

Rules of Order

for the
Christian Reformed Church
by

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Church Order

of the
Christian Reformed Church

(Approved by the Synod of 1920, Vid. Art. 47, 13.)

Article 1.

For the maintenance of good order in the Church of Christ it is necessary that there should be: offices, assemblies, supervision of doctrine, sacraments and ceremonies, and Christian discipline; of which matters the following articles treat in due order.

OF THE OFFICES

Article 2.

The offices are of four kinds: of the Ministers of the Word, of the Professors of Theology, of the Elders, and of the Deacons.

Article 3.

No one, though he be a Professor of Theology, Elder or Deacon, shall be permitted to enter upon the Ministry of the Word and the Sacraments without having been lawfully called thereunto.

And when any one acts contrary thereto, and after being frequently admonished does not desist, the Classis shall judge whether he is to be declared a schismatic or is to be punished in some other way.

Excepting the ecclesiastical regulation touching religious addresses of theological students, no one has the right in public worship to speak a word of edification, as it is called, unless he has received this right from his Classis, after that assembly has examined him regarding his orthodoxy, godly walk, and his ability to speak in public worship. Whether a person who has been examined and admitted by one of our Classes shall also have the privilege of speaking in other Classes, must be determined by the respective Classes, each for its own territory. Acts 1924, Art. 77, XII, p. 93.

Article 4.

The lawful calling of those who have not been previously in office, consists:

First, in the ELECTION by the Consistory and the Deacons, after preceding prayers, with due observance of the regulations established by the consistory for this purpose, and of the ecclesiastical ordinance, that only those can for the first time be called to the Ministry of the Word who have been declared eligible by the churches, according to the rule in this matter; and furthermore with the advice of Classis or of the counselor appointed for this purpose by the Classis;

Secondly, in the EXAMINATION both of doctrine and life which shall be conducted by the Classis, to which the call must be submitted for approval, and which shall take place in the presence of three Delegates of Synod from the nearest Classes;

Thirdly, in the APPROBATION by the members of the calling church, when, the name of the minister having been announced for two successive Sundays, no lawful objection arises; which approbation, however, is not required in case the election takes place with the co-operation of the congregation by choosing out of a nomination previously made.

Finally, in the public ORDINATION in the presence of the congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, admonitions and prayers and imposition of hands by the officiating minister (and by other ministers who are present) agreeable to the Form for that purpose.

Usages in our Churches

- A. The Election of a Minister of the Word takes place as follows:
 1. The Consistory makes a nomination, usually of three Ministers or Candidates eligible to a call.
 2. This nomination is announced from the pulpit two

successive Sundays for the approbation of the Church. At the same time the date for the congregational meeting is announced.

3. At the congregational meeting the members vote from the nomination by secret ballot. A majority vote decides. Only members in full communion and in good standing have a vote (cf. Acts 1892, Art. 47, a 48, a). Blank ballots are subtracted from the total number, then the majority is established.

B. Advice of Classis and Counselor.

1. Classis appoints a Counselor for vacant churches to advise the church in eventual difficulties and to represent Classis at the calling of a minister.
2. The consistory of a vacant church requests hand-opening of Classis when calling for the first time, since the question arises whether the calling church is able properly to support a minister.
3. The nomination is submitted for approval to the Classis or its counselor that nothing in violation of synodical decisions take place.
4. The counselor presides at the congregational meeting that he may see to it that the procedure is orderly and legal, and that the call-letter is properly written out and signed by all members of the consistory. The counselor signs the call-letter as representing the Classis for the approval of the call.

C. Classical Examination of Candidates for the Ministry.

- I. Schedule for the Classical Examination of Candidates, Acts 1920, Art. 36.

1. Dogmatics.
 2. Practical branches, covering:
 - a) Personal godliness.
 - b) Motives for seeking the ministry.
 - c) Test of insight in the practice of pastoral work.
 3. Knowledge of the Bible, specifically touching:
 - a) The character of the Holy Scriptures.
 - b) The contents of the Holy Scriptures, in aforementioned sense.
 4. Knowledge of our Standards, touching:
 - a) Knowledge of the meaning and purpose of the Standards.
 - b) Knowledge of the contents of the Standards.
 - c) Knowledge of the application of the Standards of our Church to life.
 5. Controversy.

The distinctive spiritual currents of our time in contrast with the Reformed or Calvinistic life-and-world-view.
 6. Test of Gospel Preaching, including:
 - a) Preaching before the Classis Acts 1934, Art. 33, p. 21.
 - b) Critical discussion of that sermon.
- II. 1. At the conclusion of the examination and after proper deliberation on it, one of the brethren

leads in prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, before the secret ballot is cast.

2. If the examination is sustained, the Candidate signs the Formula of Subscription.
3. A certificate, signed by the President and the Clerk of Classis is then given the Candidate, authorizing him in the name of the Lord to engage in the work of the Ministry.

D. Synodical Delegates for Examination.

1. The Delegates for Examination are appointed by Synod, one from each Classis. Each Classis shall propose a primarius and an alternate to Synod.
2. Every classical examination must be attended by three of the Delegates of adjacent Classes.
3. At the conclusion of the examination, at which they shall have the privilege to cross-question the Candidate, these Delegates submit a joint-report and their reasons for their advice.
4. If the vote of Classis is contrary to the advice of the Delegates, and no agreement can be reached, the question of admission shall be decided by Synod. Until such time the ordination of the Candidate shall be postponed, and in the meanwhile no congregation of another Classis shall have the right to extend a call to him and no Classis be permitted to examine him.
5. The Delegates for Examination submit a report of all their activities to Synod.
6. Traveling expenses of these Delegates are paid from the Synodical treasury. Acts 1912, Art. 72, 7.

E. Candidates.

1. No call shall be extended to Candidates until a month after their graduation. Acts 1884, Art. 35.
 - a) Seminary candidates who are expecting to be sent out by our churches as foreign missionaries are exempted from the existing rule that they cannot be called until a month after their graduation.
 - b) Those who graduate from our Seminary and expect to be sent out as foreign missionaries, but who intend to take a post-graduate course elsewhere before they sail, shall be declared candidates by the Curatorium as soon as they have finished their studies at our School, so that they can be called during the course of the year they are studying elsewhere. Acts 1926, Art. 36, XI, 7.
2. For the consideration of a call or calls received, the Candidates are granted a period of six weeks. Acts 1916, Art. 30, 1.

Synod revises the time for the consideration of a call by candidates from six weeks to three weeks. Acts 1928, Art. 83, II, 5.

3. If the classical examination of the Candidate should not be satisfactory, and the Congregation persists in desiring him, he will be given an opportunity at the next meeting of Classis for another examination, especially in those branches in which he was deficient. Acts 1894, Art. 64.

Article 5.

Ministers already in the Ministry of the Word, who are called to another congregation, shall likewise be called in the aforesaid manner by the Consistory and the Deacons, with observance of the regulations made for the purpose by the Consistory and of the general ecclesiastical ordinances for the eligibility of those who have served outside of the Christian Reformed Church and for the repeated calling of the same Minister during the same vacancy; further, with the advice of the Classis or of the counselor, appointed by the Classis, and with the approval of the Classis or of the Delegates appointed by the Classis, to whom the ministers called show good ecclesiastical testimonials of doctrine and life, with the approval of the members of the calling congregation, as stated in Article 4; whereupon the minister called shall be installed with appropriate stipulations and prayers agreeable to the Form for this purpose.

