but of what Scripture calls  
"faith working through love,"  
which brings a man to do willingly  
those works that God has commanded  
in his Word.

Such works,  
proceeding from the good root of faith,  
are good and acceptable to God,  
but still do not count toward our justification.  
For through faith in Christ we are justified—  
and we are justified before we do any good works.  
Otherwise they could not be good,  
any more than the fruit of a tree could be good  
if the tree is not good in the first place.

So then, we do good works,  
but not for merit—  
For what could we merit?  
We are indebted to God for the good works we do,  
rather than he to us,

since it is he who "works in us both to will and do according to his good pleasure."

As it is written:

"When you have done all that is commanded you, then you shall say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done what it was our duty to do.' "

Yet we do not wish to deny that God rewards good works— but he does so by his grace.

Finally, no matter how many good works we do, we do not base our salvation on them.

For we cannot do a single work that is not defiled by our flesh and also worthy of punishment.

And even if we could do a single one, the memory of one sin alone is enough to make it unacceptable to God.

So we would always be in doubt, tossed back and forth, without any certainty—

and our poor consciences would be tormented constantly if they did not lean on the merit of the passion and death of our Savior.

## ARTICLE 25

### THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

We believe

that the ceremonies and types of the law have ended with the coming of Christ, and that all shadows have come to an end, and that the use of them ought to be abolished among Christians.

Yet the truth and substance of these things remain for us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have been fulfilled.

Nevertheless,

we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the Gospel and to regulate our lives in all honor, for the glory of God.

## ARTICLE 26

## THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST

We believe that our only access to God  
is through the one Mediator and Intercessor,  
Jesus Christ the Righteous.

He was made man,  
joining together God and man,  
that we might have an entrance  
to the divine Majesty.  
Otherwise we have no other entrance  
than thorns have to fire.  
We would be brought low  
by his mere voice—  
as we see in Adam,  
who fled in fear before the Lord,  
and the Israelites at Mount Sinai,  
who asked for a mediator  
because they feared they would all die  
in the presence of the voice of the Lord.

But this Mediator,  
whom the Father has ordained between himself and us,  
ought not frighten us by his greatness,  
so that we look for another one,  
according to our fancy.  
For there is no person,  
in heaven or among the creatures on earth,  
who loves us more than Jesus Christ does,  
who emptied himself,  
although he was "in the form of God,"  
and took the "form of a servant,"  
for us.

He became "like his brothers in all things"—  
although he was rich, he became poor for us.  
If we had to find another intercessor who loves us,  
could we find one who loves us more than  
he who gave his life for us,  
even while we were "still his enemies"?  
If we had to find one who has trustworthiness and power,  
then who has these as much as the One  
who is seated at the right hand of the Father  
and has "all power in heaven and on earth"?  
And who will be heard more readily than  
God's own dearly beloved Son?

So then, it is sheer unbelief  
that has introduced the custom of dishonoring the saints,  
    instead of honoring them,  
doing what they never did  
    but refused to do,  
    as appears from their writings.

Nor should we plead here  
that we are unworthy—  
    for it is not a question of offering our prayers  
    on the basis of our own dignity  
    but only on the basis of the excellence and dignity  
    of Jesus Christ,  
    whose righteousness is ours  
    by faith.

And so, for good reason the Apostle  
wants to remove from us this foolish fear,  
    or rather, unbelief,  
and says to us that Jesus Christ was made  
like his brothers in all things  
    that he might be a high priest  
    who is merciful and faithful  
    to purify the sins of the people.  
For since he himself came to be tempted,  
he is also able to help those who are tempted.

And further, to encourage us more  
to draw near to him, he says:  
"Since we have a high priest,  
    Jesus the Son of God,  
    who has entered into heaven,  
let us hold firm our confession.  
For we do not have a high priest  
who is unable to have compassion for our weaknesses.  
Let us go then with confidence to the throne of grace,  
    that we may obtain mercy  
    and find grace to be helped."  
Here he changes the throne of dreadful glory  
into a throne of grace,  
to enable us to come to him.

The same apostle says that  
we "have liberty to enter into the holy place  
by the blood of Jesus.  
Let us go, then, in the assurance  
of faith."

The same one says again:  
"Christ's priesthood is for ever.

By this he is able to save completely  
those who draw near to God through him  
who always lives to intercede  
for us."

What more is needed—  
for Christ himself says,  
"I am the way, the truth, and the life;  
no one can come to my Father  
but by me"?  
Why should we seek another intercessor  
when he says that we can go to his Father  
only through him?

Since it has pleased God  
to give us his Son as our Intercessor,  
let us not leave him for another.

For when God gave him to us  
he knew well that we were sinners.

And thus,  
following the command of Christ,  
we call on the heavenly Father  
through Christ,  
our only Intercessor,  
as he has taught us  
in the Lord's Prayer,  
being assured that we shall obtain  
all we ask of the Father  
in his name.

## ARTICLE 27

### THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH

We believe and confess  
one single catholic and universal church—  
a holy congregation and gathering  
of true Christian believers  
who expect their entire salvation in Jesus Christ,  
are washed by his blood,  
and are sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit.

This church has existed from the beginning of the world  
and will last until the end.  
That appears from the fact

that Christ is the eternal King,  
from which it follows  
that he cannot be without subjects.

And this holy church is preserved by God  
against the rage of the whole world.  
It shall never be destroyed  
even though for a while  
it may appear very small  
and may even seem to be  
snuffed out.

Yet the Lord preserved for himself the seven thousand  
who did not bend their knees to Baal.

And so this holy church  
is not situated in,  
nor attached to,  
nor limited by,  
a certain place—  
and it is not bound up with certain persons.  
But it is spread and dispersed  
throughout the entire world,  
though still joined and united,  
in heart and will,  
in one and the same Spirit,  
by the power of faith.

## ARTICLE 28

### THE OBLIGATIONS OF CHURCH MEMBERS

We believe that  
since this holy assembly and congregation  
is the gathering of the redeemed,  
and that there is no salvation apart from it,  
no one ought to withdraw from it,  
content to be by himself,  
no matter what his state or quality might be.

But all people ought to join it  
and unite with it,  
keeping the unity of the church  
in submitting themselves  
to its instruction and discipline.  
We must bend our necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ  
and serve to build up our brothers and sisters,

according to the gifts God has given us  
as members in common  
of the same body.

So then, it is the duty of all the faithful,  
according to the Word of God,  
to separate themselves  
from those who do not belong to the church,  
and to join such an assembly  
wherever God has brought one together,  
even if the rulers and edicts of princes are against them  
and death and physical punishment follow.

And so,  
all who draw away from the church  
or fail to join it  
act contrary to God's ordinance.

## ARTICLE 29

### THE MARKS OF THE TRUE CHURCH

We believe that we ought to discern,  
diligently and very carefully,  
by the Word of God,  
what is the true church—  
for all sects in the world today  
claim for themselves the name of the church.

We are not speaking here of the company of hypocrites  
mixed in the church along with the good—  
those included in the name of the church,  
who nonetheless are not part of it  
except externally.

But we are speaking of distinguishing the true church  
from all sects that call themselves "the church."

These are the distinguishing marks  
for recognizing the true church:  
it makes use of the pure preaching of the Gospel;  
it employs the pure administration of the sacraments,  
as Christ instituted them;  
and it practices church discipline  
for correcting faults.

In short, it governs itself  
according to the pure Word of God,  
rejecting all things contrary to it  
and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head.

By these tests the true church can be known  
with assurance.

We can recognize those who are of the church  
by the distinguishing mark of Christians—  
namely faith.

We can recognize them because  
they receive the one and only Savior, Jesus Christ;  
they flee from sin and pursue righteousness,  
loving the true God and their neighbor  
without turning to the right or left;  
and they crucify their flesh and its works.

Though great weakness remains in them,  
they fight against it  
by the Spirit  
all the days of their life  
and appeal constantly  
to the blood, suffering, death, and obedience of Jesus Christ,  
by which they have forgiveness of their sins  
through faith in him.

As for the false church,  
it assigns more authority to itself and its ordinances  
than to the Word of God;  
it does not want to submit itself to the yoke of Christ;  
it does not administer the sacraments  
as Christ commanded in his Word;  
it rather adds and subtracts as it pleases;  
it bases itself on men more than on Jesus Christ;  
it persecutes those who live holy lives  
according to the Word of God  
and who rebuke it  
for its faults, its greed, and its idolatries.

By these things the two churches  
are easily recognized  
and thus distinguished  
from each other.

## ARTICLE 30

### THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH

We believe that this true church  
ought to be governed according to the order  
that our Lord has taught us in his Word:  
There should be ministers and pastors

for preaching the Word of the Gospel  
and administering the sacraments,  
and elders and deacons  
to make up the council of the church.

By this means they preserve the true religion  
and see that true doctrine takes its course  
and that evil men are corrected and held in check,  
to the end that also the poor and all the afflicted  
may be helped and comforted  
according to their need.

And by this means everything will be done well  
and in good order  
in the church,  
when such persons are elected who are faithful,  
chosen in line with the rule that Paul gave  
to Timothy.

## ARTICLE 31

### THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

We believe that ministers, elders and deacons  
ought to be chosen to their offices  
by lawful election,  
with prayer in the name of the Lord  
and the vote of the church,  
followed by a confirmation in their offices  
by the laying on of hands,  
as the Word of God teaches.

Everyone must be careful  
not to thrust one's own self forward by improper means,  
but each must wait for God's call,  
so that such persons may have assurance  
of their own call  
and be certain that they are chosen  
by the Lord.

As for ministers of the Word,  
no matter where they are:  
They all have the same power and authority.  
For they are all servants of Jesus Christ,  
the only universal bishop,  
and the only head of the church.  
Therefore no church has any authority or right  
to lord it over another church.

Moreover, everyone ought to hold  
the ministers of the Word and elders of the church  
in special esteem  
because of the work they do,  
and be at peace with them,  
without murmuring,  
as much as possible.

## ARTICLE 32

### THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH

We believe that  
although it is useful and good  
that those who govern the churches establish  
a certain order among themselves  
for maintaining the body of the church,  
they ought to be on guard against deviating  
from what Christ,  
our only Master,  
has ordained.

Therefore we reject all human inventions—  
all laws that are imposed upon us  
and bind our consciences in worshipping God.

And so we accept only what is proper  
to maintain harmony and unity  
and to keep all in obedience to God.

To that end excommunication,  
with all it involves,  
serves us greatly,  
if done according to the Word of God.

## ARTICLE 33

### THE SACRAMENTS

We believe that our good God,  
mindful of our crudeness and weakness,  
has ordained sacraments for us  
to confirm his promises to us  
and to be pledges of his good will and grace toward us,  
in order to nourish and strengthen our faith.

He has added these to the Word of the Gospel  
to represent better to our external senses  
both what he enables us to understand by his Word  
and what he does inwardly in our hearts,  
as he confirms salvation in us.

And so they are symbols  
and visible signs  
of something internal and invisible  
by which God works in us,  
through the power of his Spirit.  
They are not empty and hollow signs  
to fool and deceive us,  
for they have Christ as their truth,  
apart from whom they would be nothing.

And we are satisfied with the number of sacraments  
that Christ our Master has ordained for us.  
There are only two:  
the sacrament of baptism  
and the holy supper of Jesus Christ.

## ARTICLE 34

### THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

We believe and confess that Jesus Christ,  
who is the end of the law,  
has put an end,  
by his shed blood,  
to every other shedding of blood.

He has abolished circumcision,  
which was done with blood,  
and has ordained in its place  
the sacrament of baptism.  
By this we are received into the church of God  
and set apart from all other peoples and strange religions,  
that we might be dedicated entirely to him,  
bearing his mark and insignia.  
This serves as evidence to us  
that he will be our God for ever,  
since he is our gracious Father.

For that reason he commanded to baptize  
with plain water  
all those who belong to him,

in the name of the Father  
and the Son  
and the Holy Spirit.

By that he indicates to us  
that just as water washes away the dirt of the body  
when it is poured on us,  
and as truly as that water is seen  
on the body of the baptized  
and is applied to him,  
so the blood of Christ,  
by the Holy Spirit,  
does the same thing internally to the soul.

It washes and cleanses it from its sins  
and transforms a child of wrath  
into a child of God.

All these things happen,  
not by the physical water,  
but by the precious bath of the blood of the Son of God,  
which is our Red Sea.  
Through it we must pass  
to escape the tyranny of Pharaoh,  
who is the devil,  
and enter into the spiritual land of Canaan.

The ministers give us merely the sacrament  
and what is visible.  
But the Lord gives what the sacrament means,  
namely the invisible gifts and graces:  
washing, purging, and cleansing our souls  
of all filth and unrighteousness;  
renewing our hearts and filling them  
with all comfort;  
giving us true assurance  
of his fatherly goodness;  
clothing us with the "new man" and stripping off the "old,"  
with all its activities.

Moreover, anyone who aspires to eternal life  
ought to be baptized only a single time  
and ought to be content with that one baptism  
without ever repeating it;  
for we cannot be born twice.  
That baptism is profitable  
not only when the water is on us,  
and we receive it,  
but throughout our entire lives.  
For otherwise we would have to have

our heads in the water  
all the time.

For that reason we detest the error of the Anabaptists,  
who are not content with a single baptism,  
received only once,  
and also condemn the baptism of the children  
of believers.

We believe they ought to be baptized  
and marked with the sign of the covenant,  
as little children were circumcized in Israel  
on the very same promises  
now made to our children.

Christ has shed his blood  
for washing the little children of believers  
just as much as he shed it for adults.

Therefore they ought to receive the sign and sacrament  
of what Christ has done for them,  
since the Lord commanded in the law  
to grant them the sacrament  
of the passion and death of Christ,  
as soon as they were born.  
When a lamb was offered for them,  
it was a sacrament of Jesus Christ.

What circumcision did for the Jewish people  
baptism does for our children.  
And that is why Paul calls baptism  
the "circumcision of Christ."

## ARTICLE 35

### THE SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

We believe and confess  
that our Savior Jesus Christ  
has ordained and instituted the sacrament of the Holy Supper  
to nourish and sustain those  
who are already regenerated and ingrafted  
into his family—  
his church.

Now those who are born again have two lives in them.  
The one is physical and temporal,  
and they have it from their first birth,  
common to all men.

The other is spiritual and heavenly,  
and is given them in their second birth,  
which results from the Word of the Gospel.  
This life is common only to God's elect.

To support the natural and earthly life  
God has ordained for us an earthly bread  
that is meant for that purpose.

This bread is common to all  
as this life is common to all.

But to maintain the spiritual and heavenly life  
that believers enjoy  
he has sent a living bread  
that came down from heaven—  
Jesus Christ.

He nourishes and maintains the spiritual life of believers  
when they eat and receive by faith,  
spiritually.

For this spiritual and heavenly bread  
Christ has instituted  
an earthly and visible bread as sacrament of his body  
and wine as a sacrament of his blood.  
Thus he attests to us that  
as truly as we take and hold the sacrament in our hands  
and eat it with our mouths to sustain our lives,  
so truly do we receive by faith  
the true body and true blood of Christ,  
our only Savior,  
into our souls,  
for our spiritual living.

Jesus Christ did not commend  
his sacraments to us in vain.  
He does in us all that he represents  
by these holy signs,  
although the manner in which he does it  
goes beyond our understanding  
and is incomprehensible to us.  
Yet we do not go wrong when we say  
that this takes place by faith.

And so we say that what is eaten  
is the true and natural body of Christ  
and his true blood—  
but the way to eat it  
is not by the mouth but is spiritually,  
through faith.

In that way Jesus Christ remains

always seated at the right hand of God his Father,  
in heaven—  
but he never refrains  
on that account  
from communicating himself to us,  
by faith.

This banquet is a spiritual table  
at which Christ communicates himself to us  
with all his benefits  
and makes us rejoice in this meal  
by the merit of his suffering and death.  
He nourishes, strengthens and comforts  
our poor, sad souls  
by the eating of his flesh.  
He refreshes them  
by the drinking of his blood.

And yet,  
though the sacraments and thing signified are joined together,  
not all receive them in that way.  
The wicked certainly receives the sacrament,  
to his condemnation,  
but does not receive the truth of the sacrament.  
Thus Judas and Simon the Sorcerer both received the sacrament  
but they did not receive Christ,  
who was signified by it.

And finally,  
we receive this holy sacrament  
in the gathering of God's people  
with humility and reverence,  
as we engage together in a holy remembrance  
of the death of Christ our Savior.  
We also receive it with thanksgiving  
as we confess our faith  
and Christian religion.  
No one should come to this table  
without examining himself carefully,  
lest by eating this bread  
and drinking this cup  
he eat and drink to his own condemnation.

In short, we are moved  
by the use of this holy sacrament  
to a fervent love  
of God and our neighbors.

Therefore we reject  
as a desecration of the sacraments

all the muddled ideas and damnable inventions  
that men have invented and mixed in with them.  
We say that we should be content  
with the institution that Christ and his disciples have taught us  
and speak of these things  
as they have spoken.

## ARTICLE 36

## THE CIVIL GOVERNMENT

We believe finally that,  
because of the depravity of the human race,  
our good God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers,  
desiring that the world be governed  
by their laws and policies.  
His purpose is that the excesses of men be restrained  
and that everything be conducted in good order  
among human beings.

For that purpose he has placed the sword  
in the hand of the government  
to punish evil men  
and protect good and decent people.

The government's task of restraining and sustaining  
is not limited to the public order  
but extends also to the affairs of the church,  
with a view to the uprooting and destruction  
of all idolatry and false religion;  
the undoing of the kingdom of the antichrist;  
the promotion of the kingdom of Jesus Christ;  
the furthering of the preaching of the Gospel everywhere;  
to the end that God may be honored and served by everyone,  
as he requires in his Word.

Morover everyone,  
no matter what quality, condition, or rank,  
ought to be subject to the government,  
and pay taxes,  
and hold its representatives in honor and respect,  
and obey them in all things not in disagreement  
with the Word of God;  
praying for them,  
that God may lead them in all their ways  
and that we may be able to live  
in peace and quiet,  
under them.

For that reason we detest all those  
 who want to reject the authorities and civil officers  
 and subvert justice  
     by imposing a communion of goods  
     and upsetting the honest behavior that God has established  
     among human beings.

## ARTICLE 37

### THE LAST JUDGMENT

Finally we believe,  
 in accord with the Word of God,  
 that when the time comes,  
     ordained by the Lord,  
     but unknown to all creatures,  
     when the number of the elect is complete,  
 our Lord Jesus Christ will return from heaven,  
     physically and visibly,  
     as he ascended,  
     with great glory and majesty,  
 to declare himself the Judge  
     of the living and the dead.  
 He will burn this old world  
     in fire and flame  
     in order to consume it.

Then all creatures will appear in person  
 before that great Judge—  
     all men, women, and children,  
     who have lived from the beginning of the world  
     until the end.  
 They will be summoned by the voice and dreadful cries  
 of angels and archangels  
 and by the trumpet  
 of God.

All those who died before that time  
 will be raised from the dead,  
     as their spirits are once again joined and united  
     with their own bodies  
     in which they lived.  
 And those who are still alive  
 will not die with the others  
 but will be changed "in the twinkling of an eye,"  
 from "corruptible to incorruptible."

Then "the books" (that is, the consciences) will be opened

and the dead will be judged  
according to the things they did in the world,  
whether good or evil.  
And behold, all people will give account  
of all the careless words they have spoken,  
which the world regards as mere humor and entertainment.  
The secrets and hypocrisies of men  
will then be publicly uncovered  
in the sight of all.

And so for good reason  
the thought of this judgment  
is horrible and dreadful  
for wicked and evil people.  
But it is very pleasant and a great comfort  
for the righteous and elect,  
since their total redemption  
will then be made complete.

They will then receive the fruits of their labor  
and of the trouble they have suffered;  
their innocence will be openly recognized by all;  
and they will see the terrible vengeance  
that God will bring upon the evil ones  
who persecuted, oppressed, and tormented them in this world.

The evil ones will be convicted by the witness  
of their own consciences.  
They shall become immortal—  
in such a way that they will be tormented for all eternity,  
in everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

On the other hand,  
the faithful and elect will be crowned  
with glory and honor.  
The Son of God will claim them  
before God his Father and his elect angels.  
All tears will be wiped from their eyes,  
and their cause—  
at present condemned as heretical and evil  
by judges and governments—  
will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of God.

As a gracious reward  
the Lord will make them possess a glory  
such as the heart of man  
could never imagine.

And so we look forward to that great day,

with a great longing to enjoy to the full  
the promises of Christ,  
our Savior.

### III. A COMPARISON OF THE 1559/61 TEXT AND THE REVISION

#### A. Main Differences and Their Theological Significance

1. *Articles 2-13.* Observe that in Article 2 the Revision omits the words "we confess."<sup>\*</sup> We cannot say if that is merely an incidental lapse or an effort to suggest that knowing the true God (at least by means of the "created, directed, and governed world") is not itself an act of confession and faith. But it surely is that kind of act, according to Scripture, and it therefore is advisable, in our judgment, to reintroduce the link of knowing and confessing, as we find in the deBres text.

More significant is the difference in accents on how we know the true or only God in view of what we see around us. In the deBres Confession believers know God "by the created, directed, and governed world." The accent is on the created world as given or set before us, the *product* of God's activity which we know when we "confess." In the Revision, however, we know God "by the *creation, preservation, and government* of the universe." There is now less accent on the created world as given and more on God's *ongoing activity* in reference to the world. The same contrast between God's decisive act and continuing activity, the product and the process, appears in Article 37, where deBres wrote that God "will burn this old world in fire and flame in order to consume it" (*pour le consumer*) and the revisionists, in contrast, affirm that God will do that in order to "cleanse it" (*pour le purifier*). It is obvious that deBres was writing in the context of the *kruiskercken* and was not as comfortable as the revisionists in this world. In bold strokes he paints a picture of the here-and-now world, created good but headed for destruction, while the Revision prefers to emphasize (in line with providence and predestination accents) the process of God's creation, preservation, government, and purification.

At several junctures deBres is content with simple statements without specific enumerations while the Revision gives point-by-point listings. Thus, the "fourteen letters of Paul" are not mentioned individually in deBres (Article 4) but are (including Hebrews) in the Revision. The apocryphal books (Article 6) are not named individually in deBres, but they are in the Revision. They are not given particular dignity in deBres—his mood is one of cautious warning. They are given greater dignity, it seems, in the Revision (in line with alterations made already in the *Compromis* of 1566) and the mood is now one of rather cautious recommendation. The substitution of "*mettans difference*" ("we distinguish") for "*nous separans*" ("we separate") was inspired, perhaps, by the desire

<sup>\*</sup>The following study will be most beneficial and intelligible for the reader if he keeps before him the currently-used translation of the Belgic Confession (Psalter Hymnal, "Doctrinal Standards," pp. 3-21) and makes a running comparison between that translation (the Revision) and our provisional translation of the original Confession in Part II.

not to offend those nobles who were joining the *Compromis* although they were Catholic and intended to remain Catholic. Catholicism, of course, gave greater dignity to the apocrypha than did the Protestants.

In line with that change the revisionists decided, in reference to the Word of God (Article 7), to omit an important sentence: "Everyone must therefore take care not to add to it or subtract from it by mixing human wisdom with divine wisdom." That statement was probably dropped by the revisers in the interest, once again, of not offending the Catholic nobles who joined in the *Compromis*. The revisionists also substituted "compare" for "prefer" in reference to the writings of men and Scripture. While deBres wrote clearly that one "must not put the writings of men . . . above the divine writings" (*Aussi ne faut preferer les Ecrits des hommes . . . aux ecrits divins*), we read in the Revision that one must not "compare any writings of men . . . with those divine Scriptures" (*Aussi ne faut-il pas comparer les ecrits des hommes . . . aux ecrits divins*; P. Schaff translation). That thought is obviously confusing and is therefore rendered in the Psalter Hymnal: "Neither may we consider any writings of men . . . of equal value with those divine Scriptures."

We begin to see in several ways that deBres passed more radical judgment on human wisdom and writings than the revisionists did. DeBres' dictum that "all human beings are liars" (Article 7) is changed in the Revision to "all men are of themselves liars" (*d'euxmemes menteurs*). The suggestion is now that human beings have a wisdom which, despite themselves, is given them by God. And so the harsh, unequivocal judgment of deBres that "all human beings are liars and their wisdom cannot be in subjection to God" (*leur sagesse ne peut estre assuiettie a Dieu*; cf. Romans 8:7) is altered with the complete removal of this latter statement in the Revision.

Frequently the Revision shows a more rationally speculative and abstract tendency than we see in deBres. On the Trinity (Article 8) deBres says nothing about "incommunicable attributes" in God, either in relation to man or to distinct persons within the Trinity. DeBres avoids speculation and any urges toward what might be called a "new scholasticism." But the Revision is of a different mind and mood and elaborates its definition of God by adding, "who is one single essence, in which are three persons, really, truly, and eternally distinct according to their incommunicable properties; namely, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." None of that is found in the original Belgic Confession. Moreover, in deBres the argument in Article 8 concerns the functions or "divisions of labor" among the three persons—not, for example, the procession of the third person from the Father and the Son. That topic is treated in Article 11 and is therefore superfluous or irrelevant at this point. Important though it is, the *filioque*-clause ("proceeding from the Father and the Son") is not germane to the argument in Article 8. It is not clear why the Revision introduced it at that juncture, though the intent was likely to delineate the true Reformed from the enthusiastic Spiritualism and world-flight patterns of the Radical Reformation.

The greater optimism in the Revision concerning man is also apparent in Article 9 (note the comments above on Article 7). In the original Confession of deBres there is reference only to the testimonies of Scripture

and not to a subjective "feeling in ourselves"; but the very first sentence in Article 9 of the Revision underscores that subjective element. The statement is made: "All this we know as well from the testimonies of Holy Writ as from their operations, and chiefly by those we feel in ourselves." It is not clear, at this point, in what way the doctrine of the Trinity is known "chiefly" (*principalement*) by inner feelings among the "operations" of Holy Writ, but it would seem better to follow deBres and root this doctrine unambiguously in Scripture.

But the question comes: Where in Scripture should we root this trinitarian doctrine? At that point we see an interesting development. In the 1559/61 edition we read, "... but that which is obscure to us in the Old Testament is very clear in the New," while in the Revision two significant words are added. We now read: "... But that which *appears* to us *somewhat* obscure in the Old Testament is very plain in the New." Perhaps the reason for this change goes back again to the spiritual climate of the *Compromis*, which depended largely on arguments drawn from the Old Testament. Most arguments for the integration of secular rule and Church (*Volk and Volk Gottes*) depend on playing down the preliminary character of the Old Testament, in which these two are seen as coextensive magnitudes.

The point is that the issue of "how many persons there are" in the Trinity is obscure indeed in the Old Testament, as deBres indicates, and not only "somewhat obscure." The doctrine of the Trinity is not found there in an objective or definitive way—to say nothing of subjective evidences that we allegedly "feel in ourselves." In evaluating the Old Testament and human nature with a view to the Trinity, the Revision was more optimistic, and, perhaps, visionary, than the original statements of deBres. The original Confession highlights the New Testament much more than the Old. DeBres' text contains a sentence, for example, that is totally omitted in the Revision. After referring to Luke 1:35 he affirms in the most explicit terms: "Here we see the Father, called the Most High; then the Son, who is born of the virgin; and the Holy Spirit, who overshadows the virgin." That statement is dropped in the Revision.

At times, apparently significant changes were made by revisionists for no clear reason. "In Psalm 2 we read," according to deBres, " 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you,' and 'Kiss the Son . . .'" (Article 10). That statement is dropped in the Revision. In Article 12 the words "this one God has created" (*ce seul Dieu a cree*) are changed to "the Father has created" (*le Pere a cree*). More important is a further statement in Article 12. In our provisional translation we read in reference to devils and evil spirits: "They lie in wait for the church, with all their power, to destroy and spoil everything by their deception, even causing themselves to be worshipped by everyone by promising great things to men. . . . Therefore they are condemned by their own malice to everlasting damnation, awaiting their torment." Here the Psalter Hymnal text is quite different. The Revision adds words (italicized) for no apparent reason: ". . . To the utmost of their power *as murderers* [they watch] to ruin the church and every member thereof, and by their wicked stratagems to destroy all; and are, therefore, by their own wickedness adjudged to eternal damnation,

daily expecting their horrible torments." Nor is it plain why the Revision eliminates the biblical sentiment, "And that is not strange, seeing that Satan was bold enough to present himself to Christ, in order to cause himself to be worshipped by him." In Article 13 the words "nothing can happen to us by chance but only by (*sinon par*) the arrangement of our gracious heavenly Father" (*l'ordonnance de nostre bon Pere celeste*) are changed to "nothing can befall us by chance, but by (*mais par*) the direction of our gracious heavenly Father" (not "most gracious," as in the Psalter). Again it is difficult to say why that revision was made.

More important than these changes—which are possibly of an editorial sort—is the fact that the revisers of Article 13 saw fit to drop the words "no longer" (the *plus in plus de rien*) from the original statement of deBres: "For that reason we reject the damnable opinion of the Epicureans, who say that God *no longer* involves himself in anything but leaves everything to chance." Rejected here is the idea that God "no longer" is active in the historical scene following the act of creation—an obvious correction of any wrong notion we might have picked up from the statement of deBres in Article 2, for example. The providence of God—his continuing concern—goes far beyond the product of his creative activity and contradicts any fiction that he once was but is "no longer" active in history. But that important thought is lost in the Revision as translated in the Psalter Hymnal: "And therefore we reject that damnable error of the Epicureans, who say that God regards nothing (*de rien*) but leaves all things to chance." In our day there are all kinds of "Epicureans" like those described in the original Belgic Confession. They believe that God once did, but no longer does, involve himself in history.

2. *Articles 14-15.* We see in Article 14 more examples of what we have already observed in Articles 7 and 9. While deBres accentuated at every point the dignity and nobility of God, giving him all glory in man's creation, the revisionists underscored much more the responsibility and capability of man as created by God. It is hard to say if the fact is significant that in deBres God created man "from the earth" (*de la terre*) while in the Revision he created him "out of the dust of the earth" (*du limon de la terre*). It is more important that in deBres God created man "completely perfect in all things" (*tout-parfait en toutes choses*) while in the Revision he created him "capable in all things to will agreeably to the will of God" (*pouvant par son vouloir accorder en tout au vouloir de Dieu*). In this latter statement more stress is apparently put on the competence and capacity of man the creature.

DeBres wanted to see God as the perfect Creator of man, and the excellence of man is depicted in that light. "So God created him and composed him of two parts—body and soul. The body was made from the earth and the spirit or life was inbreathed from God in such a way that in man we see an excellence so great that human understanding cannot explain it." This entire statement is deleted in the Revision. The revised article is admittedly an improvement in not speaking of man as "composed of two parts—body and soul," but it unfortunately does not include this brilliant statement on man's true dignity or excellence in reference to God. Here we should notice, incidentally, that we cannot avoid the pro-

blem of body/soul dichotomy by opting for the Revision instead of deBres, since that dichotomy reemerges, in both the Revision and deBres, in Article 18. It is interesting that at that point deBres speaks of body and spirit (*l'esprit*) while the Revision prefers the terminology of body and soul (*l'ame*). In Article 37 both deBres and the Revision allude to the dichotomy of body and spirit.

The revisionists excised another statement of deBres in which he referred to the dignity of man in relation only to God: "David said he is like this: Not much was lacking for him to be like God. He is crowned with glory and honor." Again, the specific reference is to a derived or referential dignity of man, which now is lost because of man's radical fall. This latter accent was softened in the Revision. As seen, the Revision had a greater optimism than deBres in regard to man's natural endowments.

Thus, while deBres stressed that through the fall man became "blind in understanding" (*aveugle d'entendement*), the Revision erased that statement and its clear reference to the noetic effect of sin. We can use that assertion in an age that glories in rationalism and the sufficiency of human reason. While deBres affirmed that the "small traces" of God's "excellent gifts" are "not enough to enable us to find God" (*elles ne sont pas suffisantes pour nous faire trouver Dieu*), the revisionists retained deBres' stress on the "sufficiency" of those "traces" ("to leave man without excuse") but not their "insufficiency" ("to enable us to find God"). While deBres said radically and all-inclusively that "everything" in us (*tout en nous*) is turned into darkness, the revisionists modified that posture by saying that "all the light . . . in us" (*tout ce qui est de lumiere en nous*) is turned into darkness. While deBres reiterated that all life and light come from God, and stressed that "in a Psalm it is said, 'In you, Lord, is the fountain of life, and in your light we see clearly,'" that doxology is eliminated in the Revision. While deBres affirmed that "the free will of mankind is a slave of sin" (*Il appert quel veut estre le franc-arbitre de l'homme serf de peche*), the revisionists were more reluctant and obviously did not want to reinitiate the free-will controversy. They did not contend that free will is a "slave of sin" but shifted the accent. The Revision stated diplomatically: "Therefore we reject all that is taught repugnant to this concerning the free will of man, since man is but a slave to sin, and 'can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven.'" Then words are added, not found in deBres: "For who may presume to boast that he of himself can to any good . . . ? Who will glory in his own will, who understands that 'the mind of the flesh is enmity against God? Who can speak of his knowledge . . . ?'"

On the surface it might seem that these last words are in line with deBres, but the total impact of Article 14 has nonetheless been softened. While deBres elucidates that Paul "calls 'natural' the man who is like the one that Adam brought into being by his fall," those words are once again removed in the Revision. In doing that the revisionists eliminated an important statement on our likeness to all those in the line of Adam and our involvement in Adam's fall. We shall see in Articles 16 and 18 that deBres preferred the language of "line," "lineage," or progressive revelation in history (*toute la lignee d'Adam*) while the revisionists

preferred the more realistic accent on the Jewish "race" and Father Abraham (*toute de race d'Adam*). That could be a reason for the Revision's elimination of deBres' statement on our likeness or involvement in the line of Adam.

DeBres announces that "we are 'not able to think anything about ourselves, by ourselves, but our ability is from God,'" and he explains immediately that "to 'think' is much less than to 'do.'" Again, these last words are excised in the Revision. While deBres suggests the pregnant thought that thinking is a form of doing and that agency is therefore more fundamental than rational subjectivity—with wide implications for ethics and all of life—the revisionists were apparently more eager to retain a guarded appreciation for the dignity of man's understanding and will. The Revision therefore adds words not found in deBres: "For there is no understanding nor will conformable to the divine understanding and will but what Christ has wrought in man." This explains why the revisionists eliminated the final words in the original Article 14: "Christ also says, 'He who sins is a slave of sin.' So where then is his 'free will'?" Once again, it is obvious that deBres was harder on the concepts of "free will" and man's "understanding" than the Revision was.

The Revision in Article 15 contains some statements that are not found in deBres. Original sin is vile "and abominable in the sight of God," and "sin always issues forth from this woeful source, as water from a fountain." It is not clear why the revisionists made these additions, but we should observe that the simile here agrees with the more "realistic" (in contrast to "federal") concept of the spread of original sin which the Revision held (in contrast to deBres). Another difference is apparent in this article. While believers, according to deBres, "long to be rid of their bodies," they desire, according to the Revision, "to be delivered from this *body of death*." While deBres seems to have a rather platonic view of "the body," that concept is used metaphorically by the revisionists.

The Revision's "realism" and the "federalism" of deBres—if those terms are appropriate here—are of a special sort. The difference between them can be seen in key terms that emerge in Articles 16 and 18. While deBres refers to "all Adam's *lineage*" or descendants (*toute la lignee d'Adam*), the Revision refers to "all Adam's *race*" or posterity (*toute la race d'Adam*). In deBres the accent is on a *line* of descendency, begun in Adam, and continuing until the present time, while in the Revision the accent is on a *race*, included in Adam, and present, as such, today. DeBres, as we have observed (Article 2), emphasized the *product* of God's creation of the world but also, as we now see, the *process* of his dealings with man in history. The Revision, as we have noted, emphasized the *process* of God's creation, preservation, government, and final purification (Article 37), but also the *product* of the race in Adam in totality. While deBres sees a linear development in the human race, the revisionists see the total presence of the human race of Adam.

3. *Article 16*. In deBres' Confession "God showed himself to be as he is—merciful and just. He is merciful in removing and saving from this perdition those whom he, in his eternal and unchangeable counsel, has elected and chosen, by his pure goodness, in Jesus Christ our Lord, without any consideration of their good works" (*sans aucun esgard de*

*leurs oeuvres iustes*). In the Psalter Hymnal text the words *merciful* and *just* are put in bold print, emphasizing the importance of those essential attributes of God in their symmetrical relationship. Election and reprobation are now seen in virtual symmetry. That pattern is in line with Theodore Beza's "tables of predestination" of 1555 ("*Summa totius christianismi*") and 1582 ("*De praedestinationis doctrina*"), but is not in line with the apparent intention of deBres in Article 16. The article in deBres is more than twice as long as the Revision's statement, and the words eliminated in the Revision are meant mainly, in deBres, to guard against that very symmetry or aesthetic balance that Beza and others wanted to affirm.

Observe that the "*iustes*" ("just" or "good," in reference to "works") is now changed in the Revision to "*juste*" (in reference to God), and a semicolon is now inserted to provide balance or symmetry with *misericordieux*, "merciful." The sentence now reads—quite different from deBres—that God is "merciful and just: *merciful*, since he delivers and preserves from this perdition all whom he in his eternal and unchangeable counsel of mere goodness has elected in Christ Jesus our Lord, without any respect to their works; *just*, in leaving others in the fall and perdition wherein they have involved themselves" (*sans aucun egard de leurs oeuvres; juste, en laissant les autres en leur ruine en tresbuschement ou ils se sont precipites*). Observe, also, that this last thought is taken up in deBres' Confession (though some words are different) in the context of God's total mercy and not yet in the context of his being a "just judge." The statement reads in deBres: "In leaving the others in their ruin and fall, into which they had stumbled, he, in so doing, shows himself a compassionate and merciful God toward those whom he saves, to whom he did not owe a thing" (*en laissant les autres en leur ruine et tresbuschement ausquels ils sont tresbuschez*. . . the following words being omitted in the Revision.)

Thus the revisionists did major surgery on deBres in Article 16. They dissected his sentences and put them together in different contexts, and they completely eliminated the second half of his article. Our Psalter text does nothing to improve that situation. "They had stumbled," in our provisional translation, is a good rendering of "*ils sont tresbuschez*" and preserves man's responsibility for his negative action. But "they have involved themselves" is an inaccurate translation for "*ils se sont precipites*" (literally, "they have precipitated themselves") and does not preserve man's responsibility for negative action.

Much was lost, in our judgment, when the revisionists dropped more than half of Article 16. The concept of God as "just judge" in the second half of deBres' statement makes no effort to preserve the symmetry of God's mercy and justice as twin attributes which must be realized or actualized in history. The Revision eliminated all the original material of deBres on God as just judge and thus dropped the strong accent of deBres on the solidarity of all men in perdition, the responsibility of all who are lost, and the accent on doxology or praise to God for the salvation we enjoy. DeBres wrote before the supra- and infralapsarian debates and their rather debilitating effects, from the years preceding the Synod of Dort until the present century. The background of divine judgment in

deBres is not only God's "eternal and unchangeable decree, founded in Jesus Christ before the world was created," but especially man's actual sinning or "stumbling" in history. Hence the accent on doxology and praise. The background of judgment in the Revision, however, is God's essential being—his twin attributes of justice and mercy, combined with immutability. The Revision moves toward a more symmetrical theology of election and reprobation.

And so, the Pauline mood of doxology, comfort, and joy as context for the doctrine of election is largely preserved in the Confession of 1559/61, while no effort is made to preserve that mood as context of election in the Revision. The form of Article 16 is now symmetrical; the theology roots in God's twin attributes of mercy and justice in balance. Perhaps if the revisionists had not tampered with deBres at this point we could have been spared some unprofitable discussion on divine decrees, election and reprobation, for the next three and one-half centuries, down to the present time.

4. *Articles 18-26.* We have observed that deBres preferred the concepts of "body and spirit" while the revisionists preferred those of "body and soul" (see above, Article 14; also below, Article 37). While deBres wrote in Article 18 that Christ "not only assumed human nature but also a real human spirit" (*Et non seulement a prins la nature humaine, mais aussi un vray esprit humain*), those words were changed in the Revision to read that he "did not only assume human nature as to the body, but also a true human soul" (*et non seulement il a pris la nature humaine quant au corps, mais aussi une vraie ame humaine*). In the next sentence again deBres affirms that the "spirit" (*l'esprit*) was lost as well as the body, while the Revision deliberately states that the "soul" (*l'ame*) was lost. Here the body/soul dichotomy and all its problems are suggested, at least in terminology, more clearly in the Revision than in the original Confession.

We have also observed in commenting on Article 14 that there is a kind of "federalism" and linear accent in deBres (*toute la lignee d'Adam*) that contrasts with the "realism" and total-race accent in the Revision (*toute la race d'Adam*). This contrast is continued in Article 18, where deBres speaks not only of "the fathers" in general but also refers specifically to "Abraham and David." While deBres writes that Christ "is descended from the fathers (*des Peres*) according to the flesh" and adds that "he is from the seed of Abraham and David," the Revision says that he is "descended from the Jews (*des Juifs*) according to the flesh; of the seed of Abraham." Here David is not included. A more holistic accent is dominant in the Revision; a more "representational" and historical accent is in deBres. The Immanuel-concept in deBres is related specifically to Christ's being "born of Mary" (*Il a este engendre de Marie*—note the capital "I" on *Il*, with the rest of the sentence modifying this main clause), but the Immanuel-concept in the Revision is related to the entire foregoing list and there is no mention of Christ's being "born of Mary." In short, the accent in deBres is on "lineage" and progressive revelation in history. The accent in the Revision is on the Jewish race, or the race of father Abraham.

There is some merit in the expanded statements in the Revision's version of Article 19. In reference to the humanity of Christ, deBres states that "he nonetheless did not change the reality of its true nature" (*il n'a pas toutesfois change la verite de sa vraye nature*). The revision kept that thought but added a clarifying comment: "... He has not changed the reality of his human nature; *forasmuch as our salvation and resurrection also depend on the reality of his body*" (*il n'a pas change la verite de sa nature humaine; attendu quo notre salut et resurrection dependent aussi de la verite de son corps*). The same clarifying note is found in the last words of the article. While deBres wrote simply that Christ was "true man in order to be able to die for us," the revisionists added to that statement and said that Christ was "very man that he might die for us *according to the infirmity of his flesh*." While there is value in these clarifications, it seems to us that nothing essential is lost if we return to the original.

We should note here that the "altar of the cross" in Article 21 of deBres Confession (*autel de la croix*) is translated "the tree of the cross" in some of the later revisions, including Schaff and the Psalter Hymnal. That is hardly an improvement. The original brings out the *onceness* of Christ's sacrifice on the cross and, in so doing, precludes the idea of a reiterative sacrifice—the very notion that Question and Answer 80 of the Heidelberg Catechism was at such pains to refute. The revision of Article 21 also gives a fuller quotation, than deBres, from Isaiah 53. But that has no apparent theological significance.

More important are the changes in Revision's Article 22. DeBres had written: "We believe that *by* the true knowledge of this great mystery the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith" (*par la vraye cognoissance de ce grand mistere le saint Esprit vient apparoir en nostre coeur une vraye foy*). The "mystery" here is that referred to in the last words of Article 21—the mystery of "Jesus," who is "Savior"—because he would save his people from their sins" (cf. 1 Timothy 3:16). "By" the knowledge of this mystery the Holy Spirit works true faith within us. He works from mystical knowledge to faith, according to deBres, but he works from faith to more rational knowledge, according to the Revision. Thus, in place of the affirmation that "*by* the true knowledge of this great mystery the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith," the revisionists now contended that "*to attain* the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts an upright faith." Instead of *par*, indicating instrumentality and the *priority* of mystical knowledge, we now have *pour*, which points to the *result* of that "true knowledge" that is desired ("*pour obtenir la vraie connaissance de ce grant mystere, le Saint-Esprit allume en nos coeurs une vraie foi. . .*"). In short, in deBres (and Calvin) the Holy Spirit leads us from "true knowledge" to faith while in the more scholastic Revision the Holy Spirit leads us from faith to "true knowledge." The Revision here, in our judgment, is not an improvement of deBres.

We have seen above that repeatedly the Revision shows a greater optimism than deBres in regard to man's natural sinfulness (see discussion of Articles 7, 9, and 14). The Revision tends to draw a greater distinction between sins and the person of the sinner. Thus, sinners must be ab-

solved, according to deBres, and sins must be absolved, according to the Revision. Thus, deBres says that the benefits of Christ are "more than enough to absolve us" (*plusque suffisans pour nous absoudre*), and the Revision avers that the benefits of Christ are "more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins" (*plus que suffisants pour nous absoudre de nous peches*). This profound difference—as we shall continue to see—runs throughout deBres and the Revision.

The change in Article 23 is in line with that difference. DeBres states that the "sole obedience of Christ crucified . . . is enough to cover all our sins and to give us confidence, without doing what our first father did, who trembled as he tried to hide himself behind the leaves of a fig-tree." The Revision clarified that statement by speaking of our confidence "in approaching to God" and also introduced the concept of the "free conscience," in the spirit in which it had spoken previously of the "free will" (Article 14). The Revision also inserted the name of "Adam" in accord with Article 18. The expanded statement reads: "This is sufficient to cover all our iniquities, and to give us confidence *in approaching to God* (*pour nous approcher de Dieu*); *freeing the conscience of fear, terror, and dread* (*eloignant de notre conscience la crainte, l'horreur et l'epouvantement*), without following the example of our first father, Adam, who, trembling, attempted to cover himself with fig-leaves."

Minor changes were made by revisionists in Articles 24 and 25. While deBres affirmed that works of faith in a sanctified person "are good and acceptable to God, but still do not count toward our justification," the Revision again expanded that statement to read that these works "are good and acceptable in the sight of God, *forasmuch as they are all sanctified by his grace*. Nevertheless they are of no account towards our justification. . . ." Further change and expansion are in the concluding words of Article 25. While deBres stated that "we continue to use the witnesses drawn from the law and prophets to confirm us in the Gospel and to regulate our lives in all honor (*honneur*), for the glory of God," the revisionists amended that statement to read that we use those witnesses or testimonies "to regulate our life in all *honesty* (*en toute honnetete*; or 'honorableness,' in the Psalter revision of Schaff) to the glory of God, *according to his will*" (*suivant sa volonte*).

The changes in Article 26 are more significant. As we shall see in Article 37, deBres emphasized the dreadfulness of judgment and divine wrath more than the revisionists. The existential background of his Confession is the common sinfulness of mankind, which is all the more absurd and damnworthy because of the goodness of God's original creation (see Article 2). In contrast, the existential background of the Revision is more the providence and predestination of God, which is directing all things to their appointed ends (hence the differences in Articles 2, 16, 37, etc.). DeBres underscores the awesomeness of judgment in Article 26, precisely in regard to those who are in Christ and against the background of our common sinfulness: "Otherwise we have no other entrance than thorns have to fire. We would be brought low by his mere voice—as we see in Adam, who fled in fear before the Lord, and the Israelites at Mount Sinai, who asked for a mediator because they feared they would all die in the presence of the voice of the Lord." Those words of dread and judg-

ment, applied even to those in Christ, are entirely eliminated in the Revision except for the bare statement: "which access would otherwise be barred against us." In deBres (as in Calvin) God's *potentia absoluta*, his absolute power, functions as the dark background in terms of which we should see his *potentia ordinata* or fatherly disposition toward us.

Perhaps the influence of the *Compromis* brought the revisionists to excise these kinds of statements. We have seen that the revisionists in general took a more optimistic view than deBres on human structures and the nature of man (cf. comments on Articles 2, 7, 9, 14, 22, and 23). So too in Article 26 the revisionists dropped the statement of deBres: "Here he changes the throne of dreadful glory into a throne of grace, to enable us to come to him." In these words once again we see *potentia absoluta* in the background of *potentia ordinata* or God's revealed good pleasure. That structure is common in covenantally-oriented theologies but less common in theologies more oriented to a doctrine of eternal decrees. We have seen that to some extent (especially Article 16) the revisionists pushed the Belgic Confession in this latter direction.

5. *Articles 27-35.* Note that in Article 27 the revisionists added the words "as during the perilous reign of Ahab" to the statement of deBres, "Yet the Lord preserved for himself the seven thousand who did not bend their knees to Baal." Why the addition? The most likely explanation would seem to be to gain ground for the *Corpus Christianum* idea of the *Compromis* and thus to make room for the idea of State Church or *Volkskirche*. We have already seen in our introduction that the Synod of Dort was convened by the civil authority, that the sentence pronounced on the Arminians was civil and coercive in nature, and that the magisterial view is found in Article 36 of the Revision. The qualifying phrase suggests here, in Article 27, a more optimistic view of the posture of the state and a wider concept of its role vis-a-vis the church than we find in deBres.

In the Psalter Hymnal version of Article 29 church discipline "is exercised in punishing of sin"—but that is different from what deBres and even the Revision at Dort actually said. It is not different from some of the earlier revisions or even the Dutch translation approved at Dort (in which we read, "*om de zonde te straffen*"). The purpose of church discipline, according to deBres, is "for correcting faults" (*pour corriger les vices*) and not for "punishing" them (*punir* is not mentioned in deBres or the Dort revision of the French text). Still, the Psalter translation is true to some early revisions prior to Dort and a main thrust of Dort in Article 36, as we shall see (*punir* is mentioned at that point). The idea there is one we observe already in Geneva at the time of Calvin and Beza. The magistrate, it was said, should punish infractions committed even within the sphere of the church. Civil government, according to the Revision, has the double task of watching for the welfare of the state and protecting the sacred ministry of the church, including "uprooting and destroying idolatry and false religion" (see Article 36).

DeBres sees elders and deacons, in Article 30, comprising the council of the church—but the Revision adds "pastors" to that assembly (*le senat*). For deBres, the pastor is not the chief executive in the church but

has the function of preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. As result, the elders and deacons are given a certain dignity, by deBres, reflected in the fact that in Article 31 he prescribes a laying on of hands for them as well as for ministers. The revisers dropped this whole idea of the laying on of hands (*l'imposition des mains*). In practice it has survived, but only in the case of ministers. Meantime, the original of Article 31 provided that not only ministers "no matter where they are . . . all have the same power and authority" but also added that "no church has any authority or right to lord it over another church" (*nulle Eglise n'a aucune autorite ny domination sur l'autre pour y seigneurier*). This last provision was dropped by the revisers. It was, perhaps, too "congregational" for their taste, and certainly it fit poorly with the notion of a "state church" and a governmentally-convened "national synod." But in practice and profession we do in fact live by the teaching of deBres, more than by that of the revisionists, at this point. It would make sense to return to the original Confession.

We see a remarkable difference between deBres and the Revision in Article 32 on excommunication. DeBres concludes the article by saying, "To that end excommunication, with all it involves, *serve us greatly* (*nous sert grandement*), if done according to the Word of God." The accent is on the *advantage* or *benefit* of excommunication. In contrast we have the statement of the Revision: "For this purpose excommunication *is requisite*, with all that pertains to it, according to the Word of God" (*a quoi est requisite l'excommunication faite selon la Parole de Dieu avec ce qui en depend*; note that the Revision did not add the words "or church discipline," as we find in Schaff and Psalter texts). Thus the accent is on the *duty* or *necessity* of excommunication. That comports with the more "punitive" purpose of discipline in the Revision in contrast to the more "corrective" purpose in deBres (see Article 36 and comment above on Article 29).

In Article 33 we are introduced to the "higher" sacramental theology of the revisionists as compared with deBres. The simple statement in deBres, "as he confirms salvation in us" (*en ratifiant en nous le salut*), is expanded by the revisionists to read, "thereby conforming in us the salvation *which he imparts to us*" (*en ratifiant en nous le salut qu'il nous communique*). Some could find a suggestion here of sacramental efficacy, the "conveyance" of salvation, or an *ex opere operato* idea—and that perspective is possibly enhanced by the words that follow. While in deBres we read, "and so they are symbols and visible signs of something internal and invisible," the word *seals* is now inserted in the Revision: "they are visible signs *and seals* of an inward and invisible thing" (*ce sont signes et sceaux visibles de la chose interieure et invisible*). This concept could suggest a "high" sacramentalism in which salvation is delivered to us in that which is "sealed."

A note of wry relief is found in deBres in Article 34: "For otherwise we would have to have our heads in the water all the time" (*autrement il nous faudroit tousiours avoir la teste en l'eau*). This too was deleted in the Revision, for reasons not entirely clear. DeBres reminds us in these words that we sin constantly, in every act, but that the legal status of the child of God is not on-again and off-again. As we have seen (Articles 7,

9, 14, 23) the revisionists in general took a less radical view of human sinfulness and responsibility than deBres. Perhaps that is reflected in the deletion of this piece of humor. Such humor is rare indeed in any confession.

But back again to the "higher sacramentalism" of the Revision. While deBres professed that children of believers "ought to be baptized and marked (*marquez*) with the sign of the covenant," the Revision again employed the concept of *seal* in Article 34. They "ought to be baptized and sealed (*scelles*) with the sign of the covenant." While deBres in Article 35 defined the spiritual life as that given to men "in their second birth, which results from the Word of the Gospel," the Revision espoused a much stronger sacramental accent and introduced it specifically. The spiritual life is "given them in their second birth, which is effected by the Word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ" (*en la communion du corps de Christ*). While deBres stated that Christ "attests to us that as truly as we take and hold (*nous prenons et tenons*) the sacrament in our hands and eat it with our mouths to sustain our lives, so truly do we receive by faith the true blood of Christ, our only Savior, into our souls, for our spiritual living," the Psalter Hymnal translates these same words, *nous prenons et tenons*, in a way that seems to agree with the Revision: All these things happen "as certainly as we receive and hold this sacrament in our hands and eat and drink the same with our mouths." While deBres affirmed that "so truly do we receive by faith the true body and true blood of Christ," the Revision qualified that we truly receive these things "by faith (*which is the hand and mouth of our soul*)." True to this pattern, we observe that while deBres concluded, "Yet we do not go wrong when we say that this takes place by faith," the revisionists saw fit to delete that entire statement. The key words in the Revision are *seals* and *imparts*. The key words in deBres are *faith* and *confirmation*. The former terms suggest something that happens outside us by way of delivery. The latter suggest something that happens within us only by belief and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

6. *Article 36*. No article was more radically revised after deBres than Article 36—and here we see most clearly the profound influence of the move toward magisterialization. In the deBres Confession of 1559/61 the *single task* of civil government was to *hold the sword and use it in a twofold direction*: "to punish evil men and protect good and decent people" (thus a positive and negative usage of the sword). But in the Revision the *double task* or office of civil government was (1) "to have regard unto and watch for the welfare of the civil state and also (2) "to protect the sacred ministry" (thus the state has both political and ecclesiastical responsibilities).

The single task in the deBres Confession "extends also to the affairs of the church" (*aussi sur les choses ecclesiastiques*), with the anticipated result of (1) uprooting and destroying idolatry and false religion, (2) undoing the kingdom of the antichrist, (3) promoting the kingdom of Jesus Christ, and (4) furthering the preaching of the Gospel—and thus, in all these things, honoring and serving God. It should be observed that in this delineation of the duty of the magistrate the cause of the kingdom of

Christ is indeed served, though only indirectly, by providing a peaceful context in which good men are protected and bad men are restrained. But that was not adequate for those involved in the *Compromis*. They wanted to invest the magistracy with the duty of seeing the "right" religion (*in casu*, Calvinism) through to victory. So the text was altered, as we have seen, at the "occult" synod called for that very purpose, in 1566, to make it read as the Revision now has it. The magistracy now has two duties—to "watch for the welfare of the civil state" and to "protect the sacred ministry"—and this second task (protection of ministry) has the anticipated result of the same four points we have listed above in reference to the single task of the 1559/61 Confession.

This revision has troubled Reformed churches from the moment the formula of *Corpus Christianum* or magisterialization began to be distrusted, and from the time people came to have serious doubts on whether the "sword" can be rightly used for the purpose assigned to it here—"to protect the sacred ministry." Some Reformed churches (among them the Christian Reformed and the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands) have rejected the revised reading at this point. These historical facts, as we have stated above, would seem to give warrant for returning to the original of Article 36.\*

Note that in the original specific reference is made to a Christian's subjection to civil officers. Christians should be "praying for them, that God may lead them in all their ways and that we may be able to live in peace and quiet, under them" (*priant pour eux en oraisons, afin que le Seigneur les veuille diriger en toute leur voye, et que nous puissions viure en*

\*In the Christian Reformed Church by far most of the controversy on the Belgic Confession has centered in the revised statement of Article 36. Already in 1906 the synod received an overture to revise the revised article as inherited from Dort (Acts of Synod 1906, p. 53). That request was turned down, but synod expressed a desire for further clarification (Acts of Synod 1908, p. 49). The Synod of 1910 (Acts of Synod 1910, pp. 9, 104-105) saw the Revision as unbiblical in this article and added a footnote to that effect. The issue continued to simmer, on low and higher burners, until the change recorded in the text and footnote of the Psalter Hymnal after 1938, on instruction of the synod of that year (Acts of Synod 1938, pp. 16-20), corresponding to the change adopted in 1905 by the General Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands. After 1938 the issue was studied repeatedly by Synods of 1940, 1942, 1943, 1945, 1946, 1947, 1952, 1954, 1956 and 1957; and the Synod of 1958 approved the following substitute statement for the words excided in 1938: "And being called in this manner to contribute to the advancement of a society that is pleasing to God, the civil rulers have the task, in subjection to the law of God, while completely refraining from every tendency toward exercising absolute authority, and while functioning in the sphere entrusted to them and with the means belonging to them, to remove every obstacle to the preaching of the gospel and to every aspect of divine worship, in order that the Word of God may have free course, the kingdom of Jesus Christ may make progress, and every anti-christian power may be resisted." That statement was given in a footnote to Article 36 in the centennial edition of the Psalter Hymnal, and other churches in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod were informed of synod's action—but final disposition of this matter was not made until the Synod of 1963 (Acts of Synod, p. 36). At the Synod of 1964 (Acts of Synod, p. 71) a positive response was indicated from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

It seems to us that this discussion and controversy, extending over more than 70 years, could have been largely avoided if Reformed churches subscribing to the Belgic Confession had been aware of the original Confession of deBres and had adopted its language in Article 36. The original text avoids most of the issues that were debated.

*bonne paix et tranquilité sous eux*). The thought here is that Christians are subject to the state—and that thought was definitely not the point of dispute at the Christian Reformed synod that most recently discussed this matter, in some depth, in 1958. In the Revision there is less specific reference to the Christian's subjection to state officials and the suggestion is made that the state protects the members of the church. The members should be praying for magistrates "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" (*priant pour eux en leurs oraisons, afin que le Seigneur les veuille diriger en toutes leurs voies, et que nous menions une vie paisible et tranquille en toute piété et honnêteté*). The thought now is that the state protects the church—and this thought was precisely the main point of dispute in the controversies leading finally to the Christian Reformed Synod of 1958 (see Acts of Synod 1958, pp. 28-31). Again, there is good reason to return to the original Confession.

In the conclusion of deBres' Article 36 we read: "For that reason we detest all those who want to reject the authorities and civil officers and subvert justice by imposing (*mettans*) a communion of goods and upsetting the honest behavior that God has established among human beings." There is reason to assume in the context of Article 36 that *mettre* refers to an authoritative imposing (as in "he has put—*il a mis*—the sword in the hand of the government"). DeBres seems to reject those who "impose" (*mettre*) a community of goods—those who thrust it upon others by authoritative action, and do not introduce this practice by common consent. Observe that deBres does not mention the Anabaptists.

Again, the Revision is significantly different. The "Anabaptists and other seditious people" (*mutins*) are specifically mentioned as those "we detest." The concluding statement now reads: "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 (*établissant*) a community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God has established among men." We are not obliged to reject those who "introduce" or establish (*établir*) a community of goods in any way, including mutual consent. But that is a regrettable assignment. The Anabaptists were in general peaceful and law-abiding people at the time of the Reformation, and their descendants are also today. Again we save ourselves from an impossible burden by returning to the original Confession.

7. Article 37. In the text of 1559/61 both Articles 36 and 37 begin with "finally" (*finalement*). Obviously that provided some problem for the revisers, presumably because only one article could be the final one. But in deleting this word from Article 36 they also eliminated the sense of struggle that apparently was going on within the soul of deBres. Article 37 is one of several for which there is no counterpart in the French Confession, and it may be that the noninclusion there of an article on the *consummatio saeculis* was one of the reasons deBres went ahead, despite a frown from Geneva, with the publication of a rival creed. The revisers entertained a here-and-now "triumphalism" in which deBres did not share, as evident in their more "optimistic" or "higher" views of the con-

tinuing dignity of man, the sacraments, and the role (or roles) of the state (see discussions above on Articles 2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 22, 23, 33, 34, 35, and 36). But for that precise reason deBres was more deeply interested than they in the *final triumph*, at the time of the Parousia or last judgment. By eliminating the first *finale*, in Article 36, the revisers excided the evidence that deBres apparently wrote Article 37 after he had planned not to. This may well be part of the evidence of two schools vying for the right of way.

As we have seen, Article 37 in deBres goes full circle back to accents he had sounded already in Article 2 especially. The stress in deBres, at that point, is on the "created, directed, and governed world" that is set before us and open to our examination. That world is "before our eyes as a beautiful book in which all creatures, great and small, serve as so many letters intended to make us ponder the hidden things of God; namely, his eternal power and his divinity" (*devant nos yeux comme un beau livre, auquel toutes creatures petites et grandes servent de lettres pour nous faire contempler les choses invisibles de Dieu: assavoir sa puissance eternelle, et sa divinite*). But man's sin has affected the very structures of reality, as well as the institutions of men. Therefore deBres is not as optimistic as the later revisers on what happens between God's original creation and his final consummation of all things. We have seen that the Revision—in line with its greater providence and predestination orientation—put more stress than deBres on God's ongoing activity in the world and less on the product of the world as given.

We have said that this contrast between God's decisive act and his continuing activity, the product and the process, re-emerges in Article 37. While deBres writes that God "will burn this old world in fire and flame in order to consume it" (*pour le consumer*), thus showing a less-than-optimistic evaluation, the revisers conceive of God's "burning this old world with fire and flame to cleanse it" (*pour le purifier*), thus showing their more moderate disposition. The accent in deBres is on destruction or consumption of the old world, and the dreadfulness of God's judgment is emphasized. The accent in the Revision is on the cleansing of the old world in anticipation of the new, and the dreadfulness of God's judgment is now moderated. That contrast continues through the very end of Article 37.

Thus, in deBres we read that all creatures "will be summoned by the voice and dreadful cries of angels and archangels and by the trumpet of God." Again the accent is on dreadfulness. In the Revision we read that they will be "summoned by the voice of the archangel and by the sound of the trumpet of God." There is no reference to the "dreadful cries of angels," though the words "terrible and dreadful" (*horrible et epouvantable*) are preserved later in the article. In deBres the evil ones "will be tormented for all eternity, in everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels"—again, dreadfulness is emphasized. In the Revision the evil ones "shall be tormented in that everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels"—and again, dreadfulness is de-emphasized and the words "for all eternity" are omitted. According to deBres, the cause of the faithful is "at present condemned as heretical and evil by judges and governments" but "will be acknowledged as the cause of the Son of

God." The revisers changed that sentiment by inserting the word "many" before "judges and magistrates," the result being that "their cause which is now condemned by many judges and magistrates as heretical and impious will then be known to be the cause of the Son of God" (*leur cause a present condamnee par plusieurs Juges et Magistrats comme heretique et mechante sera connue etre la cause du Fils de Dieu*).

As we have stated, with the signing of the *Compromis* in 1566 the hope had been raised of "judges and magistrates" who would not call the fledgling but growing Reformed community "heretical and evil" but would rather use their sword to see its cause through to victory. By returning to the original text, in our judgment, we recover an insight into the kind of world in which the Belgic Confession was written, before the "triumphalism" or false optimism of the post-1566 era.

### B. Specific Issues and Implications

1. *Emerging Scholasticism, Prior to the Synod of Dort.* In literature on Calvin and later Calvinism it is being said increasingly today that important changes occurred between the time of Calvin or de Bres, both of whom died in the 1560s, and the Synod of Dort in 1618-19. Many changes can be seen in the light of an emerging "scholasticism" that took hold most fully in the second half of the seventeenth century but was present, in groundlines, already at the time of Dort. By scholasticism we mean confessional theology abstracted from the historical milieu, the ebb and flow, in which confessions and theologies are inevitably written. Scholasticism presupposes an authoritative tradition or system, lifted beyond history, and used as a yardstick for measuring all other systems or thought structures. In general, "Protestant Scholasticism" means, in current discussions, the re-introduction of Aristotelian rationalism and deductive logic, metaphysics, and causality concepts on the soil of an originally more fertile, biblically-open Reformational thinking.

We see that development in the transition from the original Belgic Confession to the later Revision. In the Revision the historical situation of the *kruiskercken* was almost entirely eliminated (see discussions above on Articles 2 and 37 especially); there was more satisfaction with the Christian's status in this world and greater optimism concerning all men's natural endowments and capabilities (2, 7, 9, 14, 22, 23, 26, 36, 37); human reason was set on a higher plateau than we see in deBres (7, 8, 9, 14, 22, 23, 26, 36); a greater accent was put on man's understanding and "free will" (14, 22, 23); consequently there was less objection to working back to God's essential attributes instead of remaining with the way he has actually revealed himself to us in history (8, 16); and this more holistic or "eternal" accent, in contrast to "linear" or historical, is felt throughout the Revision (2, 14, 15, 16, 18) until we get to the final, decisive consummation of all things (37). We have already observed that the revisers had a here-and-now "triumphalism" that deBres did not share, and that this is apparent in the Revision's "high" view of man, the sacraments, and the power of the state (2, 7, 9, 14, 16, 22, 23, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37). In all these areas we can see the pressures of an emerging scholasticism already in the late sixteenth century. Throughout the revisions, the mood is shifted from that of the *kruiskercken* to that of the vic-

torious *Corpus Christianum*.

Early in our comments above we noted that deBres took a more modest and less speculative approach than the Revision (see discussion, Article 8), and that this observation applies at a number of points. DeBres said nothing, for example, about God's "incommunicable attributes" in relation to man or to distinct persons within the Trinity (8), and did not develop a doctrine of election and reprobation in terms of God's parallel or balanced attributes of mercy and justice (16). This general contrast is seen throughout the original and revised versions of the Confession.

2. *Election and Reprobation (the Doctrine of Decrees)*. DeBres was not concerned to build a rationalistic or speculative system. His language is confessional or existential and not abstract or metaphysical. His focus in Article 16 is clearly the historical circumstance of the fallenness of "all Adam's descendents"—the *massa perditionis* in which all people are involved.

That historical focus is not entirely eliminated in the Revision, but nevertheless there is a profound difference between between deBres and the Revision at precisely this point. DeBres' more historical language and main accents were shifted to a somewhat more eternal, decretal theology of divine essences. The parallel and symmetrical ideas of God's "mercy" and "justice" were now emphasized in line with the emerging decretal theologies of Beza, Vermigli, Zanchi, and others. Both supra- and infralapsarians, after deBres, but prior to the Synod of Dort, were immersed in problematics of eternal, decretal, causality thinking.

In our discussion above on Article 16 we have seen that in line with emerging scholasticism the revisers dissected the sentences of deBres and put them together in different contexts. Their revisions eliminated the second half of his article, which avoids the kind of symmetry or aesthetic balance the revisers apparently wanted. In line with a more decretal, eternal accent, they qualified the strong statement of deBres on man's own responsibility for his negative action. They eliminated what deBres said specifically on God as just judge and deleted his accent, at that point, on the solidarity of all men in perdition and the responsibility of all who are lost. The Revision dropped deBres' main emphasis on doxology and praise. The result, as we have said, was to encourage the kind of theologizing that issued in the supra- and infralapsarian debates, which lasted for the next 350 years. The Synod of Utrecht in 1905 recommended that these issues be laid aside, but they have continued to be—explicitly or under the surface—in the mainstream of Reformed discussions.

3. *Dignity and Responsibility (the Doctrine of Man)*. It is necessary to observe here that the doctrines of God and eternal decrees, in the Revision, did not supplant a strong doctrine of man's dignity. In fact, as we have seen, the pressure of emerging scholasticism and renewed stress on reason and logic pushed the Revision, in some ways, in precisely the opposite direction. A final rationale for the more rationally speculative accents in the Revision can only be located in the greater optimism that deBres had concerning man's capacities—his reason, understanding, and

"free will" (see discussion above on "Emerging Scholasticism").

We have seen that the revisers elided the statements of deBres that all men are "of themselves" liars and that "their wisdom cannot be in subjection to God" (Article 8); they added the dubious judgment that we know the testimonies of Scripture "chiefly" by those operations "we feel in ourselves" (9); they erased the clear statement in deBres that fallen man is "blind in understanding" and that the small traces of God's excellent gifts remaining to us are "not enough to enable us to find God" (14); and in place of deBres' verdict that "everything" in us is turned into darkness they asserted that "all the light . . . in us" is turned into darkness (14). Instead of saying with deBres that "the free will of mankind is a slave of sin," they softened that judgment and rejected "all that is taught repugnant to this concerning the free will of man" (14). We have therefore concluded that precisely the mood of the *kruiskercken* was God-centered and wary of assigning any shred of false security to fallen man. That explains, it would seem, why deBres emphasized both the product of God's creation of the world (2) and the process of God's dealing with mankind in history (14, 15), looking forward to the definitive end of this world (37), while the Revision—in line with concepts of primary and secondary causality—emphasized the process of God's creation, preservation, government (2) and final purification (37), but also the product of the human race of Adam in totality (14, 15). As we have observed, deBres emphasized the concept of "lineage" and God's covenant and progressive revelation in history while the revisers emphasized the concept of the human race in totality (16, 18). Thus, in various ways, while deBres put accent on God's majesty and judgment, the revisers put accent on man's dignity and continuing abilities.

The Revision, we have said, stressed more than deBres the capacity of man for positive action. In fact, because of that strong accent the Revision did not have an equally strong emphasis on man's responsibility for negative action (16). The result is that man's knowledge, understanding, and "free will" are preserved in the Revision, more than in deBres (14, 22, 23), but not the awfulness and dreadfulness of God's judgment upon man's responsible sinning (26, 37). In general, however, the revisers paved the way for returning to the scholastic tradition, as we have seen, in which intellect is on a higher plateau than faith. Here Protestant Scholasticism joined hands with the medieval variety which emphasized such concepts as *fides quaerens intellectum* and *credo ut intelligam*.

4. "Signs and Seals" (the Doctrine of Sacraments). A "high" view of human reason (emerging scholasticism), of election and reprobation (decretal theology), and of the dignity of man all tended, in the Revision, to go together with a "high" view of the sacraments as "signs and seals." In discussing Articles 33-35 we have observed some main features in that view and have seen that key words in deBres were *faith* and *confirmation* while key words in the Revision were *seals* and *imparts*. We have noted that this latter accent could go in the direction of an *ex opere operato* or mechanical idea of the sacraments. Once again, while deBres emphasized the context of faith and action *in history*, the revisers emphasized the context of what happens to us *from eternity*. On that level there is a cer-

tain congeniality between, for example, the "linear" view of deBres in Articles 16 and 18, his more historically-oriented view of reprobation (16), and his "lower" view of the sacraments (33-35). Conversely, there is congeniality between the "realistic" view of the Revision in Articles 16 and 18, its more eternally-oriented view of election and reprobation (16), and its "higher" view of the sacraments (33-35).

It must be said that Calvin also used the language of "signs and seals" in discussing the sacraments (*Institutes* IV.14)—but that detracts in no way from the significance of deBres' omitting and the revisers reinserting the concept of "seals." This reaffirmation in the Revision, as we have seen (33, 35), was clearly in the context of what God now "imparts to us" by means of the sacrament. Believers, according to the Revision, are "marked" or "sealed" with the sign of the covenant. While deBres emphasized (35) that "second birth . . . results from the Word of the Gospel," the revisers asserted that "second birth . . . is effected by the Word of the gospel, in the communion of the body of Christ." In our discussion above we have observed several points at which this "stronger" concept of the sacraments is obvious in the Revision.

5. *Church and State (the Problem of Magisterialism)*. In addition to its "high" view of reason, election and reprobation, the abilities of man after sin, and the role of the sacraments, the revisers also had a "high" view of the state, as we have seen (comments on Article 36 and "The Problem of the *Textus Receptus*"). We have noted that the earliest changes in the Confession were on Article 36, as the climate shifted from that of the *kruiskercken* to that of the *Compromis*— that is to say, from the era of persecution to that of magisterialism. We have noted that Article 36 has been, and continues to be, more controversial than any other article in the Belgic Confession.

In discussing the problem of the *textus receptus* we observed that the changed political situation provided the context and occasion for most of the significant changes in the Revision. What holds all the major revisions together is the "high" or "established" theology of a community that had won support of the government and had crystallized its theology within an increasingly secure climate. The existential urgency of the *kruiskercken* now gave way to a more systematic theology, with authoritative and coercive consequences for those who did not agree. Magisterialism and emerging scholasticism must be seen together and provide a total milieu for the main revisions.

There is no need now to repeat things already said in regard to Article 36. We want only to bring issues together in the light of the changed situation between the time of deBres and the Synod of Dort. Articles 2 and 37 must be seen in that focus, and together they form a kind of framework for the entire Belgic Confession. DeBres was less optimistic than the revisers concerning this sinful world between the times of creation and consummation, and his greater stress on judgment and the wrath of God reflects his personal, ecclesiastical, and existential circumstances. He could not know the comfort and security of an "established religion." And so the mood of modesty, as we have observed frequently, runs throughout the original Belgic Confession in contrast to the more

optimistic mood of the Revision. The revised Confession shows the constant markings of those at home in this world and all the best it has to offer.

We have observed that the revised Article 27, for example, can be read in the light of the magisterialism in Article 36. The revisers apparently wanted to guard against the notion that what happened in the "perilous reign of Ahab" is a pattern for all time. They wanted to make room for the *Compromis* to function, and for that reason, it seems, resisted the "congregationalism" suggested in the original Article 31. Moreover, in the new wedding of church and state the genius of ecclesiastical discipline, as we have said, was dramatically altered. It was not only for correcting but also for punishing faults (see comments above on Article 29). Excommunication was not only advantage and benefit but primarily duty and necessity (32). It is obvious, from these few comments, that the mood of magisterialism is felt throughout the Revision.

6. *Judgment and Consummation (the Doctrine of the Last Things)*. In Article 37 especially we see the significance of the alterations in Article 36 and of the Revision's "higher" or more optimistic reading of this present world and its possibilities. What was begun already in Article 2—is the work of the only true God in Article 1—is now concluded in Article 37; but the mood of that conclusion in deBres and the mood of the Revision are quite different. DeBres speaks as one who is eager for God's judgment and looks forward to vindication. He has nothing of the contentment or here-and-now "triumphalism" of the Revision. But in the economy of divine justice a less "exalted" view of natural man, or sacraments in themselves, or the state's involvement in the church, could only mean a more radical view of the final consummation. Again, the sphere of the *kruiskercken*, in contrast to the magisterialism of the later revisers, conditioned the pervasive mood of the original Confession. What God "consumes" in deBres, he "cleanses" in the Revision (37). What is "dreadful" in deBres is less awesome in the Revision.

The implications, again, are clear throughout the changes in the Belgic Confession. In Article 16, for example, deBres sees God as a just judge who executes his wrath because of man's own sinning or "stumbling" in history. In the Revision, however, God's judgment is related less fully than in the deBres text of history and more fully to God's eternal attribute of justice (this takes the place of honor in Anselm's classic medieval formulation). So too in Article 26. In deBres the emphasis is on the dreadfulness of judgment and divine wrath because of the common sinfulness of mankind. In the Revision the emphasis is on the eternal providence and predestination of God by which all things proceed to their ordained ends.

In deBres the evil ones will be tormented "for all eternity," while in the Revision those words are omitted. In our review of differences above we noted a number of those kinds of examples. While deBres looks for vindication and destruction of this sinful world, the revisers look for renewal and restoration of what has not been such a dreadful place to be. Nor is the judgment as dreadful as we see in deBres.

7. *Conclusion*. We cannot and may not ignore the profound revisions

that were made during the sixty years after the Belgic Confession was first written. We must see those revisions in the light of what was happening in those times. It would be a mistake, in our judgment, to regard our Psalter Hymnal version as the ultimate statement of the Belgic Confession—and that revision should not in fact be preferred, for reasons we have indicated in this report. Nor should we try to “patch up” either the statements of deBres or the Revision. For by definition a creed, written at a certain time, is an historical document. In our view it should not be rewritten or revised but only translated, at most, by later generations.

In this report we have tried to give reasons for our proceeding as we have up to this point. We hope that synod will approve our actions and inform us accordingly. Those reasons are so evident, as we see them, that we have taken liberty to offer our provisional translation of the entire 1559/61 original Confession. We have done that because of the reasons elaborated above in our discussion of “the problem of the *textus receptus*,” but, more importantly, because of the weight of historical evidence when we compare the original confession of deBres and the text of the later revisers. But most importantly, we were aware, from the very start of our labors, that synod could not make a responsible decision on the *textus receptus* unless it has a provisional translation of the original confession. There must be a translation of the original to compare with the Revision. Nor could synod make a conscientious decision without indications of main differences between the original and revised Confessions and a theological analysis of those differences. We therefore respectfully submit all those materials to the synod at this time.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the considerations observed and developed throughout this report, your committee recommends the following:

- A. That synod authorize the Belgic Confession Translation Committee to use the 1559/61 deBres version of the Belgic Confession as the *textus receptus* for the new English translation.

*Grounds:*

1. It is the earliest version available.
  2. It was written in times more akin to our own vis-a-vis church-state relationships than were the later revisions.
  3. Its theological nuances are, in general, preferable to those in the later revisions.
- B. That synod communicate this decision to other churches in the Reformed community using the Belgic Confession as an official standard and invite those churches to give relevant reactions to the translation committee.
- C. That synod, recognizing that the committee will review its work, express a favorable attitude toward the general form and style of the provisional translation as submitted, and urge consistories and individual church members to send the committee reactions to and suggestions for improving that translation.

D. That synod grant to committee members Philip Holtrop and Leonard Verduin the privilege of the floor when this matter is discussed.

We conclude by noting that reactions to this report should be sent to the secretary of the committee: Dr. Arthur J. Otten, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49506.

The Belgic Confession Translation Committee

John H. Primus, chairman  
Philip C. Holtrop, reporter  
Arthur J. Otten, secretary  
Lois Read  
Leonard Verduin

## REPORT 34

## EDUCATION IN LITURGY AND CHURCH MUSIC

Report to Synod of 1979 from the Joint Sub-Committee of the Liturgical Committee, the Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee, and the Education Committee.

*Membership*

Our study committee consisted of two members of the Liturgical Committee, two members of the Psalter Hymnal Supplement Committee, and the Adult Education Editor, who represented the interest of the Education Committee.

*Mandate*

In 1977, synod adopted a joint proposal from the Liturgical Committee and the Psalter Hymnal Supplement Committee:

That the Liturgical Committee and the Psalter Hymnal Supplement Committee together with representatives of the Education Committee present to the Synod of 1978 recommendations (1) for motivating the membership of the CRC to study the history, theology, and practice of Reformed liturgy and music, and (2) for assisting in liturgical and musical matters those who desire such assistance.

*Grounds:*

1. Our Reformed heritage in worship cannot be taken for granted. Without stimulating the general awareness of our people as to the crucial nature of song and liturgy in congregational worship, there is a possibility that our Reformed faith will be undermined by non-Reformed Hymnody and liturgy.
2. In our day of pressures toward congregational authority, there is a need to foster a common Reformed mind on liturgy and music for worship. Consequently, a way must be found to give sustained educational leadership to keep liturgical and musical order in the churches.
3. The modest attempts at education in hymnody and liturgy by denominational committees and agencies suffer from being too fragmented. For more effective service, these attempts ought to be better coordinated.

(Acts of Synod 1977, Art. 59, p. 85).

In 1978, Synod recommended that our committee continue to work on this mandate.

At the same time, synod directed the chairman of the Liturgical Committee to meet annually with the chairman of the Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee and the Director of the Education Department to discuss and coordinate their various efforts in liturgical and musical education. (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 60, p. 560).

*Report of Committee Action*

There seemed to be such an overlap of effort between our committee

and the coordinating agency named above that our committee had no remaining function. We concur in the recommendations from the Education Department re plans for education in liturgy and church music.

*Recommendations to Synod*

1. That the Director of Education be given the privilege of the floor when these recommendations are considered.
2. That synod endorse the cooperative efforts of the Education Department and Calvin's Music Department in sponsoring a major Church Conference of Music and Liturgy to be held at Calvin College on July 18-20, 1979.
3. That synod pursue the study requested from the Board of Trustees of Calvin Seminary re a course offering in Reformed liturgy (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 559).
4. That synod direct continued efforts in educating our denomination through the cooperative agency named above.
5. That synod discharge our study committee.

Joint Committee on Liturgy and Church  
Music

Nelle Vander Ark, chairperson  
Bert Polman, secretary  
Clifford Bajema  
John Hamersma  
Edwin Walhout

## REPORT 35

## PSALTER HYMNAL REVISION COMMITTEE

This is the second report from our committee, appointed by the Synod of 1977. We have benefited in the past year by several additions to our committee: Dale Grotenhuis, Verlyn Schultz, and Dale Topp were added as regular members by Synod of 1978; and the Synodical Interim Committee appointed Bert Polman to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Barend Fioole.

In our report to synod last year we established four areas of our mandate, namely:

1. to formulate a statement of principle for music in the church;
2. to specify guidelines for establishing and judging the music of the church;
3. to state the procedures which will be followed in the work of revising the Centennial Edition of the Psalter Hymnal; and
4. to revise and improve the Centennial Edition of the Psalter Hymnal.

Since the fourth step is the final product of our committee's efforts, we limit our interim report to the first three areas in the three sections of this year's report.

## I. PRINCIPLE

We were asked to report last year on the principle for music in the church, as well as the guidelines and procedures to be followed in the work of revision. We proposed that the principle for music adopted by Synod of 1953 be reaffirmed in a rewritten form, with language updated to contemporary standards and in a way that conforms to the language and concepts of the 1968 report of the Liturgical Committee. Synod recommitted our proposed version so that a few matters raised in the discussion at synod might be reflected in a version "easily understood."

The 1953 "Statement of Principle for Music in the Church" is as follows:

*Principle: The Music of the Church Should Be Appropriate for Worship*

1. *The music of the church should be liturgical*—In spirit, form, and content it must be a positive expression of scripturally religious thought and feeling. It should serve the ministry of the Word.
2. *The music of the church should be beautiful*—Its religious thought or spirit should be appropriately embodied in the music as music, the poetry as poetry, and the blending of these in song. It should satisfy the aesthetic laws of balance, unity, variety, harmony, design, rhythm, restraint, and fitness which are the conditions of all art.

We propose that this principle be reaffirmed as follows:

*The music of the church should be appropriate for worship—that is, it should be liturgical and have aesthetic integrity.*

The music of worship should serve the dialogue between God and his people. It must be true to the full message of the Scriptures and reflective of biblical Christian experience. Along with this biblical motif, the music of worship should give expression to the other motifs of liturgy: the catholic, the confessional, and the pastoral. The music of worship should satisfy the aesthetic laws that are conditions of good art, such as imaginative craftsmanship and seriousness of expression. It should reflect the church at worship today and throughout the ages in ways that are relevant, enduring, festive, and dignified.

## II. GUIDELINES

We have continued studying the "Implications of the Principle" from 1953 and the "Principles" and "Guidelines" from 1972. Before we complete our work of the guidelines for music in the church, we need to have the principle adopted.

The conference on church music planned for July of this year will provide an excellent opportunity to discuss these matters with a broadly representative group of church musicians and pastors. We will report our progress in this area next year.

## III. PROCEDURES

We presented to synod last year procedures by which the work of revision is being done. This year we report our progress in these areas:

1. Regarding the Psalms (numbers 1-310), the first of our poets' workshops was held on November 23-24, 1978. In our plan to strengthen the singing of the Genevan Psalm tunes, we assigned a variety of the best psalm melodies to persons skilled in versification. Seven poets responded to invitations and the ad in the Banner and came with prepared versifications. They exercised mutual critique on the work in progress and listened to several resource people who spoke on the historical context of the Genevan melodies, on the problems of modes and rhythms of these tunes for English language settings, and on principles for using Old Testament Psalms in current New Testament worship.

As a result of this workshop about a dozen Psalms are now in final stages of completion, with contemporary English language that fits the Genevan melodies in their original rhythms. The poets hope to continue on Psalms assigned to them as our committee works toward a revised Psalter.

2. Regarding the hymns (numbers 311-493), we have completed our preliminary analysis of each song and have begun making lists of songs from other sources for possible inclusion.

3. We were especially helped this year by a working session with Dr. Ford Lewis Battles, visiting lecturer at Calvin Theological Seminary. Among his many accomplishments in the field of Calvin study is his knowledge of Calvin's work on music and worship. He served on the hymnal revision committee in his own fellowship and was able to share experiences and advice with us. We have been able to organize both our

analysis of the current collection and our search for other songs far more efficiently as a result of his advice.

It has become clear to us that we ought to concentrate on this study of the entire collection and on the development of lists of songs to meet specific needs. We have therefore postponed production of any small collection of songs for trial use in the churches.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following matters in this interim report call for synod's action:

1. That the chairman and reporter of our committee be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to this report are discussed.

2. That synod reaffirm the statement of principle for music in the church as follows:

*The music of the church should be appropriate for worship—that is, it should be liturgical and have aesthetic integrity.* The music of worship should serve the dialogue between God and his people. It must be true to the full message of the Scriptures and reflective of biblical Christian experience. Along with this biblical motif, the music of worship should give expression to the other motifs of liturgy: the catholic, the confessional, and the pastoral. The music of worship should satisfy the aesthetic laws that are conditions of good art, such as imaginative craftsmanship and seriousness of expression. It should reflect the church at worship today and throughout the ages in ways that are relevant, enduring, festive, and dignified.

#### Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee

Jack Van Laar, chairman  
Jack Reiffer, reporter  
Shirley Boomsma  
Emily Brink  
Dale Grotenhuis  
John Hamersma  
Anthony Hoekema  
Bert Polman  
Marie Post  
Verlyn Schultz  
Calvin Seerveld  
Dale Topp

## REPORT 36

## TASK FORCE ON WORLD HUNGER

The Synod's Task Force on World Hunger herewith submits the enclosed report for synod's consideration and action. This is the second of two reports, a supplement to the study submitted to the Synod of 1978, "And He Had Compassion on Them: The Christian and World Hunger" (Acts of Synod 1978, pp.567-632).

The 1978 Synod accepted that report on world hunger "as an initial fulfillment of the mandate" given to the Task Force by the Synod of 1976 (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 80). The 1978 Synod decided also to continue the Task Force for one more year and charged it with the following specific tasks:

- a. To work with the Executive Director of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and the Executive Secretary of the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions in the development of a comprehensive hunger alleviation program, and to monitor the implementation of that program as well as the other synodical decisions arising from this report.
- b. To continue their work on the structural and systematic problems causing world hunger, and to develop appropriate responses to these problems.
- c. To work with the CRWRC to assemble and prepare appropriate informational materials on hunger and distribute them to the ministers of our church.

*Grounds:*

- 1) The knowledge and background of the Task Force should be utilized during the year of transition and implementation.
- 2) There is considerable work to be done in exploring questions of structural factors and determining needed changes (pp. 85, 86).

The attached report is the fulfillment by the Task Force of its mandate to prepare a biblically directed statement on the structural and systemic problems causing world hunger and to develop appropriate responses to these problems.

We report that we have worked with the Executive Director of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee and the Executive Secretary of the Board for Christian Reformed World Missions in the development of a comprehensive hunger alleviation program and that we have monitored the implementation of that program as well as other synodical decisions arising from that report. There is at the present time in operation an action program to alleviate world hunger. It is important to note that this report does not seek to explain, expand, or diminish that program, but rather supplements it.

The Task Force found the two-year study on world hunger to be challenging, compelling, and gratifying. We have been challenged by the Word of our Lord who in his compassion on the multitude told his

disciples to give them food to eat and himself gave them food for both body and soul. We have been compelled to seek for appropriate responses to the urgent global problem of world hunger. We have been gratified by the response of so many of God's people as they seek to alleviate the hunger of teeming millions in the world.

We are gratified also with the many responses to the call for observance of a Day of Prayer and Fasting, and would remind both synod and the churches that the decision of the Synod of 1978 was that this be an annual observance.

In the preparation of the report on structural change that follows, we have been greatly helped by a large number of knowledgeable persons in the academic, pastoral, political, economic and business fields. Without their help, we could not have carried out our task. For their assistance we express our hearty appreciation.

*Recommendations:*

1. That synod grant the Rev. Jacob Vos and Dr. Vernon Ehlers the privilege of the floor when this study on world hunger is being considered, and request other Task Force members to be available to respond to questions.

2. That synod accept this report, "World Hunger and Structural Change," as the fulfillment of the mandate of the Task Force on World Hunger.

3. That synod authorize the publication and distribution of the enclosed report in study guide form, either together with, or separate from the study manual, *And He Had Compassion on Them*.

Task Force On World Hunger  
Paul G. Schrotenboer, chairman  
Eugene Rubingh, secretary  
John De Haan  
Calvin B. De Witt  
Vernon Ehlers  
Joel Huyser  
Louis Van Ess  
Jacob B. Vos

## WORLD HUNGER AND STRUCTURAL CHANGE

### I. INTRODUCTION

In his book, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, Ronald J. Sider tells this story to illustrate how a process or structure in society can affect the lives of people.

A group of devout Christians once lived in a small village at the foot of a mountain. A winding, slippery road with hairpin curves and steep precipices without guard rails wound its way up one side of the mountain and down the other. There were frequent fatal accidents. Deeply saddened by the injured people who were pulled from the wrecked cars, the Christians in the village's three churches decided to act. They

pooled their resources and purchased an ambulance so that they could rush the injured to the hospital in the next town. . . .

Then one day a visitor came to town. Puzzled, he asked why they did not close the road over the mountain and build a tunnel instead. Startled at first, the ambulance volunteers quickly pointed out that this approach (although technically quite possible) was not realistic or advisable. After all, the narrow mountain road had been there for a long time. Besides, the mayor would bitterly oppose the idea. (He owned a large restaurant and service station halfway up the mountain.)

The visitor was shocked that the mayor's economic interests mattered more to these Christians than the many human casualties. Somewhat hesitantly, he suggested that perhaps the churches ought to speak to the mayor. After all, he was an elder in the oldest church in town. Perhaps they should even elect a different mayor if he proved stubborn and unconcerned. Now the Christians were shocked. With rising indignation and righteous conviction they informed the visitor that the church dare not become involved in politics. The church is called to preach the gospel and give a cup of cold water. Its mission is not to dabble in worldly things like social and political structures.

Perplexed and bitter, the visitor left. As he wandered out of the village, one question churned round and round in his mind. Is it really more spiritual, he wondered, to operate the ambulances which pick up the bloody victims of destructive social structures than to try to change the structures themselves?<sup>1</sup>

The structures we are discussing in this report are not far-off institutions or systems, but entities that affect our everyday activities. Think for a moment of the ways in which we introduce ourselves: "I am a student at Dordt College. . . . I live in Alberta. . . . I am a welder. . . . I am a member of the Christian Reformed Church. . . . I own stock in General Motors. . . ." Almost every way in which we identify ourselves involves us as a participant in institutions or structures. These the present study will examine.

## II. SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES

The report of the Task Force on World Hunger to the Synod of 1978 encouraged Christians in the face of worldwide hunger to examine their individual attitudes and lifestyles. The report also encouraged Christians to send food and funds to hungry people overseas although it noted that these donations were only stopgap measures and that Christians would need to develop programs through which hungry people would be able to provide their own food. Finally, the report stated that all these responses would be inadequate unless accompanied by global structural change. Synod then commissioned the Task Force to analyze further the structural changes essential to an attack on world hunger.

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<sup>1</sup>Ronald J. Sider, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger: A Biblical Study*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove, Ill., 1977, pp. 203-204.

This report is an attempt to do that. It will speak at some length about systems and structures. These terms have many different meanings. We will use them nonscientifically and interchangeably to describe those processes which govern the interaction of people as well as the institutions and patterns through which people deal with each other. The word *system* stresses the dynamic side of these entities while *structure* stresses the stable side.

#### A. *Extent of Influence*

The influence of structures is hard to overestimate. As we said in the earlier report, structures are often influential beyond measure, powerful beyond description. They organize and often control our society and even the values that we cherish. Their power extends down to what food we put on our table. The systems of food production, processing, distribution, trade, and even food aid govern what we eat and what we do not eat, who will be well-fed and who will go hungry. It is important to take a close look at the often subtle influence of systems before we can begin to transform them. Samuel Escobar in *Christian Mission and Social Justice* vividly illustrates the enormous influence systems have on human life. He tells the story of how, early in this century, a mission society bought some land in Bolivia on which to build a school and a hospital for Aymara peasants. The land came with two hundred-fifty Aymara serfs. For some thirty years a many-sided ministry yielded such frustratingly little fruit that the missionaries were driven to despair. Then they realized that their position as landowners and serf-masters was exerting a greater influence than their ministry of Christian love. They decided to change the "system." They abolished serfdom, giving each serf family their own plot of land. After the land reform (the structural change), the missionary work really began to blossom; the response increased dramatically.<sup>2</sup>

Most systems are not inherently good or evil. But they do have tremendous power for a good or evil. A system rooted in and expressive of God's love can provide freedom, encouragement, and security to its members as they follow God's calling. But the same system, nurtured by motives other than love for God and neighbor, encourages the growth of evil. The Old Testament monarchy is a good example. Under kings who were committed to the Lord, the monarchy flourished and was characterized by wisdom and justice. But under kings who were not committed to the Lord, the whole system turned bad. Priests and prophets began working for their own personal benefit; judges took bribes; and "the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites" (I Kings 14:24, NIV).

Systems that have turned bad encourage people in the misuse of power and blind them into confusing that system with the will of God. For example, Christians endorsed such evils as the slave trade, child labor, and racism as manifestations of a larger system to which they were committed. Such a system can be a powerful barrier that can drive those who do

<sup>2</sup>Samuel Escobar and John Driver, *Christian Mission and Social Justice*, Herald Press, 1978, pp. 43, 44.

seek to serve God to despair. As the poet of Psalm 11 cries out, ". . . if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"

The power of systems for either good or evil is underscored by their resistance to change. This resistance is so strong that some people believe that most basic systems can be changed only by violence. Two characteristics of systems account for this strong resistance. First, most systems have originated as a result of many acts over a long period of time, and, second, they were formed to give *stability* to human dealings and relationships. Because systems haven't been formed overnight, they can hardly be changed overnight. Because they function to give stability, they hardly welcome change. The next section takes a more detailed look at the origin and purpose of systems and structures. But one more point about resistance to change: this resistance can become devilishly strong if the structure functions to the advantage of the stronger. Witness the strong resistance to the abolishment of the slave trade, child labor, and racism. Witness also the instances of opposition in the United States by people living in the suburbs to aid for those living in the inner city. Yet, as a result of the Clean Water Act, the federal government pays 80% of the *suburban* sewer construction, benefitting each suburban household several thousands of dollars.

#### B. *The Origin and Purpose of Social Systems and Structures*

Structures are a basic component of life. To state it pointedly, they live us as we live them. The family is a good example. Through it we have come to have life and a place in the world and through it we give life and make a place for others. We cannot define ourselves apart from that structure. All of us are sons or daughters; many of us are wives or husbands, fathers or mothers. This structure shapes our days: when we come home, how we spend our resources, and what we do for recreation. Just as structures define individuals, individuals define structures. For example, in the family, the parents define where the family will be located, what they eat, and how they will be transported. The children may define where the family goes on vacation.

In addition to the family, a host of other structures shape our lives, such as schools, governments, businesses, trade systems, health care programs, and taxation systems. Particularly relevant for poverty and world hunger are the structures of international trade, food production and distribution, foreign aid, development of mineral resources, and the like. Some of these will be discussed at greater length in the next section.

But first, from where do all these structures come? To begin with, they are human creations that have been developed to meet human needs and desires. A man and a woman decide to form a family, and in so doing, they follow the models of their culture. People in a certain geographical area form a national government, which changes over the course of time. A group of adults organize a school. People who have something to sell and those who wish to buy set up certain patterns of trade. These examples show that structures do not exist apart from people. It is people who create them and people who shape them. Also, all the systems mentioned in these examples—family, government, school, and trade—have not sprung up overnight. They have come about as the result of many

small acts by people over an extended period of time.

There is more to systems and structures, however, than human activity. By creating them, people are responding to the order that God has placed in the creation. God's own evaluation, "... behold, it was very good," suggests that his creation expressed an order and harmony. Not chaos, but order and total well-being characterize God's work. All the relationships conform to God's wise and loving design. Thus Genesis 2 presents the picture of Adam classifying his environment, naming the animals, and rejoicing in the wholeness and interaction of God's creation.

Structures, therefore, are not only human creations, designed to meet certain needs and desires, but also people's response to God's design. The more clearly people understand and appreciate God's design, the more wholesome their structures can be. At the same time, people also pervert God's design. The result then is an evil structure. This report will have occasion to focus on certain detrimental structures.

The purpose of a structure is to give order and stability to human life and its processes. Instead of every human act being performed in a vacuum, without precedent or history, people develop patterns of acting and of dealing with each other that have a certain consistency and that conform to an agreed-upon standard. This gives life stability and security. Structures that are patterned after God's design provide context in which people can effectively relate to each other as husband and wife, employer and employee, citizen and government, church member and consistory, buyer and seller, and so on. Ideally, each such structure has the experience of freedom and the acceptance of responsibility as people carry out their tasks.

### C. *The Structures Involved in World Hunger*

#### 1. *The Food System*

Before we consider the structures involved in world hunger, it is useful to look at the various parts of the food system, that system whereby food is produced and consumed. There is more than one type of food system operating in the world, including, for example, subsistence agriculture, a system which is designed to provide all the goods required by the farm family, usually without any significant surplus for sale. We will focus, however, on the system with which we are most familiar, the one in which some people produce food and sell it to others in exchange for valuable items (such as money), unprocessed natural resources (such as wood or metals), handcrafted goods, and so on. Although the medium of exchange can vary, we will, for ease of discussion, refer to it as money.

Figure 1 identifies some major components of the food system. The two most obvious components are *production* and *consumption*. The *means of production* include labor, capital, and favorable growing conditions. Other important components link those who produce with those who consume. The first of these is *processing*, which prepares food for *distribution*. The distribution component of the system such as donkey, wagon, truck, or train, brings the food to the marketplace. Here it is sold and bought (a process usually referred to as *marketing*) before it is ready for consumption.

Structures are necessary for the effective operation of this food system. They link the producer of food with its consumer. For example, at the outset, a bank, or some other financial institution, provides farmers with capital to purchase seeds, implements, and fertilizers with which they can produce food. And, after food is produced, some kind of transportation network is needed for distribution. So the question is not whether structure is needed, but rather whether existing structures practice stewardship in their use of agricultural resources.

We now will take a critical look at some of the problems with the structures that affect the food system. Since this must necessarily be a brief and incomplete look, we suggest that you refer to other materials (particularly those of Sider, Mooneyham, and Simon) listed in the bibliography at the conclusion of this report. Also, keep in mind Figure 1 since it provides the organization for what we present below.

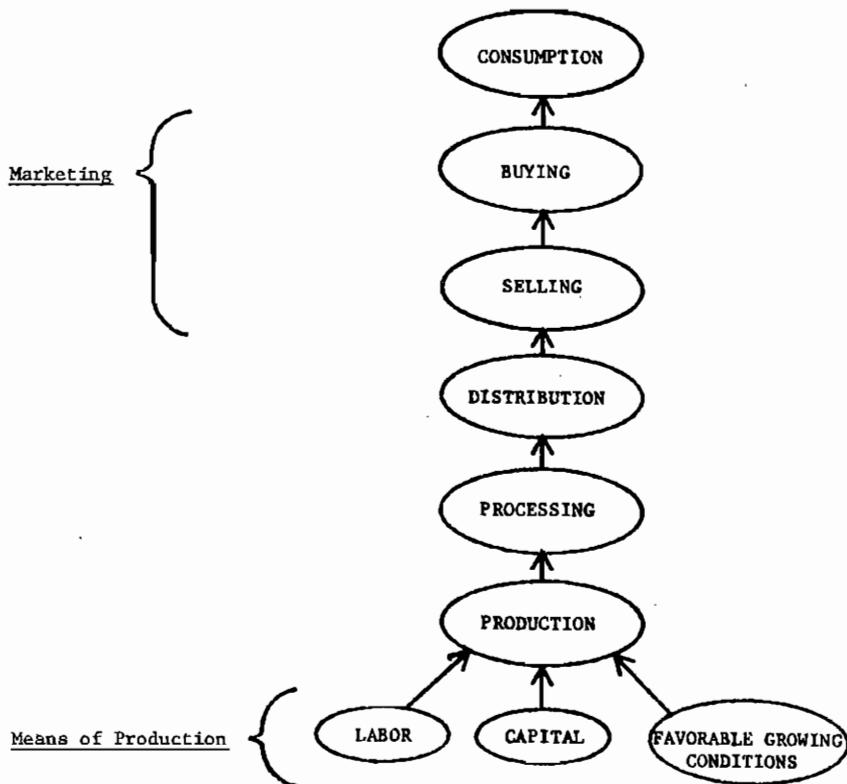


Figure 1. Some Components of the Food System

## 2. *Structural Problems in North America*

Structural problems in North America include deterioration and loss of agricultural land, outpricing of foods, and lack of proper distribution of donated wheat.

### a. *Deterioration and Loss of Agricultural Land*

Increasingly, agricultural lands in North America are being purchased, not by those primarily interested in farming, but by those seeking capital gains. Such owners, operating under existing tax structures and in the absence of soil conservation regulations, exploit the land for its highest short-term yield at the expense of its long-term agricultural productivity. They eliminate grassy drainage-ways, abandon contour farming, with a view toward more production per unit of effort. And when erosion intensifies, the land becomes suitable only for its owners intent: urban development. Present tax structures, regulations, and economic incentives allow and even encourage this deterioration of farmland.

Present structures also, with a few notable exceptions, fail to channel residential, commercial, and industrial development to nonagricultural land. The result is a continuing and largely unnecessary loss in land suitable for agriculture. The U. S. Soil Conservation Service estimates this loss to be in excess of one million acres per year in the United States alone.

### b. *Outpricing of Foods*

Cereal grains are some of the least expensive foods produced in North America. The farmer knows this all too well. And yet it seems that by the time they reach the kitchen table, they have become very expensive. The present structures of advertising and selling colorfully packaged and highly processed cereal grains to children through television produce such an expensive product that the price we pay for one cereal box is nearly enough to buy a whole bushel of grain. Are cereals being priced beyond the ability of the poor to pay when they could be processed and distributed at a much lower cost?