1. As a brief ministry in a church is usually contrary to her best interests, Consistories are advised not to call ministers that have been laboring in their charge but for a short time. Acts 1914, Art. 64, 1.
2. Synod rules that Consistories of vacant churches in making a nomination, shall not nominate ministers that have not served their present church for two years—unless special, preponderant reasons

exist—and that a counselor who deems that he must approve a nomination, containing the name of such a minister, must give an account of his reasons to Classis. Acts 1916, Art. 30, 3.

Synod urges “the consistories of vacant congregations to refrain from calling ministers of other than the Christian Reformed churches”. Acts 1930, Art. 54, page 52, III B.

3. A second call to the same minister during the same vacancy may not be extended with in a year without the advice of Classis. (Acts 1906, Arts. 35 and 36.)
4. When there is a difference of opinion concerning the legality of a call between a consistory and its counselor, the consistory shall not proceed without the consent of Classis. G. R.,* Art. 51.
5. If a minister leaves a church within a year and the moving expenses have exceeded \$50, the calling church shall refund the church he leaves expenses in full; if he leaves within two years, three-fourths; if in three years, one-half; if in four years, one-fourth of his moving expenses. This article shall be incorporated in the call-letter. Acts 1884, Art. 52; Acts 1890, Art. 63.
6. In case a church calls a minister from a church that had to refund another church, such a church need only pay for the traveling expenses. Acts 1908, Art. 54, V.

* The initials G. R. stand for “General Rules” and refer to the “Algemeene Bepalingen”, or General Rules, officially approved and accepted by Synod 1881.

7. When a minister changes pastorates, the new church becomes financially responsible for his salary, etc., from the date of his exaugural in his former charge, unless some other terms be agreed upon between the minister and the new church (as, for instance, in case he takes his vacation). Acts 1926, Art. 57, XIX.
8. Synod rules that henceforth a nomination of a consistory containing the name or names of minister (s) of an other denomination than the Christian Reformed Church, such nomination must have the approbation not only of the classis or of the counselor, but also of the nearest Delegates of Examination. Acts 1928, Art. 132. Acts 1934, Art. 145, p. 133.

Article 6.

No Minister shall be at liberty to serve in institutions of mercy or otherwise, unless he be previously admitted in accordance with the preceding articles, and he shall, no less than others, be subject to the Church Order.

Spiritual Advisors for Institutions shall be called by a neighboring church in consultation with the respective Boards. Acts 1918, Art. 37, Iib.

Synod rules that the status of a minister, who labors officially in non-ecclesiastical institutions of charity is covered by Art. 6 of the Church Order.

b. that all non-official work performed for such institution as for instance the collection of funds or solicitation for membership, whether the minister be in active service or retired, is covered by Art. 12, C. O. and is in con-

flict with his "being bound to the service of the Church for life" and not in harmony with Art. 13, nor Art. 14. Acts 1928, Art. 137.

Synod of 1930 rules, in re the status of ministers serving in non-ecclesiastical institutions of learning, "that every case be judged on its own merits by the classis to which the minister belongs". Acts 1930, Art. 57, page 55, V (2).

Synod of 1930 ruled "that a minister can accept the presidency of Calvin College without losing his ministerial standing". Acts 1930, page 55, V 3.

Article 7.

No one shall be called to the Ministry of the Word, without his being stationed in a particular place, except he be sent to do church extension work.

Synodical decisions regarding Home Missions.

1. Synod 1930 re-iterated the principle adopted in essence by Synod of 1912 that the calling and sending, as also the regulation of the labors, of ordained (home) missionaries is the task and the right of the consistory, classis or Synod engaging in that particular mission activity. Acts 1930, page 143.

2. Since "ignorance and consequent lack of sympathy makes for poor giving", the Synod of 1912 instructed the Committee for the General Fund: energetically and continuously to plead the cause of needy Classes in our church papers and to maintain constant contact with Classes and

Consistories in order that these, where they are slow to apply themselves, are urged to more zeal in giving help where there is need. Acts, Art. 28, 2, 1.

3. (a) The Synod of 1912 also found it necessary to urge that 1, d of the General Rules, accepted by the Synod of 1908 (Acts, Art. 53), be strictly observed, so that of the three collections taken for Home Missions, the last two are turned into the General Fund. Acts, Art. 28, p. 26.
 - (b) Synod 1934 approved a quota of \$1.20 per family to be paid by all our congregations to the General Home Missions Fund, but the date on which this quota shall go into effect was left to the discretion of the General Home Missions Committee, in connection with the financial needs of the various classes. Acts 1934, page 75, 2 (b). Page 175, XI, page 178, XVII (c).
4. To prevent the scattering of our people, the Synods of 1902, 1914, and 1916 decided the following:
- (a) At every classical meeting the question shall be asked whether there are names of non-resident members or baptized members to report to the Classis (Acts 1902, Art. 29).
 - (b) Further regulations in this matter were given by the Synod of 1914 (Acts, Art. 24, 2). These rules, together with the changes made by the Synod of 1916, are as follows:
 - 1) A general warning be given in our churches against removal to different localities in search of riches when not well-informed, and to con-

sider the prospects as regards ecclesiastical and spiritual ministrations.

- 2) Since the removal of our people to different localities cannot and should not be prevented, Synod appoints a committee of five persons, of whom one shall be from the Northwest and one from the Southwest of our country (Acts 1916, Art. 23, II), with instruction to prevent as much as possible that such removal result in scattering.
- 3) The work of this Committee shall be:
 - a) To gather information concerning the spiritual and material conditions of the settlements;
 - b) To furnish the needed information in the church papers and also through personal correspondence regarding both the spiritual and the material conditions of the settlements in order in this way to give guidance to prospective settlers, and to prevent as much as possible scattering, financial disappointment and spiritual ruin;
 - c) To request Consistories that they urge prospective settlers to seek information from this Committee; also to request Consistories to inform the Secretary of the Committee as soon as possible of the removal of their members, together with their names and addresses;
 - d) To keep the Classical Home Mission Committee informed as much as possible with re-

spect to the names and addresses of all who remove to different localities and of the scattered;

e) To advertise themselves repeatedly in the church papers as the **Bureau of Information for Settlers**, with the request to all interested parties to seek their advice. (Acts 1916, Art. 23, II).

4) The expenses connected with this work are paid out of the General Home Mission Fund.

4. **Church Help** is a Fund that has for its purpose to aid weak congregations in obtaining and maintaining church property, by lending money without interest to them, secured by a legal receipt and on condition of an annual payment of 5%. It is governed by three delegates, to be appointed by each Synod, to whom request for aid, approved by Classis, must be submitted. Every congregation must take a collection for this Fund once per year in September, or at the latest in October, while gifts and bequests are also thankfully received by the delegates. (Acts 1892, Art. 37 b; Acts 1894, Art. 78; Acts 1906, Art. 76.

5. Congregations that are indebted to this Fund and pay no attention to it, shall be notified and in the name of the Synod be requested to fulfill their obligations. (Acts 1914, Art. 17, 3.)