### c. *Hindrances to the Distribution of Donated Wheat*

This is an international as well as national structural problem. Our illustration here deals with the Canadian Wheat Board, a quasi-governmental organization in Canada, which governs the production and sale of wheat. The Wheat Board, which itself ships grain to poor countries, stood in the way of Christians who were working to get donated grain to hungry people overseas. The Mennonite Central Committee, after arranging for donations of large quantities of wheat, found they were unable to ship the wheat from Ontario to the seaports because the Canadian Wheat Board had jurisdiction over all rail cars. None were available for grain shipment except for the Wheat Board itself. In this case other structures—that of the Mennonite Central Committee, and the Christian Farmers Organization of Ontario—succeeded in changing the Canadian Wheat Board policy so that their shipments could go through.

This is only one example of how our attempts to feed the hungry can get bogged down in red tape.

### 3. *Structural Problems in Low-Income Countries*

To produce food for market one needs the three major means of production. But farmers in the poorer countries have difficulty obtaining these means as agriculture enters the market economy.

#### a. Lack of Credit for Small Farmers

In the low-income countries structures for the provision of capital, such as banks, cooperatives, and governmental agencies, may not exist, making it possible only for those who already have capital to produce for the marketplace. Or, if such structures do exist, they may, as in North America, provide loans only to those farmers who have sufficient collateral. Thus the farmers with larger operations, including more land, more buildings, and more machinery, obtain loans whereas the small farmer does not. This problem has recently been recognized, and the World Bank is taking some initial steps to provide credit for the small farmer.

#### b. Lack of Information and Assistance

Basic to producing crops for market are the knowledge and skill necessary for procurement of credit for selection of crop varieties, for crop management, and for marketing of food products. In some countries University Extension Services have served these needs. But in the low-income countries either these services are not available or they primarily serve large farms that are limited to cash crops for export. Structural change in systems that provide knowledge and develop skills for the smaller farmers is seriously needed. Field workers, such as CRWRC agriculturalists, have recognized the need for these agricultural extension services, as have some international agencies. These agencies are taking some initial steps to solve this problem.

#### c. Corporate Farms

Tight credit for the small farmer in the low-income countries often leads to the formation of large corporate farms. Such farms develop sufficient collateral for substantial loans and thus frequently prosper. But with increased size and sophistication of operations comes the recognition that more money can be made on cash crops for export to the richer nations than on food crops for the local poor people. Thus the large farms continue to expand and convert land into producing crops for export. This lessens the local food production base. To make matters more complicated for the local poor, large farms frequently mechanize their operations, causing increased unemployment and migration into already overcrowded cities. Ironically, the national government often welcomes such growth in export crop production since export taxes often provide a major part of their operating revenues.

#### d. Low Wages

One of two items is essential in obtaining needed food: the money to purchase it or the land to raise it. Money becomes

available through employment, but employment in the low-income countries is largely restricted to agriculture. And although many employers maintain that wages paid are fair by local standards, they do not even begin to compare with what we in North America consider to be minimal. More seriously, wages that are reasonable by local standards sometimes do not even buy enough food to feed a family. Mooneyham illustrates the low wage situation for Juan Diaz, a coffee worker in El Salvador. Here is his story:

[Juan] and three of his five daughters spend long, hard days in the coffee fields of Montenegro. On a good day, Juan picks enough coffee to earn \$1.44; his daughters make a total of \$3.35. With \$1.24 of these wages, Juan and his wife, Paula, are able to feed their family for one day. In bad times, Juan and his daughters make as little as \$.56 a day—less than half the money they need just to eat.

At the end of the six-week coffee season, Juan does odd jobs around the hacienda—provided there is work to be done. He can earn about \$.90 there for an eight-hour day. Paula de Diaz supplements her husband's earnings by working in the market. When people have enough money to purchase the tomatoes, cabbages and other home-grown vegetables she sells, Paula can make about \$.40 a day.

The hacienda provides a simple dwelling for the Diaz family, but no modern facilities. Candles are used for light, water has to be hauled from a well and furnishings consist of little more than a table and chairs. Aside from a dress and shoes for each of the girls during the coffee season, the family has not been able to buy much else in the last five years. Whatever money doesn't go for food is spent for visits to the health clinic (\$.40 each time), the high interest on bills at the company store, expenses for the children in school, and for the burial of Juan's father, who died last year.

"You know, I look forward to a better life for my children," Juan says. "I dream that if it is possible—if I can possibly afford it—my children will not follow in my footsteps, that they will break out of this terrible way of life. But the money problems we face every day blot out those dreams. I feel bad, nervous, I don't sleep nights worrying about how I'll get something for them to eat. I think and think but don't find any answers. I work hard; my wife and daughters do, too. We all do. But still we suffer. Why?"<sup>3</sup>

#### e . Land Tenure Systems

As we already have observed, a person needs either land or money to gain access to food. This raises the question, if wages are so poor, why not raise your own food? Sometimes this happens and leads to subsistence agriculture. But in many areas of the low-income world, land simply is not available because land ownership patterns have kept land in the hands of an upper class. Or, in more modern times, corporate farming operations own all the land available for cultivation. Throughout past decades land reform programs have been implemented in many areas of the world with varying degrees of success. For further information on this topic, refer to the publications of the Land Tenure Center, of which the anthology by Frykenberg is an example.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup>W. Stanley Mooneyham, *What Do You Say to a Hungry World?*, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1975, pp. 116, 117.

<sup>4</sup>Robert E. Frykenberg, ed., *Land Tenure and Peasants in South Asia: An Anthology of Recent Research*, Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisc., 1976.

#### f. Disincentives for Food Production

Clearly, as Figure 1 suggests, the means of production (labor, capital, and favorable growing conditions) must be met. But of equal importance is the *incentive* to produce. Without this, even farmers who have the means will not produce. And, in a market economy, this incentive is largely economic. If there is little or no likelihood that farming will pay for the costs of production and provide at least a narrow margin of profit, there is no reason to even make the attempt to produce food for the market.

At this point structures again enter the picture. Governments of the poorer nations must deal not only with the problem of production by the local farmer, but also with the very immediate problem of providing its people with affordable food. If food prices exceed affordable levels, the government must do one of two things to maintain stability: raise incomes or hold food prices down. For obvious practical reasons they often do the latter by establishing price controls. But while holding food prices down provides affordable food for the poor, it also takes away the local farmers' incentive to produce food. Due to the conflict between providing incentives to produce and achieving other national goals, such as maintaining political stability, most developing countries have one or more disincentives to agricultural production by their own farmers. Figure 2 lists disincentives as categorized by the U. S. General Accounting Office. The United States Department of Agriculture has also exhaustively analyzed these disincentives nation by nation.<sup>5</sup>

1. *Low producer prices* discourage farmers from using more productive methods or otherwise expanding production.
2. *Export taxes* restrict production for export.
3. *Monetary and trade policies* make food imports attractive and discriminate against food and agricultural exports.
4. *Restrictions on moving food* from surplus to deficit areas discourage increased production in the producing areas.
5. *Institutional credit* generally is not available to small farmers, producers for export are favored over producers for domestic consumption, and problems in obtaining institutional credit force farmers to use more expensive forms of credit.
6. *Extension services* are generally inadequate, do not reach small farmers, and are applied to export crops rather than domestic consumption crops.
7. *Extreme disparities in farm sizes and forms of land tenure* deter increased production.

#### Figure 2. *Disincentives to Agricultural Production in Developing Countries*

(Publ. No. ID-76-2)

U. S. General Accounting Office, 1975.

<sup>5</sup>United States Department of Agriculture, *Agricultural Production in Developing Countries: A Policy Survey*, U.S.D.A. Foreign Agriculture Supplement, March, 1975.

#### 4. Structural Problems at the International Level

Structures affecting the food system at the international level are determined largely by 1) national governments in their international relations, and 2) transnational corporations whose operations are conducted in two or more nation-states. These structures involve trade, tariffs, and various aid programs. Although most of the problems of structures at the international level are recent, some are rooted deep in the past.

##### a. Colonialism and Its Continuing Effects

Many low-income countries were for a time colonies of Western nations. As colonies they had their economies and agriculture reshaped to serve not the local needs for food, but rather the colonial interest in cash crops, such as tea, coffee, and spices. Although no longer political colonies, many such nations have not been able to restructure themselves adequately to produce needed food for local use. Land ownership patterns from colonial days persist, and knowledge of methods for growing simple food crops has been lost or severely altered. And reestablishment of precolonial land tenure patterns and regaining of the lost arts of local food production may be difficult or impossible without outside help. Economic and social structures imposed upon colonies by Western colonial powers were not always consistent with the professed Christian beliefs of those powers. And, while the church did not explicitly endorse colonialism, it often tacitly approved. What the church once condoned emerges today in the form of hungry people often inequitably treated by their own governments and separated by a lapse of a century or more in the generation-to-generation transfer of the know-how of local food production. Thus the results of past structures remain with us today, and present the church with an opportunity for an appropriate and caring response.

##### b. North American Food Trade and Aid

The major agricultural products in international trade are cereal grains, due apparently to their long-term storage and ideal transfer properties. And North America is their major exporter. This continent's role is possible because of its unusually favorable climatic and soil conditions as well as the conscientious efforts of the Canadian Wheat Board and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It appears that the United States and Canada will continue to have major roles in the world grain trade.

But Canadian and United States policies do not seem to reflect the need of low-income countries to produce their own basic food requirements. Various governmental agencies of both countries have often failed to recognize how their policies contribute to the encouragement and perpetuation of the disincentives to local agricultural production enumerated by the U. S. Government Accounting Office (Figure 2).

Stated briefly, current aid and trade programs often provide governments of poorer countries with cheap food during periods of *surplus production*. In the past, for example, in order to keep a market for United States farm products, the United States government has subsidized grain sales abroad at a loss when world sup-

plies were high and prices low. This cheap food, in turn, often has made it unprofitable for farmers in poor countries to produce food for local consumption and encourages them to stop farming food crops altogether. To make matters worse, the United States has also reduced the amount of food and subsidized sales of food when world supplies were low and prices high thus compelling these low-income nations to purchase grain in the world market when prices are highest.

Such programs, which serve to create markets for North American grain, are no doubt in the best short-term economic interest of Canada and the United States. But creating such markets is far too shortsighted a goal and one that is detrimental to the food production and financial status of poorer countries.

This is not to say, of course, that Canada and the United States cannot play an important role in alleviating hunger. During years of surplus production we promote and contribute toward buffer stocks of grains to be used during lean years. While we fall far short of being able to supply all the food needs of the world, we can use our remarkably favored conditions of good soil and stable climate to ease nations over periods of food shortage.

#### c. Transnational Corporations

Of increasing importance and concern in the international food trade are the transnational corporations (TNC's)—firms which have operations in two or more countries. The increasing concern about the role of TNC's in the production and distribution of food derives from a difficult structural problem. It is a problem that Kobrin (1977) calls a "fundamental asymmetry" between these corporations and the governments whose policies control their behavior.<sup>6</sup> Transnational corporations typically have a number of subsidiaries in various countries throughout the world, each of which is incorporated under the rules and regulations of the country in which it is based. Thus, within a given nation, a subsidiary looks very much like any other corporation at the national level. It frequently employs nationals in the day-to-day operations of its business and abides by the rules of the nation-state in which it is located.

The management of the TNC, however, is located elsewhere and consists of citizens of some developed country, such as the United States, Great Britain, the Netherlands, or France. Management decisions in the TNC's are made on the basis of the optimization of, not the subsidiary's performance, but the corporation as a whole. In other words, decisions on the use of labor, the investment of capital, and the allocation of resources are made so as to optimize the output of the corporation on a global scale.

<sup>6</sup>S. Kobrin, "National, International, or Supranational Control of Transnational Corporations," Paper presented at the 11th Annual Conference on United Nations Affairs, Central Michigan University, December 1, 1977.

Consistency of global objectives with national objectives rarely occurs. Each nation-state, of course, prides itself on establishing its own national goals for its government, its land, and its people. Restrictions on corporations located within its territorial boundaries, of course, apply equally to national corporations and the subsidiaries of transnational corporations. However, the effects of such regulations can be dramatically different on the subsidiary in contrast with their effects on the national corporation. The transnational subsidiary can compensate for problems generated by local national policy in a number of ways.

For example, suppose a nation-state increases interest rates on capital. This increase may deter the national corporations from investing capital, whereas it need not deter the subsidiary of a transnational corporation, which can receive capital from its parent company at going global interest rates, thereby achieving a competitive advantage over the local corporation. In the pricing of items produced by subsidiaries and sold to other subsidiaries within the same corporation, transnational corporations can avoid some of the tax burden that they would have to meet if they were only national in scope. For example, a TNC producing tractor engines in one of its subsidiaries might find that it is to its advantage to underprice that engine when selling it to another subsidiary in another nation-state, since by doing so it would avoid a major part of the import taxes in that nation-state. In addition, it might then show little or no profit in the production of that engine and thus avoid paying taxes on profits in the nation-state where it is produced.

We are not saying that transnational corporations are any more wicked than national ones. But laws or codes at the national level control national corporations to the benefit of society, whereas no such laws or codes exist at the international level. The problem of the asymmetry between TNC's and nation-states can only be met by cooperation among the nation-states of the world in developing an international code for the conduct of TNC's. Such cooperation, such as that among members of the Organization of American States (OAS), has been initiated, and some progress is being made in bringing TNC policy more in accord with the welfare of nation-states. Also, the recently formed U. N. Center on TNC's is formulating such a code and to date has achieved preliminary agreement on at least the major components of this code. It appears a real possibility that such a code will become a reality in the near future. Its effectiveness in providing a base for the development of law governing TNC's in the various nation-states remains to be seen.

The power of TNC's in the world economic system is tremendous. Many TNC's have at their command more finances than most of the developing nations, as is suggested by the size of their annual sales. The ultimate goal of these corporations is the optimization of their own performance, usually expressed in terms of maximization of profits. They find it desirable and even necessary to control their pricing and marketing to take advantage of tax

laws. Not to do so may be fatal to a corporation, since that would make it less competitive with other corporations. And, since subsidiaries of TNC's are not set up in foreign countries for the purposes of philanthropy or for improving social welfare, there is no reason to expect that, without controls formulated by an international code or some other means, the behavior of these corporations will be directed to the benefit of the respective nation-states in which they are located.

Instead, there is good reason to fear a resurrection of the injustices that were prevalent in past colonial times. Barnett and Muller (1974) raised their concern about the rise of a neocolonialism, in which the TNC's play the role of the ruling country. They argue that one consequence of the operation of TNC's in poor countries is that the technology, finance capital, and the control of marketing and dissemination of ideas tend to pass largely into foreign control.<sup>7</sup> And the neocolonial TNC's have and may exercise the power to keep wages low. Since one incentive for investing in a poor country is low wages it is, of course, in their interest to keep those wages low.

Many TNC executives may find themselves caught in a situation in which they cannot, for reasons of corporate survival in the midst of less-enlightened competitors, act on their own beliefs in justice. These TNC executives might well support a fair code of conduct—one which would allow them to deal more justly with the people and nations they affect—if they weren't concerned that doing so would place them at a competitive disadvantage. And they might also welcome pressures brought to bear on TNC's generally by Christian individuals and organizations concerned with justice and hunger.

### III. THE CHRISTIAN RESPONSE

#### A. *The Temptation to Avoid the Issue*

When the subject of change in social systems is introduced, we are strongly tempted to ignore the issue. Some of the reasons are quite personal. The issue is so awesome that we feel like throwing our hands up in despair. Furthermore, as members of the rich, Western industrialized nations, some of us are the beneficiaries of some of the present structures, and it is not pleasant to think about surrendering our benefits. We are also geared to a certain type of result. When we do help people in the Third World, we like that help to take the shape of visible programs with immediate results. The thought of a long, wearisome struggle against entrenched powers and systems is much less exciting.

Christian agencies working in the Third World also have reasons for avoiding the issue of change in systems and structures. To raise money for the feeding of a hungry child, the digging of a well in a remote Indian village, or the distribution of Bibles is comparatively easy. Such projects have a lot of appeal. But the raising of money to help people develop

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<sup>7</sup>Richard J. Barnett and Ronald E. Muller, *Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1974.

systems that are filled with God's love and justice, or change existing systems, is a nightmare. Therefore, agencies—which cannot function without a direct supporting community—develop an inbuilt tendency to avoid the issue.

In the institutional church the reaction is much the same. Many people's instinctive response is that the church has no business addressing itself to this issue and that it should limit itself to the proclamation of "the simple gospel" and to the administration of mercy. Furthermore, the church will be deeply impressed by feelings of incompetence in this area.

Because the temptation to avoid the issue of structural change is very strong indeed, we need to ask, personally and communally, what the consequences would be if we yielded to this temptation. The consequences can be simply stated. First, we would then decide to tolerate systems in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. For the period 1965-74, for 49 low-income countries (all with a per capita GNP below \$300 and consisting of  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the world's population), the average growth rate in GNP per capita was 1.7 per cent, or about \$2.50 per year, while for 37 high-income countries (all with per capita GNP above \$2,000), it was 4 per cent, or about \$150 per year.<sup>8</sup>

If Christians refuse to consider change in systems, the kind of structures they decide to tolerate may become increasingly unjust.

Secondly, by avoiding the issue of structural change, Christians would consign themselves forever to fighting the symptoms instead of getting at the disease itself. We all accept the wisdom of the Chinese proverb, "Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." But systems in the Third World often fail to give the poor access to the resources. These systems need to be changed before people can provide food for themselves. While the church is unable to feed all the hungry masses of the world, it can certainly call for changes in systems that may significantly improve the lot of millions.

A third, even more significant, consequence of the church's decision about to address itself to changes in systems is that it then would be guilty of proclaiming a truncated gospel. The Bible preaches liberation from sin through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He has come to deliver from sin in its every configuration. That includes sin that tears man loose from fellowship with God and that destroys love and justice between people. A message that fails to proclaim this radical liberation and to claim all of human life, including societal systems, for the service of God and man, greatly limits the stature of the One celebrated as the Deliverer in the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46-55).

A fourth and final consequence should be mentioned. People in the Third World learn more every day about how people in the First and Second Worlds live. The more they hear, the more they begin to sense the inequality in human relationships and the more they begin to demand justice. Marxism, which is always alert to inject its ideas where social problems present themselves, knows how to appeal to the poor, hungry, and oppressed. If Christians do not address themselves to evil structures

<sup>8</sup>John Sewell et al., *The United States and World Development, Agenda 1977*, Praeger Publishers, New York, 1977, pp. 160-168.

and do not work with vigor at promoting wholesome ones, they place the Christian mission in the world at a severe disadvantage over against the gospel of Marxism.

Consequences like these indicate that the church cannot afford to ignore the issue of change in social structures and systems.

### B. *Biblical Criteria for Evaluating Structures.*

The entrance of sin into the world has damaged beyond measure the harmony with which God had blessed his creation. For sin is more than personal; it comes to awesome expression in systems and structures. The fall into sin caused people to reject the Creator and to adopt an idol as the final religious authority in their life. Through the fall people became less sensitive to God's design for his creation, as is seen today in their perception of marriage and of the sanctity of human life. The fall has robbed people of the desire to let all their actions, including their developing of systems, be motivated by God's love command. Mistrust and selfishness, anxiety and greed now have a major influence on the shaping of social systems. Lamech's defiant boast, based on the system of naked power, is a telling example (Genesis 4:23, 24).

Since systems and structures can be profoundly influenced by sin, we cannot blindly accept or continue them. Rather, we must test them for good or evil. A basic question we must ask of each structure is whether it allows love for God and one's neighbor to come to open expression. When the structure hinders or forbids it, it is imperfect or evil.

Do the Scriptures give specific criteria by which to evaluate structures? A look at a few structures in the social-economic life of Israel provides the answer. To recognize the true intent of these structures, however, and to sense their liberating power, they must be seen in the larger biblical setting of God's ushering in the kingdom of love and righteousness. This larger context is well reflected in a significant study by John H. Stek. By way of summary he writes,

In the Old Testament, salvation has to do with the redemption of man and the earth from the guilt, bondage, alienation, defilement and disorder that issue from man's rebellion and sin. It is God's act whereby he reconciles man with himself and restores the creation to its pristine goodness. He covers man's guilt; he renews man as image-bearer; he breaks every bondage that holds men in thrall, thus freeing man once more to be his servant; he heals all alienation so that man's happy relationship with God, with man and with the creation is restored; he cleanses the earth of all defilement; and he puts an end to all disorder by renewing his perfect *shalom*. Although God's act, it is not done in a moment but is worked out in history. It spans the whole course of history; as the vital nerve of history it gives history its inner dynamic, coherence and meaning. And God takes man up into this mission as his servant and co-worker.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>John H. Stek, "Salvation, Justice and Liberation in the Old Testament," *Calvin Theological Journal*, Vol. 13, No. 2, November, 1978, pp. 133-165.

This summary accurately reflects the context for God's demanding the formation of structures in Israel that would be a great blessing to the poor and hungry. The laws for gleaning, for interest-free loans, and for the family's access to the land are good illustrations. The law of gleaning set aside for the poor the leftovers in the grainfields as well as the second pickings of fruit-bearing trees and plants (Leviticus 19:9, 10), thereby implying that ownership of crops was not absolute or total. Harvesting was by divine law so structured as to provide food for the poor through only their own effort. A portion was there for them to gather.

Furthermore, God wanted Israel's financial system structured so that the needy had access to interest-free loans (Exodus 22:25-27). If someone without the basic necessities of life was forced to borrow money at interest—and gouging the poor is not new under the sun—his situation went from bad to impossible. But the Lord of grace commands his people to be generous and to make loans available that will enable the poor both to satisfy their basic needs and to escape poverty. Should the poor man be unable to pay off his debt, it was to be canceled on the sabbath year (Deuteronomy 15:1-11). Thus God's law called for a system that, instead of taking advantage of the poor, helped him out of his distress.

God's law providing for the family's access to the land was remarkable. It was designed to prevent any segment of the people from becoming permanently dispossessed. When Israel entered Canaan, the Lord gave each family a piece of the land as its inheritance. That land represented both a God-given place to live and a livelihood. The only sale of the land permitted was actually a sale of the lease of the land for a number of years. The land could be redeemed at any time. If it was not redeemed, then in the year of jubilee it had to be returned to the family without cost (Leviticus 25). This law, when obeyed, created a structure that made provision for two basic needs: security for the family and a periodic opportunity to make a new, debt-free beginning. At the same time, it restrained the accumulation of property in the hands of a few, with all the potential for evil which results from a radically uneven distribution of wealth. Thus the structure was clearly designed to assist the poor and to open up life again for them when they had fallen upon hard times.

Such social-economic systems point out clearly the manner and spirit in which God wants people to deal with each other. To quote Stek again,

As regards man's relationship to his fellowman his vocation is justice... And justice is man's right dealing with his neighbor—image-bearer with image-bearer, servant of God with servant of God, one assigned dominion with one assigned dominion, one having a vocation with one having a vocation, one given a place in the earth with one given a place in the earth, one appointed provisions from the earth with one appointed provisions from the earth, one created for blessing with one created for blessing, one whose divinely intended destiny is life with one whose divinely intended destiny is life. This, according to the Old Testament, is the "justice" of the kingdom of God.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 165, 165.

The New Testament builds upon and fulfills the Old. Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfill them. In him all God's promises are "yea and amen." As the earlier report made clear in Chapter 4 "The Care for the Hungry in the New Testament" (pp. 37-45), there is a basic unity in God's work under the old and new covenants. A difference, however, is that the New Testament contains no specific laws about the harvest, interest rates, return of ancestral property, and the like. The absence of such social-economic regulations does not mean that they are considered unimportant. But after Pentecost the church became a body of many peoples living in many different and changing cultures. Many Christians became urbanized and dispersed, living often as a minority in a hostile land. When Christ blessed his people with the gift of the Holy Spirit, He enabled them to take God's concern for love and justice and apply them to the great variety of situations in which they lived.

The New Testament therefore does not give detailed regulations for a multitude of different cultures, but shows how God's spirit-filled people developed new institutions embodying love and justice in their new fellowship and meeting the needs of the less fortunate. The New Testament also reveals how the grace of God in Christ laid a new foundation for the institution of marriage (Ephesians 5) and injected into the master/slave relation the ideas of mutual subordination to Christ, which in time would destroy the institution of slavery itself.

In the light of such data from the Bible, the Task Force concludes that criteria for evaluating systems in society should follow these principles:

1. All people should be able to obtain the basic necessities of life.
2. All people who have sunk to the level of poverty are to be helped not only with the basic necessities of life, but also with opportunity to make a new beginning.
3. All people should have sufficient freedom to exercise the stewardship that God has assigned to man (Genesis 1, Psalm 8).
4. All people are entitled to a fair and equitable utilization of the world's resources.

The Task Force submits that all valid political, economic, and social systems ought to allow these principles to function.

Specific criteria for evaluating systems should include these three: 1) stewardship, 2) righteousness, and 3) respect. These three are not the only criteria that can be applied. Furthermore, they overlap. But they do call attention to three aspects that should characterize the functioning of every system.

*Stewardship.* The concept of stewardship extends beyond managing the money one has earned. All people are stewards of human life and talents, of time, and of the earth's resources. Focusing on these resources, therefore, we must ask the following questions about any given system:

Does the system promote the proper use of human resources? Or does it foster employment that is degrading to people? Does it foster unemployment? Does such technological development occur at the expense of the well-being and needs of human beings?

Does the system express respect for God's creation and its

wholeness? Does it care for the earth's resources? Does it preserve the earth's fruit-bearing potential for present *and* future generations? Or does it consume and waste resources and endanger the prospects of a future generation for the sake of material abundance today?

In the use of resources, human and other, what priorities does the system have? Does it give priority to those things that people need to fulfill their calling before God as stewards? Or is the focus on producing and satisfying artificially-created needs? Stewardship is an important criterion in any age. But with 500 million starving people on this globe, this criterion needs to be applied with the greatest urgency.

*Righteousness.* People's relationships to each other should be characterized by righteousness. Righteousness is more than observing the letter of an abstract law. It is people's dealing with each other according to God's commandment of selfless love. Systems made by people and run by people also deal with people. Focusing on the "rightness" and "wrongness" of these dealings, we should ask the following questions of a given system:

Does the system recognize the right of people to freedom, to work, and to the basic necessities of life? Or does it discriminate against certain ethnic or racial groups or against the poor, the young, the female, or the old?

Does the system give a person, a community, or a nation, when they have fallen on hard times, the opportunity to make a new beginning? Or does it allow the stronger party to perpetuate the distress and dependence of the weaker party? For example, are the present trade relationships between the rich and the poor countries such that the poor will be helped truly to develop, or are they geared to add to the wealth of the rich?

God's demand for righteousness, which includes liberation for the oppressed and disadvantaged, must be applied to all systems today. Without it, the hungry world will *stay* hungry.

*Respect.* This criterion focuses on the quality of the treatment of people. Decisive here is that all people are image-bearers of God. Since people are God's creatures and bear his image, they are full members of the human family and should be treated with respect. They are people with responsibility and should be accorded the opportunity to exercise that responsibility. Focusing on respect, we should ask the following questions about a given system:

Does the system convey respect for people as God's image-bearers? Does it communicate due respect for the culture they have formed? Does it recognize the right of people to participate in decisions that have a direct bearing on their life now and in the future? Or does the system make some people the dumb objects of unilateral actions taken by others? Does it encourage one culture to dominate another?

Does the system promote a spirit of mutual dependence and cooperation between people? Or does it promote a spirit of exclusivism and domination by one group or nation?

The world, including our society is torn by deep divisions, estrangement, pride, disrespect, and by the anger of people who are treated as inferior, weak, or unnecessary. Social, economic, and political systems have

made an enormous contribution to this tragedy. If healing is to occur—and that includes restoring the poor and hungry to a respectable place in the human family—systems will have to treat people as image-bearers of God.

### C. *Critique of the Gospel of Wealth*

Earlier in this report we identified some of the key structures that shape or have shaped the world. Now we will evaluate these structures based on the criteria that we discovered in God's Word: stewardship, righteousness, and respect.

Our focus will be on North American structures, and more particularly, on what needs to be changed in these structures. North American structures are the ones most relevant to the majority of our readers and it is these structures that our readers will be in a position to change. We are also trying to avoid the temptation to ignore the beam in our own eye while attempting to pluck the mote out of our brother's or sister's.

As soon as we focus on what is undesirable in North American structures, we risk being misinterpreted. Therefore, we will begin by making clear what we are *not* saying. We are *not* saying that Marxism is the solution to world hunger. Marxism, with its atheistic, materialistic philosophy and its suppression of individual rights and initiative is exactly what the hungry do not need. Nor are we saying that structures in the poor countries do not need reform. To the contrary, structures in the poor countries are sometimes characterized by corruption, greed, elitism, or apathy, and Christians in those countries must be as diligent in applying the criteria of God's Word to those structures as we must be in applying it to ours. Finally, we are *not* saying that North American structures are all bad. As matter of fact, there is much good in North American structures, especially in so far as they promote individual initiative coupled with responsibility.

Evaluation of what is undesirable in our structure must begin with a biblically-based critique of the "Gospel of Wealth," a creed that pervades North America. We call this creed the Gospel of Wealth because it is indeed a "gospel" and because that was the name Andrew Carnegie gave in his classic justification of it. The creed runs something like this: "When buying and selling one must seek only one's own self-interest. Maximization of profit is the name of the game. From the interaction of competing individuals, all seeking their own self-interest, the common good will emerge and the most efficient use will be made of goods and resources. On the national level, the pursuit of economic growth will at times mean that social and environmental goals must be sacrificed. The Golden Rule makes good sense in one's private life, but in business one must be practical."

What is wrong with the Gospel of Wealth from the perspective of the biblical criteria of stewardship, righteousness, and respect? Several things. First, this type of creed denies that our economic decisions are spiritual choices that we make in response to the Creator God. Business is seen as a neutral, amoral area of life. If the common good naturally emerges from the interaction of our competing self-interest (what Adam Smith called "the invisible hand"), then we need only follow the inclina-

tions of the old man of sin in the economic area of life. Economic life becomes a technical matter of finding the most practical and efficient method of maximizing profit, rather than a spiritual response to God and neighbor. There is no room for talk of obedience or disobedience, sin and redemption.

Some Christians profess a variation of this creed. They regard the business world as essentially amoral, except that one must be fair and honest, yet they take quite seriously the stewardship command as it applies to wealth once it is accumulated. But the Bible doesn't limit the stewardship command to wealth after it has been gained. Biblical stewardship also speaks to the way in which wealth is acquired: "Look! The wages you failed to pay the workmen who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty" (James 5:4, NIV). Likewise, the criteria of righteousness cannot be limited to being "fair and honest," at least in the sense in which we normally use these words. Biblical righteousness includes sharing property and possessions with the poor and disadvantaged so that they too can experience life as God intended it. Biblical righteousness is taking positive steps to see that the rights of the poor are recognized.

A second problem with the Gospel of Wealth is that it gives the illusion that more is always or generally better. In the service of maximization of profit or economic growth, material values often come to take precedence over other ones. Thus, in the name of maximization of profit, sugar-coated breakfast cereal is peddled to North American toddlers, and caramel-colored sugar water is peddled to poor so that they can join the "Now Generation." Rather than economic growth and profit being restricted to the legitimate purpose they serve as means to a larger end, they become ends in themselves. Rather than serving the development of people as image-bearers of God, economic growth reduces them to consumers of material goods. Profit, rather than being an instrument in service of God and neighbor, becomes a false god for whose sake people are induced to satisfy artificial needs at the expense of real ones.

A third problem with the Gospel of Wealth is that it replaces service to neighbor with competition against neighbor. While competition may, within limits, serve a useful purpose between equals, between unequals unrestrained competition can only lead to injustice. An ethic of competition reserves no place for the special rights of the poor. When the poor are forced to compete with the rich, most often the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. The increasing concentrations of wealth and power in the hand of the rich, and the growing dependence of the poor on their charity denies the poor their share of God's creation. It also denies the poor freedom to develop as responsible image-bearers of God, exercising stewardship in their own right and participating in decisions which will affect their lives.

Andrew Carnegie gave the classic justification of the Gospel of Wealth in his essay by that title:

The price which society pays for the law of competition, like the price it pays for cheap comforts and luxuries, is also great; but the advantages of this law are also greater still than its cost—for it is to this law

that we owe our wonderful material development, which brings improved conditions in its train. But, whether the law be benign or not, we must say of it as we say of the change in the conditions of men to which we have referred: It is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found; and while the law may be sometimes hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department.<sup>11</sup>

Compare the gospel according to Carnegie with the gospel according to our Lord Jesus Christ. Is competition a law which, like it or not, we must observe or is it a human response to the commands of our God? Does Carnegie have any Good News about a God that breaks through the darkness of human selfishness to liberate us once again to live in service to God and neighbor? Does God's blessing follow in the "train" of those who obey the law of competition or does it fall on those who practice justice toward the poor and hungry? And what about the "survival of the fittest?" How does that stack up against the biblical injunction to show deference to the "fatherless, widow, and orphan?" Have we so ardently opposed evolution in the biological realm, only to have it catch us through the back door in the social and economic realms?

A final shortcoming of the Gospel of Wealth is that it does not point to the glory of God, service of neighbor, or care of creation as essential to the proper functioning of economic life. Consider the use of *efficient* and *practical*. The criteria of efficiency is that which will earn a profit. But in computing the bottom line, the only elements that are factored into "income" and "costs" are those to which a dollar figure can be attached. Profit is market profit, just as income and costs are market costs. But many of the resources over which God has given us stewardship do not have a market value, such as pure water or clean air. Is a business enterprise efficient if it makes a handsome profit, but future generations must spend millions to clean the air and water? And what about the health costs? Is it efficient to use a scarce natural resource to meet artificial needs because there is great economic profit in manufacturing such goods? Or is a business efficient when it relocates in Taiwan to take advantage of cheap labor, but leaves displaced workers and broken homes in its wake in North America? Likewise, our definition of *practical* is too narrow. Practical becomes what is "good business." But what about practicality as defined by the Last Judgment described in Matthew 25? Isn't what is really practical only that which glorifies God and serves our neighbor?

When the purpose of a business enterprise is narrowly circumscribed as the maximization of profit, the environment and other people can easily become mere means toward that end rather than objects of stewardly care and service. The rental property becomes an investment rather than the home of the tenant family. The person in the supermarket is a consumer rather than a parent providing for the needs of his or her family. The fruitbearing potential of the land is exploited for maximum

<sup>11</sup> Andrew Carnegie, "The Gospel of Wealth," The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962.

profit of its present owner rather than conserved for future generations.

We have been harsh in our critique of the Gospel of Wealth because we are convinced it is a false gospel. But the Gospel of Wealth is not the only influence on North American structures. There are also biblical influences. One need only think of the opportunity for participation and individual responsibility that have, traditionally at least, characterized North American structures as opposed to those in Marxist countries; or of the growing concern for the environment on the part of both government and business; or of the many ways through which social security is provided for the elderly and other disadvantaged. Obviously, there is much for which we can be grateful.

We must point out that, in our consideration of North American structures, we are not thinking of the structures of even a few years ago. The "ma and pa" store and the small family farm are no longer typical. They have been replaced by agribusiness and the global supermarket. While big is not always bad and may sometimes be good, the potential for exploitative structures based on a Gospel of Wealth has become much greater now.

Consider the small Midwestern town of a decade or two ago. Many structural restraints prevented one from practicing the Gospel of Wealth. For one thing, buyers and sellers were relatives, friends, members of the same church, or, at the minimum, acquaintances. It is quite natural that business people would consider the interests of such neighbors in any business dealings; the reputation of one who considered only his or her own self-interest would spread rapidly. In addition to the social restraints on self-interest, there are economic restraints. When bargaining partners are equal, as they frequently are in small towns, each has an effective means of making sure the other takes his or her interests into account—simply by exercising his or her power to buy or not to buy, or to sell or not to sell. Finally, harm to the environment is probably much less in a small town, if not because of greater concern, then merely because of the smaller potential for damage when operations are on a smaller scale.

Now consider the global supermarket. Many of the social restraints have disappeared. More often than not the sellers are anonymous members of some large corporation who have never had personal contact with those who are buying from them. Many of the economic restraints have also vanished. Bargaining is often between unequals and those who are poor; because bargaining power is based on cash, they lack any effective means through which they can bring their legitimate demands to bear on the powerful. In addition, the potential for harm to the environment has increased greatly because large-scale technologies are utilized whose consequences might only be discovered generations into the future. In the global supermarket, it is not just the poor, but often the middle-class, who feel they are denied opportunity to exercise meaningful stewardship and to participate in decisions which will affect their lives. When economic life is dominated by powerful transnational corporations, along with their counterparts of big government and big labor, Christians must double their vigilance against exploitative structures based on a Gospel of Wealth.

When the Gospel of Wealth is allowed to shape our economic struc-

tures, bad structures result. Such structures make it easy for us to seek only our own self-interest and to ignore the rights of the poor. Conversely, such structures make the poor fatalistic about their lot in life so that they seem to us to be lazy and not to care. It is because we of all people recognize the power of evil and sin in human life that we should be so thankful for the good that does exist in our structures and so zealous about rooting out the bad.

#### *D. Evaluation of Our Involvement in Structures*

We are stewards of the world's resources for the hungry. However, we exercise very little of that stewardship as isolated individuals. Rather, we work through the different institutions and structures of which we are members.

When the Word of God comes to us and directs us to be stewards of the earth's resources for the poor and hungry, it is not telling us something abstract. It is a Word for us to obey in each of the institutions or structures of which we are a part. It is a call for us to use whatever authority we may possess within that structure to witness by word and deed to Christ's lordship over all of life. It is a call for us to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth within that structure.

The ministry to which we are called in the institutions of which we are a part is both a word and deed ministry. It is also both an individual and a corporate ministry. Individual Christian ministries within structures are valid and at times the only possible ministry. But there is no substitute for Christians working together over a long period of time. At a very minimum we need to study, reflect, and pray together if we are serious about getting at the spiritual foundations upon which existing structures are based and upon which Christian alternatives can be built. Beyond this point of study and reflection we can both make decisions for individual actions and also work together towards more fundamental changes. The organizations that already exist for communal Christian reflection and action toward structural change—among others, the Inter-faith Center of Corporate Responsibility, the Association for Public Justice, the Committee for Justice and Liberty, Bread for the World, and the Christian Farmer's Organization—are impressive and Christians should become involved in them and support them.

If we are to be responsible in a world of global interdependence, we need to ask hard questions of each of the structures in which we participate and then to devise concrete ministries of word and deed. The following are a few of those questions:

*Family.* How does our family exercise stewardship over its financial resources? Are we open to the rights of the poor and oppressed? What about our stewardship of time and talents? Are we discerning about the values projected by advertising?

*Church.* What stewardship does our local congregation exercise over its budget? What percentage is devoted to missions, both word and deed, and what percentage is spent on our church building? Does our institutional lifestyle witness to Christ's lordship through openness to the poor and through conservation of the earth's resources? Are we addressing those in positions of authority in our community with a witness of word

and deed? Do our preaching and educational ministries confront people with all the claims of the gospel?

*School.* Are students being trained for their stewardship responsibilities in a world of global interdependence? Does our institutional lifestyle witness to Christ's lordship through openness to the poor and conservation of the earth's resources? Are the research capacities of our institutions of higher learning available for the battle against hunger and poverty?

*Business and labor.* Are we wise in the use of creational resources? Are we responsible in the treatment of the environment? Are we careful in the use of technology? Are we frugal in the consumption of energy? Are we vigilant in the disposal of potentially harmful waste materials? Are we fair in the determination of price? Are we honest in the promotion of sales? Are we equitable in the earning of profit?

*Government.* What percentage of our government budget is devoted to helping the poor and hungry? Does the aid we give the poor enable them to develop in a holistic way as image-bearers of God. Does our governmental lifestyle reflect our living in an age of limited resources? How does our government punish doers of economic evil and reward doers of economic good? How well do we do as Christians in the stewardship of our citizenship?

#### *E. The Tenor and Spirit of Christian Response*

Scripture seems to have two contradictory themes with respect to Christian response to evil structures. On the one hand, numerous passages contain prophetic declarations of God's impending judgment on evil structures and upon those who maintain and profit from them. And, on the other hand, many pastoral injunctions tell those who are oppressed to wait patiently on the Lord.

On opposite sides of the coin would seem to be the prophetic denunciations of those who oppress the poor and the Pauline injunction that slaves should obey their masters; Christ's characterization of the religious leaders as "whited sepulchres" and his willing submission to death on the cross; Christ's casting the money-changers out of the temple and his invitation to Zaccheus to be his dinner guest; the admonition to the rich oppressors to weep and wail (James 5:1-6) followed by the exhortation to those who are opposed to wait patiently until the coming of the Lord (James 5:7-11). What should we make of this?

The first set of passages makes it clear that Christians cannot sit passively in the face of evil. God hates all evil, and his judgment is against it. God's people must speak out against evil, and inasmuch as they are in a position to change it, they are responsible for taking action. Implicit in the second set of passages is the assumption that God's people are victims of oppression and not the perpetrators of it. In no place does Scripture condone evil, whether it be personal or corporate.

The positive teaching of the second set of passages is vividly illustrated by the story of David and Saul. Despite much evil having been done in Israel because of Saul's sins, and despite David's knowing that God had chosen him to replace Saul, David spared Saul's life when he had opportunity to kill him. Why? "The Lord will judge between you and me, and

the Lord will exact justice from you in my case" (I Samuel 24:12).

Because God's people know that "though the wrong seems off so strong God is the ruler yet," their perspective on evil in society is radically different from that of the unbeliever. Christians cannot be passive in the face of evil, but because they know that God is in control, the manner in which they go about changing evil structures is vastly different from that of unbelievers.

*First.* Christians do not go about changing structures in a manner that disrespects other people and their offices. They neither use people as the means to achieve the end of social change nor sacrifice people for the goal of some future, more desirable society. Just as the lives of the poor cannot be laid at the altar of an increasing gross national product, neither can the lives of the rich be sacrificed at the altar of revolutionary violence. A "mudslinging" campaign is not justified by getting a Christian into political office. For Christians who would combat structural evil, the means is as significant as the end. Because judgment is of the Lord, Christians need not choose means that violate other people or their offices. The truth must be spoken, but always in love. The Lord desires healing for all those caught in unjust structures, be they victims or oppressors.

*Second.* Christians are neither defenders of the status quo nor revolutionaries. They are not defenders of the status quo because they realize that sin has radically affected all human institutions. But neither are they revolutionaries. Unlike the revolutionary, the Christian does not see the removal of evil structures as the answer to injustice in the world. Christians are rather reformers, reformers who make not merely superficial changes but who go to the spiritual heart of the matter. Christians are reformers like the Apostle Paul, who did not tell slaves to rebel against their masters, but nevertheless lit the torch that would eventually spell the end of slavery when he told Philemon to receive Onesimus as "more than a slave, a beloved brother" (Philemon v. 16).

*Third.* Christians do not fall into either utopian or "doomsday" thinking. While the Kingdom of God is "not yet," there is also a real sense in which it is "already present." In fact, the very reality of the future, full revelation of the Son of Man allows Christians to labor in the present with both hope and realism.

*Fourth.* Christians are supportive of rather than judgmental towards other Christians who are struggling within unjust structures. Appreciating the difficulty faced by those who must work within large, unresponsive systems, but knowing that labor for the Lord is never in vain, Christians are able to encourage brothers and sisters and grow with them in understanding the Lord's will.

*Fifth.* Christians avoid "guilt trips" over what cannot be changed. They realize that God holds each person responsible for the wealth, positions, and power he or she possesses, not that which belongs to others. By responsible stewardship of that which they have been given, be that great or small, Christians are made partners with God himself in the bringing of his kingdom.

#### *F. The Challenge for the Christian Community*

With respect to systems and structures—and they are both

unavoidable and indispensable to human life—the challenge for the Christian community is twofold. First, God calls his people to shape their lives and the systems of their society in harmony with his will. This implies that they face the challenge of developing systems that meet the criteria of stewardship, righteousness, and respect. Secondly, they must measure the systems of our day with a biblical standard. If these are found wanting, they must seek to change and correct them. Just as God found unacceptable the tyrant kings, greedy landowners, and corrupt judges in Old Testament times, so today he disapproves of systems through which people exploit their fellow human beings, misuse the earth's resources, and consign millions to starvation.

Many of God's people today long for systems through which God's liberating love and justice flows, but they despair. They see the twofold challenge as so big an undertaking—since the systems of our day are numerous, complex, and often deeply corrupt—that they resign themselves to doing their Christian best *within* the given systems. The challenge is immense, but that should not lead us to despair. God gives his people hope. We have many resources in his Word and in each other. Significant changes for good usually come about not through the heroic act of one person who impresses millions, but by many small acts done in obedience to God.

Christians may set out to evaluate existing systems and to form wholesome ones in the hope that is based on Christ's resurrection: "For though we live in the world, we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every thought captive to obey Christ. . . ." (II Corinthians 10:3-5). That's what gave the Apostle Paul the courage to tackle the structure of the Roman empire and the spiritual powers that controlled it. For those Christians doing the work of the Lord in the world, the promise holds ". . . in the Lord your labor is not in vain." Though a minority in the world, Christians, in the name of none other than Christ, set out to do battle with the unjust, satanic principalities and powers that often dominate people, for the sake of bringing the liberation of Christ from sin and oppression.

Despair can change to hope also when Christians become aware of the resources Christ has given in his church. We face the challenge as part of a body which has many gifts. In our denomination alone, there are thousands of businessmen and professionals who confess Christ's name, several institutions of higher learning, and a widespread system for elementary and secondary education. There are the local churches preaching the Good News and providing church education for all ages. There are voluntary associations active in various areas of life analyzing both the powers at work and the proper Christian response. The recognition of these resources, and their being put to work together, will surely yield significant results.

The immensity of the task will not discourage us if we but keep in mind that the systems we face today have come into being as the result of many small actions over many decades. No one has either the wisdom or the power to change them overnight. But Bread for the World as a Christian citizens' movement has effectively lobbied for legislation to help the

hungry. The Mennonite Central Committee persuaded the Canadian Wheat Board to ship donated grain. The governments of the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia were persuaded of the justice of public tax support for Christian schools. And, looking back in history, slavery and child labor, once rampant in the Western world, are now largely things of the past. Each change came about by people, often relatively unknown, setting about doing righteousness. When viewing systems that produce and perpetuate world hunger, such action is also what God asks of us. As children of the King and stewards of His creation, we can do no less.

The sending of food begins the process of feeding the hungry, but it is only a beginning. For behind the specter of the starving peoples lie the structures and systems which cause their poverty and hunger. It is on this basic plane that the issue must finally be met in God's name and for his sake. It is for this purpose that we have worked together, and we now call the church officially to join in this godly and pressing task.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the study and analysis presented in this report, the Task Force makes the following recommendations to synod:

##### A. *Preaching*

That synod call upon the ministers and missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church to proclaim God's command to practice stewardship and righteousness in opposition to a secular gospel of wealth.

##### *Grounds:*

1. Prophetic preaching in the areas of stewardship and righteousness is essential to the attack on the root causes of hunger.
2. The ministers and missionaries of the Christian Reformed Church are in effective positions to preach and demonstrate God's command to do justice.
3. This is their solemn obligation before God.

##### B. *Research*

That synod request the educational institutions related to our denomination to research the structural causes of world hunger, and further request Calvin College to coordinate this research and share its findings with the academic and broader Christian community.

##### *Grounds:*

1. The analysis of the complex structural causes of world hunger requires careful and continuing study of complex systems, study which recognizes the inadequacy of piecemeal evaluation and piecemeal responses to problems of justice and world hunger.
2. We cannot simply rely on humanitarian assessments of these causes of hunger but must carefully research the issues in the light of scriptural demands for justice and stewardship.
3. Our institutions have the capability for this important task.

##### C. *Education*

That synod request the educational agencies related to our denomination, such as the colleges, the seminary, the Education Department of the Board of Publications, Christian day schools, and Christian Schools International to provide instruction on the fundamental and far-reaching

influence of structures on the issues of hunger and injustice and to provide ongoing information on what Christians are doing individually and collectively to work for better structures, and further request the CRWRC to coordinate this educational program.

*Grounds:*

1. In order for Christian people to respond to the scriptural demands for justice, they must have information on which to act as they carry out their calling in the world.
2. There will be need to translate and interpret the findings of those Christians and Christian institutions researching the issues of structural causes of world hunger into terms and methods that can be effectively used by Christians as they carry out their calling in the world.
3. The educational agencies related to our denomination and the CRWRC have the capabilities for this important task.

*D. Synodical Action*

That synod encourage the formation of a coalition of Christian agencies, groups, and persons of Reformed persuasion to bring the Word of God to bear on structural problems. The aim of this coalition would be (inter alia) to share information and resources and to coordinate efforts in order to transform societal structures according to the Word of God. Furthermore, that synod designate the CRWRC to convene a meeting of all potential members of such a coalition with the goal of establishing a permanent group (with the clear understanding that it will not be a denominationally funded group).

That synod call upon members of the Christian Reformed Church to be alert to their responsibility to influence public policy and business and political structures as representatives of the King of kings. This includes vigorous support for justice in public policy and concrete opposition to unjust and oppressive structures, as well as instruction and example in the home on these issues.

That synod encourage members of the Christian Reformed Church to form and join organizations whose purpose includes communal Christian action for political or vocational justice.

That synod call upon individual members of the Christian Reformed Church to consider their vocational responsibility as it relates to hunger-causing structural problems, and that it encourage individuals to enter vocations (or use their existing vocations in a fashion) which will enable them to influence the formation of public and corporate policy.

*Grounds:*

1. It is necessary to apply the scriptural demands for justice both to our individual lives and to the structures which man creates to organize his activities and achieve his objectives.
2. Whereas individual action can be effective in applying biblical commands for justice in our individual lives, corporate action is necessary to apply biblical commands for justice to the correction of corporate structures.
3. Many avenues for corporate Christian action are actually or potentially available and should be used in pressing for application of the biblical claims for justice.

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## REPORT 37

## NELAND AVENUE CONSISTORY RE THE VERHEY MATTER

The following is the response of the Consistory of the Neland Avenue Church to the protest of the consistory of the Dutton Church against certain views of Dr. Allen Verhey. Also included is the response of Dr. Verhey to the Dutton protest.

We are sending these documents to you in view of the decisions of the Synod of 1977 which read as follows:

"1. That synod consider the adjudication of the Dutton protest concerning Dr. Verhey's views presently engaged in by the Neland Avenue consistory an adequate way of dealing with the matter.

*Ground:* The requested examination of Dr. Verhey's views is provided in this way. Neland Avenue plans to determine the validity of his views, to persuade him to conform to an acceptable view if his views should be outside of our confessions, and to attempt to reconcile the parties in this protest in a pastoral way.

2. That synod communicate the concerns about Dr. Verhey's views raised in the appeals and overtures to Neland Avenue's committee for discussion with Dr. Verhey, namely:

—the nature of his hermeneutics, whether the event-character of the Scriptures is excluded or called into question.

—his understanding of the serpent in Genesis 3.

—his understanding of the earthquake in Matthew 28.

3. That synod ask the consistory of Neland Avenue to report the result of its investigation to the 1978 Synod.

*Ground:* Since the appeals, overtures and communications have been addressed to synod, synod should receive a report on this investigation."

(Acts of Synod 1977, p. 109)

We have not directed a separate special report to synod with specific response to the matters set forth by the Synod of 1977 since the response to the Dutton protest in very direct fashion takes these items into account.

We are aware that the Dutton Protest is in the files of synod and it is therefore not included with these materials.

We would also inform synod that the Consistory of Neland Church stands ready to give further explanation of its actions and of the documents which are hereby submitted and to confer with synod in any aspects of synod's concern.