Synod of 1930 expressed its disapproval of the practice of recommending churches that are in financial difficulties to our people for special offerings that need not be repaid. Acts 1930, page 113, A.

Synod rules that in case a church requires immediate aid and is recommended to our people for a special offering, this church shall repay the money received to the Fund for Church Aid in the same manner as is done by churches that have received aid in the regular way. Acts 1930, page 113 B.

Synod decides that as the method for repayment of sums received from the Fund for Church Aid, the following rules shall apply.

- a) Churches that repay all money received from the fund in five years after the date on which the loan was made, shall receive a discount of 20% of the principal.
- b) Churches that repay all money received from the Fund within ten years after the date on which the loan was made, shall receive a discount of 10% of the principal.
- c) Churches that repay all the money received from the Fund within fifteen years after the date on which the loan was made, shall receive a discount of 5% of the principal.
- d) Churches that owe any of the money received from the Fund fifteen years after the date on which the loan was made, shall be required to repay the principal entirely.

Acts 1930, page 114 C.

Synod shall apply the benefit of discount as outlined above in C also to churches that on January 1, 1931, owe unpaid balances to the Fund for Church Aid, the time

being computed from January 1, 1931. Acts 1930, page 115 D.

Synod rules:

That the Committee extend no aid or request the churches for a special collection, before the needy church state

- (a) What it can itself do
- (b) How much is needed—Grounds
 1. Churches that request and receive permission to ask for collections from the various congregations of the Church are under no obligation to pay back the moneys received, a situation which is not fair to congregations that receive aid directly from the Fund, but are under obligation to re-imburse as soon as they are able.
 2. Often more aid is extended than a congregation needs.
 3. In this way the opportunity is given to help more churches in the acquisition of church properties.
 4. In this way interest and confidence in the Fund will be increased.

Acts 1930, pages 115, 116.

6. **Immigrants.** The Classes Hackensack and Hudson are laboring among the Immigrants and Seamen at Hoboken and Ellis Island, and receive financial aid for this work from the General Home Mission Fund. (Acts 1910, Art. 21.)

7. **South America.** Since 1908 financial aid is given from Synod to Synod to those in South America who are of common stock and faith with us, who need help for their religious interests. The Synod of 1912 gave the following instruction to the Delegates who must devote themselves to this matter in consultation with the delegates of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands:

- (a) To request all our consistories in name of Synod to take a collection for the brethren in Argentine;
- (b) To aid the Argentinian colonies with advice as much as necessary and possible (Acts 1908, Art. 38, 5; Acts 1910, Art. 29; Acts 1912, Art. 28, II; Acts 1914, Art. 24, IV; Acts 1916, Art. 23, III).

Rev. B. Bruxvoort and Rev. Wm. V. Muller are now laboring in South America as missionary pastors sent by our churches.

Article 8.

Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study in preparation for the Ministry of the Word, and have therefore not been declared eligible according to Article 4, shall not be admitted to the Ministry unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts, godliness, humility, modesty, common sense and discretion, as also gifts of public address. When such persons present themselves for the Ministry, the Classis (if the [particular] Synod approve) shall first examine them, and further deal with them as it shall

deem edifying, according to the general regulations of the churches.

The examination of candidates for the ministry under this Article differs from the regular examinations only by the omission of the Hebrew and the Greek.

Rules for Admission to the Ministry according to Art. 8.

- (1) If any one desires to be admitted to the Ministry of the Word according to Article VIII, he must apply to his Consistory and after that to his Classis. This Classis, in conjunction with the Delegates for Examination of three adjacent Classes, first examines the written credentials of the Consistory concerning the required qualifications as stated in Article VIII, and subsequently itself investigates in this respect. If the preliminary judgment is favorable, he be given the right to speak a word of edification for a limited time in the vacant churches of his Classis. He must also speak a few times in non-vacant churches in the presence of the respective ministers of these churches. Classis shall regulate these appointments in conjunction with the Consistories of those churches. Classis determines the length of this period of probation.
- (2) At the close of the period of probation the Classis, in conjunction with the said Delegates for Examination, takes a final decision regarding the presence of exceptional gifts. If the decision is in the affirmative, then the Classis shall take a peremptory examination in the following branches:
 - a) Exegesis of the Old and New Testaments;
 - b) Bible History;

- c) Dogmatics;
- d) General and American Church History.
- (3) In case of favorable issue, he is declared eligible to a call.
- (4) The examination for ordination follows later according to existing rules, except the classical languages. Acts 1922, Art. 37, X. (Agendum 1920, pages 26, 27.)

Article 9.

Preachers without fixed charge, or others who have left some sect, shall not be admitted to the Ministry in the Church until they have been declared eligible, after careful examination, by the Classis, with the approval of Synod.

Article 10.

A Minister, once lawfully called, may not leave the congregation with which he is connected, to accept a call elsewhere, without the consent of the Consistory, together with the Deacons, and knowledge on the part of the Classis; likewise no other church may receive him until he has presented a proper certificate of dismissal from the church and the Classis where he served.

Article 11.

On the other hand, the Consistory, as repre-

sending the congregation, shall also be bound to provide for the proper support of its Ministers, and shall not dismiss them from service without the knowledge and approbation of the Classis and of the Delegates of the (particular) Synod.

When a minister accepts a call to another church, he requests of his consistory proper credentials testifying to his faithful service and to the acquiescence of the consistory in his departure. These credentials are sent to the Classical Committee of the Classis in which he labors for examination and approval, and are by them to be forwarded to the Classical Committee of the Classis of the church whither he is going. After examination and approval, this Committee sends the credentials to the counselor who, upon finding the documents in good and regular order, proceeds to his installation. If the Classis happens to be in session, then it must perform this work. If the minister remains in the same Classis, then the approbation of that Classis only or of its Classical Committee is required.

Article 12.

Inasmuch as a Minister of the Word, once lawfully called as described above, is bound to the service of the Church for life, he is not allowed to enter upon a secular vocation except for such weighty reasons as shall receive the approval of the Classis.

Ministers who receive permission from their consistories for advanced study with a view to further prepara-

tion for their ministerial work, do not thereby enter upon a secular vocation, and therefore properly retain their official position as Ministers of the Gospel. Acts 1932, Art. 160.

In a concrete case, Synod ruled that the ministerial status of a minister serving as principal of a High School, and where this task constitutes a large share of his activities, should be discontinued, and the classis to which he belongs should so decide. Acts 1934, Art. 24, page 17, 18.

Article 13.

Ministers, who by reason of age, sickness, or otherwise, are rendered incapable of performing the duties of their Office, shall nevertheless retain the honor and title of a Minister, and the Church which they have served shall provide honorably for them in their need (likewise for the orphans and widows of Ministers) out of the common fund of the Churches, according to the general ecclesiastical ordinances in this matter.

If any Minister of the Word by reason of age, sickness, or otherwise, is unable to perform his duties, his request for emeritation is presented by him to his Consistory and by them to Classis, which decides on it, subject to the approval of Synod. Acts 1914, Articles 17 and 72.

Synod of 1934 adopted the principle that the clergy shall be asked to contribute to the Emeritus Fund according to a fixed scale. Acts 1934, Art. 161, page 166.