#### CONSIDERATION OF THE DUTTON CHURCH PROTEST AGAINST DR. ALLEN VERHEY

The Neland Avenue Church received the protest of the Dutton Church consistory, against certain positions held by Dr. Allen Verhey as these

came to expression at his examination by Classis Grand Rapids East and in materials written by Dr. Verhey, on March 1, 1977 and thereupon appointed a committee to deal with the matter, namely Dr. Andrew J. Bandstra, Rev. Tymen E. Hofman, Dr. Carl G. Kromminga and Dr. William Spoelhof. That committee made its final report to the consistory (restricted) which acted upon it and submitted the report and its action to the general consistory. The consistory of Neland Avenue hereby presents its response to the Dutton protest.

The report of committee of the Neland Consistory is as follows:

*To the Council (Consistory) of the Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church*

*Report of the Committee of Advice on the Protest of the Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church against certain views of Dr. Allen Verhey*

Your committee has completed an important phase of its work and is now prepared to render an extensive report. We deeply regret that the state of Dr. Spoelhof's health made it impossible for him to share in our work from mid-July, 1977, until January, 1978. We here wish to record our gratitude for his effective and diligent work on this committee particularly in connection with the session of July 21, 1977, just prior to his incapacitation. We also herewith record our gratitude to God that he has been able to join the committee again in formulating the final drafts of this report.

Our report is divided into four sections. First, we catalogue the sessions of our committee and the progress of our work. Second, we lay before you a summary of Dr. Verhey's response to the core of the Dutton protest. Third, we give an opinion as to the permissibility of Dr. Verhey's stated method of interpreting Scripture and its results. Finally, we make specific recommendations as to a future course of action.

#### **I. A review of the committee's actions.**

You have in your records a dittoed report of our proposed course of action outlined for you in April and May of 1977. The committee did converse pastorally with Dr. Verhey prior to the meeting of the Synod of 1977, but we did not deal intensively with the Dutton protest in May and June because we were uncertain as to how the synod would respond to appeals to take direct action in this matter.

On July 21, 1977, during Rev. Hofman's vacation, members Spoelhof, Bandstra and Kromminga met to review the actions of the Synod of 1977 relative to the Dutton protest and related communications. We had before us the mimeographed 1977 report of synod's advisory committee (subsequently printed in the Acts of Synod, 1977, pp. 106-110). In addition, during the first part of our meeting we were served by Dr. Anthony Hoekema, advisor to synod's advisory committee. He gave us an oral report of the committee's activities and the method by which it had come to the formulation of its advice.

After Dr. Hoekema left this meeting, the members of your committee decided on this course of future action:

#### **"2. Future Procedure:**

- a. Place the burden of the work on Allen Verhey by asking him to

respond to the committee in writing as to:

1. Items raised in the Dutton protest.
2. The three issues raised in the recommendations adopted by synod, as given in Report 1-C, p. 4, F Recommendations: 2.

The rationale is that the committee will have to have the Verhey interpretation of these matters to incorporate this in a final report and it will be better and more exact if we have his own words.

b. The committee should spend the next session in a thorough analysis of the Dutton protest. We have had cursory reviews of the protest at other sessions; now we must proceed from a very careful analysis of the protest."

Subsequently your committee (now regrettably without the services of Dr. Spoelhof) held three meetings with Dr. Verhey. These meetings occurred on September 30, October 28, and December 21, 1977. At the September meeting we analyzed the protest of the Dutton consistory (as indicated a, 1, above) with the help of Dr. Verhey's writings which reflect that protest and aided by his oral comments at this meeting. As a result of this analysis we concluded that the basic protest of the Dutton consistory could be summed up in these words taken from the protest itself "...it is plain that Dr. Verhey, although affirming his faith in a Bible that is inspired even in its words, uses and defends a method of interpretation that permits him at will to deny what the Bible plainly says" (Protest, page 1, middle of page). We decided that everything which is subsequently alleged against Dr. Verhey in the protest (and in published articles) is based on this fundamental charge. We therefore asked Dr. Verhey to focus on this charge and to respond to it. His response is now presented to you along with our report. Although much of this material has been presented by Dr. Verhey in other forms and contexts, note that here for the first time Dr. Verhey explicitly describes his *method* and further attempts to help the discussion by pinpointing what he considers to be the *basic issue* in the entire dispute. The next section of our report is designed to summarize this response.

**II. A summary of Dr. Verhey's accompanying response to the Dutton protest, and a statement by Dr. Verhey in reply to the questions raised by the Synod of 1977 (cf. Acts of Synod 1977, p. 109, F, 2.).**

A. In his opening statement Dr. Verhey affirms that it is his intention to stand under the Word, not over it in judgment, as he does his theological work. He thus wishes to "hear the Word of God and to help others to do the same."

B. Dr. Verhey next outlines six steps which he follows in interpreting Scripture. He

1. determines the best reading of his text in the original language,
2. strives to understand the language and grammar of the text,
3. attempts to understand the circumstances in which the text and its context were written,
4. pays attention to the literary type to which the text belongs (poetry, letter, etc.),
5. investigates the literary/thematic relation of his passage to other (especially parallel) passages, and

6. attends to the way in which the church has interpreted the text in the past. (Cf. Section I.)

Special note should be taken of the fact that, particularly with respect to "questions of introduction" (authorship, date, circumstances, etc.), Dr. Verhey does *not* make the question as to whether a text is or is not Word of God depend on the answers to such introductory questions (third step; cf. also earlier, where the Bible is affirmed to be the Word of God *prior* to the interpreter's conclusions as to the best original reading). Dr. Verhey is concerned to outline his method precisely because, in his judgment it *prevents* him from adopting arbitrary interpretations, and from denying "at will" what the scripture plainly says—as the Dutton protest claims he does (Section I, par. 1).

C. Dr. Verhey now devotes the rest of his document to a consideration of what seems to him to be the "basic question" in the dispute. He takes up the four evidences which the Dutton protest adduces in claiming that Dr. Verhey uses a method of Bible interpretation which allows him "at will to deny what the Bible plainly says." He begins by objecting to the inclusion of material from his doctoral thesis in this connection, since that thesis is not designed to interpret specific passages but is a technical discussion of how one moves from biblical data to moral claims. Dr. Verhey chooses to focus on what strikes him as the basic issue, namely, the question of the relation of the Bible to history.

In dealing with the relation of the Bible to history, Dr. Verhey contends that "the Bible stakes its case on history" but that the Scriptures do not record or intend to record history with "minute circumstantial accuracy." Rather, the Scriptures, in reporting events, "intend to shape the faith and life of the communities they address by their recital of the history" (Section II, par. 6). Difficulties arise in this connection only when the Scriptures "are read with the alien criteria some twentieth century 'objective' historian might demand" (Section II, par 5). In other words, Dr. Verhey contends that the Scriptures do not record history in order to provide us with an account exact in every historical detail, but in order to proclaim God's Word and will by way of such accounts. Thus the *historical* account of the fall (Section II, par 7) of Adam and Eve may be described in terms of a serpent tempter, not with the intention of identifying the tempter as a snake, but in order to warn Israel against repeating Adam's fall and rebellion by worshiping the nature deities of her pagan neighbors, deities often represented by serpents in the pagan rituals. Again, the words of Jesus recorded in the gospels are not always and necessarily word-for-word transcripts of what Jesus said, but accounts shaped by the fact that the gospel writers are addressing the teaching of Jesus to new historical situations (Section II, pars. 7-11).

In connection with the reference to an earthquake in Matthew 28:2, Dr. Verhey insists that one may legitimately advance the hypothesis that Matthew intends to speak symbolically here, since here, as in many other points in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke), differences between the writers can be totally harmonized only by tampering with the text of one account or the other(s) (Section II, par. 11). Moreover, Dr. Verhey argues that the raising of the possibility of the use of symbolic language here ought to be allowed. All parties to the present

dispute regard the resurrection as the turning-point of the ages. Since, however, the gospels are not "objective historical reporting," Dr. Verhey suggests that certain references may be *intended* to function symbolically. Reformed scholars have suggested such interpretation regarding other points in the gospel record (see Section II, par. 12, where Dr. Verhey refers to Dr. William Hendriksen's comment of Matthew's record of the temptations of Jesus).

At the very end of his reply Dr. Verhey again insists that in his dissertation he is dealing with a different method than the method of interpreting Scripture, but that here, too, methodological questions are important to him precisely because a sound method is a check on arbitrariness in the use of the Bible (Section III).

Your committee also asked Dr. Verhey to respond in writing to the three questions raised by the Synod of 1977. His answer is as follows:

- "1. I do *not* challenge the event character of the scriptures. 'The Bible stakes its case on history.'
2. The fall is an historical event. The narrative does not intend to provide information about 'how it really happened'; specifically, the image of the serpent expresses the continuing temptation to give one's assent to Adam's decision by utilizing the cults of the nature deities.
3. The resurrection is an historical event. The narratives are not concerned with minute, circumstantial accuracy. Specifically, Matthew adds the earthquake to his proclamation of the empty tomb to express the apocalyptic significance of God's act there."

### III. Our opinion as to Dr. Verhey's method of interpreting Scripture and three specific results of his use of that method.

Before we comment on Dr. Verhey's method, we call special attention to his intention and to his basic commitment. He wishes to stand under, not over Scripture in his theological work. He is committed to the confession that the books of the Bible *are* the Word of God independently of his finding correct answers to all "questions of introduction." This basic commitment must be taken with utmost seriousness, and injustice is done to Dr. Verhey if one quickly charges that specific results of his interpretative efforts show that his commitment is faulty, insincerely held, or even mistakenly applied in his work. It should be noted that his expressed commitment is in full accord with Reformed teaching and that it is, furthermore, fundamentally opposed to the positions of classic Liberalism, Neo-orthodoxy and Neo-liberalism.

A. *Method*: We judge Dr. Verhey's method to be *formally* correct and agreeable to Reformed practice in the interpretation of Scripture. This does not mean that we are prepared to judge that the method has been unerringly applied in the interpretation of the biblical passages in question or that we agree with the specific results obtained by him through the use of this method. What we affirm, however, is that the method as such is sound and that its steps are crucial to gaining a proper understanding of the intention of biblical texts.

B. *Results* (specifically in connection with portions of Genesis 3, Matthew 19, and Matthew 28): In giving our opinion on the *validity* of the

results of Dr. Verhey's use of his method, an important distinction must be made, namely, the distinction between one's *agreement* or *disagreement* with these results (interpretations) on the one hand, and the question as to whether such results (positions) are *allowable* or *not allowable*. We are touching here the basic question as to the limits of the freedom of biblical interpretation within the bounds of the doctrines derived from those Scriptures and formulated in our doctrinal standards.

In answering the question, "What is permissible difference of interpretation of these passages within the bounds of our Reformed creeds?" three things are important. First, one must ask if the interpreter has done a responsible job in interpretation. Even if an interpretation is not in conflict with the creeds, the church should not be forced into a dispute about that interpretation because an exegete has done careless work. Second, granted that the work has been done carefully, do the results in effect charge Scripture or its authors with *propounding error*? Third, assuming that the exegetical work has been done responsibly and that the results do not challenge the veracity of Scripture, do the exegetical conclusions arrived at involve a denial of Reformed confessional doctrines ( e. g., the inspiration of Scripture, the historicity of the fall, the Trinity, the two natures of Christ in one person, etc.)?

Applying these tests to the case before us we conclude:

1. that Dr. Verhey works responsibly with the six steps of interpretation he has outlined;
2. that he does not charge the biblical authors with falsifying or even being "honestly mistaken" about historical circumstances; and
3. that his view does not call into question the historical reality of man's fall and the fact that mankind is under a curse because of Adam's fall (cf. p.7), nor does it call into question God's power to effect miracles, nor does it question Jesus' authority to make binding moral declarations (witness Dr. Verhey's oral acknowledgement of a physical earthquake in Matthew 27 and his assertion that Jesus gives an "absolute but haggadic prohibition of divorce," p. 8).

The Dutton protest also alleges that one method of interpretation practiced by Dr. Verhey goes counter to the decisions of the Synod of 1972 which, among other things, warned against adopting "a method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question the event-character or the revelational meaning of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God" (Acts of Synod 1972, pp. 69, 541). As the elaboration of that part of the pastoral advice shows (pp. 541-543), the synod wished to warn against a method which either had as its presupposition the assumption that the "Bible is purely a product of human history," or a method which made an unwarranted *division* between historical events and their revelational meaning (cf. also pp. 519-520). It is not self-evident that the method employed by Dr. Verhey falls under either of these indictments. Dr. Verhey's method certainly does not assume that the Bible is purely the product of human history. Furthermore, his method, as method, does not make a division between the historical event and its revelational meaning. Furthermore, the Synod of 1972, also adopted another "interrelated" point of pastoral

advice, namely, one that reminds the churches "of our brotherly obligation to respect such freedom of biblical interpretation as falls clearly within the bounds of our creedal forms of unity, while recognizing, of course, that in all things we are bound by the Scriptures" (pp. 69, 543).

As noted above, our judgments on these points *do not mean* that we agree with the specific interpretations Dr. Verhey has advanced. Dr. Verhey, as every exegete, is subject to criticism as to the way in which he adduces evidence, accounts for data, uses historical situations or reconstructions of situations to understand a text, etc. Moreover, it is freely granted that his views are plainly out of harmony with the interpretations of the passages in question traditionally held in our circles. But we do affirm that his interpretations are not the result of an arbitrary *method* of interpretation, do not root in a denial of the divine authorship of Scripture, and do not contradict the teachings of our creeds regarding the historicity of Adam's fall, the actuality of Christ's bodily resurrection from the dead, the power of God to effect miracles, or the divine authority of Jesus Christ in ethical matters.

Your committee has, in this connection, also considered the doctoral dissertation of Dr. Verhey. This dissertation is a technical discussion, easily misunderstood as to its intent. We believe that it has been misunderstood by the Dutton Consistory. We agree with Dr. Verhey that "the concern here is with method in another sense than exegetical method"—the method Dr. Verhey dealt with in his reply. We believe that the discussion in the dissertation is not pertinent to the original question of exegetical method in relation to the authority of Scripture. Therefore your committee did not pursue this aspect of the Dutton protest further.

This report was concluded with recommendations for consistorial decision.

#### *Decisions*

Having received this report and the recommendations of the committee, along with Dr. Verhey's response to the Dutton protest, and having thoroughly discussed both documents, *the consistory has taken the following decisions:*

- A. That the Consistory of the Neland Avenue Christian Reformed Church adopts the report of its committee as its own report.
- B. That with respect to the fundamental doctrinal issue the consistory declares
  1. that Dr. Allen Verhey has demonstrated to our satisfaction his commitment to the divine authorship and authority of Scripture;
  2. that his method of interpretation is formally correct and agreeable to Reformed practice in the interpretation of Scripture;
  3. that the results of his interpretations of the biblical passages in question (from Genesis 3, Matthew 19 and Matthew 28) do not demonstrate disagreement on his part with the doctrinal pronouncements in the Forms of Unity of the Christian Reformed Church nor with the pastoral advice of Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 of the CRC, and are therefore allowable interpretations;
  4. that we accept Dr. Verhey's affirmation that he does not discuss "historical probabilities" in his preaching, but uses the principle *in*

*dubio, pro tradito* (if in doubt, prefer the tradition).

- C. That the consistory acknowledges:
1. that Dr. Verhey's interpretations of these passages differ from that traditionally held in the Christian Reformed Church;
  2. that there continue to be issues worthy of discussion with respect to the interpretation of these passages.
- D. That the consistory communicates to Dr. Verhey this pastoral advice:
1. that in suggesting interpretations which diverge from those widely held in the church he should speak cautiously, especially when his views might seem to threaten the fact-character and event-character of the fall, the resurrection, and the specific contents of the word and deed ministry of our Lord;
  2. that although we readily acknowledge that those who read the biblical account in a more literal way may at times be detracting from its revelational significance, we would caution Dr. Verhey against so emphasizing the revelational significance that it detracts from the "event-basis" of the Christian faith. We do well to be reminded that we must avoid making an unwarranted division between an historical event and its revelational meaning (cf. Report 44, Acts of Synod 1972.)
  3. that we commend Dr. Verhey for his careful reflections upon the Scriptures and that we urge him, when he discovers new perspectives upon the Scriptures, to share these with colleagues and that he make such insights public when he is convinced that they are in harmony with the creeds and serve as an enrichment of the message to be preached by the church.
- E. That in response to the protest of the Dutton Consistory, the Consistory of Neland Avenue
1. conveys this report, Dr. Verhey's response to the Dutton protest, and the decisions of the Neland Consistory to the Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church, declaring that this constitutes its answer to the protest;
  2. requests the Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church to drop its charges against Dr. Allen Verhey;
  3. informs the Consistory of the Dutton Christian Reformed Church that the Neland Avenue Consistory judges that the matters raised in the protest are matters which currently are and should continue to be discussed in a fraternal manner in the larger Reformed theological community.

Tymen E. Hofman, president  
Marion Snapper, clerk

#### Note

The consistory would here take note of the fact that the Dutton Consistory, when it requested Dr. Verhey to come to its meeting to discuss its difficulties with his interpretation of scripture as this came to expression in the classical examination, refused to allow Dr. Verhey to have someone to accompany him even though he had requested the same and permission had been granted to allow this. While Dr. Verhey expressed his

dissatisfaction with this decision, he did visit with the consistory. While not officially protesting this failure on the part of the Dutton Consistory, the Neland Consistory desires that this be made part of the record, considering this action of the Dutton Consistory to be highly regrettable, being in conflict with the right of defendants. (cf. Acts of Synod 1971, p. 31, C. 2. e.)

Done in consistory April 4, 1978.

## RESPONSE TO THE PROTEST OF THE DUTTON CONSISTORY

By Allen Verhey

The Dutton consistory has objected to some positions which I have taken publicly. The basic objection seems to be that I *use* "a method of interpretation that permits (me) at will to deny what the Bible plainly says." The first thing to be said in response is that I share the Dutton consistory's concern that the church and her theologians always humbly submit to the Word of God. I do not intend ever presumptuously to stand over the scripture and judge it. My intention is rather to stand with those people who stand under the Word when doing my theological work. My intention—however fallibly it may be carried out—is to hear the Word of God and to help others to do the same.

### I. METHOD

The letter of the Dutton consistory does not concern my intention, however, but my method, which, they claim, allows me "at will to deny what the Bible plainly says," and it is to the question of method that my response must attend. I might reply by asserting that my methodological concern is precisely to eliminate "arbitrariness" in interpreting scripture, that I am dismayed by the lack of regard for the text of Scripture even among some of the so-called "defenders" of Scripture. (See my review of Wm. Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?*, attached.) It is not my whim or anyone else's whim which establishes what God intends to say to the churches through Scripture but careful study of the scripture itself, the very words. I do not claim that "careful study" immediately entails my particular method, nor do I claim that my work within that method is unerring, but I do claim that I undertake my own methodologically careful study of Scripture for the sake of hearing what God says to his churches.

A description of the method will, I hope, substantiate these assertions and demonstrate my continuity with the Reformed tradition of biblical interpretation. The first step is the identification of the text. Here the attempt is to recover as far as possible the original text of Scripture. There is nothing particularly controversial about this first step, although it may be said that I do not on the basis of textual questions restrict the church's confession that Scriptures are the "infallible rule" to the lost original manuscripts.

The Word of God is not the end-product of scholarship, whether textual criticism or any other kind of scholarship. The Bible is the Word of

God before the textual critics establish the "best text." Indeed it is precisely because it is the Word of God that we must be concerned about establishing the "best text" and such scholars have to be trained and supported. Lester De Koster has recently insisted on this point—and appropriately so—against Dr. Palmer. The same thing may and must be said about each of the subsequent steps of this method. It is the Word of God before scholars interpret it or establish the "meaning then." But again precisely because it is the Word of God we must be concerned about "meaning then" and scholars have to be trained and supported.

Incidentally, it would seem, then, that the confession of the church is not the static kind of infallibility which would be found in the "inerrancy of the original documents" if we could recover them, but it is rather the dynamic infallibility which is found when God's Word does not return unto him void. The church's confession of infallibility is not made or lost by the work of the textual critic or by some scholar ingeniously harmonizing apparent discrepancies. It is made by the Spirit's accompanying the word with power so that it does not return to the Father void, but is profitable for reproof and teaching.

The second step of the method strives for a linguistic understanding of the text. This step involves the vocabulary and grammar of the original languages and sometimes comparison of usage in contemporaneous writings. This second step, too is non-controversial, although again it may be said that I do not restrict the church's confession that the Scriptures are the "infallible rule" to their appearance in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Greek.

The third step attempts to understand the circumstances in which the particular section of Scripture came to be written. Although often these "questions of introduction" cannot be answered conclusively—and that must be kept in mind in interpretation—still, understanding the text in its original historical context attempts to provide a check against both *a priori* and arbitrary interpretations. Some "questions of introduction" are controversial, but their importance to careful study of Scripture is usually accepted. Every part of Scripture was written first for a particular audience at a specific time to deal with concrete crises or problems in the history of God's people. Clearly, the more we can know about that particular audience, time, and set of problems addressed, the better we can understand Scripture.

Again it is important to disclaim any pretensions here. Matthew does not become the Word of God only when we have all the introductory questions answered correctly. It is the Word of God whether written initially for Christians in Syria or non-Christians in Jerusalem. It is the Word of God whether the disciple Matthew wrote it or some subsequent figure associated with a school of Matthew. It is the Word of God whether it uses Mark and a sayings collection as sources or it is the first gospel written. It is the Word of God, and precisely *because* it is we need to be concerned about these introductory questions and their effect on our interpretation. My judgments about these introductory questions—or anyone's—are *not* the Word of God, but they are not for that reason to be despised, for they are part of the attempt to understand the Word of God.

A fourth step attends to the genre or literary form of the section to be interpreted. One does not read poetry in the same way one reads a letter, for example. Even within poetry, it is important to observe whether the form is a lament or a hymn. It is also important to observe the influence of one genre upon another. The Revelation, for example, is apocalyptic literature and that recognition should affect our interpretation, but it has been influenced by the epistles (cf. 1:4-6) and that recognition, too, should affect our interpretation. Or, again, Amos should be read as prophetic literature and the influence of certain forms taken from wisdom (e.g., numerical saying) or the cult (e.g., the ironic invitation to pilgrimage, 4:4-5) should be acknowledged and used to illuminate certain passages.

A fifth step is to investigate the literary and/or thematic relationship with other passages. The unity of Scripture may and must be allowed to affect interpretation. But it is important here not to confuse the unity of scripture with some presupposed harmony. The objective of this step must not be to force any passage into rigid harmony with another but to allow each text its distinctive emphasis within the unity of scripture. (This step is particularly important in reading the synoptic gospels. My working assumption is the two-source theory, which is something of a consensus among students of Scripture, including Reformed students. Even if one did not accept that hypothesis, however, it would remain important to explain the literary relations of the synoptics and to allow that explanation to affect the interpretation.)

A sixth step is to attend to the way the church has heard and understood the Word of God, including the particular passage, in her past. The tradition of interpretation of a passage may not be substituted for careful study of the passage itself, but the tradition is important—both because the Bible is the church's book and because the tradition is an additional protection against "private" interpretations. Finally, of course, we have to allow Scripture to correct even our traditional interpretations of Scripture and to check what Scripture "plainly" means by a careful new study of passages. Unless we are clear about that, the possibility of continually reforming under the instruction of the Word will be lost to us.

That in six steps is the method of studying Scripture which I pursue. I do not wish to give the impression that it's a simple recipe or that the results are always clear and indisputable. The results of my interpretation—or anyone's—are not to be substituted for, or identified with, the Word of God. But precisely because it is the Word of God it has to be read as carefully and skillfully as possible. The method stands guard against arbitrariness, not in the service of arbitrariness.

## II. THE BASIC QUESTION

The letter of the Dutton Consistory gives four instances of the "arbitrariness" of my method. The first three concern the speaking serpent of Genesis 3, the earthquake of Matthew 28, and the divorce pericope of Matthew 19. The fourth instance, my thesis on the use of Scripture, should be kept separate from the other three. The dissertation is not concerned with what a particular text meant then, but rather with the

methodological question of how one moves from such data to contemporary moral claims. It would be possible—for each of the three “instances”—to proceed along the six steps of the method to demonstrate that the method has *not* permitted me “at will to deny what the Bible plainly says.” The method has rather protected me from *a priori*, hasty, and arbitrary decisions about what the text *ought* to say or *must* say. The interpretations—whatever else may be said about them—are not arbitrary. Such a procedure would be possible, but having defended the method itself, it seems unnecessary and superfluous. Indeed, it might bog the discussion down in extraneous discussion about certain “introductory questions” and judgments about genre.

Instead I prefer to address what I take to be the basic concern of the Dutton action, although there is no such specific charge. That basic concern is the relation of the Bible to history. Dutton seems basically concerned with what they take to be “historical skepticism” concerning the biblical narratives.

The first thing to be said is that Christianity cannot give up the historical orientation of her faith without ceasing to be authentic Christianity. History matters. When the Jews and Christians confess their faith, they recite history! The preaching and teaching, the *paraklesis* (comfort and exhortation) of Christianity is based on history. Dutton’s concern is an important one.

But the historical literature of the Bible does not present itself as objective historical reporting. It presents itself as proclamation and exhortation on the basis of history, as recital. And so it is to be read and understood.

The Bible stakes its case on history, but is not typically concerned with minute circumstantial accuracy. The historical writings do not intend to provide a circumstantial report of the events; they intend to shape the faith and life of the communities they address by their recital of the history. So, for example, Genesis records Isaac’s encounter with a Philistine king (Gen. 26) even though the Philistines do not arrive on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea until about the time of the exodus. The author is concerned with addressing his contemporaries, who have dealings with the Philistines, rather than merely recording objectively “the way things really happened.” Such circumstances are troublesome only if they are read with the alien criteria some twentieth century “objective” historian might demand. The historical tradition of the encounter of patriarch and king is reported not simply in order to preserve it as an “objective” historical record but rather to announce God’s will for the children of the patriarch.

That feature of Genesis is even more pronounced in the first eleven chapters. Again the point is *not* that the material here is *unhistorical*, but that the narratives which report this history do not present themselves as concerned with minute circumstantial accuracy. The first two chapters of Genesis are unconcerned about the order of creation, Genesis 1 and 2 providing different orders. Moreover, the writers are not concerned with *how* creation takes place, whether by the fiat of God’s powerful word or by the fashioning by God’s artful hand. The anthropomorphisms themselves stand guard against taking this as the kind of historical record

an "objective observer" might write or wish. But they are very concerned with making it clear to God's people in the midst of alien devotion to "nature deities" that it is not Marduk or Baal who stands behind nature as its creator but God, that the world is not full of divine powers to be appeased and accommodated (contrast Genesis on the stars with the account of *Enuma Elish*) but—while it is stripped of its claims to deity—it is good, that man is not made from the blood of an evil god (as in *Enuma Elish*) but in the image of God. The creation accounts—while based on history and concerned with history—are not concerned with minute circumstantial accuracy. (In John's Gospel, Jesus responds to a controversy about healing on the sabbath by saying "My Father is working still, and I am working." He refuses here to take the report in Genesis 2:2,3 as an objective report or, if you will, to accept what Genesis 2:2,3 "plainly says.")

Similarly the account of the fall is historical—based on history and concerned with history—but does not present itself as the kind of history an "objective observer" might give or wish to be given. Again the anthropomorphisms stand guard against such a misrepresentation of the intention. If we misrepresent the intention here, we are led to a literal reading of God as a garment manufacturer (3:21). The author reports the history of the fall of our first parents not as an historian but as a preacher. Israel's faith and vocation are persistently threatened by the cults of the nature deities. Within these cults the serpent was often an important symbol. The significance of this serpent would not be lost on the original hearers, however easily it is lost to us. Adam fell and mankind stands under a curse because of it. Now God has made Israel a people for his own possession and for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Israel must not follow the serpent, however tempting it may be, lest they repeat in their own way the failure of Adam. The circumstances with which the author describes the historical fall do not intend a minute circumstantial accuracy. The historical fall is reported not to provide information about "how it really happened" but to instruct the author's contemporaries about the continuing significance and temptation of the historical fall. Such an interpretation does not divorce history and the Bible. It recognizes the literary character and intention of the material. The interpretation, whatever its failings, is an attempt not to get from under Scripture's authority but to understand it in a way that is close to its original meaning and then to stand under the powerful Word of God. My powerful and prosperous standing, too, ought to be construed as a vocation to "be a blessing" and I acknowledge certain "idolatries" with their value systems tempt me to repeat in my own way the failures of Adam and Israel.

It may be observed that this interpretation is quite consistent with the creeds, both in its acknowledgment of an historical fall and in its symbolic use of the serpent image (BC Art XVII, where Jesus bruises the head of the serpent).

The gospels also are not biographies, not minutely circumstantial accounts of the way things really happened or what Jesus really said. They do, of course, announce that in the life of this Jesus the glory of the Father is revealed, that in his deeds and words, God has acted and

spoken. They do not divorce—and will not allow any divorce—between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith (cf. the initial “quest for the historical Jesus”). But they are not interested in this history as objective observers. They may—indeed, because this Jesus is raised and so continues to abide with and speak to his continuing church, they *must*—shape the report of his words and deeds to address new situations and needs in the church.

My articles in the *Reformed Journal* (May-June, July-August, 1976, attached\*) lay out my analysis of the passage on divorce—and also contains the response I would make to the Dutton letter. In the context of suggesting that the “very words” of Jesus were likely an absolute but haggadic prohibition of divorce, I insist that such an attempt to recover the very words of Jesus “must not be an attempt to undercut the authority of Scripture” but rather “to try to identify the intention of the biblical authors in their use and shaping of the traditional material” (p. 18, May-June—the whole of the first four paragraphs “II. The Historical Jesus” are relevant). Incidentally, “casuistry” is not meant pejoratively, and I do not, of course, trace Matthew’s use of the material to “moral pride” but to his faithful scribal address to his particular community. It is our *use* (or misuse) of Matthew’s statement which the article suggests may sometimes be traced to moral pride.

With respect to Matthew 28:2 once again I start with the recognition that the gospels stake their case on history and on the particular history of Jesus of Nazareth but are not interested either in preserving his words like those of a famous but dead rabbi nor in providing minutely circumstantial accounts of events from his life. This can easily be substantiated: for example, in bringing the Nazareth sermon to the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, Luke the “historian” among the gospels, is quite unconcerned that he refers to the Capernaum miracles as having already happened (4:23). Even at the account of the empty tomb—and if Jesus has not been raised, then our faith is vain—the gospel writers’ special interests and pastoral concerns shape their accounts. It is a mistake, I am convinced, to try to provide an ingenious harmonization of the diverse accounts. I have listed in “Notes on a Controversy” (*Reformed Journal*, May, 1977, p. 11, attached)\* some of the items concerning which the evangelists differ in this single important pericope. They can be harmonized only by tampering with the text—or if you will, by arbitrary and willful interpretations. Not that these details are unimportant! (*Ibid.*) But they must not be read as though the gospels are concerned to provide the kind of report an “objective observer” might give or wish to be given. Now there is no apparent disagreement between Dutton’s consistency and myself about the *point* of Matthew’s reference to the earthquake or about the validity of that point: the aeons turn at the resurrection; there is the apocalyptic act of God which begins the end of the old age and initiates the new age. But if we acknowledge a distinction between the gospels and objective historical reporting then the plausibility of asking whether the reference is an apocalyptic reference to

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(\*Note: The writings referred to here are attached only to Dr. Verhey’s original response but are not attached to this report. The Committee)

demonstrate the significance of God's act rather than a space-time occurrence ought to be allowed. (That's the force of suggesting that questions of minute historical detail are inappropriate to the gospels—not that it is impossible to ask them, but that they are not questions to which the gospels intend to speak with authority.) Such questions are not new in Reformed biblical scholarship, nor indeed is answering them by preferring a symbolic reading novel. (See Hendriksen's commentary on Matthew at the temptation of Jesus.)

The question ought not, however, simply be answered in terms of our own "preferences" or whims—arbitrarily. Different criteria have been recommended for making such historical judgments, ranging from *in dubio pro tradito* (if in doubt, prefer the tradition) to the very narrow criteria of the elimination of whatever might have arisen either in Judaism or in the early church. The range of criteria may point out that historical judgments deal in probabilities—and mine are no exceptions. But it may be helpful to relate certain criteria to different contexts. One context is apologetic; here the strictest criteria seem the best choice in order best to show that the church's witness to the resurrection and to Jesus as the Christ is historically reasonable. Another context is interpretation of the gospels themselves; here I find most helpful criteria like multiple source attestation, multiple form attestation, the recognition of certain tendencies in the development of the tradition. The objective is not to undermine the authority of the text of Scripture or to substitute some historical reconstruction for the text of Scripture but, rather, to enable us to understand it better. Finally, there is the context of edification of the believing community; here, in preaching, for example, the best criterion is *in dubio pro tradito*. That is probably because the interest of preaching is not "objective observer" history either. While the appropriate criteria may be debated, the use of them recognizes—and demonstrates both that the gospels stake their case on history and are not concerned with minute circumstantial accuracy. Exactly how much can be known about the historical Jesus may be—and will continue to be—debated, but even by the most restrictive criteria we know enough to claim that the gospels witness to him faithfully (cf. Jeremiah on Amen and Abba). Moreover, to keep such judgments from being arbitrary some such criteria will have to be used.

Incidentally, I do not "except" the resurrection from this kind of investigation. Indeed, if this kind of investigation demonstrated that Jesus had not been raised, I would become a Jew. The gospels stake their case on history, after all. But such an investigation, while it cannot "prove" God took Jesus from the dead, clearly demonstrates it is not historically unreasonable to accept such a claim.

### III. The fourth "instance"

I do not understand the concern about my dissertation. Indeed it seems to me to rest upon a misunderstanding of my dissertation. The dissertation does not defend a particular recommendation for the use of Scripture. Rauschenbusch is a case which allows me to lay out candidly arguments based on Scripture and to see the warrants used. That allows me to identify the questions which have to be asked and answered by

anyone, including myself, who wants to make such a recommendation. Insofar as some preference is shown to Rauschenbusch's view it is in terms to Rauschenbusch's consistency with his recommendation over against Carl Henry's relatively arbitrary use of "temporary obligations." Calvin might have provided another case-study, for he was relatively candid about the inference-licenses. See e.g. *Inst.* II, vii, before his treatment of the Decalogue, where he lays out the principles of *synechdoche*, *contraries*, and *inwardness*.

The concern here is with method in another sense than the exegetical method outlined earlier, but it continues to be of importance to me precisely as a check on arbitrariness, including my own. The article in *Outlook*, June, 1977, is relevant to the response to Dutton consistory's concern about the dissertation. (Incidentally, saying a title is a "presumptuous deception" is not to say the author of the title is a "proud liar." I think that description of the title can stand, but I do not mean it to be a judgment on the person. And I regret that such an implication was drawn by Rev. P. De Jong.)

That I defend the authority of Scripture for ethics against the "learned detractors" and against arbitrary use may be seen in the appended review of Jack T. Sanders' *Ethics in the New Testament*.

*Ethics in the New Testament*, Jack T. Sanders, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975. Pp. 144, \$6.95.

Jack Sanders raises two questions in this book. The first is the question about New Testament ethics: What kinds of moral judgments are found within the New Testament and how are they reached? The second question concerns the relation of the New Testament to contemporary moral advice: What relevance does the New Testament have for contemporary moral discernment? These are important and difficult questions. They call for carefully reasoned and thoughtfully faithful replies. But Sanders' book simply does not live up to this calling. If Sanders had answered even one of these two questions well, the book would be worth buying and treasuring. But he doesn't, and it isn't.

Sanders spends one chapter on Jesus, one on the synoptic gospels and Acts, one on Paul, one on the later epistles in the Pauline tradition, one on the Johannine literature, one on the later epistles and Revelation. In each chapter he attempts to discover and state the ethic found there, and in each chapter he concludes with a brief statement on the relevance of that ethical position to contemporary moral reflection.

Sanders' chapter on Jesus begins helpfully with references to Henry Cadbury's point about "the peril of modernizing Jesus." He notes that Cadbury consciously avoided arguing on the basis of Jesus' "consistent eschatology" because he "thought that this view might not win the day—as indeed it did not" (p. 2). But the rest of the chapter (and the rest of the book) forgets this point and proceeds as though "consistent eschatology" had in fact won the day. "Consistent eschatology," of course, is the position taken by Albert Schweitzer that Jesus expected the kingdom to arrive in the imminent future. In that position Jesus' ethical teachings are intended for that short interval before the coming of the kingdom. They are "interimsethik." Sanders next rehearses and criticizes

some attempts to reject this "consistent eschatology" as determinative of Jesus' ethic, including Dodd, Kasemann, Funk, and Wilder (but not including figures like Jeremias, Cullman, and Kummel). Some of the critical points made against the resistance to "consistent eschatology" are well made. But the reader is quite unprepared for the verdict that "the true historical question regarding Jesus' ethics must be answered precisely as Albert Schweitzer answered it, i.e., that Jesus' imminent expectation prompted his ethical teaching" (p. 11). Part of the problem here is that Sanders—in spite of all his protests about modernizing Jesus—does not really allow Jesus to live in the social context of first century Judaism. The same point has increasingly been made against Schweitzer. There is little doubt that Jesus was an apocalypticist, but that would not in the first century cut him off from other currents flowing in Judaism. Even apocalyptic and pharisaism were not totally alien to each other (see W. D. Davies, "Apocalyptic and Pharisaism", *Christian Origins and Judaism*). But Schweitzer and Sanders place Jesus in an imaginary purely eschatological context, and, so, quite arbitrarily cut him off from other aspects of Judaism, including the Torah. Jesus' relation to the Torah and his relation to legal and edifying exposition of Torah are severed by this imaginary context. So Sanders does not deal with those relations. If he had, he might have seen that Jesus' eschatology did not affect his ethic, it affected the way he held the received moral tradition. Jesus' conviction that the kingdom was coming put merely legal observance of the law in crisis and led him to emphasize the demands on the purity of disposition and intention. If he had looked at Jesus within the social context of first century Judaism, he might have seen that neither the received tradition nor the apocalyptic expectation accounts for Jesus' inclusion within the blessing of the kingdom of "the people of the land." Such lines of investigation might have been very helpful (and have been helpful, e.g., in W. D. Davies, *The Setting of the Sermon on the Mount*, and in G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*).

Instead we are given a critical evaluation of the attempts of Bultmann and some post-Bultmannians to assert some ethical significance for Jesus. Sanders' own conclusion is that "Jesus does not provide a valid ethics for today" and he means by that not simply that Jesus provides no rules or ideals or principles (like Bultmann, e.g.), but that Jesus' ethic has no relevance at all (quite unlike Bultmann, e.g.).

Sanders' treatment of the gospel literature itself (in chapter two) represents little improvement. Sanders says that the imminent expectation gives to Mark's ethic the character of simply enduring the present time and watching for the future. One might wish to ask the function of chapters 7, 10, 12. Surely Mark presents the moral teachings of Jesus as one of the reasons he is crucified as a messianic pretender in spite of the "Messianic Secret." And surely that material amounts to something more than—and other than—withdrawal from the present evil age to wait for the eschaton. Sanders says that Luke deals more systematically with the delay of the parousia but can offer little more moral advice during the interim than "doing good." One may wish to question whether Sanders does justice to Luke's attitude toward the rich, the poor, the woman, the powerless. Can Luke's interest in women, for example, be put aside as

merely "domestic and sentimental?" Sanders understands the narrative of Mary and Martha (Lk. 10:38-42) as showing that "the one who does care for physical needs is devaluated in favor of the one who sits at the Lord's feet" (p. 38) without seeing here any challenge to the role assignments of women. And he does not even refer to Mary's "Magnificat." Sanders says that Matthew provides a new legalism, more stringent and perfectionistic than the old legalism, but still a way of salvation and standard for obedience. One may wish to ask whether the proclamation of the kingdom does not precede the Sermon on the Mount, whether conversion does not precede the use of the material in catechesis, whether Jeremias is not rather right in suggesting that Matthew's ethic is gospel from start to finish (cf. J. Jeremias, *The Sermon on the Mount*).

Sanders' treatment of Paul, like his treatment of Jesus, puts him in an imaginary purely eschatological context. Paul's ethic, like Jesus' ethic, for Sanders, depends on his presumed imminent eschatology. Here Sanders inadvertently provides refutation of his own position. On p. 57 he tells us that an analysis of Rom. 12-15 will show that Paul's ethic is "inextricably bound together with Paul's imminent eschatology." But at the end of *that* analysis, quite to the contrary, Sanders concludes that here we are offered "a possibility for an ethics that is not essentially grounded in an imminent eschatology" (p. 63). One can only wish Sanders had tried to demonstrate his position as carefully as here more often. That he does not succeed in what he stated as his intention in this little section, however, seems not to have captured his attention, and it surely caused no revision of his overall position.

More questions could be asked about Sanders' attempt to find and describe New Testament ethics. Does he do justice to the use of the *Houstafern* when he claims that they are simply an endorsement of contemporary social roles? (Cf. J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, pp. 163-192). Is it clear that John "intended a narrowing by changing love of neighbor into love of one another" (p. 92)?

But if Sanders' treatments of New Testament ethics are questionable, his occasional remarks on their relevance are absurd. Sanders seems singularly incapable of any self-critical reflection about what kinds of reasons may count for or against the relevance of New Testament ethics. The "modern man" cannot accept eschatology according to Sanders (the importance of both "crisis" and the orientation toward the future in contemporary thought notwithstanding), and so, patently, whatever of the New Testament ethic is eschatological is irrelevant. Nearly the whole of the New Testament ethic expects the imminent end of the world, according to Sanders' analysis: therefore, nearly the whole is irrelevant. But then it is passing strange that the Paulinists in Colossians and Ephesians are criticized for losing the eschatological edge of Paul's thought. They are irrelevant because in losing the eschatological judgment on this age, they simply move "in the direction of equating Christian ethics with good citizenship" (p. 89). This, too, the modern man, at least the morally sensitive modern man, cannot accept. Neither eschatological judgment upon the world nor non-eschatological acceptance of the world is relevant for modern man. The point now is not whether Sanders does justice

to the New Testament ethics but whether this "modern man" with his moral sensitivity is the appropriate test for the relevance of Scripture.

The most artificial use of this test occurs with respect to the Johannine ethic. Sanders rejects John's ethics as irrelevant because they seem to be held by "the new fundamentalism" (p. 99). That some Christians love each other and think the church has no responsibility for world hunger, poverty, war, or racial inequalities show the "moral bankruptcy of the Johannine ethics" (p. 100). While we might share his moral outrage with Christians who deny any responsibility for the world, it is an impossible leap in logic to go from that outrage to the refusal to license movement in argument from John to contemporary ethics.

But the most absurd use of this test comes when he criticizes Fuchs' attempt to move from the ethic of Jesus to a contemporary use because Fuchs' move requires "a solid commitment to one religion" and such an ethic is "unusable in modern American society" (p. 20. cf. p. 64). Can Sanders seriously be suggesting that inferences from the Bible to contemporary moral claims can only be licensed if they do not demand commitment to the faith? (We may lean to one side whether American society ought to be genuinely pluralistic or sterilely neutral.)

The results of the book, Sanders admits, are "overwhelmingly negative." He does find Luke's "good Samaritan," James' "visceral humane reaction" against elitism. Paul's "fleeting denial of eschatology in favor of the *qualitative transcendence* of love" still relevant. And, overextending the credibility of the reader (p. 129), he more than once finds the New Testament ethic relevant for a defense of situational ethics (pp. 64, 90). But the overwhelming negative conclusions, Sanders suggests, are themselves the major positive conclusion, for "we are now at least relieved of the need or temptation to begin with. . . the New Testament, if we wish to develop coherent ethical positions" (p. 130).

This review, too, has reached overwhelmingly negative conclusions. Neither the question of New Testament ethics nor the question of their relevance is helpfully addressed by Sanders. Perhaps this negative conclusion will free the reader to spend his money and time with R. Schnackenburg on New Testament ethics or with B. Birch and L. Rasmussen's forth-coming book on the relevance of the Bible for ethics.

Allen Verhey

*Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* by William Arndt, St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976 (reprint of 1955 edition). Pp. 172. \$2.50

This book is an attempt to defend the inspiration and authority of the Bible by answering the allegations of contradictions within Scripture. Its introduction clarifies what should be allowed to count as a contradiction, and its four chapters examine first some allegations of historical contradictions in the Old and New Testaments and then some allegations of doctrinal contradictions in the Old and New Testaments.

It is true that the inspiration of the Bible is frequently attacked on the basis of alleged contradictions, but it is at least questionable whether its inspiration and authority are best defended by attempting to harmonize all the passages. Arndt's attempt to harmonize all of Scripture into a minute circumstantial accuracy leads him to tamper with the text. This

happens already with Arndt's suggestions that many differences (especially numerical differences in Kings and Chronicles) resulted from the mistakes of scribal copyists. A better case could be made that copyists intentionally harmonize the differences that they find; for example, the Johannine parallel (Jn. 6:69) to the story of Peter's confession in Mark 8, Matthew 16 and Luke 9 has an extraordinary variety of readings, all of which represent some harmonization to the synoptic parallels except the preferred reading, "Thou art the holy one of God."

This tampering with the text also occurs at the level of interpretation. By his attempt to force John into agreement with the synoptic gospels about the date of Jesus' death, he forces himself to tamper with the plain meaning of John. John 19:42 says straightforwardly that the date of Christ's death was the date of preparation for the passover (Nisan 14) and not the passover itself (Nisan 15) as the synoptics represent it. Similarly, his attempt to see in Ecclesiastes 12:7 ("The dust returns to earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it") an affirmation of the "immortality of the soul" so that it agrees with John 5:28 (resurrection!) does violence to the historical and literary context of Ecclesiastes.

More examples of tampering with the text in the interest of harmonization could be given. But let the rule be stated: any attempt to defend the inspiration and authority of Scripture which forces tampering with the text cannot stand. And let the judgment be blunt: Arndt tampers with the text. The conclusion is clear: this attempt to defend the inspiration and authority of Scripture cannot stand. But that conclusion does not mean that the "learned detractors" are right, that Scripture is not inspired or authoritative. It means that Scripture's inspiration and authority are not to be located in some minute circumstantial accuracy. The Bible does not present itself to us as such a book, and it is not in such terms that it is to be judged—or defended!

Allen Verhey

## REPORT 38

## CHRISTIAN CARE FOR RETARDED PERSONS

## I. MANDATE

Article 49 of the Acts of Synod 1978 states: Synod "appoint a committee to report to the Synod of 1979 with the following mandate: to study the need of institutional Christian care for covenant members of the CRC who are so profoundly retarded as to be uneducable and/or untrainable beyond the mental and functional level of a one-year old; to determine the availability and adequacy of such care in the USA and Canada, having regard to the type of care now available, and to present and future needs for it within the CRC; to recommend appropriate action, if required, taking into account the burden such action would impose for future years on the financial resources of Christian Reformed families.

*Grounds:*

1. The need for such a study is urgent, since the Board of Pine Rest Christian Hospital decided on May 19, 1977, to phase out such care of severely retarded children at the Children's Retreat.
2. This problem may involve parents and children *from many sectors* of our denomination, who may find that individually or even with the help of local congregations it is not possible to manage such care (Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 61, 62).

In addressing this issue your committee has met three times, each meeting separated by several weeks in which individuals worked on specific assignments.

## II. BIBLICAL GUIDELINES

Somewhat surprisingly, there is not one single reference in the Bible to persons who are mentally retarded. It is known from other sources that mentally retarded persons were present in cultures contemporary with Israel during Bible times. It would be arbitrary and unrealistic to assume that Israel alone, among all those countries, was spared this affliction among her children. Yet nowhere in Scripture is there even the slightest bit of information regarding their existence, their place in society, or their care.

The label "fool", used commonly in secular literature to designate a retarded person, does not have that meaning in the Bible. There the mark of a foolish person is not lack of intelligence but rather moral depravity and spiritual irresponsibility, as so vividly described in Isaiah 32:6. In contrast to the wise man who fears the Lord, a fool despises wisdom and instruction (Prov. 1:7). It is this moral and spiritual deficiency which underlies Christ's prohibition against calling someone "fool," (Matt. 5:22).

Another label, "simple ones," used occasionally in Scripture, has less

odious, but nevertheless similar, connotations. For example, "I have seen among the simple, I have perceived among the youths, a young man without sense" (Prov. 7:7). The meaning of "without sense" is quickly revealed in the following verses (Prov. 7:8-23) where the young man is described as visiting a prostitute. Mental retardation, again, does not enter the picture here.

The same is true of Jesus' words: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3). Although countless families of retarded persons have no doubt taken comfort from these words—and there is no good reason to assume that retarded persons must be excluded from this category of people—neither the text nor the context warrant the conclusion that this beatitude applies more to retarded individuals than to others. Retardation simply is not an issue here.

It should also be noted that the few references to apparent mental illness—whether faked, as in the case of David (I Sam. 21:15), or demon-caused (e.g., Matt. 8:28ff.)—cannot be interpreted as having any bearing on the problem of retardation. In cause as well as manifestation, mental illness and mental retardation are two unique and totally distinct afflictions.

Despite the Bible's silence regarding mental retardation *per se*, there are, nevertheless, a number of references to handicaps in general. Since retardation is itself a handicap and in its most severe forms accompanied frequently by physical defects, the conclusion is warranted that whatever is said about other handicaps does also equally apply to retardation. A reading of the passages clearly reveals how God expects the community to deal with the handicapped. For example, "You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind" (Lev. 19:14). And again, "Cursed be he who misleads a blind man on the road" (Deut. 27:18). While handicapped individuals could not serve as priests (Lev. 21:17-23), they were not excluded from worship nor, apparently, from community fellowship. One such handicapped individual, Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth, was taken in by David and shared his table (II Sam. 9:1-8). His handicap was not considered ground to reject him.

Time and again God reveals himself as concerned about, and a protector of, handicapped persons (e.g., Ps. 146:8; Zeph. 3:19) and others who are weak and defenseless. Ezekiel especially reveals God's anger with the leaders of Israel who have neglected to minister to the needs of the people for whom they are responsible (Ez. 34). This chapter, which, admittedly, is primarily meant to be symbolic and figurative, in no way detracts from the truth that those mentioned—the weak, the crippled, the sick, the lost, the strayed—must be helped, regardless of whether their disability is spiritual or physical. And it is to people who find themselves confronted with physical defects that Isaiah presents God's promise, and God's ideal, of healing and restoration for the handicapped (Isa. 35:5,6).

When Jesus comes, he refers back to Isaiah's promise (Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22) and reveals himself as its fulfillment. Repeatedly he shows his divine powers as he miraculously heals people afflicted with a variety of diseases: the blind (Matt. 20:30), the deaf (Matt. 11:5), the paralyzed (Luke 5:14ff), the speech-impaired (Mark 7:32). The Bible tells us also how Jesus was frequently moved with compassion for physically or

spiritually afflicted people (e.g., Matt. 20:34; Heb. 4:15).

It is true that he may have been more sensitive than his contemporaries. Handicapped individuals were sometimes reduced to begging because needed support was not forthcoming (Mk. 10:46; Luke 16:20; Acts 3:2). Yet, even in Jesus' day there appears to have been an "institution," a place where ill and handicapped individuals were brought for care, perhaps, or for a cure (John 5:2-5). The Bible does not furnish any details about this *Bethesda*, or "House of Mercy," beyond stating that in it there were "a multitude of invalids" of whom some were apparently fortunate enough to have someone—a family member or paid attendant?—to help them into the healing waters of the pool while others were not so fortunate. It is not clear whether the handicapped man had been at Bethesda all of these thirty-eight years, nor what type of care he received or who provided or paid for it. But at least there was some place where handicapped individuals could go, a place of hope if not of healing. The community accepted Bethesda as such, regardless of what their attitudes may have been toward the handicapped. In the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, the Rich Man is traditionally held at fault because he did not share with Lazarus even the crumbs that fell from his table (Luke 16:19ff). Through the centuries the Christian conviction has been that, with compassion, the community should minister to the needs of the less fortunate. The church, though by no means doing a perfect job at all times, has, nevertheless, been in the foreground of providing Christian care to the handicapped.