Synod rules that when an emeritated minister desires again to enter upon active service, he may not be called

until the consistory and the classis, that recommended him for emeritation, deem that the reasons for his emeritation exist no more. Acts 1928, Art. 137. IX.

Rules for the Care of Emeritated Ministers and of Widows and Orphans of Ministers.

Art. 1. For the execution of Art. 13 of the Church Order, the Christian Reformed Church maintains an Emeritus Fund from which adequate aid is rendered, subject to the following stipulations.

Art. 2. Every synodical meeting determines the Budget for the Emeritus Fund and determines what each Classis, proportionate to the number of families, is to raise for this Fund. Private gifts and legacies will be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Art. 3. Synod appoints a Committee of five persons to whose care the administration of this Fund is committed. This Committee consists of two ministers and three other members. It is to be incorporated as "The Board of the Emeritus Fund of the Christian Reformed Church of America." An alternate is appointed for each member.

Art. 4. Synod appoints for this Committee alternately three and two members, so that at every meeting of Synod election of members takes place. Members that are functioning may be re-elected. The Committee elects a president, a Vice-President, a Secretary, and a Treasurer from their own number.

Art. 5. Every Classis determines, subject to the approval of Synod, the amount to be disbursed to those persons that by it have been emeritated or have become widows or orphans. For this purpose the Consistory, with the request for emeritation, must state the amount deemed

necessary for the emeritus (widow, orphans). Rule shall be that emeriti shall receive two-thirds (2/3) of the average salary of our ministers, and widows and orphans in the same proportion.

Every Synodical year the consistories shall state what is needed for the support of the emeriti, widows and orphans under their supervision. Acts. 1930, page 88 (2).

Classis also determines, in consultation with the Consistory, when in every special case, the disbursement should cease, but this also is subject to the approbation of Synod.

Art. 6. Every Classis attends to the regular reception of the congregational contributions for the classical assessments, one-fourth ($\frac{1}{4}$) of which is to be forwarded quarterly to the Treasurer of the Fund.

Art. 7. Every Classis is bound to furnish needed information to the Committee. The Stated Clerk of Classis corresponds for this purpose with the Secretary of the Committee.

Art. 8. The Committee meets before Synod to discuss its affairs, to prepare its report for Synod, and to submit to Synod the budget for the ensuing year.

Art. 9. The Committee disburses to the parties concerned what has been determined by the respective Classes. If there is difference of opinion, the Committee has the right and duty to appeal to Synod.

Synod rules that, in case the funds do not permit payment of the full allowance, the needs of the recipient shall be taken into consideration and distribution made accordingly, because the needs of one may be greater than

those of others. This rule shall go into effect immediately. Acts 1932, Art. 73.

Art. 10. The Committee annually audits the books of the Treasurer and reports in *De Wachter* and in *The Banner*.

Synod instructs the Emeritus Board to send to the Classes twice a year a statement giving receipts and itemized disbursements (also per cent paid each year) of this Fund. Acts 1934, Art. 84, page 62, IV.

Synod 1934 adopted an assessment of \$1.60 per family for the Emeritus Fund. Acts 1934, page 182 G.

Article 14.

If any Minister, for the aforesaid or any other reason, is compelled to discontinue his service for a time, which shall not take place without the advice of the Consistory, he shall nevertheless at all times be and remain subject to the call of the congregation.

Synod suggests that ministers who are able to meet the requirements of the Government, join the Reserve Corps of Chaplains; and instructs and authorizes the Synodical Committee to prepare the credentials for those who desire to enroll with this Corps. (Acts 1922, Art. 37, V.)

Synod rules that no consistory has the authority to grant his minister an "indefinite leave of absence" since Art. 14 C. O. declares the very opposite and there is no article in the Church Order legalizing such "leave of absence." Acts 1928, Art. 137.

Article 15.

No one shall be permitted, neglecting the Ministry of his Church or being without a fixed charge, to preach indiscriminately without the consent and authority of Synod or Classis. Likewise, no one shall be permitted to preach or administer the Sacraments in another Church without the consent of the Consistory of that Church.

- (1) A Consistory shall not admit to its pulpit a minister outside of our denomination except when they are convinced that such a minister is of sound Reformed confession. (Acts 1904, Art. 125, 5.)
- (2) a. As to his membership a candidate is under the supervision of the Consistory of the church to which he belongs, but with regard to his labors as a candidate he is subject to the supervision of the Classis in whose district he labors.
- b. Those who formerly served the church as ministers must either be declared emeriti or the Classis must assume responsibility for them. (Acts 1904, Art. 126, 7.)

Article 16.

The office of the Minister is to continue in prayer and in the ministry of the Word, to dispense the Sacraments, to watch over his brethren, the Elders and Deacons, as well as the Congregation, and finally, with the Elders, to exercise

church discipline and to see to it that everything is done decently and in good order.

Synod of 1926 refrained "from adopting either the Authorized Version or the American Standard as the official version of the Bible in our churches", but decided to recommend, however, the American Standard Version to our churches. Acts 1926, page 46. See also Acts 1934, page 103.

Article 17.

Among the Ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their office and also in other matters as far as possible according to the judgment of the Consistory, and if necessary, of the Classis; which equality shall also be maintained in the case of the Elders and the Deacons.

Article 18.

The office of the Professors of Theology is to expound the Holy Scripture and to vindicate sound doctrine against heresies and errors.

For the training for the Ministry of the Word, the Christian Reformed Church has Calvin College and Seminary. Calvin College is open also to other students besides those studying for the ministry. The Synod of 1920 decided to discontinue the Preparatory Department: the first two years immediately, the third year in 1921, and the fourth year in 1922. The Seminary Preparatory

Course of the Preparatory Department was continued until 1924.

All matters pertaining to these institutions are found in their Constitutions, Rules and Regulations.

A. Curatorium.

The care of these Institutions is entrusted to the Curatorium whose members consist of two delegates nominated by each Classis and elected by Synod. The duties of this body are described in the "Rules for the Curatorium."

B. Professors.

I. Theological Professors

When a theological professor is to be appointed, Curatorium shall present a nomination to Synod. The nominees shall preferably be ordained men that have had some experience in the ministry of the Word. The nomination shall not be made until a conference has been held with the Theological Faculty. It must be made in time so that it may appear in our church papers at least twice before Synod meets. To this end the Executive Committee of the Curatorium shall prepare a proposal in time for the meeting of the full Curatorium in May. When Curatorium convenes, its first duty shall be the making of the nomination and its publication. In order to lengthen the time for possible objections to reach Synod, the election shall take place at Synod as late as possible, and certainly not before the twentieth of June.

As in the past, a professor will be appointed for a term of two years; in case of reappointment, this will be for a term of six years; if again reappointed

at the completion of his second term, he will be appointed indefinitely.

These rules supersede all former rules. Acts 1930, Art 23, pages 20, 21.

2. The Professors of Theology are appointed as much as possible for definite departments. In the branches which they teach they must meet the requirements set at other institutions of learning of the same standing in our country. (Acts 1910, Art. 56.)

The rule shall be to appoint only men who have specially prepared themselves for the particular branch they are to teach. In case one or more years of special preparatory training be necessary, then the Synod shall appoint such a person with the understanding that he assumes his task after one or two years. (Acts 1924, Art. 26, p. 21.)

3. The installation of the professors of theology takes place according to the form (Acts 1906, Art. 35, 5a), after they shall have signed the Formula of Subscription.
4. Emeritus Professors who were honorably retired, and who received a definite appointment, are entitled to a pension from the churches, since they, just as the ministers, devote all their gifts and talents entirely and exclusively to the service of the Church. (Acts 1916, Art. 20, 4.)

Synod rules that our professors retire at the age of 70 years. (Acts 1922, Art. 11.)

II. College Professors.

Since the appointment of professors by Synod, which does not meet until June, leads to practical difficulties both for the School and for the persons involved, the appointment or re-appointment of professors for the College is entrusted to the Curatorium. At the regular meeting in June the Curatorium shall decide as to the desirability of a special meeting during the last week of February, so that by the first of March provision may be made in eventual vacancies. (Acts 1914, Art. 39, 1.)

C. Educational Secretary. Acts 1912, Art. 36, ii.

The appointment of the Educational Secretary is permanent, and in case of eventual separation of College and Seminary, he remains in the service of the Church. In this manner the official position of the Secretary is guaranteed.

D. Candidates for the Ministry.

1. Besides the school-examination now the rule, a preparatory examination is required, to be held by the Curatorium, covering the following branches: Dogmatics, Ethics, Exegesis, Isagogics, Sacred History, and a specimen sermon. In case of successful issue the Curatorium declares the examinee eligible to a call in the churches.

In case a student desires to continue his studies at other institutions, this preparatory examination shall not be held until he desires to be eligible to a call. Acts 1922, Art. 11, II.)

Only those prospective seminary students will

be admitted to examinations in the regular session of the Curatorium who plan to enter the seminary in the fall of the same year; and if anyone examined and passed by the curatorium for some reason or other postpones his entrance into the seminary for a year or for a longer period of time, he shall be required to submit again to the examination of the curatorium before he can be admitted as a regular student of the seminary. Acts. 1928, Art. 73.

2. If anyone being declared a candidate does not receive a call within three years and yet desires that his relation be continued, he shall apply to the Classis to which he belongs, that said Classis may decide whether his candidature be prolonged. Acts 1910, Art. 67, xi.)
3. Students that have pursued their studies at institutions not positively Reformed, must at least have attended the classes of the last year at our Theological School, before they are permitted to take the preparatory examination. (Acts 1922, Art. 11, III.)

Article 19.

The Churches shall exert themselves, as far as necessary, that there may be students supported by them to be trained for the Ministry of the Word.

Every Classis has its own "Student Fund", and the matters of this Fund are regulated by Classis itself. (Acts 1888, Art. 66.)

Synod suggests to the various classes the desirability

of working in the direction of exempting students from restitution. Acts. 1928, Art. 83.

Article 20.

Students who have received permission according to the rule in this matter, and persons who have according to Article 8 been judged competent to be prepared for the Ministry of the Word, shall, for their own training, and for the sake of becoming known to the Congregations, be allowed to speak a word of edification in the meetings for public worship.

Synod calls attention to the following regulations touching religious addresses of students in our churches and urges the consistories faithfully to observe these synodical rules:

Acts 1934, Art. 64, page 44.

- a) If theological students desire to take post-graduate work at other institutions, they should inform the Board of Trustees to that effect.
- b) As long as they continue their study elsewhere they should annually apply to the Board of Trustees for renewal of the privilege of "speaking unto edification in the meetings for public worship."
- c) When they desire to consider a call they must notify the Board of Trustees which shall act according to the Rules and Regulations established by Synod. Acts 1920, p. 39.

- d) The Curatorium is given the right to grant license to preach to:
1. Such graduates of the Seminary who are pursuing theological studies with a purpose of entering the Gospel Ministry; and
 2. Such graduates of the Seminary who are serving our churches in an administrative or teaching capacity at Calvin College or at the Seminary. (Acts 1926, Art. 36, VI, p. 32.)
- e) Synod, upon request of the Curatorium, points out to the various Classes the inadvisability of licensing those not studying at our Theological School to preach in our churches.

Synod, also upon request of the Curatorium, emphatically calls the attention of the Consistories to the fact that they should not permit students who have not been licensed to preach, to speak in Public Worship.

Students who have pursued their theological studies at other institutions must at least have pursued the studies of the Senior year at our Theological School, in order to be declared eligible for a call in our churches. (Acts 1924, Art. 41, E and F, page 38.)

Article 21.

The Consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian Schools in which the parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the covenant.

Synod rules that altho such as heartily support Christian instruction do not thereby automatically qualify for the nomination of office-bearers yet Synod wishes to emphasize that this element should be given very weighty consideration, and advises consistories to do so, since principles logically call for it and our Christian schools are constantly in need of whole-hearted support from consistories.

Acts 1934, Art. 162, pages 167, 168.

Article 22.

The Elders shall be chosen by the judgment of the Consistory and the Deacons according to the regulations for that purpose established by the Consistory. In pursuance of these regulations, every church shall be at liberty, according to its circumstances, to give the members an opportunity to direct attention to suitable persons, in order that the Consistory may thereupon either present to the congregation for election as many elders as are needed, that they may, after they are approved by it, unless any obstacle arise, be installed with public prayers and stipulations; or present a double number to the congregation and thereupon install the one-half chosen by it, in the aforesaid manner, agreeably to the Form for this purpose.

Synod of 1934, which adopted a new Form for the ordination of elders and deacons (see Supplement) decided not to adopt the Dutch version of the new Form

proposed but to continue the use of the old Form found in the Dutch Psalter, or whatever new Form may possibly be adopted by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Acts 1934, page 34, Art. 58 B.

Nominations and congregational meetings must be announced two successive Sundays.

For the promotion of uniformity in our churches Synod rules that reinstallation of re-elected officers not only is desirable but proper. Acts 1928, Art. 85.

Article 23.

The office of the Elders, in addition to what was said in Article 16 to be their duty in common with the Minister of the Word, is to take heed that the Ministers, together with their fellow-Elders and the Deacons, faithfully discharge their office, and both before and after the Lord's Supper, as time and circumstances may demand, for the edification of the churches to visit the families of the Congregation, in order particularly to comfort and instruct the members, and also to exhort others in respect to the Christian Religion.

Article 24.

The Deacons shall be chosen, approved and installed in the same manner as was stated concerning the Elders.

Article 25.

The office peculiar to the Deacons is diligently to collect alms and other contributions of charity, and after mutual counsel, faithfully and diligently to distribute the same to the poor as their needs may require it; to visit and comfort the distressed and to exercise care that the alms are not misused; of which they shall render an account in Consistory, and also (if anyone desires to be present) to the Congregation, at such a time as the Consistory may see fit.

Synod urges the Classes to impress earnestly upon delinquent congregations their duty to remember the poor, if necessary altho those in other congregations, and to attend to the development of the deaconate and to proper correspondence between deaconries. (Acts 1910, Art. 17, xvii.)

Article 26.