The reason for this is that, in addition to the example and teaching of Christ, the Apostle Paul repeatedly emphasizes the solidarity of the whole human family—and especially the Christian family—and the consequent responsibilities entailing from that unity. Perhaps the best expression of the bond which should exist especially among Christians is found in I Corinthians 12. The tenor of that particular chapter has to do with spiritual gifts which are apportioned differently to different people. Within that discussion, however, Paul illustrates the importance of each member of the Christian household to all other members. Using the symbolism of the body—very fitting for a church often called the "Body of Christ"—he lists the unique place of each member and the importance of each member towards the proper functioning of the body as a whole. This could be seen, admittedly, as a figurative description of a merely spiritual relationship which should exist within the church, except for what he says in verses 25 and 26, "God has so adjusted the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior part, that there may be no discord in the body, *but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together.*" Earlier he has said, "the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable." Much as we may grieve over the existence of mental or physical handicaps, the handicapped are nevertheless part of the Body of Christ. Even when they are considered to be weak and useless, they are nevertheless still indispensable. Though their existence may be one of being rather than doing, of being consumers rather than producers, that existence has, nevertheless, meaning and purpose in God's plan. Paul leaves no doubt that members must care for each other, care that does not merely arise out of

wholesome compassion for other people but also out of a healthy self-interest. If one member suffers, all suffer. Someone else's handicap becomes *my* handicap which cannot simply be ignored.

That same responsibility of Christians toward others is unequivocally expressed in Galatians 6:9,10, "Be not weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart. So then, as we have opportunity, let us *do good to all men, and especially those who are of the household of faith.*" This principle has been given beautiful expression in the new Form for the Baptism of Children where, alongside of the vows of the parents, there is now a congregational vow pledging mutual support.

Other passages could be marshaled to underscore Christian responsibility towards the less fortunate. For example, I John 3:17, "But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" Or James 2:15,16, "If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'go in peace, be warmed and filled,' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?" Or even Jesus' words in Matthew 18:1-14, especially verse 10, "See that you do not despise one of these little ones." In this same passage, the Parable of the Lost Sheep is interpreted in the context of children: it is the one child in a hundred who needs special attention and care to whom the shepherd's heart goes out, and in whose rescue he rejoices.

The evidence is irrefutable. Where there is a need, the Christian community has a responsibility. No person may ever be judged too unimportant to deserve our help. People take priority over projects and practices. Even Jesus did not hesitate to interrupt sabbath ritual to minister to a specific need. It is doubtful whether cost is ever a legitimate reason for withholding needed care. Within the tradition of the Christian church, and Judaism before that, we have a great opportunity to minister to those we may perhaps see as the least of Christ's brethren but who should elicit the same compassion and love we would give to Christ were he himself in need of our help.

Several prominent thinkers of our day have adopted the position, based more on logic than biblical teaching, that the severely retarded are not human beings and, consequently, do not deserve the consideration normally given humans. Martin Buber, for example, wrote that "only insofar as man is capable of making relationships can he be considered human." Emil Brunner thought that "the image of God ceases where true human living ceases—on the borderline of imbecility or madness." Joseph Fletcher stated that an IQ of 40 is the cutoff point for humanness and that certainly anyone with an IQ of 30 or less is, for all intents and purposes, sub-human. In 1977 a study committee of the Anglican Church in Canada concluded:

"The capability of man to relate to himself, to his neighbour, and to God encapsulates all the minimal criteria set down by theologians and scientists alike. It would follow, therefore, that without any of these minimal criteria, actual or potential, a living body is not human. It is a fundamental error to treat it as human."

Not surprisingly they proposed the only logical solution: euthanasia.

Your committee fears the result of such thinking and is diametrically opposed to it. Both the position that the severely retarded are not human as well as the conclusion they should be killed are contrary to biblical teaching. After God created man and woman in his image and after his likeness—thus endowing them with true and noble humanity—he instructed them to be fruitful and multiply (Gen. 1:26-28). That reproduction is, as in the plant and animal kingdom, “after its kind,” thus assuring that human beings beget human beings. Nowhere in Scripture is there any indication that deformed human beings are not fully human or created in God’s image. And nowhere in Scripture is there any suggestion that the severely handicapped are outside of the umbrella of protection provided by the sixth commandment, “Thou shalt not kill.” Your committee feels very strongly that the severely handicapped nevertheless represent human life and as such are entitled to, and deserving of, our compassion and strong support. Our position is best summed up in the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

“The question whether in cases of congenital mental deficiency one is dealing with human life at all is so naive as scarcely to require an answer. It is sick life, born of men, and even though it must be extremely unhappy life, it cannot but be human life.”

And,

“The fact that God is the Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of life makes even the most wretched life worth living before God. The beggar Lazarus, a leper, lay at the rich man’s gate and dogs licked his sores; he was devoid of any social usefulness; yet God held him to be worthy of eternal life. And where if not in God should there lie the criterion for the ultimate value of a life?”

### III. DEFINING THE ISSUES

From the outset, the committee wrestled with the mandate’s language. While the reference is to persons who are called profoundly retarded—but called “severely retarded” in Ground 1—, the further qualification, “uneducable and/or untrainable beyond the mental and functional level of a one-year old,” appeared to confuse the issue. The classifications developed by the American Association on Mental Deficiency include the categories mild, moderate, severe and profound. Table A in Appendix I gives a brief description of the social and developmental potentials of the persons in these categories. It should be remembered, however, that the mentally retarded are not a homogenous group. Retarded persons vary in their ability and skills. Though a person may be grouped within a certain category on the basis of an intelligence test administered to him, the possibility cannot be excluded that he may function significantly better, or worse, on specific abilities than would be expected from or indicated by his general classification. The dividing lines, therefore, are only approximations and generalizations. Also, the more severe the retardation is, the more difficult it becomes to make an accurate evaluation. Testing procedures for the profoundly retarded have

not been developed sufficiently to definitively place an individual above or below a one-year functioning level. Further complicating the issue is the likelihood of physical handicaps accompanying the more severe forms of retardation.

For these reasons, your committee concluded that the *spirit* of the mandate, if not the *letter*, referred primarily to those persons falling in the general category of profound retardation—having an IQ of less than 20.

The ultimate criterion, the committee felt, was whether the person needed lifetime care in a specialized program which provides 24-hour nursing, physician access, physical therapy and other support services.

#### IV. IDENTIFICATION OF THE POPULATION

It is difficult to determine how many individuals in the CRC are so severely handicapped as to need specialized, 24-hour, lifetime supervision and care. Statistics generally quoted for the United States and Canada indicate that approximately 3% of the population can be considered mentally retarded, that is, having an IQ of 70 or less. In the two countries, then, 7,200,000 persons are retarded. Of that number, however, 84% or 6,408,000 persons fall into the mildly retarded category, 6% or 432,000 are considered moderately retarded, 3.5% or 252,000 are severely retarded, and 1.5% or 75,600 are profoundly retarded. An inverse relationship between these figures is obvious. The greater the severity of the handicap, the fewer the number of persons affected.

Applying these statistics to the Christian Reformed Church, the numbers become much smaller. Among our 287,656 members, 3% or 8,630 persons may be retarded. That number would break down into the following categories and numbers: mildly retarded, 89% or 7,680 persons; moderately retarded, 6% or 517 persons; severely retarded, 3.5% or 302 persons; profoundly retarded, 1.5% or 129 persons.

Perhaps one of the most helpful things the committee did was to visit the Children's Retreat and observe the population in question in this mandate. This helped clarify the statistics and personalize the issue. We urge the synodical advisory committee appointed to address this report to do likewise.

#### V. DETERMINING THE NEED

Following this clarification the committee sought to determine by means of a survey (Appendix II) the number of such people in the denomination, their present residence, and the degree of the family's satisfaction with the placement. In addition, we also requested the pastor's opinion of whether he believed the church had an obligation to provide Christian care in church-related institutions for these people. Seventy percent of the pastors responded to the questionnaire. Eighty-three people were identified as meeting the criteria spelled out in the questionnaire. In addition, ten people were added from the Children's Retreat who were not covered in the response despite their Christian Reformed background. Fifty-two of these people are presently in public

facilities; forty-two are in private institutions, including twenty-two at the Children's Retreat.\*

The data suggest that only three families are dissatisfied with the care presently being provided their loved one. All of these three families have a child in a public facility. Also, we must conclude that the quality and availability of care vary dramatically among states and perhaps provinces. The fact that there are far more residents in the Children's Retreat from out-of-state than in-state suggests that public facilities are unavailable or of such poor quality so as to discourage their utilization.

The committee also suspects that, for several individuals, where placement is considered satisfactory, this is a matter of "out of sight-out of mind." Some may have been away from their home churches for so long that no one perhaps quite knows how satisfactory the care actually is. In other instances, the emotional involvement with institutionalization may have been so great that it is less painful to leave the person where he is than to go through the trauma of transfer or readjustment. Seeking alternate placement now would necessitate the admission that in the past the child has received less than adequate care and that the parents or other relatives accepted that. Alternate placement was not always an available option, of course. For a long time, only Pine Rest offered Christian care within the Reformed community. But this often meant that the child had to be sent far from home, limiting family contact. More recently, with costs climbing rapidly, more and more people were forced to place their relative in a public facility. Few will ever know the anguish with which these decisions were reluctantly made.

An example of what parents face in having a profoundly retarded child is as follows. The questions never stop. How long can the parents keep the child at home when he needs special care at all times? How will it affect the other members of the family when one child requires so much attention? What programs and services are available, if any? How much will it cost? What are the sacrifices that will have to be made in time, friends, way of life, future plans? Provided the immediate concerns are provided, what will happen when the parents are gone?

A pastor who has never encountered this situation can easily be overwhelmed with the complexities of funding sources, referral information,

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\*The committee questions the validity of these data since we have concluded that the population of concern cannot be provided for in some of the facilities listed. Also, although twenty-two are identified as being at the Children's Retreat, only sixteen are at the profound level of functioning and are receiving this care.

*Composite of Questionnaire and Children's Retreat Data*

- 7 Illinois residents in Michigan
- 3 Canadian residents in Michigan
- 1 Colorado resident in Michigan
- 2 Minnesota residents in Iowa
- 1 Michigan resident in Illinois
- 1 Colorado resident in Iowa
- 1 Wisconsin resident in Michigan
- 1 New Jersey resident in Michigan
- 1 Indiana resident in Michigan
- 2 Iowa residents in Michigan

advocacy, program evaluation and the familiarization with the handicap. How will he be able to instruct the parents when they come to him? For a small church to handle expenses of one individual at \$20,000 per year would be difficult, but for most parents it is impossible. Imagine the difficulty in asking for this amount of money from the church. The emotional strain on the family is enormous.

The overture from Classis Rocky Mountain challenges the Christian Reformed Church to reexamine its responsibilities to those members of our denomination, whose number may well be less than thirty, and to find a practical way of ministering to them and to their families. The committee feels that responsibility is never in doubt.

## VI. AVAILABILITY AND ADEQUACY OF CARE FACILITIES

Granted the obligation of the Christian community to care for its needy members, how and where is such care to be provided? Some families have chosen to place their handicapped member in a state facility, whether for financial reasons or because of proximity to their home. This has effectively excluded the church from any financial obligation. An argument could be made, further, whether for the profoundly retarded—those who have little or no cognizance of life around them—such care should be considered acceptable, provided it is sensitive and proper care. Surely, not only in a Christian facility are nurses and attendants capable of love and affection. There are untold dedicated individuals in public institutions as well, many of them committed Christians, whose love and devotion is beyond doubt. Your committee supports this observation.

The level of care in public institutions, unfortunately, is by no means uniform in all states. In some areas it is superb, in others it is deplorable. Limited funding, overcrowding of facilities, poorly trained staff can create a situation which parents find simply unacceptable for their child. And it should be the family which should make the ultimate decisions about the propriety of their member's placement. It is difficult enough to send a loved one away from home; this should not be compounded by continuing guilt from knowing that the member is not properly cared for and perhaps actually suffers. If parents or other family members oppose placement in a public facility, that is a right which should be respected. Furthermore, the family may legitimately argue that their relative has as much right to live in a Christian environment as a non-handicapped person, regardless of his level of awareness. This is a sensitive issue which the church, through its pastoral concern, should address.

Scattered throughout the United States and Canada are many fine Christian facilities providing care for the mentally and physically handicapped. Their number is growing. With very few exceptions, however, they provide service only to those persons who have at least minimal skills in dressing, feeding, and personal hygiene. Many further limit admissions by setting age standards. While none will perhaps openly discourage admissions of persons not from their denominations, preference is obviously given to church members.

Ideally your committee would like to see regional or local facilities

available to all those requiring this care. The survey, however, definitely points to there being too few CRC people in any one region to encourage the development of such a program. The public alternatives as they develop may be an alternative in the future. Also, other Christian resources may develop although there is no evidence of this occurring for the profoundly retarded.

## VII. FINANCIAL ISSUES

The type of care we are concerned about is expensive. The State of Michigan is presently spending \$87 per day in some facilities and at the time of this writing has been ordered by a court to add even more staff to already existing programs. At Pine Rest Children's Retreat the cost is \$65 per day. Family and churches are encouraged to pay \$45 per day. The remaining \$20 is provided from other gift revenues.

Few families have the resources to pay in excess of \$16,000 per year, and keep doing so year after year. It becomes even more difficult when parents die and there is no estate to cover these massive costs. Amounts like these will be, likely, even beyond the ability of an individual congregation. Yet they must be raised if transfer of the handicapped person to an inadequate public facility is to be avoided. Since perhaps the greatest fear of parents of retarded children is what will happen to their child after their death, the church has an obligation to alleviate that fear by assuring continued proper care. What is needed, perhaps, is the establishment of a procedure where churches can cooperate to meet expenses and where there is the kind of supervision to assure this is actually done.

The perplexing problem of the parents of those children, including those yet at the Children's Retreat, is that nowhere can a facility be found which will accept their child and provide adequate care. Whether because of cost factors, or because of licensing requirements imposed by the various states, private facilities are virtually non-existent for individuals in this category. Your committee knows of none aside from Pine Rest's present program. Families and churches, at this point, have two choices: they can reluctantly resign themselves to the fact that for their child they must accept often inadequate public care, or they can insist that even for these persons there must be the availability of a Christian facility which will provide whatever care and training are necessary.

Your committee reviewed the decision of Pine Rest Christian Hospital's Board to phase out of the 24-hour, inpatient hospital care of the profoundly mentally retarded. Factors contributing to that decision are many and complex. For example,

1. Pine Rest has been strongly advised by licensing and accrediting groups to discontinue hospital care for this group of people. The suggestion here is that these people can be cared for in skilled nursing facilities. Also, because these people are in a "hospital," no public support is available such as Medicaid.
2. Even though the cost of caring for these individuals is high, hospital licensing standards demand that higher level staff than would be necessary in a skilled nursing facility be used.

3. Costs of operating the program have escalated to the point where the population has declined as quality public alternatives have developed. (Note: Costs in public institutions in Michigan have skyrocketed to \$87 per day; at Pine Rest the present cost is \$65 per day.)
4. The building in which these patients are located requires extensive renovation in order to meet State Public Health requirements. The board must settle program plans before major renovation can begin. Major renovation which would change the licensing from "hospital" to "nursing facility" or "extended care facility" does not seem possible.

Because of the concern demonstrated by the parents of those residents who remain in the Children's Retreat, the Board of Pine Rest Christian Hospital has not carried out its decision of 1977. Rather, it continues to provide for the population who must have this care and has moved the remaining higher-level group to a new cottage.

Your committee concurs in the concern of the parents of those that remain at the Children's Retreat. There are no quality alternatives, either public or private, for this population. The overture of Classis Rocky Mountain challenges the CRC to re-examine its responsibilities to those members of our denomination requiring such care and to find a practical way of ministering to them and to their families.

#### VIII. FUTURE TRENDS

There is every reason to believe that the current trend toward placement of mentally retarded people into the "least restrictive alternative" will continue. As a committee we support efforts at the federal, state, provincial and local levels to provide services which encourage mentally retarded people to live as normally as possible. In practice this means that more people will continue to live at home, more will live in home-like residences while fewer will live in large institutions and nursing homes.

The President's Commission on Mental Health also adopted this position and is advocating increased tax dollars to implement more programs. It is reasonable to assume that those states and provinces who presently are behind in the development of such facilities will be spending tax dollars and developing this concept. However, the committee is convinced that quality public programs do not presently exist in most areas of the United States and Canada for the profoundly retarded, physically handicapped person.

As more public programs develop, tax dollars will be directed toward local public facilities. The committee supports placement of retarded people as close to their loved ones as possible. However, to do so at the risk of placement in inhumane services and facilities cannot be condoned.

As far as the use of public dollars by private, church-related institutions is concerned, we endorse the utilization of tax dollars but point to the potential risks that such utilization may entail. These risks are increasing dramatically as more tax dollars are made available and more

systems are established to police the use of those dollars.

In practice we found that Canadian Christian agencies are much less restricted in accepting public funds than are their United States counterparts. There is increasing evidence in the United States of discrimination in the dissemination of public funds to Christian organizations and, in some cases, a refusal to grant public dollars to Christian organizations who insist on maintaining a clearly Christian set of bylaws, staffing expectations and practices. To a large extent, this variation seems directly related to the availability of public services. Where public services are sufficient, private organizations are viewed as competitors; where public services are inadequate or in short supply, private agencies will likely be encouraged.

Such evidence causes the committee dismay since the future of voluntary, Christian agencies as an arm of the healing ministry of the church is threatened by such data. The disparate experience of Christian organizations also made it difficult for the committee to arrive at simple conclusions concerning the use or non-use of public dollars in the provision of services in private, Christian agencies. In general, we support the use of public dollars in private, Christian organizations, providing the basic Christian orientation of such organizations is not threatened by accepting public dollars.

#### IX. ADDENDUM

Throughout its work, the committee realized increasingly that the church has not systematically addressed its responsibility to the mentally retarded. Even though our primary interest was the limited group in the synodical mandate, our own discussion and the responses of the questionnaire pointed to a concern for the larger group as well. We would like to point to some of the concerns which surfaced during our work.

1. The problems that all Christian agencies are having with the regulations as they are applied to Christian agencies. For example, some CRC members are able to benefit from tax dollars in Christian agencies, while others, because of their county or state of origin, cannot.
2. The number of questionnaires which indicated a lack of awareness about the problems facing mentally retarded individuals and their families. Or, in other cases, a realization of the problems but the unavailability of resources to meet the problems.
3. As a committee we learned that less intensive, residential-type services are being developed by Christian organizations where leadership exists and the local situation warrants. These facilities are often constructed with private capital but completely financed in their operations by public tax dollars. They are located in areas close to the individual's home and family. In other areas of high church density there seems to be a total reliance on public facilities. We wish to point out that the placement of higher level retarded people into such public facilities is frequently a final placement. *This is and will continue to be their home. We are concerned that unless these facilities are developed by Christian organizations they*

*will not provide a Christian environment for the retarded person.* When family devotions, prayer, church attendance are no longer available to this group because of placement in secular facilities, the church has denied covenantal children the means of grace. As long as parents are alive and well, they may attempt to bridge this gap through visits or by having their retarded loved one home on a weekend. When this no longer is done because of age, death, distance, etc. the retarded person is denied his heritage.

4. Aside from materials available from other denominations, there is no planned effort to deal with the Christian nurture of higher-level mentally retarded people.
5. The question of marriage needs to be addressed. For those of us close to these people in their everyday activity, we see a trend developing which encourages these individuals to consider such a step. Little guidance is presently available when this issue is brought up.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The committee requests that the Rev. Gerald Oosterveen and Dr. Richard Houskamp have the privilege of the floor when this report is discussed.

2. Synod declare that covenant members, regardless of their level of functioning or intellectual capacity, are entitled to quality Christian care, especially when quality public alternatives are not available.

##### *Grounds:*

Scripture does not warrant distinctions among people based upon their need or intellectual capability. (See for example Gal. 6:10 and I Cor. 12:26.)

3. Synod declare that the churches have the responsibility to support families as they seek quality Christian care for a profoundly retarded child or adult.

##### *Grounds:*

a. Galatians 4:7 and I John 3:17

b. Quality public services are not available to some covenantal members of the church.

4. Synod instruct the deacons to share the financial burden imposed upon individual families and urge that the deacons read this report and familiarize themselves with the problem.

##### *Grounds:*

a. See grounds to Recommendation 3.

b. The financial burden is too great for almost any individual family to assume.

5. Synod urge diaconal conferences and/or classes to address this need where it exists and provide financial support as needed.

##### *Grounds:*

The financial burden is greater than the individual family or church can ordinarily handle.

6. That synod request Pine Rest Christian Hospital to consider alternatives to its decision to phase out of 24-hour, inpatient, hospital care which might allow it to continue to provide such care in a more appropriate program and facilities.

*Grounds:*

- a. It is the only existing Christian facility presently providing care to this population.
- b. In many areas quality public alternatives are not available.

7. That synod authorize the committee to continue its work for one more year.

*Grounds:*

- a. To monitor the effectiveness of the synodical decision of 1979.
- b. To study the needs of the larger group of mentally retarded persons who are members of the Christian Reformed Church.
- c. To study the ways in which there can be more effective involvement of the churches in meeting the needs of the mentally retarded and their families.

8. Synod authorize the replacement of one committee member, Miss Theresa Bushman, who was unable to become involved in the work of the committee. This new member would ideally be a person with broad experience and interest in diaconal work.

Committee for Christian Care for  
Retarded Persons  
Richard E. Houskamp, chairman  
Bruce Tuinier, reporter  
Harry Brands  
John Dykstra  
Kenneth Ooms  
Gerald Oosterveen

## APPENDIX I

### LEVELS OF INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION

#### A. The Distribution of Intelligence<sup>1</sup>

The chart illustrates that the bulk of the population functions near the average IQ of 100. The farther removed a person is from the average the fewer individuals are in the particular category. *All* persons combined whose IQ is below 70 comprise only 3% of the total population.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from: Walter H. Ehlers, Durtis H. Krishef, Jon C. Prothero, *An Introduction to Mental Retardation* (Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Company, 1973), p. 41.

#### B. Social and Developmental Potentials of the Mentally Retarded<sup>1</sup>

LEVEL OF RETAR- DATION	AGE 0 - 5	AGE 6 - 18	AGE 19 - OVER
<i>Profound</i> IQ 0 - 25	Gross retardation; minimal capacity for functioning in sensorimotor areas; needs nursing care.	Some motor development present; may respond to minimal or limited training in self-help.	Some motor and speech development; may achieve very limited self-care; needs nursing care.
<i>Severe</i> IQ 25 - 40	Poor motor development; speech is minimal; generally unable to profit from training in self-help; little or no communication skills.	Can talk or learn to communicate; can be trained in elemental health habits; profits from systematic habit training.	May contribute partially to self-maintenance under complete supervision; can develop self-protection skills to minimal useful level in controlled environment.
<i>Moderate</i> IQ 40 - 55	Can talk or learn to communicate; poor social awareness; fair motor development; profits from training in self-help; can be managed with moderate supervision.	Can profit from training in social and occupational skills; unlikely to progress beyond second grade level in academic subjects; may learn to travel alone in familiar places.	May achieve self-maintenance in unskilled or semi-skilled work under sheltered conditions; needs supervision and guidance when under mild social or economic stress.

<sup>1</sup>Adapted from *The Problem of Mental Retardation*, U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of the Secretary, Secretary's Committee on Mental Retardation (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969).

<i>Mild</i> IQ 55 - 70	Can develop social and communication skills; minimal retardation in sensorimotor areas; often not distinguished from normal until later age.	Can learn academic skills up to approximately sixth grade level by late teens. Can be guided toward special conformity.	Can usually achieve social and vocational skills adequate to minimum self-support but may need guidance and assistance when under unusual social situations.
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## APPENDIX II

REPORT OF SURVEY OF THE SYNODICAL COMMITTEE ON  
CHRISTIAN CARE FOR RETARDED PERSONS

The questionnaire was sent to approximately seven hundred fifty pastors serving congregations in the Christian Reformed Church. The following questions were asked:

1. Are there persons in your congregation who are presently receiving institutional care as described in the enclosed letter?
2. Are there persons in your congregation who are presently residing with a relative/guardian but will likely require the care described above at some later date?
3. Are there persons in your congregation who because of inadequate or unavailable services of the type described are living with a relative/guardian?
4. Do you believe the Christian community has a covenantal obligation to provide for these persons in church-related institutions?

The results of the survey were as follows: (Please note that totals are not consistent because not every question was filled out on every questionnaire.)

		<i>Responses</i>	
<i>Question 1</i>	61	<i>Yes</i>	(13%)
	391	<i>No</i>	(87%)
<i>Question 2</i>	29	<i>Yes</i>	( 6%)
	457	<i>No</i>	(94%)
<i>Question 3</i>	2	<i>Yes</i>	( .5%)
	437	<i>No</i>	(99,5%)
<i>Question 4</i>	459	<i>Yes</i>	(87%)
	37	<i>No</i>	( 7%)
	31	<i>Other</i>	( 6%)

The responses to the questionnaire represent approximately 70% return which is excellent.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE RETURNS

In spite of our best efforts to circumscribe our inquiry to the group of people described in our synodical mandate, it appears that a broader group of people are represented in the responses of pastors. This is evidenced in the description of the type of settings in which some of these people are presently living; for example, foster homes, group homes, state mental hospitals, day treatment programs, etc.

Secondly, in spite of the overwhelming support for question 4, some of the best responses came from those who answered neither yes nor no. This group, by qualifying their responses, seemed to have a grasp of the complexity of the issue. Their responses included concerns about location, distance from the family, quality of public programs, availability of non-Reformed-Christian programs, etc.

The results of this survey indicate that of the number of pastors responding, sixty-one identified one or more people in their congregation who are presently in some type of placement outside the natural family. That breakdown is as follows:

<u>Public Resid.</u>		<u>Private Resid.</u>					<u>Day Programs</u>	
Muskegon Dev. Center	Other	Hope Haven	Salem CA	C.R.	Elim	CHCC	Other Resid.	
11	41	3	4	22	2	2	4	4

The United States and Canadian breakdown was also culled out from the material. Unfortunately, we were not able to identify all of the sources of the Canadian locations, but it seems that the predominant number is in Ontario.

<u>State and Canadian Breakdown</u>	<u>Added from Additional Questionnaires</u>	<u>Added by Pine Rest Total</u>
Michigan	31	2 33
New Jersey	2	1 3
Canada	16	2 23
New Mexico	1	1 1
Oklahoma	1	1 1
Kansas	1	1 1
Arizona	1	1 1
Iowa	5	3 10
Minnesota	4	4 4
California	5	1 6
Oregon	1	1 1
South Dakota	1	1 1
Illinois	4	1 5
Unknown	1	1 1
Subtotal	74	9
Indiana		1 1
Wisconsin		1 1
Totals		10 93

Finally, we attempted to break out of the data those people who are placed out of the state of their original residence in some other state because of some apparent lack of facilities in their own immediate area. That breakdown is as follows:

*Composite of Questionnaires and Children's Retreat Data*

- 7 Illinois residents in Michigan
- 3 Canadian residents in Michigan
- 1 Colorado resident in Michigan
- 2 Minnesota residents in Iowa
- 1 Michigan resident in Illinois
- 1 Colorado resident in Iowa
- 1 Wisconsin resident in Michigan
- 1 New Jersey resident in Michigan
- 1 Indiana resident in Michigan
- 2 Iowa residents in Michigan

From this data we can readily recognize that the larger number of people are at present in public facilities and that only three of those pastors who responded to this question indicated a lack of satisfaction with the public facilities.

## Overtures

### Overture 1 — Reaffirm Inerrancy of the Bible

Classis Illiana overtures the Synod of 1979 to declare that we believe the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God by reaffirming the declaration adopted by the Synod of 1959 that "Scripture in its whole extent and in all its parts is the infallible and inerrant Word of God" (Acts of Synod 1959, Article 134, I, B, 1, e, pg. 64).

*Ground:* Denominational clarification of position relative to the inerrancy of the Bible is essential for the life of the church today in its pastoral and educational function and for our witness to fellow believers throughout the world.

Classis Illiana  
Carl E. Zylstra, stated clerk

### Overture 2 — Reaffirm Inerrancy of the Bible

Classis Chicago South overtures synod to declare that Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 and its guidelines may not be used as a basis or interpreted in a manner which allows for the positing of actual errors in the Scriptures. This overture is submitted in view of the fact that Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 and its guidelines have been used to affirm that there are errors in the Bible, see H. Boer, *Above the Battle? The Bible and Its Critics*:

"In my own denomination the 1971 and 1972 reports on 'The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority', prepared for the synod of the Christian Reformed Church, provide a striking illustration. The impact of higher criticism on the thinking of the authors is clearly evident. Scholarly integrity has therefore made it necessary to face rather frontally the fact that many data in Scripture are not in harmony with each other. We cited a number of rather notable examples of this in Chapter 5 and presented a more extended description of one such datum in the preceding chapter" (p. 80).

"The Bible is infallible; it is not inerrant in the accepted sense of the word" (p. 82).

"The problem is basically that of relating, as essential qualities of the Word of God in-scripturate, the divine—which is always absolute—and the human—which is always relative" (p. 85).

"Even so, there is a new element in this view of infallibility and it is of great importance. The new element consists in an absence, an excision. It excludes from the understanding of infallibility the conception that the Bible as a human literary product is a book in which literary, historical, geographical, numerical, or other disparities do not and cannot exist. In that sense the Bible *cannot* be said to be infallible or inerrant" (p. 86).

See also THE BANNER (Feb. 10, 1978).

*Grounds:*

1. Report 44 of the Synod of 1972 and its guidelines have been used to affirm that there are errors in the Bible.
2. This declaration agrees with Articles 4, 5, the Belgic Confession.
3. The Synod of 1973 claims that neither Report 44 nor its guidelines raises any doubts concerning the fact that "all that Scripture says is to be believed because the author says so" (Acts of Synod 1973, Art. 32, II, B, 2, p. 34).
4. This declaration is consistent with the statement of the Synod of 1959 "that Scripture in its whole extent and in all its parts is the infallible and inerrant Word of God" (Acts of Synod 1959, Art. 134, I, B, e, p. 64).

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

### Overture 3 — Request Report re Verhey Matter

Classis Illiana overtures the Synod of 1979 to bring to a conclusion the question of the legitimacy of Dr. Verhey's views which led to the decision taken by the Synod of 1977:

"that synod ask the consistory of Neland Avenue CRC to report its investigation to the 1979 Synod" (Acts of Synod 1977, Article 70). In the event Neland Avenue CRC does not report to the Synod of 1979, synod itself should conduct this investigation.

*Grounds:*

1. Neland Avenue failed to bring to the Synod of 1978 a report of its investigation as requested by the Synod of 1977.
2. The Synod of 1977 was confronted with a considerable number of appeals and overtures from churches and classes insisting on a decision by synod. Such a decision was postponed in view of the expected response of Neland Avenue in 1978 which was not forthcoming.
3. This matter has been before the churches since the examination of Dr. Verhey in Classis Grand Rapids East in September of 1975.
4. The Synod of 1979 should bring this matter to a conclusion for the sake of Dr. Verhey as well as the confessional integrity of the CRC. Without equivocation and further delay our churches should know: can an office bearer in the CRC call into question the historical reality of the speaking serpent as taught in Genesis 3 and the earthquake at the time of our Lord's resurrection?

Classis Illiana

Carl E. Zylstra, stated clerk

*Note:* It should be observed that a report of Neland Avenue Consistory on the Verhey matter was received in May 1978 but was not presented to the Synod of 1978 because the matter was still in the process of adjudication in Classis Grand Rapids East. (See Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 21, p. 17.)

Wm. P. Brink, Stated Clerk

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#### Overture 4 — Designate NIV Acceptable Version

Classis Chatham overtures the Synod of 1979 to designate the New International Version Bible translation as one of the versions acceptable for use in worship services subject to a favorable review by the Bible Translation Committee.

*Grounds:*

1. The need for a modern translation in contemporary English for pulpit and other uses in our churches is apparent.
2. The concern for a new translation as realized in the NIV was expressed by the Synod of 1966 and previous synods.
3. All scholars (of whom some are members of the Christian Reformed Church) who have taken an active part in the translation of this version were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form.
4. The Synod of 1976 expressed its approval for the use of the NIV in the churches by recommending its translation for financial support.

Classis Chatham

G. J. Bomhof, stated clerk

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#### Overture 5 — Designate NIV Acceptable Version

Classis Grand Rapids South overtures the Synod of 1979 to designate the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible as one of the versions acceptable for use in worship services.

*Grounds:*

1. According to Article 47 of the Church Order, it is incumbent upon synod to designate the Bible versions to be used in the worship service. Article 52b of the Church Order makes it the duty of the consistory to see to it that the synodically approved versions are used.
2. The need for a modern translation for pulpit and other use in our churches is apparent. We believe this is shown in the decision of the Synod of 1976 (against the advice

of both Advisory Committee and the Synodical Interim Committee) that "synod place on the list of non-denominational causes for financial support the work of preparing the 'New International Version' of the Holy Bible." The grounds given then are also instructive (Acts of Synod 1976, pp. 41-42):

- "a. Already before this work was initiated and for some time thereafter our synods have expressed their interest in such a translation and have encouraged it.
  - "b. From the beginning some of our eminent biblical scholars have been engaged in this work. The present Executive Secretary also is a minister of the Christian Reformed Church. Both of these facts demonstrate the influence which we as a church, be it indirectly, are having.
  - "c. The New Testament has already been published and is receiving wide acclaim as a faithful, readable, and highly competent translation."
3. These translators were united in their commitment to the authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They were also well qualified to perform this task.
  4. The New Testament has been favorably reviewed by the standing committee on Bible Translations.
  5. This recommendation follows in a tradition within the Christian Reformed Church (Synods 1926, 1954, 1966, 1976) which is deeply concerned with a better understanding of the Scriptures through improved Bible versions. We thank God for the extent to which he has enabled the NIV translators to produce such an improved version.
  6. We are concerned with the oral communication of the biblical truths to our children. Our congregations have many children so we strongly believe that the reading of Scripture during worship should be in a style they will understand. The NIV was tested for clarity and ease of reading by various ages and classes of people and the resulting translation is remarkable.

Classis Grand Rapids South  
H. J. Kwantes, stated clerk

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## Overture 6 — Designate NIV Acceptable Version

Classis Sioux Center overtures the 1979 Synod to approve the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible for use in the worship service.

*Grounds:*

1. Article 52b of the Church Order requires that only approved versions be used, and churches should be authorized to use the best translations available.
2. The NIV is more than a revision of earlier translations. It is a new translation of Holy Scriptures into contemporary English. It has been acknowledged as accurate in translation, and has been called a "faithful, readable, and highly competent" translation.
3. Trial use has demonstrated that its style makes it appropriate for use in the worship service.
4. The Christian Reformed Church initiated the NIV when its synod appointed a committee on Bible translation from the Calvin Seminary in 1956. This committee reported to the Synod of 1958 that there was a need among evangelicals for a new Bible in contemporary English. Subsequently several men of our denomination became involved in one way or another in this translation, among them, Edwin H. Palmer, John H. Stek, Marten H. Woudstra, Simon Kistemaker, Gerard Van Groningen, John J. Timmerman, Richard F. Wevers, William Hendriksen, and David Engelhard.

Classis Sioux Center  
Paul E. Bakker, stated clerk

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## Overture 7 — Ratification of Synodical Decisions by Classes

Classis Illiana wishes to express its deep concern that the Synod of 1978 made two "substantial alterations" in the Church Order, namely that of instituting the office of

evangelist and that of admitting women to the office of deacon, without allowing the churches to "have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes" (Art. 47), other than by way of study committee reports.

Classis Illiana therefore overtures synod to add the following sentence to the second paragraph of Article 47 of the Church Order:

However, changes made by synod with respect to the creeds or Church Order shall not become effective unless approved by a majority of the classes and certified to have been approved by the next subsequent synod.

*Ground:* This additional requirement would assure better expression of the mind of the whole church on matters pertaining to our creeds and Church Order, since each consistory would have a vote on the classical level.

Classis Illiana  
Carl E. Zylstra, stated clerk

### Overture 8 — Ratification of Synodical Decisions by Classes

Classis Sioux Center overtures the Synod of 1979 of the Christian Reformed Church to make an amendment to Article 47 of the Church Order as follows:

Synod, after having tentatively adopted a substantive alteration of the creeds or the Church Order, shall submit the alteration to the next meeting of each classis. Ratification of the alteration depends upon an affirmative vote by the majority of the classes prior to the commencement of the next synod. Failure by a classis to act within the prescribed time shall constitute rejection by that classis. Upon approval by the classes, synod shall adopt the final declarative resolution after which the alteration becomes effective.

*Grounds:*

1. The Church Order functions as a constitution of the CRC and any changes in it should reflect as much as possible the comprehensive mind of the church.
2. The procedure delineated in the overture will directly involve more of the members and leaders of the denomination than the limited number of delegates to synod and thus will reflect a more comprehensive mind of the church.
3. This procedure will insure that "... the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes" as stipulated in Article 47.
4. This procedure will strengthen the unity of the church in its adoption of an alteration.
5. This procedure is consistent with Article 96 since synod, at its discretion, still has the authority to make a final declarative resolution on a revision.

Classis Sioux Center  
Paul E. Bakker, stated clerk

### Overture 9 — Two-thirds Vote of Synod for Church Order Changes

Classis Huron overtures synod to amend the Rules of Synod so that a majority of no less than two-thirds of all voting delegates shall be required to make any change in the Church Order.

*Grounds:*

1. This will prevent a small majority from forcing its will upon the total life of the denomination.
2. Such a change will aid synod in promoting peace and harmony within our denomination.
3. The importance of the Church Order in the life of the churches would surely require more than a simple majority to make changes which can deeply affect the life of the churches.

Classis Huron  
B. Bernard Bakker, stated clerk

### Overture 10 — Ratification of Article 3 by Classes

The Consistory of East Palmyra overtures the Synod of 1979 to place the responsibility of the ratification of the proposed change in Article 3 of the Church Order upon our 38 classes. Two-thirds of them (namely 26 classes) shall have to affirm ratification for passage. The decisions of the classes shall be reported to the Synod of 1980.

*Grounds:*

1. A simple majority vote is insufficient for so important a matter as ordination of women.
2. All the consistories of the denomination, and not just the synodical delegates, should be allowed their input in this significant decision.
3. An added year of consideration of this new proposal will help to come to a more satisfying decision.
4. Robert's Rules of Order requires a two-thirds majority for passage of an amendment to a constitution.

East Palmyra Consistory  
Peter Admiraal, clerk

*Note:* The above overture was submitted to Classis Atlantic Northeast but was not adopted.

### Overture 11 — Limitation upon Deliberative Authority of Synod

Classis Chicago South calls the attention of synod to the fact that delegates to synod are authorized to take part only in such actions as are "transacted in agreement with the Word of god . . . as well as in harmony with the Church Order" (Synodical Credentials). Therefore Classis Chicago South overtures the Synod of 1979 to adopt the following policy as one of its rules of procedure (in order to make explicit what has always been implicit in Articles 29, 47, and 96 of the Church Order): "Any proposed action which, by its material content, necessitates a change in the Church Order must be presented to synod as a proposed change in the Church Order."

*Grounds:*

1. Although the delegates to synod are authorized to propose and adopt changes in the Church Order (provided sufficient time is given to the churches for consideration of the proposed changes), the delegates are not authorized to take part in any actions not in harmony with the Church Order. Actions not in harmony with the Church Order are not authorized and therefore must be considered null and void.
2. This proposed rule provides the only way in which the spirit of "common agreement," which is the basis of authority in such matters (changes in the Church Order) of church polity, can be duly honored.

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

### Overture 12 — Consistorial Ratification of Synodical Decisions

Classis Chicago South overtures synod to revise Article 47 of the Church Order by adding the following:

- a. Decisions of the Christian Reformed Church which involve doctrinal or ethical changes or changes in the Church Order must be ratified by a majority of the consistories in the denomination by the commencement of the annual meeting of synod.
- b. These decisions shall be considered settled and binding only after successful ratification as described above.

*Grounds:*

1. The equality of all believers in the church of Christ requires that the laity as they are well represented in consistories be given a credibly equitable share in the decision mak-

ing processes of the denomination especially as it is related to their conscience, faith, and practice of Christian fellowship.

2. This does not constitute an unreasonable delay in the implementation of synodical decisions when considered from the perspective of the far-reaching consequences of decisions of this type.

3. A broader base for deliberation on these critical decisions impacting the lives and consciences of so many is certainly warranted.

4. The present structure of synod (50-50 clergy-laity representation) is conducive to a conceivable dominance of the clergy over the laity (one of the causes of the Protestant Reformation). This proposed revision of the Church Order would serve as a check against this possibility.

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

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### Overture 13 — Declaration re Office of Evangelist

Classis Chicago South overtures synod to declare that the office of evangelist be considered a full-time position.

*Grounds:*

1. There is some obscurity in the 1978 decision of synod. While in the majority report the word "full-time" is used, in the report of the advisory committee adopted by synod "full-time" is absent.

2. Ordination to the work of evangelist, as to the work of the ministry, involves full-time service.

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

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### Overture 14 — Change in Rules re Office of Evangelist

Classis Kalamazoo overtures the 1979 Synod to change the word "organized" to "a calling church" in the 1978 synodical decision on Layworkers in Evangelism (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 66, C, 6, e, p. 78).

*Grounds:*

1. The present wording precludes the ordaining of an evangelist who is serving an organized but not yet calling church.

2. An emerging congregation usually retains the services of its layworker during the transition from organization to being granted by classis the permission to be a calling church.

Classis Kalamazoo  
Jack Stulp, stated clerk

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### Overture 15 — Recognition of Dutch Reformed Church in Africa

Classis Eastern Canada overtures the Synod of 1979 to take immediate steps toward the recognition of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA) as a church in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church.

*Observations:*

1. Our urgent need for the kind of instruction and discipline which the NGKA can provide in ecclesiastical fellowship is heightened by our growing involvement in the RES with the "state church" (NGK) and the "Reformed Church" (GK) in South Africa. The balance of influence in our current structures of ecumenical relations has made it all too

easy to overlook apartheid and involvement in the Lodge (Broederbond) in these "Dutch" denominations.

2. The Dutch Reformed Church in Africa (NGKA) is not "Dutch" in the sense of ethnic exclusiveness, despite its name. The history of its uneasy relationship with the "state church"—in some ways strikingly like our own history of conflict with the "state church" in the Netherlands—has resulted in the inclusion of the Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, and other indigenous nationalities within the basic NGKA denominational structure. The church is now actively seeking White, "Colored," and Indian members as well, having condemned apartheid root and branch. In the urban centers the NGKA worship services (like those of the Anglicans, Roman Catholics, and other non-apartheid churches) frequently include Christians of "all nations."

3. There is need for identification with Reformed Christians outside the Dutch and Anglo-Saxon majority in our denomination and the denominations in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church (Revelation 7:9-10).

Classis Eastern Canada  
John de Vries, Jr., stated clerk

### Overture 16 — Request for a Study of Denominational Boards

The Synod of 1978 rejected an overture from Classis Hudson to reorganize the Back to God Hour Committee so that it would be constituted as a full-fledged denominational board, including members-at-large. In the synodical discussion it became evident that there was dissatisfaction with existing board structures and performance.

There would appear to be a number of considerations that justify certain criticisms against our boards. The following salient board features invite criticism:

1. The large membership on a number of boards. The Home Missions Board has forty-nine members, the Calvin College and Seminary Board forty-seven, the World Missions Board forty-six, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee forty-four, and the Board of Publications thirty-eight. In contrast, both Back to God Hour and Synodical Interim Committee only have fourteen members each.
2. The disproportionate number of ministers on three of the boards. On the Calvin, Home and World Missions Boards, ministers occupy between 85% and 90% of the thirty-eight classical seats. The World Relief Committee on the other hand is wholly lay in its composition, while the Board of Publications has twenty-one lay and seventeen ministerial representatives.
3. The position of members-at-large in the board structures of Home Missions, Calvin, World Missions, and CRWRC. The member-at-large represents no ecclesiastical entity, his "area" is fully represented by classical members, he reports to no ecclesiastical body and confers with none. He is responsible only to himself. The member-at-large is a development without any basis in Reformed ecclesiastical principles. It is noteworthy that the Board of Publications has no members-at-large at all.
4. Out of a total of 256 board members in the seven boards mentioned above, only ten are women. This compares poorly indeed with the large role they play in the day to day work of the denomination.
5. Membership turnover is so great that it is difficult to see how the necessary continuity of policy and service can be adequately maintained.
6. The infrequent meetings of the boards raises the question of the effectiveness of board meetings, as also that of the concentration of power in the hands of executive committees and permanent staffs.

In view of these considerations, Classis Holland overtures the Synod of 1979 to appoint a study committee to review the size, composition, and effectiveness of the major denominational boards, including the Back to God Hour Committee and the Synodical Interim Committee, and to come to the Synod of 1981 with recommendations covering - 1) the possibility of smaller, more workable boards; 2) much greater diversity of membership; 3) increased continuity; and 4) increased overall effectiveness.

#### Grounds:

1. A number of boards (4 of them) have from 44 to 49 members; another has 38. Since 1948 the number of classical board delegates has doubled. Such large numbers preclude

efficient functioning. Few of America's largest corporations have even half that number of board members.

2. In a number of boards, diversity of membership leaves much to be desired. Our denomination has too much talent available covering every aspect of denominational outreach and undertaking. Its proper utilization by the classes could also eliminate "delegate-at-large" representation.

3. The boards' turnover rates are much too high, individually ranging to 50% annually, and to over 80% over three year periods, resulting in ineffective involvement in board activity by many.

4. Board effectiveness is not only dependent on size, diversity and continuity, but also on the number of meetings annually scheduled. Consideration should be given to this aspect, particularly where boards meet only once or twice annually.

5. A comprehensive study of denominational board structure and effectiveness has never been made. It is the opinion of Classis Holland that such an overall evaluation should be made at this time.

Classis Holland  
John Leugs, stated clerk

### Overture 17 — Rules re Admission of Ministers from Other Denominations

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures the Synod of 1979 to direct its synodical deputies:

1. to take specific and special note of the "need" factor when requested to give their advice to the consistories and/or classes in the calling of ministers from other denominations and in declaring ministers from other denominations available for call in the Christian Reformed Church at their own request;

2. to require of the consistories and/or classes such written specification of the "need" for approving such ministers and their calling as will satisfy the synodical deputies in their concurrence, which written specification shall then become part of the report of the synodical deputies to be submitted for synodical approval.

*Grounds:*

a. The requirement that there be a clear need for admitting ministers from other denominations is adequately set forth in synodical regulations. (See Church Order Supplement, Article 8.)

b. Without a specific report on the matter of need there is no way for synod to know whether this aspect of its concern is being taken seriously, since present regulations do not require a report on the grounds of concurrence.

c. It is the judgment of many that the Christian Reformed Church is at present not in need of admitting any more ministers from other denominations. However, such ministers are still being admitted each year. If there is such need it ought to be demonstrable.

d. There are clear indications that many candidates will be available for service in the Christian Reformed Church, having been trained specifically for the Christian Reformed Church ministry, who may not be able to find a place for service to the church because of a limited number of churches in need of ministers. Therefore, the matter of demonstrated need becomes crucially important.

3. That in situations where the deputies have grave difficulty in coming to a decision, they be urged to seek the advice of the Synodical Interim Committee before rendering a decision in the matter.

*Grounds:*

a. With respect to the need of the Christian Reformed Church for ministers from other denominations, the Synodical Interim Committee would be able to give informed advice.

b. Since approval of synodical deputies must be obtained in either case before any public actions or announcements can be set forth, there is no impediment in seeking such advice.

Classis Grand Rapids East  
G. H. Stoutmeyer, stated clerk

### Overture 18 — Addition to Guide for Church Visiting

In the "Guide for Conducting Church Visiting," Classis Quinte overtures synod to add in the section "Regarding the Deacons," question 5, the following question: *Do they promote the work of the CRWRC and does the congregation respond adequately?*

*Grounds:*

- a. The program of the CRWRC is important.
- b. Not all congregations are diligent in promoting and supporting the work of CRWRC.

Classis Quinte  
Guy Corvers, stated clerk

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### Overture 19 — Distribution of Informative Communications

The Synod of 1971 adopted the following rule:

"Synod urges our assemblies and members to refrain from overtures, appeals, or communications which are repetitious, or mere expressions of agreement or disagreement with matters already on the agenda of synod.

"Synod authorizes the Stated Clerk to omit such items from the printed agenda at his discretion. In such cases they shall merely be listed and accepted as informative communications. The senders shall be notified and their materials shall be given to one of the advisory committees of synod to be received as information. Matters received as information will not ordinarily be mentioned in advisory committee reports or the Acts of Synod.

*Grounds:*

1. Such materials contribute no additional light, and tend to obscure the deliberative character of synod.
2. The materials that are printed in the Agenda and Acts of Synod should meet the demands of intrinsic value and good stewardship in the elimination of needless expense" (Acts of Synod 1971, Art. 58, pp. 46-47).

Classis Hackensack overtures the Synod of 1979 to insert the following sentence immediately before the last sentence in the second paragraph of the above decision: "These materials shall also be distributed to all synodical delegates."

*Grounds:*

1. These materials are sent in by members, churches and classes for consideration and action by synod.
2. Giving these materials to one advisory committee only seriously limits synodical consideration and action.

Classis Hackensack  
C. N. Van Dalfsen, stated clerk

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### Overture 20 — Synodical Reimbursement for Loss of Wages

Classis Hamilton overtures synod to rule that synod shall reimburse committee members on executive committees of synodical agencies and committees (including CRWRC) "for loss of wages entailed in a committee members' absence from home" (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 345, VI, B).

*Grounds:*

1. There is a misunderstanding regarding interpretation of the Synodical Interim Committee on this matter. It is our understanding that this interpretation does not apply to persons serving on executive committees of boards and agencies of synod.
2. All qualified people should be able to serve regardless of financial positions.

Classis Hamilton  
John W. Jongmsma, stated clerk

### Overture 21 — Establish a Canadian Bank Account

Classis Hamilton overtures the Synod of 1979 to establish a Canadian bank account to accommodate financial transactions with the churches in Canada.

*Grounds:*

1. To avoid banking fees
2. To stabilize churches' budgeting.

Classis Hamilton  
John W. Jongsma, stated clerk

### Overture 22 — Establish a Ministers' Compensation Committee

The North Haledon Consistory overtures synod to establish the minimum salary and fringe benefits that are paid each minister to be the same for all ministers as that adopted for FNC churches in order to comply with the "GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS' SALARIES" (1979 average salary and fringe benefits \$15,838.00) and to revise the name and function of the FNC Committee to implement the following procedure:

1. The name of the committee should be "BASIC MINISTERS' COMPENSATION" committee (BMC).
2. A quota of \$172.00 per family (based on 1979 statistics) be included in denominational quotas for BMC, this quota to be assessed as the minimum salary and fringe benefits is determined annually.
3. Each church will determine the total dollar amount of quota to be paid to the denomination and then deduct the minimum salary and fringe benefit amount to be paid. The balance due will be the amount of quota payments paid to the denomination for all causes.
4. If a church's total quota requirement is less than the minimum salary and fringe benefit amount, that church will submit a voucher to the BMC for subsidy to meet the minimum salary and fringe benefit payment.
5. The above will apply to a vacant church as well, except the church receiving subsidy will submit a voucher to the BMC on the following basis:
  - a. If church has a stated supply and the total quota requirement is less than \$8,320.00, the voucher will be for the difference.
  - b. If church is arranging for visiting ministers and the total quota requirement is less than \$4,160.00, the voucher will be for the actual difference in cost.
6. The following from the "GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS' SALARIES" report and recommendations "Supplement 7, Acts of Synod 1970" should be restated and emphasized. "The committee does not mean that the minimum should in any way be construed as the maximum, but that it becomes the base from which to proceed responsibly to a realistic salary on the basis of annual reevaluation of need, increase or decrease in cost of living and prevailing salary standards." Each congregation by its own inclination could supplement salary and benefits.
7. A committee be appointed to assist the FNC Committee to recommend a procedure to be followed to implement this program. The joint committee shall make its report and recommendation to the Synod of 1980.