In places where others are devoting themselves to the care of the poor, the Deacons shall seek a mutual understanding with them to the end that the alms may all the better be distributed among those who have greatest need. Moreover, they shall make it possible for the poor to make use of institutions of mercy, and to that end they shall request the Board of Directors of such institutions to keep in close touch with them. It is also

desirable that the Deaconates assist and consult one another, especially in caring for the poor in such institutions.

Article 27.

The Elders and Deacons shall serve two or more years according to local regulations, and a proportionate number shall retire each year. The retiring officers shall be succeeded by others unless the circumstances and the profit of any church, in the execution of Articles 22 and 24, render a re-election advisable.

Definite retirement according to Article 27 must be the rule, but the liberty of renominating those that retire, as permitted in that Article, must remain.

- a) since the Church is served best by the best gifts and talents;
- b) since the retiring officers often through experience have acquired greater fitness;
- c) since in most churches there is not available a sufficient supply of qualified men that the retiring members can be left out of consideration without loss to the church. Acts 1898, Art. 50, 1.)

The Synod of 1912 decided that in case the installation of newly-elected Elders and Deacons must for weighty reasons be postponed, the tenure of the retiring Elders and Deacons is extended, and they remain legal trustees of the church.

Article 28.

The Consistory shall take care, that the churches for the possession of their property, and the peace and order of their meetings can claim the protection of the Authorities; it should be well understood, however, that for the sake of peace and material possession they may never suffer the royal government of Christ over His Church to be in the least infringed upon.

Synod advises all newly-organized congregations and their ecclesiastical advisors not to be hasty in acquiring or to assist in acquiring property for church purposes, unless, humanly speaking, the future of a congregation is quite well assured.

Acts 1934, Art. 165, page 171.

OF THE ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLIES

Article 29.

Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the Consistory, the Classis (the particular Synod), and the General Synod.

Article 30.

In these assemblies ecclesiastical matters only shall be transacted and that in an ecclesiastical manner. In major assemblies only such matters shall be dealt with as could not be finished in

minor assemblies, or such as pertain to the Churches of the major assembly in common.

Article 31.

If any one complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have the right to appeal to a major ecclesiastical assembly, and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote shall be considered settled and binding, unless it be proved to conflict with the Word of God or with the Articles of the Church Order, as long as they are not changed by a General Synod.

Ecclesiastical Usage.

Appeal from a decision by any ecclesiastical assembly must be made before the first following meeting of the major ecclesiastical assembly appealed to, and notice sent of this appeal to the clerk of the minor assembly. The interested parties must be informed of every decision made.

Article 32.

The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin by calling upon the Name of God and be closed with thanksgiving.

Article 33.

Those who are delegated to the assemblies shall bring with them their credentials and in-

structions, signed by those sending them, and they shall have a vote in all matters, except such as particularly concern their persons or churches.

To promote uniformity, the printed credentials as authorized by Synod (Acts 1888, Art. 87), should be used, or at least written credentials concluding as follows: "with instruction and authority to take part in the consideration of all matters legally brought before the meeting according to God's Word and the interpretation of it embodied in the forms of unity and the accepted Church Order.

Article 34.

In all assemblies there shall be not only a president, but also a clerk to keep a faithful record of all important matters.

Major assemblies have also a "stated clerk", who, however, has not the function of a permanent clerk, not being an officer, but that of a delegate whose regular duties are three-fold: He inscribes the minutes, he attends to all official correspondence, and he prepares the Agendum. (Acts 1904, Art. 132, 7.)

Article 35.

The office of the president is to state and explain the business to be transacted, to see to it that everyone observe due order in speaking, to silence the captious and those who are vehement in speaking; and to properly discipline them if

they refuse to listen. Furthermore his office shall cease when the assembly arises.

Article 36.

The Classis has the same jurisdiction over the Consistory as the Particular Synod has over the Classis and the General Synod over the Particular.

In a concrete case, and in answer to protests received questioning the right to depose a Consistory, Synod upheld this right on the following grounds:

- (1) Article 36 of our Church Order gives the Classis jurisdiction over the Consistory.
- (2) Articles 79 and 80 of the Church Order, and the Formula of Subscription state plainly that censure of office-bearers shall be suspension or deposition from office. (Acts 1926, Art. 104, I, b, 1 and 2, p. 142.)

Article 37.

In all Churches there shall be a Consistory composed of the Ministers of the Word and the Elders, who at least in larger congregations, shall, as a rule, meet once a week. The Minister of the Word (or the Ministers, if there be more than one, in turn) shall preside and regulate the proceedings. Wherever the number of Elders is small, the Deacons may be added to the consistory by local regulation; this shall invariably be the rule where the number is less than three.

Acts 1908, Art. 54, xi, and Acts 1912, Art. 57, xvii.

- (1) With a view to the danger that catechetical instruction may be relegated to the background or wholly neglected, Synod appeals to all Classes and Consistories most earnestly and urgently to guard against the danger as much as possible.

Synod recommends and encourages a nine-months term of catechetical instruction. Acts 1928, Art. 46.

- (2) Henceforth an extra copy of the Acts shall be sent to every Consistory especially designed for the Consistorial archives. (Acts 1916, Art. 55.)
- (3) In the interest of good order, the consistories shall report each year on the exact number of families to the Publication Committee of the Christian Reformed Church; said Publication Committee to keep an accurate record of these reports and to publish them in the Yearbook of the Christian Reformed Church. These statistics will be available for the various synodical and classical assessments. Acts 1932, Art. 83.
- (4) Synod of 1906 adopted the following rule regarding the question of what constitutes a family for statistical reports, and Synod of 1924 re-emphasized it:
 - a) Where husband and wife both are confessing members;
 - b) Where husband or wife belong to the congregation, by confession of faith; Acts 1928, Art. 85.

- c) Where a widow is the acting head of the family. (Acts 1906, Art. 93, p. 52.)

Rules for Congregational Meetings as sanctioned by usage.

Inasmuch as congregational meetings are called by and in charge of the Consistory, the president and clerk of the Consistory shall function as such at these meetings.

Only such matters as are presented by the Consistory shall be acted upon at these congregational meetings.

When members of the congregation desire to have any matters presented to the congregational meeting, they shall first submit them to the Consistory so that this body may judge whether and in what manner these matters are to be submitted to the congregational meeting.

Article 38.

In places where the Consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall not take place except with the advice of the Classis.

In case of the organization of a new congregation within the limits of an existing local church, the consent of the local consistory must first be obtained and then also that of the Classis. Naturally the Consistory has the right to withhold its consent. In that case, however, the interested parties have the right of appeal to Classis, and if need be, to Synod, with whom the final decision rests, while in the meanwhile the *status quo* remains unchanged. (Acts 1908, Art. 54, ii.)

- a) With reference to the expressions, "interested parties" and '*status quo*', Synod rules that the words "interested parties" in the aforesaid Article refer only to the applicants, and that the words "*status*

quo remains" means that the organization cannot, in that given case, proceed; though it must not be lost sight of in this connection, that there may be exceptions to this rule. (See Rutgers, Adviezen, I, 175.)

- b) This does not, of course, invalidate the rule that a Consistory always has the right to appeal to Synod. That such appeal has in some cases only a formal significance is inevitable. (Acts 1924, Art. 24, a and b, pages 14 and 15.)

Usual Manner of Procedure in the Organization of New Congregations.

- (1) Such members of the church as desire the organization of a church in a different locality present their petition for organization to the Classis. All heads of families and single members sign such a petition.
- (2) The Classis considers whether such organization is possible and desirable in the light of the proximity of other churches and the presence of properly qualified persons for the offices. In case the Classis decides to grant the request, a classical committee is appointed to effect the organization.
- (3) The committee meets with those interested after these have obtained their letters of dismissal from their respective churches. After public worship, under the auspices of said committee, the letters of dismissal are handed in and accepted, when in good and regular order, election of all officers takes place and they are at once installed in their respective offices.

- (4) The election of the officers is by free ballot by the male members whose letters of dismission have been accepted. According to the rule of free balloting a two-thirds vote is required for election on the first ballot. For the other ballots a majority is sufficient.
- (5) The Articles of incorporation of the new organization are then to be executed before a Notary Public at this meeting.

Article 39.

Places where as yet no Consistory can be constituted shall be placed under the care of a neighboring Consistory.

If possible, the organization of a new congregation must precede the administration of the sacraments. If, however, conditions are not ripe for organization, the eventual members are to be enrolled in a neighboring church and under the supervision of its Consistory the sacraments may be administered in their midst, not, however, without preaching of the Word nor without a suitable representation of the Consistory for the purpose of supervision. (Acts 1908, Art. 54, vi.)

Article 40.

The Deacons shall meet, wherever necessary, every week to transact the business pertaining to their office, calling upon the Name of God; whereunto the Ministers shall take good heed and if necessary they shall be present.

Article 41.

The classical meetings shall consist of neighboring churches that respectively delegate, with proper credentials, a minister and an elder to meet at such time and place as was determined by the previous classical meeting. Such meetings shall be held at least once in three months, unless great distances render this inadvisable. In these meetings the ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside; however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

Furthermore, the president shall, among other things, put the following questions to the delegates of each church:

1. Are the consistory meetings held in your church?
2. Is church discipline exercised?
3. Are the poor cared for?
4. Does the consistory support the cause of the Christian schools? *
5. Do you need the judgment and help of the Classis for the proper government of your church?

And finally, at one but the last meeting and, if necessary, at the last meeting before the (Par-

* See Acts 1930, Art. 54, II B, page 48.

ticalar) Synod, delegates shall be chosen to attend said Synod.

No new Classis shall be organized without the consent of Synod. (G. R., Art. 11.)

Every congregation within the synodically prescribed boundaries for a separate Classis shall delegate a minister and an elder to the Classis, and in case the church is vacant, two elders. (G. R., Art. 10.)

- a) Wherever possible, a Home Missionary should be connected, as minister, with one of the congregations which he serves, in order that it may delegate him to the Classical assemblies;
- b) In the event it is not possible for a Home Missionary to be delegated to Classical assemblies as stated in a) above, it is within the jurisdiction of Classis, by way of exception to Art. 41, to grant a Home Missionary, when delegated by a church together with its minister and an Elder, the privilege of membership in the Classical assembly. Reasons:

- (1) Art. 33 requires that members shall have credentials signed by those sending them;
- (2) Art. 41 states that the Classical meetings shall consist of neighboring churches that delegate. (The conflict with Art. 84 is more apparent than real.)

Acts 1930, page 146.

Synod decides that the privilege of membership be granted, by Classical assemblies, to ordained Jewish Missionaries, in harmony with the ruling which applies to Home Missionaries. (Acts 1930, page 154.)

At every classical meeting investigation shall be made whether the various churches are laboring to execute the decision of Synod of 1898, Art. 94, that the so-called baptized-member-system may be abolished in our churches. (Acts 1902, Art. 128, 3.)

Consistories shall report the names and addresses of their non-resident members and baptized members to the Mission Committee of their Classis. At every classical meeting they shall be reminded of this matter. (Acts 1902, Art. 29, i.)

The Synod of 1902 deemed it advisable that a larger number of ministers be given opportunity, through alternating synodical delegation, for active participation in the affairs of our Church, but it established no rule in this matter. (Art. 103, 6.)

Whenever a Consistory or Classis delegates some one who declares that he cannot afford the loss of wages incident upon attendance at the meeting, the delegating assembly shall, if not releasing him, attend to the necessary compensation. (Acts 1902, Art. 132, 6.)

Synod of 1926 decided, with regard to the nature and authority of Classical Committees:

- (1) That with respect to Classical Committees the principle must be firmly established, that they must conform to the nature, purpose, and authority of committees in general;
- (2) That as regards their nature and character, they are merely servants of the Classis, and that they must never, as do the Ecclesiastical Boards (Kerkelijke Besturen) in the Hervormde Kerk of the

Netherlands, take the place of a Classis, nor assume an independent place next to a Classis;

- (3) The purpose of a Classis in the appointment of a Classical Committee is, that it shall serve the Classis by attending to classical matters in the interim between classical meetings;
- (4) The authority of Classical Committees extends only to the charge given them by the Classis. (Acts 1926, Art. 105, F, 2, b, 1, 2, 3, 4, pages 145, 146.)

Synod suggests to the various classes that they adopt the new Rules for Synodical Procedure, (Acts 1934, page 298) also for classical procedure insofar as applicable. Acts 1934, page 80, Art. 96.

Article 42.

Where in a church there are more Ministers than one, also those not delegated according to the foregoing article shall have the right to attend Classis with advisory vote.

Article 43.

At the close of the Classical and other major assemblies, Censure shall be exercised over those, who in the meeting have done something worthy of punishment, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies.

Article 44.

The Classis shall authorized at least two of her oldest, most experienced and competent Minis-

ters to visit all the Churches once a year and to take heed whether the Minister and the Consistory faithfully perform the duties of their office, adhere to sound doctrine, observe in all things the adopted order, and properly promote as much as lies in them, through word and deed, the upbuilding of the congregation, in particular of the youth, to the end that they may in time fraternally admonish those who have in anything been negligent, and may by their advice and assistance help direct all things unto the peace, upbuilding, and greatest profit of the churches. And each Classis may continue these visitors in service as long as it sees fit, except where the visitors themselves request to be released for reasons of which the Classis shall judge.

Article 45.

It shall be the duty of the church in which the Classis and likewise the (Particular) or General Synod meets to furnish the following meeting with the minutes of the preceding.

Article 46.

Instructions concerning matters to be considered in major assemblies shall not be written until the decision of previous Synods touching these matters have been read, in order that what was

once decided be not again proposed, unless a revision be deemed necessary.

Article 47.

(Every year [or if need be oftener] four or five or more neighboring Classes shall meet as a Particular Synod, to which each Classis shall delegate two Ministers and two Elders. At the close of both the Particular and the General Synod, some church shall be empowered to determine with advice of Classis, the time and place of the next Synod.)

Article 48.

(Each Synod shall be at liberty to solicit and hold correspondence with its neighboring Synod or Synods in such manner as they shall judge most conducive to general edification.)

Article 49.

(Each Synod shall delegate some to execute everything ordained by Synod both as to what pertains to the Government and to the respective Classes, resorting under it, and likewise to supervise together or in smaller number all examinations of future Ministers. And, moreover, in all other eventual difficulties they shall extend help to the Classes in order that proper unity, order and soundness of doctrine may be maintained and

established. Also they shall keep proper record of all their actions to report thereof to Synod, and if it be demanded, give reasons. They shall also not be discharged from their service before and until Synod itself discharges them.)