*Grounds:*

- a. The Synod of 1970 (Article 88) adopted the recommendations of the special committee to establish minimum salaries and fringe benefits for ministers. This "Guidelines for Ministers' Salaries" shall apply to all churches. Synod has not followed through and now the only churches that are mandated to comply with this decision are churches requesting assistance from FNC.
- b. The Synod of 1970 (Article 88) adopted a base salary for that year which was to be revised periodically (annually or biennially). The two committees presently functioning pertaining to ministers' salary have within their guidelines the following conflict.

The Ministerial Salary Guidelines Committee states in the Acts of Synod 1970, "In considering its ability to grant an increase, the consistory should set its ministers' salary increase as a primary obligation. In considering its ability to grant an increase, the consistory should set the salary increase ahead of capital expenditures, etc. Meeting its

financial responsibilities to its minister should take priority over responsibilities to classis and synod.

This is challenged by the statement made in the Fund for Needy Churches mandate of 1958, Acts of Synod, "That recipient congregations be strongly urged to reckon with the requirement that in the matter of salary payments they become self-supporting as soon as possible." From the "Information About the Fund for Needy Churches, Inc." (revised 7-1-75), "It is expected that needy churches participate fully in giving to synodically adopted quotas." This tension causes some churches to become self-supporting at the expense of ministers' salaries and maintenance of good facilities; both of which can be detrimental to the welfare of a growing church.

c. Each year synod revises this base salary and fringe benefits for FNC churches as recommended by the FNC Committee on the ground that it is necessary in order to comply with the "Guidelines for Ministers' Salaries" adopted by Synod of 1970. Our present system of self-supporting and Fund for Needy Churches places greater demand on per/family support for ministers' salaries on members of smaller churches; thereby making it more difficult to adequately support a minister and placing a greater burden upon families attending smaller churches. (See financial statement in supplement to overture 22.) A more equitable per/family quota denominationally would give smaller churches the ability to use finances for building and grounds improvements to meet the needs for the work of the church and share fully in other denominational programs (such as missionary support).

d. The proposed committee would be in accord with the present mood of our church order and our quota practice since we are presently collectively supporting a goodly number of our ministers by means of a quota system through several agencies. The Home Missions Board's "Grant-In-Aid" program could be substantially reduced and eliminate the duplication of money and effort that now exists. Classical salary support programs could also be reduced and a simple and better system of accountability would result.

e. We are basically a denomination of small churches, the average church having 92 families. Of our churches 404 or 56.50% have 92 or less families, and 176 or 24.62% of the churches have 147 or less families. Over 81% of our churches are under 147 families. The basic cost of operating a church is not much different for a medium church than a large church and two of the larger basic costs of operating a church are the minister's salary and denominational quotas. However, the cost is much greater per/family for the smaller church.

North Haledon Consistory  
Arthur Van Hook, stated clerk

*Note:* The overture above was submitted to Classis Hackensack, but was not adopted.

In accord with the request of the consistory the above overture and grounds are printed and lengthy appendix containing pertinent information and financial facts will be forwarded to all members of the Advisory Committee of synod which will process this overture.

### Overture 23 — Discontinue Funding of Ministers' Pension Fund

The Consistory of Grande Prairie-La Glace overtures the 1979 Synod to discontinue the present funding concept undergirding the Christian Reformed Ministers' Pension Fund.

#### *Grounds:*

##### 1. *Scriptural Considerations*

a. The funding concept is unscriptural. Scripture teaches that those who minister the Word and sacraments are to be supported by the free-will offerings of God's people. I Corinthians 9:13,14 teaches, "Don't you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel." The same rule is spelled out in Galatians 6:6, "Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches." The funding concept clearly violates this scriptural rule for supporting ministers, active or retired.

b. Scripture teaches that the church of Jesus Christ must be financially supported by the

free-will offerings of the people of God (1 Cor. 16:1,2; II Cor. 9:6-15). This rule for the support of God's church in all its activities, as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God on the part of his redeemed people, was established from the very beginning. The funding concept violates this basic God-given rule. It is taking one phase of the church's duties, that of a loving support for its retired ministers, and placing it in control of a lifeless, out-of-hand, uncertain business enterprise.

c. Undeniably, the church is doing business when it invests money for the sake of making money. The Lord condemns this strongly in Matthew 21:12.

d. Synod's answer to Mr. Kolkman (Art. 81, C. 1., b. Acts of Synod 1976) based on II Corinthians 12:14 has nothing to do with the issue at hand. The church must bequeath to the next generation the duties incumbent on it, i.e. the duty of a loving care and support of all ministers, whether retired or not. Future generations must be taught to see this as a great honor and duty and privilege demanded by the Lord. They must be taught to see that ministers of the gospel have a right to this loving care of the church of Jesus Christ. Surely we do not want them to conclude, which our plan now intimates, that all of the church's affairs can rightly be supported by cold business ventures.

## 2. Economic Considerations

a. In accord with Acts of Synod, 1976, p. 90, ground b. "We have no moral right to bequeath to the next generation the obligation of paying a significant part of the compensation to the ministers that served this generation," we must note that *we are* loading down this *present* generation with the needs of the present *and of the future* needs of our retired ministers.

b. Because of the devaluation of the dollar it seems unfair that we at present should give our dollar for future use when that dollar may only have the value of fifty or sixty cents in the future.

c. Because of the devaluation of the dollar, the amount of money now proposed for this fund will not be sufficient in the future and will have to be enlarged from time to time. Future generations will still be trying to build this fund bigger and bigger.

d. The argument that the government demands certain conditions be met in order to have a Pension Plan are not convincing. The church is entitled to care for its retired ministers through free-will offerings of its members. If the handling of such monies comes under state laws because it is called a Ministers' Pension Plan, we should rename it, so that the government will know we do not have a pension plan, but do have funds to care for our retired ministers.

## 3. Historical and Judicial Considerations

The Ministers' Pension Plan cannot be viewed as an isolated monetary venture of a church attempting to accumulate finances on the marketplace of the world for the financing of its own ends. There are many fields of endeavor which are questionable according to God's Word. The entire aspect of business and financing has had little scrutiny in recent years within our circles and the powerful influence of the world has a tendency to quietly slip into our backdoors influencing our thinking and acting in every aspect of living. The entire system of our debt economy, of government stocks and bonds and the stock market have a long history behind them both in secular and in Christian circles. We hope that the following short study into the history and evolution of the market place, specifically the development and place of usury (interest) will give a clearer insight as to why this church and consistory feel that it is wrong for our denomination to invest its faith and monies in the present Ministers' Pension Fund.

In 1941 a group of Christians met at Malvern, England to discuss the future of Western civilization in the midst of its greatest crisis, the war against Nazi paganism. In the *Findings*, drawn up by Bishop William Temple, reference was made to one of the main underlying causes of the crises facing the West: The financial system based on usury, "A system in which there is a distinct monetary interest, apart from the interest of the producer or of the community as a whole, tends to fall under the condemnation of usury." This definition of usury, the distinct interest in money for its own sake, is still valid in the '70's.

This system has been operating now for 500 years, not only within the boundaries of individual nations, but in the world market with which the western nations must also play their role for preservation and prosperity. It is therefore imperative that all Christians understand that we are today witnessing the replacement of man by money as the dominating end of his own activity. The modern way of life in which the worship of money has become the mainspring of the human enterprise, is not, as the bankers and economists would have us suppose, the natural and necessary mode of man's life. It is in

fact, completely contrary to the Law and Word of God. The rise of the present financial system based upon usury came about in the 15th and 16th centuries by the defeat of the Christian philosophy of economics.

We must be aware of the present dangers in our society that have developed over the past centuries. R. J. Rushdoony warns us concerning this present system:

"A truly Christian order means not only a severely limited order with respect to time limits on debt, but also severely restricted with respect to usury. It cannot be one of debt money and of a debt economy. Government 'bonds' must be seen as clearly unlawful to the orthodox Christian, and to his institutions for they involve a philosophy of debt, and of continuing debt, for bonds are not generally retired when due. Indeed, bonds are the mainstay of debt money. . . bonds are a central aspect to a debt economy, the mainstay of money-lenders, and a death knell to the liberties of a people. No 'money trust' can be destroyed merely by exposure or by knowledge of its existence. It can rapidly be destroyed as people take seriously their faith in its every aspect and submit themselves to the sovereignty of God and his Word. Most 'fundamentalist' (and we feel Reformed) Christians are thoroughly 'modernist' in their radical disregard of much of Scripture, including its teaching concerning debt and usury. There is no preaching against the installment plan, bonds, debt money, long-term debts, unbiblical usury. The present debt economy based on usury will sooner or later collapse, destroying with it all institutions built thereon. A new and debt-free economy must even now be inaugurated in the healthy segments of society, lest chaos follow" (Craig Press, Nutley, N.J. 1965, p. 155).

The biblical condemnation of interest and usury is quite clear. Debt is only to be contracted in emergencies and no man can mortgage his future, since time is controlled by the Sovereign God and it is not to be used by man to exploit his neighbors. The maximum life of a debt was six years and on the seventh year all debts had to be cancelled (Ex. 23:10ff., Lev. 25:1ff., Deut. 15:6-11; 28:12,44). The Old Testament forbids one Hebrew to take from another, and defines usury as that which exceeds the sum loaned.

Unlike the heathen nations of the day such as Babylon and Egypt where 20% interest was usual and 30% demanded for short term loans, the people of God were expected to care for the poor and the weak, and even the strangers, the sort of people that were the first to be exposed to the money-grabbers of the day. God follows this instruction with stern warnings (Ex. 22:21-24), and commands not to seize the goods of the poor man arbitrarily if he fails to pay his debts, "Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of the poor in his cause" (Ex. 23:6). Thus the poor, the widows and the strangers are to receive their rights not as to a form of charitable largesse, but as a fundamental means of preserving national life and unity. The rights of the creditor were so limited in Israel that he could not carry on a lucrative business at the cost of his fellow citizens. The Law of God was directed to preserving the true wealth of a nation, namely, its people, not its property; human beings called by God to freedom, and such a people alone are the indispensable form of wealth—this is the kernel of the whole legal and economic doctrine in the Old Testament. The equality of all members of the nation is imperative before the God who is no respecter of persons but requires voluntary sacrifice by all citizens to the benefit of the entire nation.

The same concern with the rights of person before the rights of property is apparent in the New Testament. Time after time Jesus warns his disciples of the dangers of putting one's trust in money and the worship of Mammon (Matt. 16:26; 6:19; John 6:27; Mark 10:24). The same concern for the widow, the poor and the afflicted shown by God in the Old Testament are shown by Jesus in the New Testament: "... for I was hungry and you gave me no meat, I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink..." (Matt. 25:41-46). It is in this eschatological perspective of God's eternal justice and Christ's eternal love that the Christian can think about the use of money in God's world. It is God alone who gives to man the power to obtain wealth (Deut. 8:17-20), and it is to God only that every man will have to give an account of his stewardship.

The early Christians, while turning to the Bible for moral and religious arguments against interest and usury, turned to Aristotle for their technical arguments. Aristotle taught that money is infertile, does not breed real wealth, and therefore cannot reproduce itself in the form of interest, without violence being done to justice. He knew nothing about the modern thing known as credit, and intangible fluctuating quantity of 'money' held only in books. He dealt with real coins, and he believed that no mere transaction of borrowing could produce an expansion of money as we know it today.

Aristotle's teaching against usury exerted great influence upon Christian thinking

about money. Both the suspicion of trade and the condemnation of usury passed into early and medieval Christian thought, for both trade and usury were tainted with the mortal sin of avarice. Christians of the day believed that man's activity in the natural world must be shaped by his final spiritual end. However, it is important to note that the dualism of Aristotle soon found its way into theological thought.

A dilemma theologians and moralists faced was, how to distinguish between loans for consumption and loans for production and trading operations. Slowly formulations were developed in which usury or gaining money without working for it was contrary to the spiritual realm as nor working was contrary to the natural realm. However, a new word crept into use; the word used to cover certain risks undertaken by business ventures to protect their investments was 'interest.' The justification for interest was that it would be compensation for loss sustained by the lender; compensation, not profit, was the formal distinction. Even compensation could be sought only if the loan had originally been gratuitous and if the lender had neither hoped nor intended to receive any return for the making of the loan. Delay was the most usual reason for compensation.

More controversial was the question whether he could also seek compensation for profits lost by being denied the use of his money after the stipulated date. The first case was widely accepted by most authorities. However, the second worried many theologians because it implied that money could be a source of gain. With the opening up of commerce in the later Middle Ages and the growing need for capital investment in ships, plant and mining machinery as well as printing presses, the theologians lost their battle against the argument that a man making a loan had forfeited a chance of profitable investment elsewhere and should be compensated for that particular loss of opportunity.

This led to a major breakthrough in usury theory and practice. It was soon argued that because of the chance of loss on investment due to delay, interest should be charged from the beginning of the loan and for the duration of that loan. The earlier claim and requirement that the debtor should have defaulted in payment before interest could be charged was abandoned. Canonists and theologians did address themselves to these problems but they did not solve the real problem—that in the newly emerging capitalist economy, money, rather than human subsistence and welfare, was tending to become the dominating purpose of work and trade; that profit mattered more than persons, and that man's economic activity was heading for a situation in which money became a living organism. In short, nature in the Aristotelian sense was eating up grace in the economic sphere of life, just as it had begun to do in European statecraft through Machiavelli's new doctrine of the power-pagan state and through European art and morality with the same destructive consequences. The attempts of the canonists and Christian theologians to check the usurer were hampered by the ethos of an age which had drawn a false distinction between religion and life, so that economic activity was uncontrolled by any concept of the unity and wholeness of the human task in the world. Man began to think of himself as over the law rather than under the law.

In the sixteenth century there was one other important development in the evolution of the modern financial jungle. It was the beginning of the triple contract theory which brought together three principles that had been used; the partnership, the insurance of the principal in return for a fixed share of the profits, and a guarantee of a fixed return on investment. Ecclesiastical circles were slow to pick up on the last point.

The Reformers failed to provide new Christian philosophies governing economic policies that were relevant to that day. The church, by synthesizing nature and grace in the thirteenth century through the leadership of Aquinas, paved the way for the future secularization of Western economic and legal thought during the Renaissance. In teaching that not man's reason or intellect but only his will had fallen, Aquinas had opened up the way for the emergence of an autonomous realm in which man's reason rather than God's Word held undisputed sway. The realm of the natural man's reason was supposed by Aquinas to be capable of elucidating the first principles of both the natural and social sciences including the science of economics. This autonomy of man's "natural" unfallen reason really lies at the basis of the secularization of Western business. It helps to explain the inconsistencies into which the medieval scholastic theologians and moralists fell in their efforts to reconcile the new economic differentiation taking place under their noses with an eternal unchangeable Natural Law, which they mistook for God's creation norm.

Calvin was the first theologian to deny that usury *per se* was contrary to the Word of

God. He rejected Aristotle and the assumption of the scholastic position that money was sterile and declared that the Scriptures did not forbid usury to all men, but only to the Jews; an entirely novel approach to the question.

In 1545 Calvin made his famous reply to the questions of Claude de Sachins on the subject of usury. In this letter he examined one by one the texts which were adduced in all condemnations of usury and gave his reasons why they were not conclusive. He pointed out that as far as the prohibition of usury among the Jews was concerned, men were now living under a different dispensation from the Old Testament. He examined the argument which had been inherited through the church fathers from Aristotle, "money does not breed money," and concluded, "It is not therefore from money that the profit grows but from production. And so the arguments (of Aristotle) are indeed subtle and have a certain speciousness but when they are examined more closely they collapse entirely" (Quoted in H. M. Robertson's *Aspects of the Rise of Economic Individualism*, Cambridge, England, 1933).

What, above all, characterizes Calvin's teachings is his refusal to objectify the economic relationships between men which are created by economic links, but also their spiritual responsibility before Christ. It is perhaps on this point that Calvin stands most apart, not only from the medieval morality of Thomas Aquinas, but also from the protestant ethic of his contemporaries and predecessors. The loan at interest, above all, is not for him an economic question, nor an act belonging to ethics, but rather a fact that puts man before God in a personal action for which he alone is responsible, a fact whose true nature can be made known and measured only in the charity of Christ, in which everything gets its true identity.

On scriptural grounds, Calvin imposed restrictions on the taking of interest. He wished that usury would disappear from the face of the earth. Calvin held that interest was lawful if it did not exceed an official maximum. He urged various restrictions: that loans must be made free to the poor; that it was wrong to oppress the poor by demanding greater security than they were able to afford; that excessive security must not be exacted from the poor; that the borrower must reap as much advantage as the lender; that what is venial as an occasional expedient is reprehensible when carried on as a regular occupation; and that it was illicit to take a higher rate than the maximum allowed by the civil power. Calvin's approach is, therefore, a turning point in the history of the idea of usury, but not in that of economics or the development of the financial system which is supported.

Protestantism did not bring any sudden change in the Christian attitude towards usury. The secularization of the usury question came about because the churches were no longer strong enough to retain it as an ecclesiastical matter. Thus protestantism cannot be held responsible for the rise of the modern apostate humanist opinion that usury is to be discussed in purely economic rather than religious terms. In his *Economics History of England*, Eric Lipson points out,

"The problem of usury assumed a new aspect in the sixteenth century. Hitherto the ethical issues involved in the taking of interest had been the most widely canvassed; yet though they still continued to engage attention, their importance steadily diminished. Writers still spoke of the 'Damnable sin of usury' but their protestations went unheeded; the main currents of thought sweeping by them were concerned with issues that were fundamentally economic. The questions which exercised the minds of men in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries concerned primarily not the *lawfulness* but the *rate* of interest. Ought the rate of interest to be fixed by law? And what machinery was required to bring together lender and borrower, to mobilize the resources of the community so as to create 'a fund of credit.' The answer to these questions was worked out by gradual stages, in the course of which was evolved the modern banking system. It was reserved for John Locke to suggest that 'to receive profit from the loan of money is as equitable and lawful as receiving rent for land, and more tolerable to the borrower,' whose labor is less arduous than that of a tenant, while his returns were likely to be much greater.

"In practice no distinction was possible between productive and unproductive loans; and the toleration of the one, in the interest of traders and manufacturers, necessarily extended to the other. An Act of Parliament fixing the maximum rate of interest at 10% had been passed in 1545, but repealed in 1552. It was revived by Parliament 1571 in a statute which still denounced usury as 'forbidden by the law of God' and gave no legal right to the lender to enforce a contract for interest. In the debate on the Usury Bill the change of opinion was expressed by a member who said that 'the mischief is in the ex-

cess, not otherwise, and to forbid interest was to hamper trade by keeping apart those with money and those with the skill to use it. The actual rate was sometimes much above 10%; in 1588 even 20% was paid. In 1625 interest was set at 8% and in 1714 the rate went down to 5%.

"These enactments provoked a sharp conflict of opinion as to whether there was a natural rate of interest against which legislation was ineffective. The demand for state regulation was inspired by the low rate in Holland, where in the later seventeenth century it was 3% or 4%. Once usury was brought within the pale of the law, if not of social morality, the ground was prepared for the rise of banking in its modern form. More important than the merchants—or even the needy landowners living in excess of their income the financial needs of the Crown proved the decisive factor in the evolution of the banking system. The long wars with France, which began under William III, forced Parliament to face the real situation, and the solution was found in the creation of a funded debt on the basis of which was erected the Bank of England in 1694" (Vol. III, p. 222-248).

The establishment of the Bank of England marks the beginning of a financial revolution which completely changed the habits of life of millions of people. England changed its real debts into monied debts, debts in the books on which interest must be paid. Shortly after the Napoleonic Wars the national debt rose to over six hundred and seventy million pounds. Taxation became heavier just to maintain the interest on these debts.

The acceptance of a national debt marks the official beginning of the doctrine of "the 10% profit margin" becoming the dominant purpose of economic action. The object of investment and of the business enterprise was not production for the sake of consumption but for the sake of yielding a return on the lenders investment loan. The modern world had been born, in which wealth is no longer identified with real things, but with such intangible assets as "bank credits, mortgages, loans, bonds and stocks, and shares." As England made money her new god it is not surprising she also provided it with a new temple in which to live. Beautiful buildings arose which housed this god and Money Power got into the saddle of political power from which it began to exercise a stranglehold over both the people and the government. Thus began the present system of debt money, which is in effect inflation money, money created out of nothing by the bankers ledgers of Treasury notes and based solely on public faith.

Those who maintained a strong faith in this new economic structure and were fortunate enough to have the capital to invest reaped huge profits at the expense of those less fortunate. Some of the great companies of the day such as the Bank of England, the South Sea Company, and the East India Company, became extremely powerful and controlled not only the government but the destiny of all England, as well as that of Europe. Smaller financial investors invested strictly in government bonds and in shares issued by the big successful merchant oligarchies.

The shattering of a unified spiritual authority left society open to control by one of its own absolutized constituents, and it was economic and financial purpose which came to command all of man's life, as Walpole cynically put it, "Every man has his price." Increasingly that economic purpose became so concentrated upon the accumulation of money in bank ledgers that it fell under the spell of Money Power and has caused our modern confusion about the rightful place and purpose of money. What Christians had called usury, economists now define as a law of nature.

This concludes a very brief history of the development of usury and interest. We feel it points out how our church has fallen into the trap of the economist's law of nature in the funding concept now followed in our Ministers' Pension Plan. To accept the position that it is right to invest in Government bonds and stocks, etc., which is the mainstay of our present day oligarchies which feed off the ordinary people of the day, plus the fact that the church is doing exactly what the modern apostate man is doing—gathering money for the sake of money for future security, is contrary to God's Word, a denial of divine providence, and this way we are following the economists' broad road that brings its own sad rewards. We feel therefore as a church and consistency that it is imperative that our denomination discontinue the funding concept of the Ministers' Pension Fund.

Grand Prairie  
La Grace Consistory  
Menno Klunder, clerk

Note: This overture was presented to Classis Alberta North on January 10, 1978. Classis Alberta North did not endorse this overture.

## Overture 24 — Review and Modify Ministers' Pension Fund

Classis Chatham overtures the Synod of 1979 to appoint an independent study committee to review, modify and possibly discontinue the present funding system of the Ministers' Pension Fund operative now for almost eight years. The committee shall also study and disclose the real present and future costs of the plan, the scriptural and practical implications of a \$25,000,000 fund as well as the actual financial situation of our present retirees, widows and orphans.

### *Summary of Matters to be Studied With Grounds*

1. The present payments to ministers, widows and orphans are inadequate.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. The average shortage of a sample study ranges from \$2600 to \$8500 per year. (See Exhibit "A.")
  - b. Pension as deferred compensation entitles the pensioners to the churches' loving care in a just and fair manner.
2. To study whether the present fund of approximately \$7,000,000 should be placed in trust into professional hands and also be used by the churches to borrow from.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. A part-time committee with limited expertise and attention, and yearly change in membership is presently expected to run and invest an envisioned \$25,000,000 fund.
  - b. Grounds (a) and (b) under 3.
  - c. Many churches are soliciting funds at the annual rate of up to 10% interest. (See Exhibit "B.")
3. To study the present investment policy and liability for losses.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. There are considerable unrealized and actual losses.
- b. The net return on our investment was only 4% in 1977 and will be approximately 5.5% in 1978.
- c. The moral and ethical implication of investing in securities of public corporations.
- d. To study the present and future costs of maintaining the present funding policy.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. The church has a right to know that cost.
  - b. With the pension at \$6,000 per annum and a 6% per annum compounded increase for 10 years would bring the per family quota to over \$100 per year. (See Exhibit "C.") The pension will then be \$10,746 in 1989 but the *actual* purchasing power will be *lower* than the 1978 pension due to an increase in the cost of living.
  - c. The present funding system generates a *constant decrease* in pension benefits in terms of purchasing power.
  - d. The present funding system has not yet provided funds for past services incurred at the inception of the plan of 1970. The unfunded liabilities (deferred compensation) was approximately \$16,000,000 in 1970 and still is \$16,000,000 in 1978, or 8 years later. (See Exhibit "C.")
5. To study the concept of the present funding system and its implications.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. We believe that the present funding system and the erection of a \$25,000,000 fund is secular in nature and reduces the churches' care of its ministers, widows and orphans to the level of a business and its employees.
  - b. God's people in the Reformed tradition have never resorted to multimillion dollar funds but called upon God's people to respond to the needs of the occasion: e.g. Calvin College, World Missions, CRWRC.
  - c. It is a matter of wisdom, now that the Pension Plan has been operative for a period of eight years to review the plan and study the implications of which the Synod of 1970 may not have been aware.
6. To study the feasibility and future costs of returning to the pay-as-you-go approach of funding while maintaining the \$7,000,000 fund.

#### *Grounds:*

- a. Pensions could immediately be increased without increasing the per family quota since presently one-half of the quota goes toward the multimillion dollar fund.
- b. Laws in neither Canada or the United States would appear to prevent a return to pay-as-you-go combined with modified funding.

7. To revise Part 7 of the Pension Plan to eliminate hardships and discrimination.

*Grounds:*

a. Outside earnings of a widow with or without children should not reduce the already inadequate pension, marriage age, length of marriage and whether the wife is the wife of a former minister as a criteria for receiving benefits has no place in the pension plan.

b. A minister in good standing should be given the unconditional right of reentry in the pension plan, provided that he pay the annual contributions plus interest which should have been paid for the period that he was not a contributing member.

#### RATIONALE

Taking a close look at the interim financial statements of the MPF from January 1, 1978 through October 31, 1978 (Exhibit "E") we realize that the fund will reach a total of over \$7,000,000 in 1978. Should we go beyond the \$7,000,000 figure to our planned \$25,000,000 fund, and possibly more, or are there other alternatives that need to be studied or implications synod was not aware of when the present plan was started in January 1970?

It should be noted that there are considerable unrealized and actual losses on investments in securities due to a moribund trend of the securities market. The question may well be asked as to the churches' involvement in such a market. It is sad to point out that the 1977 net return on the Pension Fund investment of \$6,000,000 was only about 4%, and then to know that many of our churches are paying 9% to 11% on funds borrowed from mortgage companies and other sources for church building programs etc.

We enclose a copy of one page of THE BANNER (Exhibit "B") of September 15, 1978 in which churches are soliciting funds in the amount of no less than \$730,000 at the annual rate of 9% to 10% interest. The question needs to be asked whether we are exercising good stewardship.

It has come to our attention that some members of the MPF Committee have serious doubts as to the competency and expertise of the committee to manage the present fund investment and may be unnecessarily exposed to liability for losses that result from its investment. This is in no way intended as a criticism of synod and its Pension Fund Committee, but the question needs to be raised whether this committee or the church has the competency and expertise of investing and running a \$25,000,000 fund as envisioned, even apart from the question as to the right of the church to build a \$25,000,000 movement.

It is our opinion that a part time committee with limited expertise and attention - whose membership changes every year - can hardly hope to achieve the ultimate requirement of the Pension Fund, a fact which will be detrimental to our retired ministers, widows and orphans.

The alternative seems to be to place our multimillion dollar fund into the hands of experts such as insurance companies and others. But then the question needs to be raised as to the ethical and other implications: may the church ever relinquish its right to control its investments? An insurance company could well make a decision on investing we would consider contrary to scriptural principles; e.g. companies that have no concern for the environment, or that bleed underdeveloped countries.

We should also consider whether a multimillion dollar fund is the way the church ought to take care of its ministers by a self-sustaining fund, and the relationship between the minister and the church he served will become a mere business relationship, rather than a relationship that is governed by a spirit of loving care and trust the church and the minister ought to have for one another. Is it really necessary for the church to continue the present funding beyond the \$7,000,000 total? Should we not trust that the church is prepared to take care of the future needs of its ministers in a spirit of Christian concern and loving care? Do our deacons build large self-sustaining funds to take care of the needs of the poor? Did Calvin College first need its millions to begin its building program? No, the church relies upon its faithful membership for the needs and requirements of God's kingdom. Helping others and sharing are the "kind of sacrifices that give God joy" (Heb. 13:16). Paul tells the Corinthians that the reason he is collecting aid for the Christians at Jerusalem is that it brings glory to God (II Cor. 8:19). The Christian lives in a community of love and righteousness, a community where he is justly dealt with.

It is also of vital importance that synod recognize and tell the churches what our quotas will be under the present system of funding: for example, ten years from now. According to our calculations, the annual per family quota will more than likely be over \$100 per year ten years from now. The synod has the duty to bring to the attention of the churches the future costs of maintaining the present funding policy and the benefits that it will generate.

A matter of even more immediate importance is that the present retired ministers who

served the church during a time when wages were low are sacrificing more than anyone else for the present funding system. The annual contributions to the Ministers' Pension Fund are double the amount paid out to retired ministers, widows and orphans; it is therefore reasonable to assume that the MPF is built up at the expense of the present retired ministers, widows and orphans.

The Scriptures demand in many places that those in need (the widow, etc.) be a primary responsibility for the church. We only have to think of the strong words of the prophet Amos as well as the biblical injunctions in Romans 12:13 and I Timothy 6:18-19. There is a need that exists among our retired ministers and widows and the church must rise to meet that need. If a pension is deferred compensation, as it ought to be, then the beneficiaries may expect the church to take care of them for life as promised and receive that which is rightfully and justly theirs. A quick look at exhibit "A" will reveal that in a sample testing there is a shortage which ranges from \$2,600 to \$8,500 per year. This may not continue.

Furthermore, there are some provisions in the present plan that need to be reviewed. Surviving spouses' benefits referred to in Part 7 of the Pension Plan should be revised to eliminate hardship and discrimination. For example, outside earnings of a widow with or without children should not reduce the already inadequate pension; the marriage age, length of marriage and whether the wife is the wife of a former minister as a criteria for receiving benefits has no place in the pension plan. Besides, it does not seem right that a minister in good standing cannot - after some years of absence from the plan - reenter the pension plan unconditionally, provided that he pay the annual contributions plus interest which should have been paid for the period that he was not a contributing member.

It is our firm conviction that the above raised concerns give ample grounds for a thorough study by an independent committee of synod of the MPF.

Classis Chatham  
G. J. Bomhof, stated clerk

*Note:* Statistical Exhibits referred to in this overture will be duplicated and sent to synodical delegates.

—William P. Brink, Stated Clerk

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## Overture 25 — Provide Better Health Insurance for Ministers

Classis Minnesota North overtures synod to evaluate the health insurance group policy with Ministers Life and Casualty Union currently in use by some of our ministers and consider other possible means of providing health insurance to the churches with a view to implementing a uniform denominational insurance plan to cover all United States Christian Reformed ministers automatically.

*Grounds:*

1. We have investigated other health plans and better coverage is available at comparable or lower cost than through Ministers Life and Casualty Union.
2. Good stewardship demands that the Christian Reformed Church find the best health care at the lowest cost to the local churches.

Classis Minnesota North  
Carl J. Toeset, stated clerk

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## Overture 26 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

The Consistory of Lynnwood, Washington, overtures synod not to ratify the proposed amendment of Church Order Article 3 (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 105) until the relationship between Article 3 of the Church Order and other articles of the Church Order is clarified by means of a synodical ruling or statement.

*Grounds:*

1. Adoption of amended Article 3 will only bring that particular article into harmony with synod's decision but not the entire Church Order.
- a. Synod sought to preserve the biblical principle of male headship in the governing

authority of the consistory; thus its insistence that the work of women deacons be distinguished from that of elders.

b. However, the Church Order does not so distinguish. It distinguishes between the general consistory and the restricted consistory only once (Art. 35c) without really defining the latter. Especially in smaller churches where the elders are not allowed to meet separately (Art. 35b) but also in larger churches the indiscriminate use of the word "consistory" may cause confusion because the consistory has authority:

- over the general government of the church (Art. 35a, 37), which is original authority (Art. 27a);
- over all matters (including discipline) in small churches with less than four elders (Art. 35b,c);
- to examine persons concerning doctrine and life to determine their fitness for communicant membership in our churches (Art. 59c);
- to exercise admonition and discipline over believers (Art. 78);
- to deal with public sins (Art. 81);
- to admonish and discipline members (Art. 83a, 84, 85, 86b, 87);
- to admonish and exercise special discipline upon office bearers (Art. 89, 90, 91, 92, 93).

2. Failure to clarify the relationship between amended Article 3 and the above mentioned Articles of the Church Order may lead to the circumvention of the intentions of the 1978 synod, namely, to preserve the principle of male headship in the governing of the church.

3. Good order demands that all our churches follow as much as possible the same policies in church government. If the relationship between amended Article 3 and the rest of the Church Order is not clarified there will be confusion in our churches as to how amended Article 3 is to be applied.

Lynnwood, Washington  
Consistory  
Paul Zwieters, stated clerk

*Note:* The above overture was submitted to the January 1979 session of Classis Pacific Northwest but was not adopted.

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### Overture 27 — Clarify Decision re Woman Deacons

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures the Synod of 1979 to clarify the decision of the Synod of 1978 regarding women in the office of deacon. This clarification is intended to define the authority of women in the office and to suggest practical implementation of that office as it presently exists.

*Ground:* The issue of authority was a critical factor in the study committee report, and in the floor debate; and this is reflected in the instructions to distinguish the work of women deacons from elders. If that should mean that women are not to vote in council, then they are not deacons; if they are to vote, they rule over the congregation. This issue of authority in the office needs more study and clearer application.

Classis Grand Rapids East  
G. H. Stoutmeyer, stated clerk

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### Overture 28 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

Concerning the decision of the Synod of 1978 regarding women deacons, the proposed ratification of the amended Church Order Article 3 and its supplement (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, E. 3, 4, pp. 104, 105),

Classis California South overtures the Synod of 1979:

1. To clarify the meaning of that part of the decision which reads: "provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders."
2. To delay a decision on the ratification of the proposed Church Order amendment (Article 3) and its Supplement until 1980.

3. To delay further implementation of the decision of synod until a decision on ratification has been reached.
4. To declare that ratification will demand an approval/disapproval of the content as well as the wording of the amended Church Order.

*Grounds:*

- a. There are differing opinions as to what the Synod of 1978 meant when it said that "the work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders."
- b. Without a clear understanding of the meaning and implication of the proposed Church Order Article 3 and its amendment, ratification is impossible.
- c. Additional time for study and response is essential for the unity of the church as it faces an issue as substantial as this one.
- d. The procedural issue concerning ratification only of "the wording" is in conflict with the intent of ratifying Church Order change.

Classis California South  
Henry Radius, stated clerk

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### Overture 29 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

Classis Lake Erie addresses the following overture to synod: The synod has decided that qualified women may be ordained to the office of deacon "provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 104). Classis Lake Erie overtures synod to provide guidelines so that the distinction called for may be properly made.

*Grounds:*

1. Church Order Article 35 and Belgic Confession Article 30 allow deacons, especially in smaller churches, to share with the elders in the government of the church. Therefore guidelines are needed to clarify how the work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders.
2. Providing such guidelines would help prevent confusion and would allow the churches to uniformly and effectively implement the decision of synod concerning women as deacons.

Classis Lake Erie  
George Vander Weit, stated clerk

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### Overture 30 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

In the event synod does not decide to go back to the original reading of Church Order Article 3, Classis Illiana overtures synod to set down guidelines to the authority and scope of the office of deacon (deaconess).

*Grounds:*

1. At present each church may interpret the synodical decision on ordaining qualified women to the office of deacon (deaconess), provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders. We believe that there should be a certain amount of uniformity in our denomination on the implementation of this decision.
2. Each consistory is responsible for the general government of the church (Church Order, Article 35a). To what extent may deacons (deaconesses) serve in the general consistory and not violate the headship principle that synod recognized (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 104, Art. 80 E III b) since each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; the authority of the consistories being original (Church Order Art. 27 a)?

Classis Illiana  
Carl E. Zylstra, stated clerk

### Overture 31 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

Classis Hamilton overtures synod to clarify the statement, "the work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elder" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 104, Art. 80).

*Grounds:* the apparent confusion caused in the churches because of the vagueness of this expression.

Classis Hamilton  
J. W. Jongsma, stated clerk

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### Overture 32 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

Classis Chatham overtures the Synod of 1979 to review the decision of the Synod of 1978 regarding the matter of qualified women being ordained into the office of deacon provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders.

*Grounds:*

1. The churches are confused about the implementation of this decision.
  - a. Article 95 of the Church Order states that "No office bearer shall lord it over another office bearer" and the decision implies that deaconesses will not have the same authority that deacons have traditionally had.
  - b. The decision raises serious questions as to the relation of deacons to the elders in the consistory. (Cf. Art. 35 of the Church Order and Belgic Confession Art. 30.)
2. The decision has caused considerable unrest in the churches.
  - a. Some consistories feel that Article 47 of the Church Order has been violated.
  - b. Some consistories feel that we need compelling biblical grounds in order to make such a significant change.
  - c. Some consistories feel that the decision is potentially divisive.
3. The lack of unanimity at the Synod of 1978 raises serious questions as to the advisability of this decision at this time.

Classis Chatham  
G. J. Bomhof, stated clerk

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### Overture 33 — Defer Implementation of Decision re Women Deacons

Classis Chicago South overtures synod to declare that the synodical decision regarding women in diaconal office as formulated in Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, E, 3, not be implemented until a change in Article 3 of the Church Order is properly made.

*Grounds:* Article 29 and 47 of the Church Order.

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

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### Overture 34 — Study Feasibility of Permitting Women to Serve as Elders

The Consistory of Hope, Oak Forest, overtures synod to:

1. appoint a committee to study still unresolved questions in regard to women serving as elders in the church, and
2. consider the feasibility of permitting those churches that are ready to do so to ordain women as elders.

*Grounds:*

1. Both the study committee (Acts of Synod 1978, Report 31, F. 2., p. 532) and the 1978 synodical advisory committee recommend further study and reflection on the issue of

women as elders, with the advisory committee pointing to several biblical passages and issues (such as the concept of headship and its application to the question of women serving in church office) which the 1978 study committee did not consider in sufficient depth (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 103). At present no continuing synodical vehicle exists for pursuing this further study and reflection.

2. Three successive synodical study committees have concluded that no clear biblical evidence excludes women from holding office as elders.

a. The study committee which reported to Synod in 1973 concluded that "the practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical office cannot conclusively be defended on biblical grounds" (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 588).

b. The study committee which reported to Synod in 1975 concluded that "biblical teaching is not opposed in principle to the ordination of women to any office that men may hold in the church" (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 593).

c. The study committee which reported to Synod in 1978 declared that "the biblical evidence for allowing or denying women admission to the office of elder and minister as presently understood is not clear" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 531). This study committee also stated: "When the church seeks to restrict the conduct of a group of believers (women), it should do so on the basis of unambiguously clear biblical evidence" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 532).

3. Consistories of churches that are ready to ordain women as elders currently find themselves in the difficult, if not untenable, position that the only grounds they can give for not nominating women as elders are admittedly either biblically questionable or purely pragmatic (viz., that "most of our churches do not seem to be ready at this time for women elders" Acts of Synod 1978, F.2.C., p. 532). Since no clear biblical principle is involved, this would appear to be an issue which can properly be left to local church option, especially since some churches do appear ready for women as elders and have already instituted female "adjunct elders" who function as elders but without ordination or voting rights.

4. The possibility of using these churches now ready for female elders as "pilot projects" for a designated period of time and so enable synod and the denomination to study and assess the effects of such a change, as it works out in practice rather than just theoretically, deserves serious consideration by a study committee.

Hope Consistory  
Jon F. Bontekoe, Clerk

*Note:* This overture was considered by Classis Chicago South at the January 17, 1979 meeting but was not adopted.

## Overture 35 — Further Study re Women in Office

Classis Florida overtures the Synod of 1979 to deal with the matter of women deacons as follows:

1. That synod withhold action on the ratification of the proposed wording of Article 3 of the Church Order and its Supplement, which were referred to the Synod of 1979 by the Synod of 1978.

*Grounds:*

a. This decision would allow synod to implement Article 47 of the Church Order, which states concerning changes in the Church Order that, "No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

b. This decision is necessary because the Synod of 1978 did not give the churches opportunity to consider the proposed changes.

2. That synod refer the proposed amendment to Article 3 and the Supplement together with the report on Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office to the churches for their reaction.

*Grounds:*

a. This is standard synodical procedure under Article 47 of the Church Order, which gives the churches the opportunity to carry out the mandate of Article 47 to "consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

- b. That such is standard procedure is amply demonstrated by the recent revision of Articles 11-14 of the Church Order.
3. That synod appoint a committee to receive these reactions no later than January 15, 1980, evaluate them, and report their findings and recommendations to the Synod of 1980.

*Grounds:*

- a. This is standard synodical procedure under Article 47 of the Church Order.
- b. This procedure will set up proper avenues for the expression of reactions, thus enabling synod to handle the matter of women deacons both decently and in order and in a way which will promote peace and unity in the church.

Classis Florida  
Walter Hofman, stated clerk

### Overture 36 — Defer Implementation of Decision re Women Deacons

Classis Minnesota North overtures synod to postpone implementation of its decision of 1978 for one year, which decision reads:

"That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders."

Synod did not allow the churches sufficient time and opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed change of Church Order Article 47. This overture allows for time for responses for and against the decision of Synod 1978 by the churches.

Classis Minnesota North  
Carl J. Toeset, stated clerk

### Overture 37 — Re Ratification of Church Order Article 3

Classis Minnesota South overtures synod not to ratify the changes in Article 3 of the Church Order initiated by the Synod of 1978 (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 105), which would allow consistories "to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders".

*Grounds:*

1. While the Greek word "diakonos" is used for both men and women who performed works of mercy (Rom. 16:1 and I Tim. 3:8), yet nowhere do we read that women were ordained as deacons in the church.
2. While the Greek word "diakonos" is used for both men and women who performed works of mercy, synod has not adequately distinguished between women who perform works of mercy and men ordained as deacons who perform works of mercy. In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called a servant in some translations, but men are called deacons in I Timothy 3:8.
3. The decision of synod to allow consistories "to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders" violates the scriptural principle of the headship of man. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let a woman learn in quietness with all subjection. But I permit not a woman to teach, nor to have dominion over a man, but to be in quietness. For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (I Tim. 2:11-13). If women are ordained to serve in the office of deacon, they are by virtue of their ordination placed in a position of authority over male members of the congregation. This conflicts with Paul's teaching in I Timothy 2:11-13. Moreover, the apostle Paul addressed his letter to the Philippians in this way, "... to all the saints in Christ Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." The conclusion is not unwarranted that the deacons in the church at Philippi held a position of authority in the church. Therefore, ordaining women as deacons would violate the principle of the headship of man. (Likewise, I Cor. 11:3, Eph. 5:23, and Col. 3:18 teach that the man is the head of the woman.)
4. Scripture in I Timothy 3:8-12 list the qualifications for deacons. Verse 12 states specifically, "Let the deacons be the husband of one wife." This clearly implies that the office of deacon is open only to confessing male members.

5. The office of all believers has not been given due consideration in the decision of synod. Women members of the church can and must perform works of mercy without being ordained.
6. Synod did not give due consideration to the calling of the woman. When God created the woman in the beginning, she was created to be a "help meet" (ASV) or a "helper" (NIV) for the man. This principle should also be maintained when it comes to the offices of the church.
7. The decision of synod conflicts with the following Articles of the Church Order:
  - a. Article 29—"Decisions of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be reached only upon due consideration." Synod did not give due consideration to the implications of the decision "to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." For example, synod failed to indicate precisely how the work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders.
  - b. Article 35—"In every church there shall be a consistory composed of the office bearers. The consistory is responsible for the general government of the church." This implies that deacons have a part in the general government of the church. Hence, if women are ordained as deacons, they would also have a part in the general government of the church, though their work might be distinguished from that of the elders. This in turn conflicts with the biblical teaching of the headship of man.
  - c. Article 47—"No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes." The Minority Study Report on Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office, which was the basis for the 1978 Synod's decision to change Church Order Article 3, was before the consistories for less than two months.
8. The decision of synod is also in conflict with the decision of the Synod of 1975 (Acts of Synod 1975, pp. 78-79) which adopted a recommendation "that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice." The Scripture evidence (Rom. 16:1 and I Tim. 3:11) which synod used to support its decision was by no means compelling. There is no proof that Phoebe was an ordained deacon (deaconess). The women referred to in I Timothy 3:11 are not called deacons. The Greek word can be translated either women or wives, but not deacons.
9. The proposed change in Article 3 of the Church Order would be in conflict with Article 30 of The Belgic Confession, which speaks of "faithful men" being "chosen, according to the rule prescribed by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy."

*Conclusion:*

On the basis of these grounds, the proposed changes in Article 3 of the Church Order should not be ratified. Instead, we should maintain the original reading of Article 3 of the Church Order, "Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for office bearers are eligible for office. . . ."

Classis Minnesota South  
Nicholas Roorda, stated clerk

## Overture 38 — Re Position of Women in the Church

The Consistory of First Lethbridge overtures the Synod of 1979:

- A. Not to ratify the decision of the 1978 Synod to admit women to the office of deacon.

*Grounds:*

1. The biblical evidence cited for the 1978 decision is open to more than one interpretation, and is unconvincing to many. (Cf. e.g. Acts 6:3 & I Tim. 3:12).
2. To bring present theory and practice into harmony with this decision requires important changes in the Church Order (Arts. 3 & 35) and in the Belgic Confession (Art. 30). Such changes ought not to be made before the entire church has had ample opportunity to reflect on them. With reference to the Belgic Confession, consultation with other Reformed churches may be necessary.
3. Decisions of this nature ought not to be made by "counting heads" at synod. A greater consensus of opinion must first be reached in order to prevent further unrest and

polarization in the church. A definitive decision can better be made at some future "distance" from the current controversial and emotional climate in the church. "It is difficult for anyone, also the church, to think straight under constant pressure. Perhaps we need to rest awhile" (Eppinga in *The Banner*).

4. It has become evident that the decision to ordain deaconesses is only part of a larger package, and will almost certainly lead to women elders and pastors, something we are convinced is contrary to biblical teaching. (For a concise treatment of the biblical evidence, cf. e.g. the Postscript by the Rev. P. M. Jonker in the Acts of Synod 1973, pp. 588-594.)

5. The fact that this issue has entered the church on the waves of the largely secular Women's Liberation Movement does not enhance its credentials, and makes it a most inopportune time in which to make such a decision. The question can be asked: "Is our own generation so prayerful, so attuned to God, that it recognized what other generations have missed? Or is the opposite the case—that our generation is so attuned to the secular world that we seek to accommodate our faith to every popular fad of the spirit of the age?" (Cf. Rom. 12:2; 1 John 4:1.)

B. To encourage the churches to make use of women in the auxiliary role of diaconal assistants in carrying out the work of Christian mercy.

*Grounds:*

1. This has considerable biblical warrant (cf. e.g. Mark 15:40, 41; John 12:1-9; Acts 9:36-39).

2. In practice this would accomplish much the same thing as now proposed by ordination, without being freighted with all the objections mentioned above.

3. This has been implemented to varying degrees throughout the history of the church, including the Reformed churches.

First Lethbridge Consistory  
H. Venhuis, clerk

*Note:* This overture was presented to the meeting of Classis Alberta south in March 1979, but was not adopted by classis.

## Overture 39 — Reword Church Order Article 7

Classis Minnesota North overtures synod to redefine the concept of need (re Article 7a of the Church Order) by rewording Church Order Article 7a to read,

"Those who have not received the prescribed theological training but who give evidence that they are singularly gifted as to godliness, humility, spiritual discretion, wisdom, and the native ability to preach the Word, may, by way of exception, be admitted to the ministry of the Word, especially *when these gifts meet a ministry need within the church*""

*Grounds:*

1. Scripture defines need in the church in terms of ministry to the church (cf. Ephesians 4:11-13).

2. This ministry need is met by singularly gifted individuals recognized by the Christian community.

3. The presence of these singularly gifted individuals implies that there exists a ministry need which the Holy Spirit desires to fill.

\*Italics is new reading

### SCRIPTURAL SURVEY OF NEED

Scripture tells us that the needs of the church are filled by Christians who have been granted gifts by the Holy Spirit to meet the needs. Needs are never confined or even alluded to as numerical needs. Rather, the Spirit gives gifts which, not only may be used in the church, but, indeed, must be used when given. When, therefore, God gives gifts to his people for use in his church, the church may never say it has no need for these gifts. They are given to be used. This seems clear from Ephesians 4:11, 12, where gifts are given for the expressed purpose of equipping saints for ministry and for building up the body of Christ. Gifts, and their necessary use, are also spoken of in 1 Corinthians 12:21, "The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' or again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of

you," and Romans 12:4-8, noting verse 6 which says, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them." This passage then proceeds to list some of the gifts given.

Furthermore, the Bible praises those who seek to use their gifts in service to the church. I Timothy 3:1 states, "If anyone aspires to the office of bishop, he desires a noble task." Paul writes in II Corinthians 9:7, "God loves a cheerful giver." In fact, nowhere does the Bible call the church to suppress the gifts given to its members, but always to use them in its service. Nor does it ever teach that God gives gifts where no needs are present. The giving of the gift determines the existence of need.

From Scripture, then, we can be sure that when God gives gifts they are given to be of use in his church. The church cannot turn its back on God-given gifts. Nor can the church define need in mere numerical terms when the Bible always says that gifts fulfill spiritual ministry needs. This is a call that the church be biblically correct in its understanding that God gives gifts for use in his church to fulfill the needs of his people.

#### HISTORICAL SURVEY OF ARTICLE 7 (8)

Article 7 (8) came into being apparently because of a shortage of ministers. The Reformed churches stressed the need of thorough theological training for its ministry. As early as 1574, the synod set forth a list of gifts necessary for men without academic training to be admitted to the ministry. It appears to be commonly understood that even when there was a great shortage of ministers, there were not many admitted to the ministry under Article 7 (8). The "singularly gifted" stipulation always prevented the ordination of large numbers of men lacking academic training. The Article was rarely used.

In our own denomination, Article 7 (8) has been used for the ordination of lay missionaries on the Indian mission field at least five times, once on the Nigerian field, once for the Spanish church (Cuban) in the United States and once in Canada. On two occasions, men presented for ordination were rejected because the "singular gifts" were not present and others were rejected because "need" was not shown.

The recent revision of the rule which added the word "*especially* when the need is urgent" has been consistently interpreted by synodical deputies and by synod to mean "*only* when the need is urgent."

In studying the use of Article 7 (8), we note that the use of present Article 8 also involves the question of need. However, the need of ministers from other denominations seems to be greater than need of "singularly gifted" men without training. Determination of need has apparently been rather subjective in these cases. For example: If a church had called only twice, no need, but if the church has been vacant for more than a year, then need existed. The last synod approved synodical deputies' concurrence with a classis' admission of a minister from the Reformed Church to Service Chaplain at a psychiatric medical clinic.

The Synod of 1922 took up the matter of rules for admission of men with "singular gifts." The Synod of 1947 received a study committee report examining Article 7 (8). The question raised, "Why do our churches have the ruling of Article 7 (8)?" is pertinent to our own study. Synods dealing with the report seem to have reemphasized that Article 7 (8) was to be used *only* in case of great need (i.e. numerical). Another study committee presented a report at the Synod of 1970. At this synod, the recommendation that synod declare Article 7 (8) inoperative for the ministry of the church while a Reformed theological training is available was rejected (Acts of Synod 1970, Article 100).

Acts of Synod 1947, Article 163

"The Advisory Committee on Church Order . . . advises that synod adopt the following as an answer to the 1946 overture of Chicago North, and to guide the churches in the future application of Article 7 (8).

1. Synod reminds the churches that Article 7 (8) of our Church Order was adopted in a time when there was a dire need for ministers of the Word. This article should function *only* in case of great need. *Adopted*
2. The "gifts" mentioned in Article 7 (8) should be possessed by a candidate in a very exceptional measure. No one should be considered unless he has extraordinary qualities. *Adopted*
3. Not only the qualifications mentioned in Article 7 (8) should be considered, but such a candidate should also possess exceptional knowledge of the Word, knowledge of spiritual needs; and native ability to apply the Word. *Adopted*
4. This Article should never be used as a means to ordain all layworkers who may desire such, and whose prestige would be increased by such action. The churches are reminded

that the regular door to the ministry is a thorough academic training. This must be maintained in theory and practice. *Adopted*"

This report to synod gave a prominent place to the "singularly gifted" stipulation and focused upon that phrase as the essential qualifier in evaluating a candidate. The Christian Reformed Church, however, since 1947 has apparently focused primarily on "need" (i.e. defined numerically) and virtually ignored the prominent place given to the "singularly gifted" phrase in the report of 1947. To illustrate this we would like to conclude with two paragraphs from the report of 1947:

"In the second place: In his sovereign good pleasure God sometimes endows some of his children with extraordinary gifts and qualifications for the ministry, though they have not followed a prescribed course and are therefore deficient in scholastic training. When God qualifies a man for the ministry by endowing him with excellent and extraordinary gifts for that office, then, to be sure, the church of Christ is in duty bound to recognize this fact with appreciation. The rule is and should ever remain to be: those that feel called to the ministry must follow the prescribed course of study. But at the same time the door must ever remain open for such as God graciously qualifies for service without special training." (quoted from *Church Order Commentary*, Van Dellen and Monsma, p. 44).

"This second point is not included in the findings of the Committee of Classis Chicago North. We are convinced, however, that a complete interpretation of Article 7 (8) requires adequate mention of this second point also. For may we not assume that if the post-Reformation Churches were thinking merely of the special need of the Churches when they adopted Article 7 (8), that they would then have made this need the point of their departure in Article 7 (8)? Nothing is said in this article concerning a scarcity of ministers, however. The article does not speak of the need of the churches, but only of persons that have not pursued the regular course of study for the ministry, who nevertheless desire to be ordained. The article provides that such persons shall not be admitted unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts, godliness, humility, modesty, common sense and discretion, as also gifts of public address" (Acts of Synod 1947, p. 409).

Classis Minnesota North  
Carl J. Toeset, stated clerk

## Overture 40 — Study Impact of English Broadcasts of Back to God Hour

Classis Minnesota North overtures synod to make an independent study of the evangelistic impact of the domestic, English language Back To God Program.

### Grounds:

1. Such a study has not been made available.
2. The expenditure of money (\$4.3 million for both radio and television, of which over half is for domestic programming) warrants such a study.
3. Such an evaluation is necessary to determine the effectiveness of this broadcast for outreach purpose. Our responses appear to indicate that we presently reach the churchd rather than the unchurched.

Classis Minnesota North  
Carl J. Toeset, stated clerk

## Overture 41 — Consistorial Authority to Admit Lodge Members

### Background

For a number of years the Richfield Church has been industriously doing outreach ministry in its community. Because many of our members have died, or moved to other parts of the state and country, Richfield has been forced to realize that its future belongs with its community and a dynamic ministry there. Recently, it was reconstituted as a merger of three churches with the hope of avoiding the kind of disintegration which afflicted the churches previously.

In doing outreach ministry, the church has contacted people from many ethnic backgrounds and religious preferences. Among them have been numerous members of fraternal organizations such as the Masons and Eastern Star. A couple of these people have become very active in the church and have served the congregation in significant capacities. For instance, one person took care of all the financial responsibilities for the church and, although he was not designated the treasurer, he functioned as such. Others have taught in Vacation Bible School and Sunday school and exemplify a committed Christian life. These people participate in most of our church activities and have been invited to share with us in the Lord's Supper. They are given every privilege of our congregation except full membership, the symbol of full acceptance and community.

Naturally these people wish to become church members with us. They have met with our consistory and have talked with us very openly about the stand of the Christian Reformed Church as it describes and indicts fraternal organizations. Although we have made it abundantly clear to them that the denomination views the Lodge as an organization that demands religious commitment, they contend vehemently that they do not believe in this organization with religious commitment, and that their first allegiance is to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They contend that we have no way of making the judgment that their faith in Jesus Christ is diminished because of fellowship in the lodge. They see this involvement as primarily a fraternal and fellowship exercise.

In response to this, we as consistory and congregation have struggled with the question of responsibility to these people, to our local congregation, to the denomination, to the church universal, and to our community where our witness to the love of Jesus Christ is on constant display. We have discussed this matter at an open meeting with our congregation and have discovered, as we suspected, that our local church like the denomination is made up of people who have differing opinions on this matter. Although most of us can support very strongly what the synodical report has to say about fraternal organizations, we feel that it is very unfortunate that this report has not been entrusted to the church as guidelines so that each consistory could then make the decision on the basis of interviews with individual persons whether or not they should be members of the church.

Because of our intense interest in the people to whom we minister who have lodge affiliation, we decided to overture Classis Hackensack. That overture brought to them is the same contained in this communication. At the September, 1978, meeting, classis decided to adopt this overture and send it on to synod. Our consistory and the majority of our congregation was heartened by the pastoral sense exhibited at classis in attempting to assist us on this matter and bring it to the attention of the entire denomination through synod. However, at the classis meeting of January, 1979, another overture was brought asking that classis at that session rescind the decision of the previous session (September, 1978) with respect to adopting the overture of the Richfield church. The motion to rescind was adopted and therefore classis in essence rejected our overture.

Therefore, the Consistory of Richfield overtures the Synod of 1979 to adopt the following overture:

That the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church declare that with respect to members of fraternal organizations each congregation, through its own consistory, be entrusted with the essential responsibility of determining whether such persons become members of that congregation. Consistories are urged to exercise this essential responsibility of their calling by heeding carefully guidelines and conclusions of the synodically approved report on church membership and lodge membership.

*Grounds:*

- a. To deprive a person of church membership exclusively because of affiliation with any organization is a form of labeling which produces prejudice, and violates the scriptural principle of individual and local church responsibility.
- b. According to Reformed Church Order the local congregation should have primary responsibility, through its consistory, for permitting a person's inclusion into membership.

*Article 59*

- a. Members by baptism shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper upon a public profession of Christ according to the Reformed creeds, with the use of the prescribed form. Before the profession of faith the *consistory shall examine them concerning their motives, doctrine, and conduct.* The names of those who are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper shall be announced to the congregation for approval at least one Sunday before the public profession of faith.

*Article 27*

- a. Each assembly exercises, in keeping with its own character and domain, the ecclesiastical authority entrusted to the church by Christ; *the authority of consistories being original, that of major assemblies being delegated.*
- c. Other Reformed bodies, who advocate a similar stand towards the Lodge, permit the local church to make the determination about an individual membership. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church is a case in point.

Richfield Consistory  
Andrew Rienstra, president

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**Overture 42 — Curtail Reprinting of Agenda in the Acts of Synod**

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod:

- A. That synod print and distribute only the Acts of Synod and any material in addition to that printed in the Agenda which was received by synod after publication of the Agenda and before synod convenes.
- B. That in printing the Acts of Synod, any reference to reports, overtures, etc., be keyed to the Agenda report numbers and paging.

*Grounds:*

1. With exception of certain addendum, and the Acts of Synod proper, all materials in reports, etc. is contained in the Agenda.
2. It is a terrible waste of resources to duplicate the Agenda in the Acts of Synod.
3. This will speed up publication and distribution of the Acts of Synod to the churches.
4. The Acts of Synod and the Agenda could be sold as a two volume set to anyone interested in the decisions of synod and the various reports to synod.
5. Classis Eastern Canada is of the opinion that the situation has changed since synod first looked at it in 1972, Article 62, Overture 16.

Classis Eastern Canada  
John de Vries, Jr. stated clerk

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**Overture 43 — Definition of Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship**

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to declare that synod's definition "churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship" as including fellowship at the table of the Lord be strictly adhered to.

*Grounds:*

1. Synod's decision of 1978 concerning Ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America contradicts its decision of 1974, since no one other than their own members are accepted at their table.
2. Our current relationship with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid Afrika upon examination also contradicts synod's decision of 1974. If it should happen that members of the Christian Reformed Church in good standing were to travel to the Republic of South Africa, they would be excluded categorically from communion in most congregations of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Suid Afrika—however exemplary their life and however clear their confession of faith in Jesus Christ, unless they could pass officially as "whites."

Classis Eastern Canada  
John de Vries, Jr., stated clerk

### Overture 44 — Cooperation with Alliance

Classis Eastern Canada overtures synod to encourage the Board of Home Missions, the Back to God Hour, the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary to cooperate fully with the *Alliance de la Reforme Evangelique* as requested by Classis Eastern Canada.

*Grounds:*

1. This newly formed French speaking Alliance has requested the support of the above mentioned Christian Reformed agencies to bring a Reformed witness to the Francophones in Quebec and other parts of Canada, in order to fill the significant spiritual vacuum existing at this time.
2. The political situation in Quebec demands that mission work be carried out in the French language by French Quebecers or at least those who speak French fluently and are unquestionably part of the Francophone community.
3. Members of the Alliance will be able to do meaningful follow-up work for the Radio Back To God Hour in Quebec.
4. The Alliance established on September 8, 1978 is undoubtedly Reformed in character and has as one of its stated goals the establishment of an *Eglise de la Reforme Evangelique* with its own confession of faith. Yet official endorsement by synod at this time would be premature, and could hinder the development of this autonomous French speaking Alliance.
5. A similar type of support has been given by our denomination in behalf of World Missions.

Classis Eastern Canada  
John de Vries, Jr., stated clerk

### Overture 45 — Further Definition of Diaconal Role of Women

The Consistory of Calvin, Dundas, overtures synod:

1. Re Women in Office (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80)

That synod, which decided that "the work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders," stipulate under Article 3 of the Church Order that women as deacons shall not be members of consistory. Their work would not be sufficiently distinguished from that of the elders if they were to participate in church government, for we believe that deaconesses are to serve as assistants to the deacons.

*Ground:*

"I permit no woman . . . to have authority over men . . ."

"But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God." (1 Timothy 2:12 and 1 Cor. 11:3)

2. Re The Form for Ordination and Installation of Elders and Deacons

That synod maintain the above form as it is, and in addition formulate a new form solely for the installation of deaconesses. (Deaconesses to be defined as assistants to the deacons, thus excluding from their function the government of the church.)

Calvin Dundas Consistory  
Jack Bruining, clerk

### Overture 46 — Clarify Decision re Women Deacons

Classis British Columbia overtures synod that before ratifying the changes in the Church Order re "women in the office of deacons," synod shall clarify the intention of the restrictive clause ("provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders") and give due consideration to the necessary changes in the Church Order.

*Grounds:*

1. The restrictive clause needs to be clarified in relation to Article 35, which regard to the place of deaconesses in a general consistory, since the consistory is responsible for the general government of the church." The restrictive clause also needs to be clarified

where it concerns small consistories in which deacons perform tasks otherwise restricted to elders.

2. Article 2 of the Church Order already distinguishes between the office of elder and deacon by stating that "these offices differ from each other only in mandate and task, and not in dignity and honor." If the restrictive clause is not saying anything new, what, in effect, is it saying?

3. Synod's decision is carefully laid out in order to maintain the headship principle in which the woman (wife) is subject to the man (husband). For that reason the office of deacon is expressed in terms of assistance and service, rather than authority. But there, too, the restrictive clause needs clarification in that no distinction is made between elders and deacons in terms of Articles 27a and 37, articles which speak of the authority and supervision exercised by the consistory.

Clarification is also needed in terms of Articles 59c, 78, and 81 ff., articles dealing with the spiritual care, admonition and discipline, public sins, plus the articles dealing with special discipline over office bearers (Art's. 89, 90, 91, 92, 93). Matters discussed in these articles are to be dealt with by both elders and deacons as the occasion requires. What is the force of the restrictive clause against the background of synod's own interpretation? (See Acts of Synod 1978, 3, ground b, p. 104.)

4. All things are to be done decently and in good order throughout our churches; this calls for policies in church government in our denomination which are well-defined and clearly enunciated in terms of a Church Order, and for synodical decisions which cannot be misunderstood.

Classis British Columbia  
Homer G. Samplonius, stated clerk

### Overture 47 — Appoint Study Committee on Artificial Insemination by Donor

Classis British Columbia overtures the Synod of 1979 to serve the churches, by means of a study committee, with the teachings of Scripture as it relates to AID (Artificial Insemination by Donor), and that the materials of the study and advisory committees of Classis British Columbia be included in this synodical study.

*Grounds:*

1. Classis has made an extensive study of the subject without resolving the issue.
2. Our churches need to hear this testimony of Scripture on AID because couples are facing the issue in their marriages.

Classis British Columbia  
Homer G. Samplonius, stated clerk

*Note:* Classis British Columbia has enclosed several appendices relating to its studies of artificial insemination. These materials will be forwarded to the advisory committee of synod dealing with this overture—and also to the study committee, if synod adopts the overture.

### Overture 48 — Divide Canadian and United States Ministers' Pension Fund

Classis British Columbia overtures the Synod of 1979 to separate the present Ministers' Pension Fund program into two plans: one for the United States participants, and one for the Canadian participants, and appoint a committee to prepare such a dual USA-Canadian Pension Fund program for the Synod of 1980.

*Grounds:*

1. The establishment of two separate plans will eliminate the potential legal entanglements with United States and Canadian pension laws. In Canada in particular, the proposed new regulations for charitable organizations that transfer funds from

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Canada to the United States and other countries will create many problems for the existing Ministers' Pension Fund.

2. The present monetary variances between the United States and Canada will be eliminated by a dual pension program.

Classis British Columbia

Homer G. Samplonius, stated clerk

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### Overture 49 — Appoint Study Committee re Funding Ministers' Pension Fund

Classis British Columbia overtures the Synod of 1979 to appoint a study committee with the mandate to review the present funding system of the Ministers' Pension Fund, and to report its findings to the Synod of 1980.

*Grounds:*

1. The present pension benefits of the Ministers' Pension Fund, adopted in 1970, continue to be inadequate largely on account of the amounts of monies required for the realization of the actuarial fund of twenty-five million dollars. Yet the quotas for the Ministers' Pension Fund remain very high and will have to be increased astronomically if the benefits are to be improved by a considerable percentage. Although it is obvious that a reserve fund of some kind is necessary in order to be properly funded, it is unacceptable that the benefits must be curtailed so much on account of the extremely high funding for the actuarial fund.

2. It remains a very serious question in our denomination as to whether the establishment of a twenty-five million dollar fund is an acceptable practice and proper stewardship for a church to follow. The funds are presently invested in preferred stocks and bonds for our denomination by a small committee. Such a funding system operates essentially on the basis of a secular model, and moreover, as a mere economic and business concern.

3. It is imperative that the present funding system be reviewed by synod after being in operation for almost ten years.

Classis British Columbia

Homer G. Samplonius, stated clerk

## Printed Appeals

### Note on Terminology:

Although several following items use the term *overture*, we have classified them as appeals in accord with their substance. (See Church Order Arts. 30 and 31.) William P. Brink

### 1. — Classis Northcentral Iowa Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Northcentral Iowa protests the *procedure* by which the Synod of 1978, (in Art. 80 E, 4) made a *substantial* amendment in the Church Order without itself following Church Order Article 47 which directs that "no substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

#### Grounds:

1. Although it appears that the Synod of 1978 submitted the "new wording" of Church Order Article 3 and its supplement for ratification by the Synod of 1979, the reference to new *wording* makes it clear that synod did not intend that the *substance* of the change be subject to ratification. This is the exact reverse of the concern of Article 47 of the Church Order, which directs that "substantial alterations" be committed to the churches before final adoption, not the mere wording of them.

2. Although it may be argued that the *issue* of women in ecclesiastical office has been before the church for many years, the specific recommendation that women be ordained as deacons, and as deacons only, and as deacons whose work shall be distinguished from that of elders, was known by the church at large and by the delegates to synod for only the few weeks between the appearance of the agenda and the meeting of synod. This did not give opportunity to the churches to consider carefully the scriptural warrant for the proposed change, nor how it could be reconciled with other articles of the Church Order, and with Article 30 of the Belgic Confession.

3. By adopting a substantial alteration in the Church Order at the same synod to which it was first proposed, synod has *broken faith* with the churches. As late as 1977, synod assured a classis which overtured synod for classical ratification of revisions of the Church Order that "Article 47 of the Church Order adequately deals with the matter of ratification of changes in the Church Order when it states: 'No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod . . . unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes.' *Synods have, therefore, postponed final ratification of substantial alterations in the Church Order until a following synod*" (Acts of Synod 1977, Art. 17 II C. [italics ours]).

If synod sustains our protest, we request that the Synod of 1979 refer the change in substance of Article 3 of the Church Order to the Synod of 1980 for ratification, and urge the churches "to consider the advisability of the proposed change." (Quotation is from Art. 47 of the Church Order.)

Furthermore, if synod sustains our protest, we request that the Synod of 1979 bind itself with the agreement that when synod makes a decision which requires a substantial change in the Church Order, the effectuation of that decision will be delayed until after ratification of the Church Order change one year later, in compliance with Article 47 of the Church Order.

Classis Northcentral Iowa  
John Elenbaas, stated clerk

### 2. — Classis Huron Appeals Decisions of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Huron protests the following decisions of the Synod of 1978 and appeals to synod (in accord with Church Order Arts. 29 and 30) to rescind these decision:

1. "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders."
2. "That synod amend Article 3 of the Church Order as follows:

Article 3

- a. Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the offices of minister and elder.
- b. All confessing members of the churches who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon. Cf. Supplement, Article 3

Supplement, Article 3  
Women as Deacons

The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders. (Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, E, 3 and 4; pp. 104, 105).

Grounds:

1. Scriptural Grounds:

- a. God in his Word has conferred upon man the three offices, which are essentially one.\*

1) God conferred as creation ordinance the office of shepherding and serving upon Adam (Gen. 2:18-23).

2) God continued man in this shepherding and serving function of office after the fall in the Old Testament (Ex. 3:10; 18:25; 28:1; Numb. 3:15; 11:24; etc.), except in very special circumstances (Judges 4:4).

3) Christ called men to this office (Mark 3:14-19; John 1:15-19).

4) The Holy Spirit called men to this creational office in the New Testament church, which is the beginning of the new creation (Acts 6:1-6; I Tim. 3:1-3; Ti. 1:6).

5) Therefore, we believe that synod, in effect, abrogated the Scriptures relative to the decision to admit women to ecclesiastical office.

- b. Synod has presented no compelling biblical evidence sufficient to warrant such a change from the historic position of the Reformed churches:

1) The Synod of 1975 decided, "That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained *unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice*" (Acts of Synod 1975, Article 79, D, 1, p. 78). Synod further declared that "*sufficient biblical grounds have not been advanced to warrant a departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the church*" (Acts of Synod 1975, Article 79, D 2, p. 78). Synod in its meeting in 1978 did not advanced such compelling biblical evidence.

2) Synod sets a dangerous precedent in taking such drastic action on the basis of what is essentially an argument from the silence of Scripture.

3) The only two scriptural references which synod used to support its decision do not speak to the matter of women in office.

\*We have addressed ourselves in this protest and appeal to the offices of the church as basically one, that is, one in substance and nature. This is the approach of the Belgic Confession (Articles 30 & 31) and of the Church Order (see particularly Article 35).

In substance and nature ecclesiastical office is one, is unified, is shepherding and serving. It is for this shepherding and serving that Christ came (John 10:14; Luke 22:27). Christ's lordship constituted service.

The threefold office of Christ is manifested in the churches in the offices of minister, elder and deacon as shepherding and serving: deacons (Acts 6:1-6, I Tim. 3:8f); elder (Acts 20:28, Luke 12:42, I Pet. 5:4); minister (Eph. 4:11, 12, I Cor. 4:1).

Thus essentially there is one office, which is divided in three. We note further throughout our appeal that the unity of the churches of Jesus Christ is solidly based on the truth of the Word of God. We note that in this entire discussion of women in office, there is and remains a cleavage on the matter of the interpretation of Scripture. For the welfare of the churches, for the truth of God, this issue should be clearly resolved before radical changes are made on the basis of these discussions.

Romans 16:1 concerns a commendation of Phoebe, who comes from Cenchrea, a congregation established by Paul (Acts 18:18), to the church at Rome. This commendation is given in the context of and from a servant of God who at the command of the Lord ordains men to office. In this context we must surely understand Paul to be speaking of a woman who is working hard in the office of believer.

In I Timothy 3:11, the women obviously are the wives of the deacons. That is the context. If this were a reference to women as office bearers, it would be in contradiction to what Paul has been saying about office and, therefore, very strange contextually.

4) It is disheartening to note that synod, in its haste, presumed to possess, the wisdom which is possessed only by all the churches in common while knowing the explosive nature of the issue with which it dealt.

## 2. Church Order Grounds:

a. Synod's decisions tend to downgrade the office of deacon and is contrary to the Reformed principle of equality of offices and, therefore, would appear to be in conflict with our Church Order, Article 95b, "and no officer bearer shall lord it over another office bearer."

b. Synod's decisions are in conflict with Article 3 of the Church Order which, though amended, has not been ratified.

c. One important part of Articles 29 and 30 of the Church Order (. . . unless it is proved that the conflict with . . . the Church Order" and " . . . that a decision conflicts with . . . the Church Order") is made ineffective if it is possible for synod to change the Church Order to fit with its decisions as these decisions are made.

d. The supplement, "The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders," is unworkable under the present structure of the Church Order. This is particularly true of the present revised Church Order, which defines a consistory as the body of elders and deacons. This definition given in Article 35 of the Church Order, speaks to the unity of the offices and the authority of each of the three offices enters in to the fabric of at least twenty other articles of the Church Order.

## 3. Grounds in the Life and Unity of the Churches

a. Synod's decision were reached by a relatively small majority. We believe that a broader consensus is needed for such a sweeping change, also for the sake of maintaining unity within our denomination.

b. Rescinding synod's decisions will do much to allay the fears of those who see this as another step towards opening all the offices to qualified women.

c. The ordination of women as deacons as optional to the churches is divisive and detrimental to the promotion of peace and harmony among the churches. This will be especially evident in broader ecclesiastical endeavors.

d. Synod's pastoral responsibilities are not carried out (i.e., to seek the peace and unity of the churches) in adopting such a decision, knowin the explosive nature of the issue and its debatable grounds.

4. The worth of women as compared to men, raised once and again in the process of coming to these decisions, is not apropos to the question at issue. If a person is not qualified for a particular office, is he, therefore, worth less? The question is not a question of worth nor of equality, but of God's order of things which he made and which he is redeeming again in his Son, Jesus Christ. In that order of things, he has given to women a most wonderful and beautiful place and task which no other can fill (Gen. 2:20). Let us as a church of Jesus Christ protect it and hold it in reverence, in proper wonder, over against the attacks of the unbelieving society in which we live.

Classis Huron

B. Bernard Bakker, stated clerk

## 3. — Classis Pella Appeals Decisions of the 1978 Synod to Deacons

Classis Pella appeals to the Synod of 1979 to annul the decisions of the Synod of 1978 regarding the admission of "qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that the

work of women as deacons be distinguished from that of the elders," and requests the Synod of 1979 to declare that the office of deacon is not open to women.

*Grounds:*

1. The biblical evidence used by synod does not support this decision.

a. Biblical exegetes throughout the Christian community do not universally agree that Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11 teach that women may serve in the office of deacon.

b. The Hermeneutical Principles Report does not thoroughly exegete the above passages. The study committee in Report 31 deals with Romans 16:1 in three lines, and, even though it spends thirty-five lines on I Timothy 3:11, does not really exegete the passage but only expresses committee judgments. The committee then bases conclusions on its own suppositions. Synod does not use in its grounds those passages which were given more thorough and lengthy exegesis, but only those which were given scanty attention.

2. The decision is contrary to a previous decision of synod which declared that "the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice" (Acts of Synod 1975, Art. 79). Compelling biblical evidence supporting ordination of women to the office of deacon was not advanced by synod.

3. Synod has not addressed itself to the Belgic Confession (Art. 30) "when faithful men are chosen, according to the rule presented by St. Paul in his epistle to Timothy."

4. This decision raises problems which challenge the polity of the Christian Reformed Church: the Church Order has been changed in substance and not simply in wording, while the churches have had no prior opportunity to consider the matter. This is contrary to Church Order Article 47.

**NOTE:**

a. Delegates to synod were told by their chairman during discussion on the floor of synod that the only changes possible in 1979 are changes in the wording of the already adopted revised Church Order article. (Cf. Recommendation 5, Acts of Synod 1978, p. 105, which refers to ratification of "this wording".)

b. The churches had only a minimal opportunity to consider the Hermeneutical Principles Committee Report and to make decisions on it since the agenda did not reach them until late April 1978.

5. This decision creates confusion in our churches.

Questions such as the following arise:

a. Does the decision indicate that there are two kinds of deacons? Are there some deacons (women) who are able to do a certain kind of work in the church as ordained office bearers, while there are other deacons (men) whose work as ordained office bearers is broader and more authoritative? If so, the churches do not find this distinction reflected in the ordination form and in the Church Order.

b. Regarding the work of deacons: if the work of deacons is to be understood "in terms of assistance and service," as the grounds for the decision of the 1978 Synod state, does this mean that deacons may have any part in the governing of the church? Church Order Article 35 gives deacons governing authority. Is not the headship principle in which the woman is to be subject to the man (Ephesians 5:23,24; I Corinthians 11:3) violated when a woman serves as deacon? This question is especially pertinent in small consistories where elders and deacons always meet jointly.

6. Regarding ground three, neither Calvin (*Institutes*, Book IV, chapter 3) nor the Convent of Wezel of 1568 actually support the ordination of women to the office of deacon:

a. Calvin speaks of two kinds of deacons - one with ruling authority and one with the duties of service and assistance. He does not speak of *one* office of deacon which includes women.

b. No one has demonstrated that the Convent of Wezel (not a synod) ever had in mind the use of women as deacons, as permitted by our 1978 Synod. We note further that the Synod of Middleburg of 1581 did not favor introducing an office of deaconess.

#### 4. — Classis Zeeland Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Zeeland appeals the decision of the Synod of 1978 "that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, E., page 104).

*Grounds:*

1. Classis believes that the action of the Synod of 1978 in this matter was contrary to the Church Order, Article 47, "The task of synod includes the adoption of the creeds, of the Church Order . . . . No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes." Synod allowed women to assume the office of deacons immediately and proposed a change to make the Church Order agree with this decision:

"A motion is made that this wording of Church Order Article 3 and its supplement be ratified by the Synod of 1979" (Acts of Synod 1978, E, 5, p. 105). This decision either makes the Synod of 1979 a simple "rubber stamp" or does not permit true evaluation of the necessity of a proposed change in the Church Order.

2. The decision of the Synod of 1978 did not fulfill the requirement of the Synod of 1975. The Synod of 1975 decided: "1. That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice. . . . 2. That synod declare that sufficient biblical grounds have not been advanced to warrant departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order" (Acts of Synod 1975, D, 1 & 2, p. 78).

a. The study committee of 1978 re this matter essentially acknowledges the lack of compelling biblical grounds when it asks the Synod for 1978 to take note of a number of difficulties which arose in its study of women in ecclesiastical office and specifically lists four of them. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 529-530.)

b. "The advisory committee also observes that there are problem areas, some of which are identified in the study committee report.

"Therefore, with deep appreciation for what the study committee has done the advisory committee believes that there are several areas that merit further study." (Acts of Synod 1978, D, p. 103.)

Classis Zeeland  
Arthur Besteman, stated clerk

#### 5. — Classis Alberta North Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Alberta North overtures the Synod of 1979 to rescind the decision of Synod 1978, "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, p. 104).

*Grounds:*

1. This decision is contrary to Scripture. We are taught in Genesis 3:16, I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12 that women shall not exercise authority over man. Synod has not shown that the office of a deacon is different for a woman than for a man. As our Church Order and creeds now understand the office of deacon (Belgic Conf. Art. 30 and Church Order Art. 35) it carries the same authority as does that of elder as they make up the council of a church.

2. There is no evidence in Scripture that any woman was ever ordained to serve in a special office. On the other hand, Scripture leaves no doubt that only men were ordained to office by God's direct commission. The requirements for the special offices are only applicable to men. Neither Romans 16:1 or I Timothy 3:11 allow the conclusion that "women may serve as deacons (deaconesses)." It is an error to change a stand of the church held for 1900 years on such dubious grounds. To say the least, this needs much more study and reflection.

3. Before a synod can decide on so weighty a matter that has such far-reaching and sad consequences, the church should be given ample time to study all of the implications in-

volved. The church should, for example, have time to study what ordination to office means, if that would be different for men and women, etcetera.

4. Women have always served the church well with the gifts and talents God gave them. Scripture cites many remarkable services of women both in the Old Testament and the New Testament (Luke 8:2-3; Act 1:14; Acts 18; Rom. 1; Rom. 16:3; to name just a few). Women have never been restricted in this service because they were not ordained to a special office. It needs clear demonstration, which has not at all been given, that ordaining women to office would enable them to serve better and be of greater benefit to God's church and kingdom.

Classis Alberta North  
Henry Jonker, stated clerk

## 6. — Classis Grand Rapids South Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Grand Rapids South overtures Synod of 1979:

1. To repeal the decision of the Synod of 1978 (Art. 80, E, 3): "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders."

*Grounds:*

a. Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11 do not furnish clear, compelling biblical evidence that women were ordained to the office of deacon.

b. The decision is contrary to the teaching of Scripture as found in I Corinthians 14:32-38 and I Timothy 2 and 3.

c. The bulk of biblical data on the subject of the ordination of deacons lists such prerequisites and qualifications as to restrict the office to qualified male confessing members (I Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:2-6).

d. Ground "a" for the above decision is an admission of the weakest type of biblical substantiation, when it declares, "There is *some evidence*, for Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11 indicates that women may serve as deacons (deaconesses)." This ground offers a subjective judgment and argues that since gifted women served as deaconesses they were ordained as deacons. Reformed believers have always insisted on compelling biblical evidence as the only grounds for substantial changes in church polity and reject this kind of strained inferential exegesis.

e. Ground "b" for the above decision states, "The headship principle... is not violated as long as the office of deacon is expressed in terms of *assistant and service*." This ground is neither Biblical, since it revokes any representative authority of Christ as exercised in the office of deacons as they conduct their work, nor creedal, since Belgic Confession Article 30 states, "This true church must be governed by... ministers, elders and deacons, who, together form the council of the church." This decision of Synod 1978, therefore, restricts the office of deacons, stripping from it the aspect of Christ's authority as pertains to representing him in the work of mercy among the congregation.

f. The decision was made contrary to Rules for Synodical Procedure VIII, B, 2.

g. The decision changing Article 3 of the Church Order was made in violation of the Church Order, Article 47.

h. The decision of the Synod of 1978, Article 80 essentially creates:

1) a hierarchy of regular deacons and inferior deacons never before known and unacceptable, in Reformed church polity.

2) a segregation of officebearers that defies the unity of the three-fold office of Christ's presence in the church; and

3) a limited involvement of the very women officers we are now to accept and ordain to the full office of deacon.

i. the unity of the church has been severely fractured as a consequence of a decision so radical yet bearing only the slightest biblical warrant. If there is insufficient biblical information on this matter it behoves us not to fly in the face of twenty centuries of Spirit guided understanding within the church, but rather to set aside such a decision which is not biblically warranted, and so bring peace back to the church.

2. To abide by the decision of Synod 1975: "That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice" and, "that synod declare that sufficient biblical grounds have not been adduced to warrant a departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order" (Acts of Synod 1975, Art. 79, 1 and 2).

Classis Grand Rapids South  
H. J. Kwantes, stated clerk

## 7. — Classis Kalamazoo Appeals Decision of 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Kalamazoo overtures the Synod of 1979 to reconsider the 1978 synodical decision re women in office (Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, page 105).

*Grounds:*

1. Sufficient time was not afforded to the churches to respond to a decision involving a revision of the Church Order (Article 3) as required by Article 47 of the Church Order.
2. Reconsideration will offer synod and the churches opportunity to give more careful reflection to the difference between the functions of the office of deacon as currently practiced and the biblical guidelines upon which the decision was based.

Classis Kalamazoo  
Jack Stulp, stated clerk

## 8. — Classis Grandville Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

In the conviction that the Synod of 1978 erred in its decision to permit the ordination of women to the office of deacon, Classis Grandville overtures the Synod of 1979 not to ratify the proposed change in Article 3 of the Church Order and to declare the decision of 1978 null and void.

*Grounds:*

1. The decision is not in harmony with the general teachings of Scripture re the male role in church leadership.
  - a. The general rule of Scripture is that of male leadership; for example, judges, Levites, priests, kings, prophets, apostles, elders and deacons.
  - b. In the one recorded instance of the ordination of deacons (Acts 6:16) the early church ordained men, and thereby recognized this principle of male eligibility.
2. Synod did not demonstrate that the biblical evidence upon which it based its decision was compelling and conclusive.
  - a. Both the Study Report 31 (III, A, 1, c, (20): III, B, 4, c; V, C, D) and the Advisory Committee (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, p. 103) emphasized the fact that there were several problem areas that needed further study.
  - b. The Synod of 1975 decided that "sufficient biblical grounds have not been advanced to warrant a departure from our present practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order," and that this practice should be maintained "unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced" (Acts of Synod 1975, Art. 79, p. 78).
  - c. The Synod of 1978 had before it the same scriptural passages as did the Synod of 1975. Hence basically no new biblical evidence of a compelling nature was advanced to warrant a departure from the decision of 1975. This is especially evident in Report 31, where hesitation and uncertainty are repeatedly expressed regarding the exact interpretation and application of various pertinent verses.
3. The decision was in violation of the Church Order.
  - a. Article 47 states, "No *substantial* alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

b. The decision to permit the ordination of women to the office of deacons was in conflict with the stipulation of Article 3, and as such cannot be considered "settled and binding" according to Article 29. The proposed alteration of Article 3, substantially changing the qualifications for office, should have been sent to the churches for consideration first as required by Article 47. Consequently, the Church Order was not "faithfully observed" as required by Article 96.

4. The decision was in conflict with Article 30 of the Belgic Confession: "namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, who, together with the pastors, form the council of the church."

This decision has created a great deal of tension and unrest in the church. In the interest of the unity of the church, we urge synod to act favorably on this overture.

Classis Grandville  
Peter Vander Weide, stated clerk

## 9. — Classis Hudson Appeals Decision of the Synod of 1978 re Deacons

Classis Hudson overtures the Synod of 1979 not to ratify the change of Article 3 of the Church Order as proposed by Synod 1978 (Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, p. 105) and to rescind its decision of 1978 to permit consistories to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders.

### *Grounds:*

1. Such a change is in direct conflict with Article 35 of the Church Order.

### *Explanation:*

It is stated in the reasoning of synod that "consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, p. 104). And again, in the reasoning for the change in the Church Order, "The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, p. 105). However, Church Order Article 35a clearly declares that "in every church there shall be a consistory composed of the officebearers" (elders and deacons).

"The consistory is responsible for the general government of the church." How is it possible to have elders and deacons governing the church together, have women as deacons, and still have the work of women as deacons "distinguished from that of elders?" In churches where a distinction is made between a general consistory and a restricted consistory (certain matters taken care of by the elders alone and others by the deacons alone), even there the Church Order declares,

"All other matters belong to the general consistory" (Art. 35c). Consequently, if women are ordained to the office of deacon, they would be required by the Church Order to participate in the rule of the church as consistory members and in this sense their work would not be distinguished from the work of the elders.

2. To ordain women as deacons under our church polity would disregard the headship of man over woman.

### *Explanation:*

The Synod of 1978 in supporting its motion to ordain women deacons appeared to be correct when it said, "The headship principle in which the woman (wife) is to be subject to the man (husband) is not violated as long as the office of deacon is expressed in terms of assistance and service" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, p. 104). However, the Scriptures and the Church Order do not limit the office of deacon to "assistance and service." Acts 6:1-6, Philippians 1:1, and Church Order Article 35 show that rule is involved in the discharge of the office. Consequently, at the very least, a married woman deacon as a member of the consistory would be exercising rule over her husband who is a member of the congregation.

3. To introduce women to the office of deacon (and thus to rule in the consistory with the elders) while denying her the office of elder (overseer) is inherently not only wrong, but inconsistent. Because of this inconsistency, ratifying the proposed change of Church Order Article 3 is also preparing the way for the ordination of women elders and ministers in the not too distant future.

4. The Word of God speaks to this issue in a number of passages familiar to all (Acts 6:3; I Tim. 2:9-15; I Tim. 3; and I Cor. 14:34,35). Though many might reason other-

wise, the burden of proof in these texts seems to point in the direction of ordaining only men to this office. There is no clear-cut, positive scriptural directive to open this office to women. Reformed procedure has always been to follow the clear, positive teaching of Scripture.

Classis Hudson  
Gerald W. Frens, stated clerk

### 10. — Classis Illiana Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Illiana overtures the Synod of 1979 to restore the Church Order Article 3 to its former reading: i.e., "Confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office. Only those who have been officially called and ordained or installed shall hold and exercise office in the church."

*Grounds:*

1. Substantial changes in the Church Order shall not be effected unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes (Art. 47).
2. Synod must be above suspicion and not set the tone for ignoring the Church Order to which we all pledge agreement.
3. We are deeply concerned for the unity of the church and do not wish to see it fragmented by the decision of 1978 which changed Article 3 of the Church Order without referring it to the churches.
4. It is still the judgment of classis that the action taken by Synod of 1978 to permit women to be ordained as deacons is contrary to the teaching of Scripture: the passages of Scripture cited in the decision of synod in no way provide a ground for this action. At the most they refer to women serving in the church. Romans 13 uses the same word "diakonos" in reference to the government. On the other hand, this action clearly ignores the express teaching of Scripture in I Corinthians 14:32-38, I Timothy 2:11-12 and I Timothy 3:12.

Classis Illiana  
Carl E. Zylstra, stated clerk

### 11. — Classis Pacific Northwest Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures synod to rescind the decision of the Synod of 1978, "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders." (Cf. Acts of Synod 1978, p. 104.)

*Grounds:*

1. This decision rests on two passages of Scripture (Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11) neither of which demonstrates that women were serving in the office of deacon during the New Testament period. Nor do they speak of women serving in the office of deacon as understood and defined in the Church Order.
2. This decision is not based on "compelling biblical grounds" for changing our present practice. The Synod of 1978 did not comply with the decision of the Synod of 1975 (see Acts of Synod 1975, p. 78).
3. Since "office" in our Church Order always implies authority to rule in the church, it is impossible to implement the decision of the Synod of 1978 unless the entire Church Order be revised on the point of the exercise of authority. The authority to rule in the church comes to expression only through the consistory and/or the council, and all the officers in the church have a share in the exercise of that authority.

Classis Pacific Northwest  
K. R. Slager, stated clerk

### 12. — Classis Chicago South Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Chicago South overtures the Synod of 1979 to declare the proposed ratification of the "wording of the Church Order Article 3 and its Supplement" (Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, E, 5), to be a new proposal to change the Church Order and to deal with it as a newly proposed change in the Church Order.

*Grounds:*

1. The material content of the proposed ratification is in fact a change in the Church Order. This has never been presented to the churches as a proposed change in the Church Order.
2. The proposed ratification would authorize a change in church practice which dates back nearly two-thousand years. Such a change should take place only after the churches have had sufficient time to consider the implications involved, and after a goodly majority of the entire membership of the denominations has become convinced of the correctness of the proposed change.
3. The proposed ratification poses a serious threat to the peace and unity of the church. Therefore, if such a major change in our denominational church practice is to be introduced, an opportunity ought to be given so that even the appearance of such a change having been illegally proposed and adopted can be removed. The suspicion of illegality (even without the case that might well be adduced for actual illegality) has added to the dissension in our classis caused by the proposed ratification.
4. It should not be assumed that a decision approved by one synod to be ratified by the following synod must necessarily be so ratified. Precedent for a synod not ratifying a decision of a previous synod is found in the Acts of Synod 1974 (Article 82, II, C, 1).
5. If the decision reflected in the proposed ratification is of God, it will endure a reasonable length of time for consideration by the churches.

Classis Chicago South  
Richard M. Hartwell, stated clerk

### 13 — Classis Columbia Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

A. Classis Columbia advises the Synod of 1979 of its deep regret that the Synod of 1978 permitted the immediate implementation of its decision with regard to women in the office of deacons without seeking the advice of the local churches and requests that the decision be reconsidered (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, pp. 101-105).

*Ground:* Article 47 of Church Order states, "No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters (creeds, Church Order, liturgical forms, Psalter Hymnal, principles and elements of the order of worship) unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

B. Classis Columbia overtures the Synod of 1979 that any substantial changes in the Church Order with regard to women in ecclesiastical office be adopted only after sufficient review, study, and response from the local churches.

*Ground:* Article 47 of the Church Order guarantees the local churches sufficient opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes in the Church Order prior to synod's adoption of such suggested changes.

Classis Columbia  
Howard B. Spaan, stated clerk

### 14. — Classis Orange City Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Orange City overtures the Synod of 1979:

A. To decline ratification of Church Order Article 3, which as revised would read, "All confessing members of the church who meet the biblical requirements are eligible for the office of deacon," and to decline ratification of Supplement Article 3 which would read, "The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of the elders."

*Grounds:*

1. This was a major decision in terms of the Scripture, the Church Order, and Church History. Therefore this decision was contrary to the Church Order, Article 47, which reads as follows: "The task of synod includes the adoption of the creeds, of the Church Order . . . . No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes." Synod made a major Church Order change, after the proposed change had been brought to the attention of the churches little more than one month before the time of synod, allowing no time for the church either to study the matter, or to respond.
2. Synod of 1978, having acted contrary to the spirit of Church Order Article 47 (*i.e.*,

making a change in Church Order Article 3), further spelled out her action contrary to the Church Order by deciding that the only changes allowable at the time of ratification would be formal, not substantial (only the wording, not the sense). Article 80, E, 5 reads: "A motion is made that *this wording* (italics ours) of Church Order Article 3 and its Supplement be ratified by the Synod of 1979" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 105).

3. The sense of Article 3 of the Church Order, as it speaks to and about the office of deacons as filled only by men, has stood for several centuries of Protestant church history. Always it was assumed that the Church Order expressed the understood sense of Scripture. The Synod of 1978 approved a major change on the following basis:

"There is some evidence in the Bible for opening the office of deacon to women. At least two passages in the New Testament (Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11) indicate that women may serve as deacons (deaconesses)" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 140, Art. 80, E, 3a).

Note: After extensive studies presented to several synods, synod has found no solution to the problem of women in office. Without any conclusive exegesis, synod on the basis of saying, "there is *some evidence* (italics ours) in the Bible for opening of the office of deacon to women," decided to do so.

B. To annul the decision of the Synod of 1978 which allows the election of women to the office of deacon (deaconess), be it with some specified restrictions.

*Grounds:*

1. This decision is clearly contrary to Scripture, which places deacons together with elders (bishops) in a position of official leadership in the congregation (Phil. 1:1) and forbids giving any such ruling power to women in the churches (1 Tim. 2:12, etc.).

2. This decision violates the Belgic Confession (Art. 30), to which all our churches have pledged their loyalty, also in their classical and synodical assemblies. That article expressly assigns a governing power also to deacons, both within the exercise of their own office and in the several acts wherein they are to cooperate with the pastor(s) and elders of the congregation.

3. This decision, as was also clearly stated on the floor of Synod of 1978, violated the Church Order (Articles 2-4), especially Article 3 which allows only men to be nominated for this office.

C. To declare a moratorium on any further decision-making concerning the matter of women in any office for at least five years.

*Grounds:*

1. Synod is presently making decisions, if not too much in terms of the spirit of the times (women's liberation, etc.), at least under pressure of the spirit of the times. At such a point in time, five years from now, or later, the deliberative process of the assemblies can be more scripturally decisive and effectively productive.

2. Any decision re women in any office is a highly emotional issue as is evidenced by public statements made by people on both sides of the question. Only adequate time and minimized emotion will allow for a wise decision that will be according to the Scripture and good for the church.

3. The churches of the Reformation have allowed only men to the offices for some 400 years, and the CRC has lived by her Church Order for over 100 years. Five more years is short time in contrast, and the scriptural evidence now offered for change it too moot to call for hasty action.

4. The 1978 decision has been disruptive and divisive in the church.

D. To leave to the churches the study of the question of what is or could be the distinctive place and function of women in the instituted church, and specifically, among other things, let the churches study:

1. whether the equal place women have in Christ and in the church is really a matter of filling offices of elder (minister) and deacon;

2. whether the Scripture does not have a distinctive role for women in the instituted church according to God's creative design and revealed intent for women;

3. whether there should be a distinct office of deaconess that is understood to function according to the divine/creational design of women and the givens of Scripture;

4. whether we have done justice to or taken adequate recognition of women in the Church Order.

*Grounds:*

a. In synod's studies and decisions re women in office, synod has not adequately nor

fairly dealt with woman as woman. To put a woman in a man's office/function is not to deal justly with woman. The latter is a secular concept of equality brought into the church.

b. The Church Order does not take recognition of woman's place and function in church.

c. Christian Reformed churches are divided even as by the Synod of 1978 was divided. Major changes in the Church Order and in the church's polity and practice should have a far greater basis of agreement among the churches and classes when binding decisions are made.

d. In Reformed polity, it is preferable that recommended changes come from churches.

Classis Orange City  
Karl Bratt, stated clerk

### 15. — Classis Minnesota South Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Minnesota South overtures synod to declare that the decision of the 1978 Synod, that the change in "wording of Church Order Article 3 and its supplement be ratified by the Synod of 1979" (Acts of Synod, 1978, Art. 80 E, 5) does not adequately comply with the Church Order, in that it does not also refer the change in the substance of Article 3 for ratification, and to declare that the final approval of the *substance*, as well as the *wording*, of the change of Article 3 of the Church Order must still be made by the Synod of 1979, or a later synod.

*Grounds:*

1. Church Order Article 47, "No substantial alterations shall be effected by the synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

2. The Minority Study Report on Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office, which was the basis for the 1978 Synod's decision to change Church Order article 3, was before the consistories for less than two months.

Classis Minnesota South  
Nicholas Roorda, stated clerk

### 16. — Classis Sioux Center Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

Classis Sioux Center overtures the Synod of 1979 to declare that the decision of the Synod of 1978, "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders," is of no effect in the Christian Reformed Church.

*Grounds:*

1. There is no conclusive evidence in Scripture for opening the office of deacon to women. The Synod of 1975 declared, "... that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice." The passages quoted in the grounds adduced by the Synod of 1978 do not unqualifiedly support the opening of the office to women. Synod itself said, "There is some evidence....", and again, "At least two passages in the New Testament (Rom. 16:1 and I Tim. 3:11) indicate that women may serve as deacons (deaconesses)."

2. Church Order Article 35a states that the consistory (elders and deacons) is responsible for the general government of the church. This concept implies a shared role of government within the overall structure of differentiation. This concept has historical precedent and is our common practice today. Article 35b implies that in a consistory made up of less than four elders, deacons can and should serve in the capacity of elder. It should be noted that even though the consistory may have separate elders and deacons meetings, historically and in common practice today, these meetings have been joint sessions.

3. There is more to the office of deacon than that of assistance and service. It carries with it authority. Article 30 of the Belgic Confession reads as follows: "We believe that

this true church must be *governed* by that spiritual polity which our Lord has taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors . . . ; also elders and deacons, who together with the pastors form the council of the church; that by these means the true religion may be preserved." Synod decided that women could be ordained to the office of deacon "provided their work is distinguished from that of the elders", thereby creating a special kind of deacon, of which the Church Order and the Confessions know nothing.

Classis Sioux Center  
Paul E. Bakker, stated clerk

### 17. — Coopersville Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Coopersville overtures synod to annul the decision of the Synod of 1978 re Women in Ecclesiastical Office, and specifically the approval to "admit qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that the work of women as deacons be distinguished from that of the elders."

*Grounds:*

1. There is not adequate biblical evidence for opening the office of deacon to women.
  - a. Romans 16:1 furnishes no *substantial* evidence that the office of deacon (ordained) was ever open to women.
  - b. 1 Timothy 3:11 does not furnish *substantial* evidence, nor the context, that the word *gunaikas* is to be translated as "women deacons."
2. Women can, and have served as deaconesses within the churches for many years without ordination.
3. Sufficient time was not afforded the churches to respond to changing the Church Order as is required by Article 47.
4. Synod's decision leaves the implementation of this decision to the individual churches. This creates an atmosphere of congregationalism that is foreign to Reformed church polity.
5. The restriction "provided that their work is distinguished from that of the elders" is not in keeping with the Reformed understanding of the office of deacon within the church (there would be two kinds of deacons).
6. The Rules for Synodical Procedure were not followed and therefore the issue was not legally before synod (Rules for Synodical Procedure VII, B. 2. a,b,c.).

*Note:* This overture was submitted to Classis Grand Rapids North at its September 1978 meeting but was not approved.

Coopersville Consistory  
Garrett Adema, clerk

### 18. — Immanuel, Ripon, Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Immanuel overtures the Synod of 1979 to nullify the decision of the Synod of 1978 "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" (Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80.)

*Grounds:*

1. No compelling biblical grounds for such were presented by the Study Committee on Hermeneutical Principles concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office; the Advisory Committee, Church Order II; nor by synod itself. Such compelling grounds were determined necessary by a previous synod: "That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds were advanced for changing the practice" (Acts of Synod 1975, Article 79, D, 1).
2. This decision is not in harmony with our Belgic Confession Article 30, "We believe that this true church must be governed by the spiritual polity which the Lord has taught us in his Word; namely, that there must be ministers or pastors to preach the Word of God and to administer the sacraments; also elders and deacons, *who, together with the pastor form the council of the church*; that by these means the true religion is preserved; and that the true doctrine be propagated, *likewise transgressors punished and restrained by spiritual means*; also that the poor and distressed may be relieved and comforted, ac-

ording to their necessities. By these means everything will be carried on in the church with good order and decency, when faithful *men* are chosen according to the rule prescribed by Saint Paul in his letter to Timothy (*italics ours*).

3. The procedure of placing before synod the recommendation of the Minority Report of the Study Committee, which allegedly was substantially the same as the Advisory Committee, is highly questionable, according to the Rules for Synodical Procedure VII, B,2,c: "A main motion is not acceptable under the following conditions. . . . If it is verbally and substantially the same motion already rejected by synod. . . ."

*Note:* This overture was submitted to Classis Central California at its January 1979 meeting, but was not adopted.

Immanuel Consistory  
Theodore Kuik, clerk

## 19. — Southern Heights Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Southern Heights Consistory overtures synod to reconsider the decision of the Synod of 1978 that allows consistories to ordain (install) qualified women to the office of deacon.

### *Grounds:*

There is an inconsistency between the functions of the office of deacon as currently practiced in the CRC and the biblical guidelines upon which the decision of synod was based.

1. The policy approved by synod contained the specific clause, "provided that their work as deacons be distinguished from that of elders." This clause was added because of the "headship principle, in which the woman (wife) is to be subject to the man (husband)." The headship principle states, according to the committee report, that "a woman is not to have authority over a man (husband) and that she is to be in submission to him." Clearly, then, by the clause added to the motion on women as deacons, synod was declaring that women should not be in authoritative positions in the church. The Rev. Clarence Boomsma, President of last year's synod, also stated this beyond a doubt when he wrote in the Banner, October 13, 1978: "synod revealed it was not prepared to cross the bridge to allow women to exercise ecclesiastical authority as deacons, and thereby open the gate, even if only a little ajar, to women elders and ministers in the future. The basic position of headship as it pertains to women in office was not altered by Synod of 1978." These are the biblical guidelines upon which the decision of synod was based.

2. But what is the office of deacon as currently practiced? Article 35 of the Church Order of the CRC instructs that the consistory is responsible for the general government of the church and to be composed of elders and deacons. A distinction of "supervision and discipline" restricted to the elders and "Christian mercy" to the deacons is made from "all other matters which belong to the general consistory." Implicit in the deaconal role in the general consistory, charged with government in the church in all matters, excluding "discipline and supervision," is an obvious element of authority.

Although perhaps initially the early church deacons were solely the arm of the church as servants in the work of Christian mercy to those in need (Acts 6, 1 Tim. 3), today they are an integral part of the ecclesiastical authority of the church via the consistory. The deacons participate in decisions, then, relative to policies on worship, missions, education, building and grounds, nominations of officebearers, general church policies, membership matters, etc. In fact, in many Christian Reformed churches, the deacons participate (and vote) in the matter of professions of faith (opening the doors of the kingdom), though perhaps they do not participate in the closing of the doors of the kingdom through church discipline.

3. Thus we find an inconsistency between the office of deacon as currently spelled out in the Church Order (where authority is given to them), and the biblical guidelines upon which the decision of synod was based (where authority for women over men was not allowed). Perhaps the only route to go to be consistent with synod's decision is as the Rev. Mr. Boomsma wrote: "If consistories now wish to ordain women deacons, they may do so according to the decision of the 1978 Synod. But if they wish to observe synodical regulations and remain subject to synodical authority, they will have to

distinguish the role of women deacons from that of men deacons in the consistory when it governs the affairs of the church." But it is this what synod meant, then it should say so clearly, and not leave the situation under a cloud of uncertainty and inconsistency.

*Note:* The Southern Heights CRC sent an overture to Classis Kalamazoo. Classis adopted the basic overture as such, as well as a summary of the grounds. Since classis did not see fit to adopt the fuller explanation of our grounds, which is crucial to an understanding of why we think synod should reconsider the whole matter regarding women as deacons, we hereby submit our own appeal.

Southern Heights,  
Kalamazoo Consistory  
Ralph Slager, clerk

## 20. — First Kalamazoo Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of First Kalamazoo overtures the Synod of 1979 to rescind the decision of Synod of 1978 re Women in Ecclesiastical Office, to "admit qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that the work of women as deacons be distinguished from that of the elders."

### *Grounds:*

1. There are no compelling biblical grounds for opening the office of deacon to women.
  - a. Romans 16:1 does not provide any compelling evidence, that the office of deacon was ever open to women (see Acts 6:3) and
  - b. I Timothy 3:11 does not provide compelling evidence, nor does the context, that the word "gunaikas" is to be understood as "women deacons". (Dr. A. Kuyper explains: wives of both elders and deacons.)
2. Women can and have served as deaconesses within the churches for many years without ordination.

\* A. Kuyper, H. Bavinck, and F. L. Rutgers, *De Staten Bijbel*, Annotated, Middelharnis (the Netherlands), 1895, p. 312.

*Note:* The above appeal was submitted to Classis Kalamazoo in January 1979, but was not adopted.

3. Sufficient time was not afforded to the churches to respond to changing Article 3 of the Church Order as required by Article 47 of the same.
4. The Rules for Synodical Procedure were not followed and therefore the issue was not legally before synod (VIII, B, 2 a,b,c).

Consistory of First Kalamazoo  
C. Boender, clerk

## 21. — Second Abbotsford Consistory Appeals Decisions of the 1978 re Deacons

The Consistory of the Second Abbotsford appeals to the Synod of 1979:

A. That synod reconsider synod's 1978 decision: "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided their work is distinguished from that of elders," and change its decision to read as follows: "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deaconess, provided that deaconesses not be made part of the consistory"; and further, that synod appoint a committee with the mandate to submit to Synod 1980 appropriate changes in the Church Order.

### *Grounds:*

- (1) Synod 1978 uses the words "deacons" and "deaconesses" interchangeably (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, ground a, p. 104).
- (2) The restrictive clause ("provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders") is ambiguous.
- (3) For deaconesses to do their work meaningfully they need not be members of the consistory. There is no scriptural reason for holding that every office-bearer be part of the consistory.

(4) The reason for synod adding the restrictive clause ("provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders") was to prevent violating "the headship principle in which the woman (wife) is to be subject to the man (husband)" (Acts of Synod 1978, ground b, p. 104). Article 35 of the Church Order states that the consistory is responsible for the general government of the church, which in effect excludes women from the consistory. This exclusion of women from the ruling body should, therefore, be stated in the Church Order.

B. That synod do not ratify the provisional change in Church Order Article 3 and its supplement as amended by Synod 1978.

*Grounds:*

- (1) Adoption of overture A (above) would make the ratification unnecessary.
- (2) Adoption of overture A (above) would prevent bewildering confusion.

*Note:* This appeal was submitted to Classis British Columbia meeting in March, 1979, but was not adopted.

Abbotsford Consistory  
Ralph Huizenga, clerk

## 22. — First St. Thomas Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of First St. Thomas overtures synod to rescind the decision of Synod 1978, "That consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders, "as well as the subsequent amendment of Article 3 of the Church Order required by this decision (though the wording of it and its supplement are to be ratified by the decision of Synod of 1979).

*Grounds:*

1. This decision contradicts the decision of Synod 1975, which states that "synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices, recognized by the Church Order, be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice" (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 78).

The grounds adduced, as well as the wording of the decision itself, do not speak of compelling biblical grounds, but speak only of "may be allowed" in a very passive sense, as also "some evidence", "may serve" and "could mean."

2. Genesis 3:16, I Corinthians 14:34 and I Timothy 2:12, show clearly that women shall not exercise authority over men, and synod has not demonstrated adequately that the function of female deacons is different from that of male deacons, who form part of the general consistory and jointly with the minister and elders are the general government of the church.

3. The decision to amend Article 3 of the Church Order (though the wording and its supplement are to be ratified by the decision of Synod of 1979) is not in keeping with Article 47 of the Church Order, which reads (in part) - "No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters, unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes."

We firmly believe that the proposed changes are indeed major ones and the churches have not had adequate and sufficient time to consider the changes, which will have far-reaching implications for all the churches of the denomination.

*Grounds:*

Reformed Church polity and also our own Church Order (Art. 35) dictate that the offices of the church (ministers, elders and deacons) jointly exercise government of the church. Deacons are therefore effectively included. The elders being charged especially with the spiritual care; but the whole consistory, deacons included, in charge of the general government of the church.

If and when women are ordained, they will have the same duties and responsibilities as the male deacons, even though the decision of synod says "provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders."

This is obviously an ambiguous statement, for the work of elders is different from that of the deacons. Or is there implied here that women deacons are different deacons than male deacons? Will we have male deacons who jointly with the ministers and

elders exercise general government of the church and female deacons who sit on the sidelines, having no vote and therefore are not a part of the general consistory?

Referring specifically to Genesis 3:16 ("and thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee") or to I Corinthians 14:34 ("let your women keep silence in the church, for it is not permitted unto them to speak") and to I Timothy 2:12 ("but I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over men") . . . it is evident that the Bible, the infallible and inerrant Word of God, states that women shall be in subjection and shall not have authority over men. Note that it does not say that one is inferior and the other superior.

The indications are simply, that God has placed male over female in their own separate functions. If women deacons are to be the same as male deacons, exercising general government of the church . . . it would obviously be contrary to the teachings of Scripture.

Proponents of women in office usually refer to Galatians 3:28 ("there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ") and use this text to back up their argument that male authority as instituted in Genesis 3:16 is abrogated. A more correct interpretation, however, would be that this text states that as persons and individuals standing before God, there is no difference. We are all, whether male or female, required to obey God's commandments and love our neighbour as ourselves. No changes in the functions of male and female are implied. The creation ordinance is by this text not negated, but supplemented and complemented.

A lot of hermeneutical maneuvering has been attempted to update current practices. We should, instead, rely upon the Holy Scriptures to teach us the way that we should go and not use "custom, great multitude, antiquity etc." (Belgic Conf., Art. VII) to substantiate our points of view. No current practices should influence us to permit actions which are against the Bible.

*Note:* This appeal was submitted to Classis Chatham but was not adopted.

First St. Thomas Consistory  
Peter Venema, clerk

### 23. — Central Avenue Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Central Avenue, Holland, overtures synod to rescind the decision of the 1978 Synod with respect to women in the office of deacon (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80, E, 3, p. 104) and not to ratify the amended Church Order Article 3 and its Supplement (cf. Acts of Synod 1978, Article 80, E, 4 and 5 p. 105).

*Grounds:*

1. The decision of 1978 is not in keeping with the decision of the Synod of 1975 (cf. Acts of Synod 1975, Article 79, D, 1, p. 78): "That synod declare that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing that practice."
2. The decision of 1978 has resulted in division and disunity and continues to threaten the peace of the churches.
3. The decision of 1978 "that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon" with its qualifying phrase "provided that their work is distinguished from that of elders" is impractical and unworkable to implement because given the present day patterns of consistorial life and work deacons do function so that their work at many points is not distinguished from that of elders.

*Note:* This appeal was presented to Classis Holland at its January 1979 meeting, but was not adopted.

Consistory of Central Avenue  
Floyd Maat, clerk

### 24. — Champlain Valley Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Champlain Valley, Vergennes, respectfully overtures the Synod of

1979 to rescind the decision of the Synod of 1978 which allows the election of women to the office of deacon (deaconess) be it with some unspecified restrictions.

*Grounds:*

1. This decision is clearly contrary to Scripture, which places deacons together with elders (bishops) in a position of official leadership in the congregation (Phil. 1:1) and forbids giving any such ruling power to women in the churches (I Tim. 2:12).
2. No conclusive evidence can be found in Scripture to support ordination of women to the office of deacon.
3. This decision violates the Belgic Confession (Art. 30), to which all our churches have pledged their loyalty. The aforementioned article expressly assigns a governing power also to deacons, both within the exercise of their own office and in the several acts wherein they are to cooperate with the pastor(s) and elders of the congregation.
4. This decision, as was also clearly stated on the floor of the Synod of 1978, violates the Church Order (Art. 2-4), especially Article 3, which allows only men to be nominated for this office.
5. We believe it is proper, since each individual church is bound by the Church Order, that all the churches through their classis have time to ponder and react to any Church Order changes before they go into effect (Art. 47). Article 96 states that this Church Order was adopted by *common consent*, which we feel, implies that any changes adopted, should certainly pass by more than a narrow margin.

*Note:* This overture was submitted to Classis Atlantic Northeast in February 1979 but was not adopted.

Consistory of Champlain Valley  
William De Graaf, clerk

## 25. — Pleasant Street Consistory appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Pleasant Street overtures the Synod of 1979 to restrict ordination to the office of deacon to men only, and not to ratify the rewording of Article 3 of the Church Order and its Supplement as amended by the Synod of 1978.

*Grounds:*

1. The decision of the Synod of 1978 does not accord with the teaching of Scripture.
  - a. Scripture teaches clearly in Genesis 3:16, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 1 Corinthians 14:33b-36, and I Timothy 2:9-15 that man is head of the woman and that women may not assume positions of authority over men in the church. This would certainly apply to the offices of the church: ministers, elders, and deacons.
  - b. The office of deacon as constituted in our churches is not only one of assistance and service, but also one of authority. This is recognized also by the Belgic Confession of Faith, Article 30. Even with the qualification that the task of women deacons must be distinguished from that of elders, their office would carry an element of authority. Practically, too, it would be very difficult to separate the functions of women deacons and men deacons, and in time most churches would probably not distinguish them.
  - c. There is no real evidence in Scripture that women were ordained to the office of deacon. The references in Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11 are very inconclusive. On the other hand, it is clear from Act 6 that only men were appointed to serve as deacons, and 1 Timothy 3:12 could only apply to men.
2. The decision of the Synod of 1978 introduced a major change in our church polity which the churches did not have adequate time to consider and study. In the past when the Church Order was changed, time was given for the churches to ponder and react to such changes before they were put into effect, however, the report of the synodical study committee came before the churches via the Agenda for Synod in April of 1978. The synod made its decision in June of 1978. This violates Article 47 of the Church Order which says: "No substantial alterations shall be effected by synod in these matters unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes." We recognize that the Synod of 1979 must ratify the rewording of Church Order, Article 3, and its supplement, but this seems to apply only to the wording and not to the substance of the change.
3. The peace of our beloved denomination is at stake when such a weighty matter is passed by so small a majority.

4. The decision of the Synod of 1978 is, in effect, the first step to the opening of all the offices of the church to women, including that of elders and ministers. Whereas this might appear to be an assumption, church history and the trend in other denominations, such as the Gereformeerde Kerken in The Netherlands, verify this conclusion. The three offices of minister, elder, and deacon have always been closely related in our churches. Article 35 of the Church Order unites them in the consistory which is said to be "responsible for the general government of the church"

*Note:* This overture was submitted to Classis Atlantic Northeast at its February, 1979, meeting, but was not adopted.

Pleasant Street Consistory  
Sander Silvis, clerk

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## 26 — Wright Consistory appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of Wright, Kanawha, protests the decision of the Synod of 1978, regarding the admission of "qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that the work of women as deacons be distinguished from that of elders" and appeals to the Synod of 1979 to declare that the decision of Synod 1978 is invalid.

*Grounds:*

1. The biblical evidence used to support this decision is inconclusive.
  - a. There is no universal agreement among scholars that Romans 16:1 and I Timothy 3:11 teach that women may serve in the office of deacon.
  - b. There is no conclusive exegesis of these passages given in the hermeneutical principles report.
2. The contrary evidence in interpretation of passages such as I Timothy 2:12, Acts 6:3 and I Corinthians 14:34,35 has been to exclude women in church office, including that of deacon.
  - b. The Belgic Confession in Article 30 speaks of "faithful men being" chosen for office.
3. There are Church Order problems connected with this decision in that the Church Order has been substantially changed without the churches having prior opportunity to consider this change (C.O., Art. 47).

*Note:* This appeal was submitted to the January, 1979, meeting of Classis Northcentral Iowa, but was not adopted.

Wright Consistory  
Paul Eekhoff, clerk

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## 27. — Bethel, Tucson Consistory appeals Decision of 1978 Synod re Deacons

Bethel, Tucson, Arizona, Consistory overtures synod to reconsider the decision of the Synod of 1978 re women being ordained to the office of deacon and refer this matter to the churches for their consideration before a final decision is made.

*Ground:*

This decision violates Article 47 of the *church order* which states that no substantial change shall be made in the *church order* unless the churches have had prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed change. The decision of the synod requires a change in Article 3 of the *church order* which states that "confessing male members of the church who meet the biblical requirements for office-bearers are eligible for office."

*Note:* This appeal was presented to Classis Rocky Mountain, but was not adopted

Consistory of Bethel,  
Tucson  
Jacob Hekman, president

## 28. — Millbrook Consistory appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Millbrook, Grand Rapids Consistory overtures the Synod of 1979 to reconsider the decision of 1978 regarding women in the office of deacon. The reconsideration is intended to define the authority of women in the office; and to suggest practical implementation of that office as it presently exists, or to explore the possibility of a distinct office of deaconess.

### *Grounds:*

1. Reconsideration is appropriate since the advisory committee listed several passages that had bearing on the issue that were not mentioned in the Report on Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Office (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 103).
2. The present instruction to distinguish the work of women deacons from that of elders is difficult to apply. In theory elders and deacons are separate and distinct offices, but in fact they are often doing the same work.
3. The issue of authority is a critical factor in the study committee report, in the floor debate, and is reflected in the instructions to distinguish the work of women deacons from the elders. If that should mean that women are not to vote in council, then they are not deacons, if they are to vote, they rule over the congregation. This issue of authority in the office needs more study and clearer application.
4. There is clear biblical and historical precedent for an office of deaconess (Rom. 16:1, I Tim. 3:11 and Calvin's Institutes III. 3:).
5. There appears to be confusion and unrest in the churches following the decision of 1978 regarding women in the office of deacon.

### *Addendum I*

The consistory understands the use of the word "office" to be without an implied authority. It is used interchangeably with the word "position." That is, if an office is established, whatever authority is involved in that office must be defined.

### *Addendum II*

This overture was presented to Classis Grand Rapids East in its January 1979 meeting. It was not adopted as formulated.

The Consistory of Millbrook  
J. Nagelkerke, clerk

## 29. — Bethel, Dunnville, Consistory appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Bethel, Dunnville, Consistory overtures synod to halt the implementation of the decisions adopted in Article 80 (Acts of Synod, 1978) re: Report 31 of Synod 1978 (Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office) and to reaffirm the historic Reformed principle and practice of ordaining only men to the offices of minister, elder, and deacon.

### *Grounds:*

1. Report 31 of the Synod of 1978 (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 80) is a substantial alteration in historic Reformed church polity, and as such Church Order Article 47 requires that the churches have "... prior opportunity to consider the advisability of the proposed changes." By immediately adopting Recommendation 2 of the Minority Report, synod did not give the local churches the required "prior opportunity to consider."
2. The decision of synod re the Supplement to Church Order Article 3 ("The work of women as deacons is to be distinguished from that of the elders") is impossible for the local churches to follow, since Belgic Confession Article XXX and Church Order Article 35 require that all office-bearers belong to the general consistory which has a ruling function in the life of the local congregations.
3. Report 31 as adopted by the Synod of 1978 does not fulfill the requirements of the Synod of 1975: "that the practice of excluding women from the ecclesiastical offices recognized in the Church Order be maintained unless compelling biblical grounds are advanced for changing the practice." (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 78).
  - a. We respectfully submit that the grounds advanced by Report 31 are not compelling biblical grounds.

b. The Committee on Hermeneutical Principles itself reports: "No biblical passage speaks directly to the question of women in ecclesiastical office as presently understood" (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 529). Hence, the grounds that they subsequently put forward, by their own admission, cannot be considered "compelling biblical grounds."

c. We respectfully submit that the following verses (Gen. 3:16; I Tim. 2:11-13; and I Tim. 3:12) support the historic Reformed practice of reserving ecclesiastical offices for the men of the congregation.

*Note:* This appeal was presented to Classis Hamilton at its meeting in January 1979 but was not adopted.

Bethel, Dunnville Consistory  
C. Roorda, clerk

### 30. — New Holland Consistory Appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons

The Consistory of New Holland overtures the synod to declare that the decision of the 1978 Synod "to allow women to serve in the office of deacon" is contrary to the Word of God and therefore must be rescinded so as to have no affect in the Christian Reformed Church.

*Grounds:*

1) Biblical passages which are pertinent to the issue. (These are the same passages which the synodical study committee which made its recommendation to the Synod of 1978 felt were pertinent.)

a) Genesis 1 & 2.—We agree with the study committee that both man and woman were created in the image of God. We also agree that both man and woman were given dominion over the earth. But this passage indicates that the man and woman had different roles in carrying out that dominion. We read that for a time man carried out the task of dominion alone. As the study committee itself implies, one possible area in carrying out that task of dominion was in naming every living creature. Other areas of dominion are in tilling and keeping the garden. But the important thing is that he was able and did carry out the task alone. The woman never did this. This argument may not carry out the task alone. The woman never did this. This argument may not carry much weight except for the fact that we read that the woman was created to be a helper fit for man. Man is not described as a helper to woman but woman as a helper to man. The emphasis of this passage is not parity of worth as the study committee maintains but the relationship of man and woman in carrying out the task of dominion. Man was first given the responsibility and authority of dominion and woman's role in having dominion is that of helping man. Man is seen as having ultimate authority and responsibility before God as his representative to see that his will is done on earth, including being done by the woman, and the woman is seen as helping man in this task. This by no means denies the parity of worth before God, in service to him, of the man and the woman. Both are of equal worth before God in service to God and both have gifts and talents to be used in service to him. Genesis 2 describes the relationship man and woman have to each other in carrying out their service to God as God created them and using their gifts and talents so that God carries out his ultimate dominion over the earth through man. Nor do we see Genesis 2 describing this relationship only in the context of marriage. To do so fails to take into account the full continuity of the text. The passage tells us that man, not a husband, was created in the image of God and given dominion over the earth. He was put in the Garden of Eden to till and keep it. He also gave all living creatures names. To help him carry out his responsibilities and tasks God created woman, not a wife, from man to which man also gave a name just as man did to all the living creatures. But man's relationship to woman was not the same as man's relationship to all living creatures. Out of this special relationship in which God created man and woman, with the woman as a help to man, comes the marriage relationship. After God creates woman as a help to man, after man names the woman, "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." Man, and woman to help him, were created in special relationship to each other to have dominion over the earth and out of that special relationship comes marriage. In this

special relationship of man and woman, man has responsibility and authority even over the woman, though it's an authority of special love and concern as they carry out a special task together. There is no distinction in this created relationship between man and woman or husband and wife, and that carries through the entire Bible as the study committee points out. In fact, much of the study committee's problem stems from trying to make such a distinction when the Bible doesn't. It's interesting to us that many of the present day scholars who so vocally warn us not to read the Greek culture's body-soul dichotomy into the Bible are themselves reading the modern culture's man-husband, woman-wife dichotomy into the Bible when it isn't there. We therefore understand the passage of Genesis 2 to teach that man was created to have the responsibility and authority under God for dominion over the earth and woman was created to help him in that responsibility, meaning that she too was under his responsibility and authority though in a special, loving relationship.

b) Genesis 3:16—"He shall rule over you" is not a new relationship here but expresses the effect of sin on an already established relationship. This is true of the other relationships expressed in this passage. The relationship of a woman giving birth to a child was already present before sin (Gen. 1:28). This relationship would now be affected by sin and there would be a multiplying of pain. The man's relationship to the ground, in that he would have to till and keep it, was present already before sin. But now, because of sin, that relationship would be strained with a curse being placed on the ground. So with the relationship between man and woman. The responsibility and authority of the man for the woman in that special relationship did not begin because of sin but from creation. This relationship was not changed but affected by sin so that man will now rule, be lord and master, over the woman in ways that will not always be happy for the woman.

c) Micah 6:3, 4—Miriam—Miriam certainly had special gifts and talents that were used in her role of helper fit for man but it's notable that she fills no official role. She does not have an official role like Aaron nor does she even have the responsibility and authority of one of the elders who served with Moses.

d) Numbers 12:1 ff—Miriam's Rebellion—We agree with the study committee that this revolt is not so much of a woman against male authority but "of two persons, one a woman and the other a man, against duly constituted authority."

e) Judges 4 & 5—Deborah—As the study committee points out, Deborah was a leader of Israel "in a time marked by apostasy and male inaction. Barak together with the elders and priests failed to exercise leadership. In fact, Barak was challenged to assume leadership but refused to do so." We do not understand this passage as being a norm by which we judge our activity today but as a warning against apostasy and male inaction for us today. Deborah was being used by God here to *help* inactive man reassume his leadership role.

f) II Kings 22:12-20; II Chronicles 34:20-28—Huldah—Huldah, unlike Deborah, is not described to have filled any official leadership role in Israel. However this too was a time of apostasy and male inaction and again should not be considered normative for us today. As with Deborah, Huldah was used by God to restore obedience of men to God in their leadership role.

g) Joel 2:28 & 29—Joel's Prophecy Regarding the Spirit's Outpouring.—In the Old Testament only a very limited number from among God's people were blessed with the Holy Spirit in a special way. These were special people who had been appointed and anointed by God through his people to a special task of prophet, priest or king. The Holy Spirit came upon this limited number of people to help them carry out the task to which they had been appointed and anointed, using their gifts and abilities. We understand Joel's prophecy to refer to the New Testament outpouring of the Holy Spirit, beginning at Pentecost, by which all believers are united to Jesus Christ and appointed and anointed to carry out his work with him of prophet, priest and king. This anointing is referred to in I John 2:27, John 14:26 and Acts 2:17. This outpouring and anointing by the Holy Spirit changes sinful man and woman's relationship to God through Jesus Christ and it changes the relationship of man and woman as it is affected by sin according to Genesis 3:16. But it does not change the created relationship of man and woman to each other according to Genesis 2. It only restores that relationship.

h) Galatians 3:28—This passage describes the parity of man and woman before God in Jesus Christ because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. But it again does not change the created relationship of man and woman having dominion under God. Nor can this

passage be used to qualify women for office of elder, deacon or minister, since all men are not qualified for these offices either as Paul writes Timothy and Titus.

i) I Corinthians 11:2-16—We have no problem with the veil and covering being cultural, but the principle behind them is not culture but based on the creation of man and woman according to Genesis 2. Verse 3, "The head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband (or man). As the study committee points out, there is no husband-man dichotomy in the Bible, and the head of Christ is God." Again verses 7-9, "For a man ought not to cover his head, (application for the day) *since* he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man" (creation principle). As the study committee points out, verses 11 and 12 refer to a man and woman's relationship in the Lord, not to each other, similar to Galatians 3:28.

j) I Corinthians 14:33b-36—We agree with the study committee that the principle here again is the relationship in which God created man and woman according to Genesis 2.

k) I Peter 3:1-6—The study committee states that the submission called for here by the wife is due primarily to the mission task she has with her husband. However, in the model Peter gives of such submission, Sarah does not obey her husband to win him over but because of her created relationship to him in obedience to God.

l) Romans 16:1-2—Phoebe is described as a deaconess and a helper but she is not described in any official capacity over the church which includes men. The emphasis here is that she is a helper fit for men such as Paul who fills an official capacity as a man. As a helper she serves as a deaconess, one who serves.

m) I Timothy 2:9-15—Here again, as the study committee pointed out, the principle is the relationship between man and woman as God created them, recorded in Genesis 2. No woman is to have authority over men "For Adam was formed first, then Eve." This is not a cultural directive, nor does it have a post-fall basis, but it's foundation is God's creation.

n) I Timothy 3:11—Whoever these women were, whether wives of deacons or deaconesses, they were not official deacons in the church. That would go directly against what Paul has just said in I Timothy 2:9-15 and in so many other places, all based on the relationship in which God created man and woman.

2) Not only do we not find any evidence for opening the offices of elder, deacon and minister to women but we find substantial biblical and creational evidence which prohibits these offices to woman. We therefore agree with the confessions and Church Order that these offices are for biblically and spiritually qualified men only and that opening these offices to woman is a direct violation of God and His word.

*Note:* This appeal was submitted to Classis Sioux Center in February 1979 but was not adopted.

New Holland Consistory  
John Nydam, clerk

### 31. — Classis Pacific Northwest requests Deletion of Synodical Rule of Procedure

Classis Pacific Northwest overtures synod to rescind Synodical Rule of Procedure V, F, adopted by the Synod of 1971 which states:

"Synod urges our assemblies and members to refrain from overtures, appeals, or communications which are repetitious, or mere expressions of agreement or disagreement with matters already on the agenda of synod.

Synod authorizes the Stated Clerk to omit such items from the printed Agenda at his discretion. In such cases they shall merely be listed and accepted as informative communications. The senders shall be notified and their materials shall be given to one of the advisory committees of synod to be received as information. Matters received as information will not ordinarily be mentioned in advisory committee reports or the Acts of Synod."

(Acts of Synod 1971, p. 46)

#### *Grounds:*

1. This procedure nullifies the right of members, churches and classes to overture and

appeal to synod, which right is guaranteed by Articles 28, c and 30 of the Church Order, and infringes upon the "original" authority of consistories which is one of the basic principles of our Church Order. (cf. Article 27a.)

2. It inhibits the kind of free discussion by consistories and classes which ought to precede decisions on important matters by our synods.

3. The alleged saving of expense which the 1971 synod gave as a ground for its rule does not justify such violations of the basic rules and procedures of our Church Order.

4. Classes and consistories never had the opportunity to discuss this rule before it was adopted by synod.

*Note:* For a more recent decision and clarification of this rule, see Acts of Synod 1978, pages 51, 52.—Wm. P. Brink, Stated Clerk.

Classis Pacific Northwest  
K. R. Slager, stated clerk

### 32. — Dutton Consistory Appeals Decisions of Neland Avenue and Classis Grand East re Verhey Matter.

The Consistory of Dutton objected to the decision to ordain Dr. Allen D. Verhey after he had stated in his examination that he did not believe that the serpent spoke to Eve as reported in Genesis 3 and that he believed that the earthquake reported in Matthew 28:2 should be understood as an eschatological symbol and not necessarily as a fact. We brought these objections to the Synod of 1976. The synod, after extended discussion of the matter, refused to rule whether these objections were valid or not on the technical grounds that

"Beyond the point of ordination the procedures outlined in the Form of Subscription and the Church Order must be followed if a minister's loyalty to the Confessions is called into question,"  
and it decided

"that synod remind the appellants that if they remain convinced that the position of Dr. Verhey brings him into conflict with the Confessions they must follow the procedures outlined in the Form of Subscription and the Church Order". (cf. Acts of Synod 1976, p. 95)

We are convinced that the position of Dr. Verhey does bring him into conflict with the confessions, and, following the instructions of the synod, have confronted him personally with our objections to his views. Discussion of the matter with him instead of removing our objections confirmed them. Therefore following "the procedures outlined in the Form of Subscription and the Church Order," we brought our objections to his views to the Neland Avenue Consistory which hold his ministerial credentials.

The Neland Avenue Consistory, after a year had elapsed, informed us that it judged that the views to which we objected were permissible ways of interpreting the Bible. We were convinced that its reply, based mainly on Dr. Verhey's formal claims of respect for the Bible as God's Word, answered none of our objections to his method of "interpreting" and using it. We therefore brought our objections to Classis Grand Rapids East. The classis on January 18, 1979 adopted the recommendations of the majority of its study committee which endorsed and sustained the Neland Avenue Consistory's support and defense of the views of Dr. Verhey. Still convinced that these views are in conflict with the Bible and the Reformed Confessions, we therefore, following the directions of the Form of Subscription, Church Order and the synod, (Acts of Synod 1976, p. 95) bring these objections to the Synod of 1979.

From the examination, from his writing, and from conference with him, it is plain that Dr. Verhey, although affirming his faith in a Bible that is inspired even in its words, used and defends a method of interpretation that permits him at will to deny what the Bible plainly says.

Genesis 3 says,

"Now the serpent was more subtle... And he said to the woman, yea, hath God said... And the woman said to the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees... And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die..." (vss. 1-5).

"And the woman said, the serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And Jehovah God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou above all cattle, and

above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life" (vss. 13, 14).

I Corinthians 11:3 says,

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and purity that is toward Christ."

Yet Dr. Verhey said that he does not believe that the serpent spoke to Eve.

Matthew (28:2) wrote,

"And, behold, there was a great earthquake."

Dr. Verhey in his examination stated that he believed that this earthquake should be understood as an eschatological symbol and not necessarily as a fact. Questioned by our consistory whether he believed that such an earthquake had occurred he answered, "I do not!" Since Mark, whose gospel he considered to be an older source, did not mention it, this earthquake should be understood as eschatological symbolism which Matthew used especially for his Jewish readers.

The Gospel of Matthew informs us that Jesus said,

"I say unto you that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication maketh her an adulteress" (Matt. 5:32).

"I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery" (Matt. 19:9).

In the May-June, 1976 *Reformed Journal* Dr. Verhey denied that Jesus actually said this. He wrote,

"It would be interesting historically to know precisely what position Jesus took. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify the 'very words' of Jesus behind the record of them in Paul and the gospels.

"What we have, then, are not the 'very words' of Jesus about divorce, but rather the accounts of them by Paul, Mark, Luke and Matthew.

"The content of the original words of Jesus was very likely an absolute prohibition of divorce. . .

"Now whatever difficulties surround the quest for the historical Jesus, he was at least a rabbi convinced that the kingdom of God was breaking in or would soon break in.

"The command, then, is to be understood not as a moral rule but as an invitation or permission to share in the freedom Jesus gives to live marriage as God intended and intends" (pp. 18, 19).

In the second installment of this article in the July-August issue he concluded the discussion

"With this perspective on scripture and its use in moral reflection, it is possible, I think, to discern the voice of God amid the variety of voices. God does not give us specific legal requirements.

But divorce is sometimes necessary 'between the times' for the protection and honoring of marriage itself. . ."

The strict condemnation of divorce except on grounds of fornication (which Matthew attributes to Jesus and which our churches traditionally maintained) Dr. Verhey rejects as 'perhaps' traceable to moral pride (pp. 30, 31).

Notice in these examples the method of "interpretation" of Scripture which Dr. Verhey uses and defends: Genesis' "the serpent. . . said to the woman" is interpreted to mean "the serpent did *not* say to the woman; Matthew's "Behold, there was a great earthquake" is interpreted to mean "and there was *not* a great earthquake"; Matthew's report that Jesus said "whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication. . ." is interpreted to mean that Jesus did *not* say "whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication. . ."

This method of interpretation cannot be dismissed as a minor inconsistency in an otherwise Reformed use of Scripture, but it is defended as characteristic of a proper understanding and use of the Bible.

The results of such a view of and use of the Bible are also apparent in his stand on moral questions. In the classical examination he expressed his disagreement with the churches' strong condemnation of abortion, stated that such biblical injunctions as "servants obey your masters" no longer apply and that the same principle applies to the proper status of women in the church. His views on these matters become clearer and more readily understood to anyone who studies his 1975 doctoral thesis on *The Use of Scripture in Moral Discourse*.

Throughout this thesis he holds that although the Bible is to be regarded as authoritative we may not move from it to present day applications of what it says without the use of additional "warrants" for doing so.

"The confession of the church that the Scriptures are the rule for practice can give the mistaken impression that the Scriptures immediately provide a court of appeal before which to test moral recommendations. But analysis has shown that the Scriptures provide a court of appeal only through the mediation of the adoption of authorizations for moving from Scripture to moral recommendations. The movement in argument from Scripture to claim must be authorized, warranted. . . ." (p. 217).

What sort of "warrants" are needed to justify moving from what the Bible says to applying it to present moral questions? Among such "warrants" Dr. Verhey mentions "the moral certainties whose source is other than Scripture," "the congeniality of certain warrants to the modern mind", and "the relevance of judgments about historical method in general and about the life-relation of the interpreter with historical texts in general." He says, "It is possible and important to recommend that also in its use of Scripture 'Christian ethics cannot get underway in any adequate and fundamental fashion unless it comes to terms with, and relates itself to, natural man's understanding of his own moral existence, his own existence as man'. Similarly, it is possible and important to recommend continuing discussion about the nature of modern science, both natural and historical science, its relation to religion, and its relevance to reading scripture" (pp. 219, 220). In this vein he recommends, "That Christian moralists and communities be self-consciously attentive to the other 'authorities', tradition, community, reason and experience, that they be self-consciously attentive to their situation, that they not be satisfied with the attempt to repeat in each new cultural setting what the Scriptures meant once. Even our reading of Scripture (and our recommendations for the use of Scripture) must be constantly open to analysis, criticism, and reformation that might come from the community, tradition, new experience, and reason as well as the Scripture itself" (p. 222).

Accordingly we also find him criticizing the common evangelical claim that the Holy Scripture is the supreme and final authority in matters of faith and conduct, the "*sola scriptura*."

"The slogan, *Sola scriptura*, is methodologically deceptive. This conclusion too is demanded by our candid analysis of Rauschenbusch's argument. Whether the claim was an authorization for moving from Scripture to claim or the judgments of the nature of Scripture, the question appropriate to Scripture, or the message of Scripture, which are peculiarly relevant in warrant-establishing arguments, Rauschenbusch's argument could be traced back to other kinds of 'authorities' than Scripture, including tradition, community, reason and religious experience.

"The formula *sola scriptura* is deceptive not only because, as we saw, there are sources for data besides Scripture in moral argument (which *sola scriptura* never intended to deny) but also because the argument for the very authorizations licensing the use of Scripture can be traced back to other sources of data.

"*Sola scriptura* is methodologically deceptive" (p. 221).

Later he again emphasizes this conclusion:

"The analysis of Henry has even confirmed our conclusion that *sola scriptura* is methodologically deceptive. The arguments Henry uses to establish his warrants for the use of Scripture can be pressed back to diverse kinds of data, including other 'authorities,' particularly tradition and experience" (p. 283).

In his discussion of these "warrants" needed to justify moving from the Bible to present moral decisions Dr. Verhey again and again assigns a unique and decisive role to ones own experience.

"There is simply no way to get behind the experience of the authority of Scripture. It has an important priority in discerning and establishing warrants for the use of Scripture" (p. 212).

"This ability of an experience of the authority of Scripture to propagate itself is evidence of its authenticity. For it is by it—and it alone finally—that the question suggested as appropriate to Scripture is established as a vital question. And it is by it—and it alone—that the message recommended as what one understands when one understands the Scripture is established as a vital message. That is, it is by the experience of the authority of Scripture that Scripture comes alive. That power to make alive is the vital priority of experience in the discernment and recommendation of authorizations for moving from Scripture to moral claims" (p. 214).

He insists on this conclusion from studying Carl Henry's writings even when Henry reveals a contrary emphasis:

"In the morphology of each of the three warrant-establishing arguments the experience

of the authority of Scripture has a place of important prominence, even if Henry gives such appeals comparatively little space and even though he contends against subjective emphasis on the creative contribution of the knower to the epistemic situation" (p. 278).

He affirms this supremacy of experience again and again,

"Among all the sources of data observed in the establishment of warrants for the movement in argument from Scripture to moral claim, experience has a unique importance. The experience of the authority of Scripture in the interpreter's moral life establishes the limit of arguments where the claims are authorizations for moving from Scripture to moral claims" (pp. 222, 223).

Dr. Verhey believes that what prevents letting experience determine when and how Scripture must be used from becoming pure subjectivism is that it is an experience of the authority of Scripture!

"The important priority belongs not to experience in and of itself, not to pure subjectivity, but to the experience of the authority of Scripture" (p. 224).

But to present the matter in this way is misleading. It overlooks the fact that what is to be decided is exactly what is Scripture and how the Scriptures are to be applied. When personal experience is given the decisive authority at that point it is no longer God's Word but man that is in control.

One may try to justify this making man's experience the decisive test of how and when to use the Bible by calling this "the testimony of the Holy Spirit." Using this orthodox sounding expression does not change the fact that one is now putting man's experience over the Bible in deciding what he must believe and do. Whenever anyone does that, he no longer has any way to decide whose experience is right and whose is wrong. The Bible warns us, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

It goes on to tell us that we must test the spirits by the gospel. But such a test cannot be made when one, with Dr. Verhey, puts man's experience over the gospel. Then everyone's experience becomes equally decisive and there is no way to distinguish true from false, and right from wrong. Dr. Verhey would try to save us from such complete relativism by suggesting that it must be the experience of the Christian community rather than that of each individual that will make the decision. But this does not really help matters because whole communities and churches have departed and are departing from the Scriptures and from the Christian faith. That this view does give men veto power over the Bible is shown when the thesis says,

"The inability or unwillingness to be consistent with a recommendation (for the use of Scripture) counts against it.

"The recommendations here are that the first order recommendations which the Christian community is unable or unwilling to act on consistently be disestablished" (p. 219).

#### Conclusions:

1. We are convinced that this method of interpreting and using the Bible is in conflict with what the Bible everywhere teaches about its proper interpretation and the way in which men must submit to it.

The Bible, claiming that it conveys to us "all things that pertain to life and godliness" insists that no "prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit". Therefore it warns us against "false teachers who bring in destructive heresies" (II Peter 1:3, 20, 21; 2:1). The word translated "heresy", as Lenski (p. 309) points out is derived from the verb meaning "to choose" and "means a view, an opinion, a doctrine that one chooses for oneself. . . ." Making this claim of authority for itself, the Scripture also elsewhere warns us against self-chosen opinions that diverge from it. (Compare Rom. 16:17, 18; I Tim. 6:3, 4; II John 9-11.)

The Scripture insists that its gospel message included "the whole counsel of God" and everything "profitable" for us (Acts 20:27, 20) and that as "Scripture inspired of God" it is "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:15, 16).

It insists that this inspiration of God and authority of the Scriptures extends not only to some main teachings such as Christ's resurrection, but to all of it including its details and words. Our Lord could hardly have made that claim more emphatic than when he ascribed such authority to every "jot" and "tittle" (Matt. 5:18) of it! The Apostle Paul attributed such inspiration and authority not only to the revelation which he received, but equally to

the words with which he must convey it: "Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth. . ." (1 Cor. 2:13).

The Lord had to reprimand his disciples, "O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25). Those disciples were quite willing to believe that in the Bible which they could relate to their own experience. The trouble with them (as with the view which Dr. Verhey advocates) was that they were not willing to submit to that in the Bible which they could not fit into their own experience—to "all that the prophets have spoken."

When we place man's experience over what God has said are we not doing exactly what the serpent in paradise tempted Adam and Eve to do?

Are we not repeating the sin of Israel which both the Lord's prophet and the Lord in person condemned as rejecting the commandments of God to replace them by their own traditions and opinions (Mark 7:6-9)?

2. We are "convinced that the position of Dr. Verhey brings him into conflict with the Confessions" (Acts of Synod 1976, p. 95) of our churches. One cannot consistently deny what the Scriptures say about the serpent in Genesis 3 and I Corinthians 11:3, about the earthquake in Matthew 28:2, and about what Jesus said on divorce in Matthew 5 and 19, and also confess that we "receive all" of the Scriptures as "canonical, for the regulation. . . of our faith; believing without any doubt all things contained in them" (Art. V, Belgic Confession).

Dr. Verhey insists that we cannot proceed from anything in the Bible to decisions about proper conduct without considering certain extra-biblical "warrants" or "authorities" such as "tradition, community, reason" and especially and most importantly "experience" which must justify any such movement from the Bible to our moral decisions. This cannot be harmonized with the Heidelberg Catechism which leaves no room for such intervening, much less superior "authorities" and assumes that God's moral law is as valid for us as it was for Israel when it asks and answers the questions "What does God require in the . . . commandment" (see questions 94, 96, 99, 103, 104, 105, 111, 112, 113).

Dr. Verhey's critical views of the "*sola scriptura*," and insistence that various other "authorities", including especially man's own experience, must decide whether or to what extent Scripture is to be used in determining our way of life contradict Article VII of the Belgic Confession:

THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES TO BE THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH. We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein. For since the whole manner of worship which God requires of us is written in them at large, it is unlawful for any one, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scripture, *nay, though it were an angel from heaven, as the apostle Paul says.* For since it is forbidden to *add unto or take away anything from the Word of God,* it does thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and complete in all respects. Neither may we consider any writing of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures, nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, or succession of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all; *for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself.* Therefore we reject with all our hearts, whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule, as the apostles have taught us saying, *Prove the spirits whether they are of God.* Likewise; *if any one cometh unto you and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house.*"

(Notice that the "warrants" or "authorities" which Dr. Verhey says must decide whether anything in the Bible applies to our conduct include exactly the things whose authority the confession rejects: "custom," "the great multitude," "succession of times and persons," etc.)

3. Dr. Verhey's view, when denying that the earthquake reported by Matthew actually occurred, does exactly what the Synod of 1972 warned must not be done. It uses a "method of biblical interpretation which excludes or calls into question. . . the event-character of biblical history, thus compromising the full authority of Scripture as the Word of God" (Acts of Synod 1972, p. 69, Art. 52, 3e—decision of Report 44).

4. Since these views are in conflict with Scripture, our Confessions and Form or Subscription, and the decision of our synod, and their dissemination must be destructive of our Christian faith and life, we must appeal to you as the responsible church body to declare that this method of interpreting and using the Bible is not to be tolerated in the Christian

Reformed Churches and to take whatever measures may be needed to prevent its being preached and taught by Dr. Verhey as a minister in our churches.

Dutton Consistory,  
William A. Hulst, clerk

### 33. — Waterloo Consistory appeals Decision of Classis Huron declaring its Overture re Women as Deacons not Legally Before Classis.

A. The Council of Waterloo *protests* the decision of Classis Huron of January 10, 1979 (Classis Huron Minutes, arts. 7 and 31) that the overture presented by the Council of the Waterloo Church was not legally before classis because the overture was not included in the printed agenda of classis.

We protest that decision of Classis Huron on the following grounds:

1. The Rules of Procedure 1978 of Classis Huron (Art. III, C, 1) allow the admission of overtures that are not included in the printed agenda in case of urgency. Since the subject matter to which the overture was addressed was on the agenda of classis, and since classis did not so much as read the overture, this decision was not proper.
  2. The overture was a communication to Classis Huron in response to matters presented to the churches of Classis Huron together with and after publication of classis' printed agenda. For that reason the overture could not possibly have been included in that same printed agenda; and therefore this decision was not equitable.
  3. The overture was urgent, in that it was pertinent to matters placed on classis' agenda by four constituent churches, therefore the decision not to allow the overture to be legally before classis lacked impartiality.
  4. During the same session, classis had already declared another overture, submitted by another church, to be legally before classis on the ground of its urgency, even though that overture also had not been included in the printed agenda of classis. (Minutes Classis Huron, January 10, 1979, Art. 5 q) Since that particular overture addressed the same subject as the overture of the Council of the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church, classis' decision re the Waterloo overture was prejudicial.
  5. By ruling the Waterloo overture not legally before classis, the churches of Classis Huron denied one of their constituent churches the right to be heard. This denial was extended from January 10, 1979 to January 31, 1979, the date Classis Huron reconvened, after three weeks recess, to resume deliberation of subject related matters. We therefore consider that decision to be in contravention of the Church Order (Art. 95).
- B. The Council of Waterloo Church *appeals* this decision of Classis Huron to the 1979 Synod and respectfully petitions synod to declare the decision of Classis Huron, as recorded in the minutes of Classis Huron of January 10, 1979 (article 7) "that the overture from Waterloo CRC is not legally before classis," was inappropriate.

#### C. OVERTURE

The Council of the Waterloo CRC overtures synod to uphold the decision of the Synod of 1978, to wit:

"that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided that their work be distinguished from that of elders." (Acts 1978, Art. 80, E, 3)

*Note:* This overture (with grounds) is the adaptation of the overture that was declared not legally before Classis Huron on January 10, and 31, 1979.

#### *Grounds:*

1. Classis Huron argues that "Synod's (1978) decision was reached by a relatively small majority" (87 to 64) and "that a broader consensus is needed." We submit that if the 1978 decision were to be reversed by synod it may be expected that only a 'relatively large minority' of the delegates of the Synod of 1978 would be satisfied. Both the majority and the minority of 1978 represent large sections of the membership of our denomination. The result could well be a new wave of overtures in 1980 appealing to synod to overturn the decision of 1979.
2. The Council of the Waterloo CRC further submits that this is not the right way for the church to handle differences of conviction in matters that create confusion and disturbance among its membership. Furthermore, the Church Order states that "decisions

sions of the assemblies shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved that they conflict with the Word of God or the Church Order" (art. 29). This means also that those who protest must prove that the decision they protest is in conflict with Scripture and that the exegesis of the relevant study committees must be proven wrong.

3. We would, in a pastoral manner, call to synod's attention two specific aspects of the decisions of 1978:

i) There was a great measure of agreement between the findings of the majority and the minority of the study committee. Some difficulties remained (e.g., Recommendation C, Acts of Synod 1978, p. 529) but in the understanding of man's headship substantial progress could be noted (Recommendation D, *ibid.*)

ii) The advisory committee was very much aware of the possibility that such action might cause polarization in the churches. In this connection the committee said:

"In 1957 the church was confronted with a similar problem: should women be allowed to vote at congregational meetings? . . . Each consistory had to decide the matter for its own congregation. From that page of history we can learn. There was unity in the church, both in its effort to understand the Scriptures and in its respect for the differing degrees of readiness for a change that Scripture permitted. Yet, at the same time that there was unity, there was also diversity."

4. Seeing that diversity and unity can exist side by side, the Council of the Waterloo Christian Reformed Church implores synod to act in a spirit of *tolerance and confidence*. We need a spirit of tolerance in order to be able to *make decisions* that enable both the majority and the minority in the church to live, each according to their Christian conviction, and to *accept those decisions* even when they do not seem to be in our immediate personal or local interest, and to *respect those decisions* even if we personally do not like them too well.

We need also a spirit of confidence to trust that the Lord Jesus Christ will guide his church by his Spirit in all the truth (John 16:13) so that, even if the church were to err, the light of the truth will shine forth and prevail in the course of time.

5. The Council of the Waterloo CRC pleads with the denomination to consider the work of the three study committees that, for a period of eight years, have applied themselves to the study of the matter of women holding office in the church. The consensus of these studies ought to make us careful not to reject these findings hastily or on emotional grounds.

6. We call for consideration of the fact that the decision of 1978 was not coercive since it leaves the actual decision of admitting women to the office of deacon to the autonomy of each consistory. On the other hand, reversal of that decision would take away the autonomy of each consistory in this matter.

*Note: Documents pertaining to this appeal will be forwarded to the advisory committee of synod dealing with this matter.*

Waterloo Consistory  
Norm Slothouber, president

#### LIST OF PERSONAL APPEALS

1. Marion and Betty Van Someren appeal Decisions re Preaching on the Creeds by First Minneapolis Consistory and Classis Minnesota North.
2. Dr. Harry Boer appeals Decision of Classis Illiana re Transfer of Ministerial Credentials.
3. Mr. Clarence Reyneveld appeals Decision of Classis Grand Rapids South.
4. Mr. H. Minderhoud appeals Decision of the 1978 Synod re Deacons.

NOTE OF REV. A. HOKSBERGEN

*On Forms for Excommunication*

The Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen is not joining the Liturgical Committee in recommending these forms for use in the churches. He states his position as follows:

I am pleased that the language of these forms is a considerable improvement over the Form for Excommunication which now is in use in our churches. However, I am not able in good conscience to lend my support to these forms even though the wording is improved. I present the following grounds for my position:

1. Although church discipline is and must always be a significant part of the life and ministry of a congregation, and recognizing that the ultimate step of excommunication may in itself be a legitimate act for the church body to take, the present fractured nature of the body of Christ on earth does not allow a single congregation, not even a single denomination of churches, to speak unequivocally for the entire church of the Lord on a matter so serious as the closing of the door of the kingdom to a specific individual. This becomes obvious when we observe that other church bodies do not always honor our acts of excommunication.

2. In the light of the present state of the church, i.e. its divided state, it would be more acceptable for a denomination to exclude a specific individual from its own fellowship of churches, if the church believed there is good reason for doing so, rather than speaking for other bodies of believers with whom it has no ecclesiastical fellowship.

3. The *Form for Excommunication* ought to be used at a business meeting which is attended by the membership of the congregation rather than at a public worship service as the forms being presented are intended to be used. The excommunication or official exclusion of a person from the church is an act engaged in by the members of the church. It is highly inappropriate to have visitors sit by while a congregation engages in such business. Such an action carried out in a public gathering can be very harmful to the spiritual welfare of those in the audience who may be making some initial inquiries about the Christian faith. I therefore feel that this kind of action has no place in the liturgy of the congregation while it is engaged in the act of *public* worship.

For these reasons, I humbly ask the synod not to give its approval to these forms but rather to re-examine the manner in which our denomination can most effectively conduct its ministry of church discipline, especially that act of its discipline which removes a specific individual from the membership of the church.

Alvin L. Hoksbergen