Article 50.

The General Synod shall ordinarily meet once every two years unless there be urgent need to shorten the time.

To this Synod three Ministers and three Elders out of every Classis shall be delegated. If it becomes necessary in the opinion of at least three Classes to call a meeting of Synod within two years, the local church designated for this purpose shall determine time and place.

Synod shall meet according to rule on the second Wednesday of June in the even years. (Acts 1894, Art. 145.)

When a Classis desires an early Synod, it must apply to the convening church, who applies to its Classis, and when at least one-half the number of Classes desire to call an early meeting of Synod, the convening church shall call such a meeting. (Acts 1922, Art. 37, XI.)

- (1) Synod shall convene and be constituted as prescribed by the Church Order and Synodical Rulings governing its meetings.
- (2) Each Synod shall appoint a Convening-Consistory whose duty it shall be to announce the next succeeding Synod in the official publications of the

Church, three months before the date of meeting. It shall also provide all facilities needed for the synodical meetings, make arrangements for the lodging of delegates, etc. Expenses thus incurred shall be paid by the synodical treasurer.

- (3) The synodical agenda shall appear in two parts: one part in January of the synodical year containing all the reports of advisory committees appointed by previous Synods; and the second part appearing the first week in May, containing overtures to Synod and the names of delegates. Material for the agenda must be in the hands of the stated clerk a month before the date of publication. Material not appearing in the Agenda can be taken up by a special decision of Synod.
- (4) On Tuesday evening last preceding the opening of Synod a special service of prayer, in charge of the convening consistory, shall be held in the city in which Synod is to meet. All the members of Synod are expected to attend this meeting, and the general public is cordially invited to attend. The president, or vice-president, of the preceding Synod shall administer the Word and lead in appropriate prayer.
- (5) The president of the previous Synod shall officiate as president pro tem until Synod has chosen all its officers. At 9:30 A. M. of the appointed day, and at the appointed place, he shall call Synod to order, and conduct the opening devotionals.
- (6) Thereafter he shall call for the prescribed credentials of the delegates. Provided that a quorum, i. e., two-thirds of the membership, is present, he

shall declare that the synodical assembly has opened.

- (7) The officers of Synod shall be chosen by the delegates from their own number in the following order: president, vice-president, secretary, and assistant secretary. Election to take place by ballot. Whoever receives a majority of the votes cast shall be declared elected.

After the officers have been elected they shall take their places upon the rostrum. The president pro tem shall thereupon introduce the president-elect to Synod. The president-elect shall receive the gavel and respond briefly.

He shall read the prescribed PUBLIC DECLARATION to which every member of Synod shall rise to give heed and respond by expressing assent. The Declaration is to be presented to each delegate who assumes his seat at a later time.

The synodical sessions are open to the public, unless by a majority vote Synod decides to meet in executive session. The minutes of an executive session are recorded but not read in public session, and are not to be published in the Acta.

While Synod is in session its members may not leave the assembly without permission from the chair; neither is it permissible for any member to withdraw himself and return homeward without the consent of the assembly.

Acts 1934, pages 298, 299.

(See pages 298 to 313 for complete set of Rules for Synodical Procedure.)

As much as possible the rule shall be adhered to that no proposals of importance shall be presented to Synod that have not appeared on the Agendum, so that Consistories and Classes may have opportunity for previous deliberation. (Acts 1904, Art. 112.)

All committees shall publish their reports for the information of the churches, six months before Synod convenes.

All reports of Advisory Committees, prepared for Synod, on subjects committed to them, for special study, shall be inserted from *De Wachter* and *The Banner*, in the *Agendum*. (Acts 1910, Art. 67, iii.)

Usages and Rules for Synod.

The Committee on Education is to be a permanent organ in the service of the churches. However this committee has no supervisory, but only advisory powers.

The committee's task is outlined in Acts 1928, pp. 33-34.

Membership:—The Committee is to be composed of nine members, so that three complete their term each synodical year. Acts 1928, p. 35.

Synod 1934 made the following ruling in re reimbursement of expenses for Synodical delegates.

That each delegate be allowed a re-imbursement of expense which shall not exceed one actual round-trip railroad and/or steamship fare plus 1c per mile for sleeping accommodations and meals.

It should be considered incumbent upon the clergy to make use of their clergy permits whenever possible.

If transportation is by automobile carrying one or more delegates, reimbursement should be for actual expenses, not to exceed the railroad fare plus 1c per mile. Acts 1934, page 66.

- (4) a) The Synod meets on Wednesday morning for the purpose of the election of officers and the appointment of a Committee for Advisory Committees. Synod then adjourns to enable this Committee to meet.

Synod rules, that wherever feasible Reports and Overtures shall be dealt with directly by Synod, the Program Committee to give advice with respect to the material that can be so treated.

With respect to the Reports that are given into the hands of the Advisory Committees, Synod decides that in case the advice of the Pre-advisory committee differs radically from the proposals of the synodical committee, the proposals of the latter shall have precedence over the proposals of the former. By this we understand that the proposals of the synodical committee shall be the first to be voted upon after the report of the synodical committee together with the advice of the advisory committee shall have been presented to Synod.

Synod decides to have also a Pre-advisory Committee on Budgets to which the different Boards submit their budgets. Acts 1932, Art. 13.

- b) On Wednesday afternoon Synod meets again

to approve the report of the Committee for Advisory Committees. Synod then adjourns until Friday morning to enable the Advisory Committees to prepare their reports.

- c) The reports of the Advisory Committees are presented as soon as possible to the Committee for Publications, who see to it that all reports are neatly printed and distributed to the delegates. (Acts 1918, Art. 52, iii.)

For financial and other reasons, Synod 1934 suggested to the various classes that they send only four delegates each to the Synod of 1936, and appointed a committee to study the question whether it is feasible to make this change permanent. (Acts 1934, pages 60, 61.)

Reports.

- a) All reports not appearing in the Agendum must be laid before Synod in printed form. Copies of the reports of the Advisory Committees also must be laid before the meeting, printed or otherwise.
- b) All reports submitted to Synod must be incorporated in the Acts unless otherwise decided.

Since we are a bi-lingual Church, the question as to the language to be used on the floor of the Synod is left to personal choice. Acts 1928, Art. 15.

For the benefit of our American churches, an extract of the Minutes is published in **The Banner**. (Acts 1904, Art. 111.)

The Synodical Committee is composed of three members, to be appointed at each Synod for a term of two

years, with the Stated Clerk as member **ex-officio** and secretary.

The treasurers of the general Church funds and their alternates are appointed by the respective Committees. These treasurers:

- a) receive the collections and contributions through the Classical Treasurers, and render an account of them per Classis once a month;
- b) upon receipt, send at their earliest convenience, a postal card receipt, mentioning the number of **De Wachter** in which publication is to be made;
- c) at the annual meeting they submit an annual report containing a statement of the contribution of each Classis, and a detailed account of disbursements. The proper committees, after approving these reports, publish them in **De Wachter** and **The Banner**.

The respective secretaries must incorporate these reports in their reports to Synod. (Acts 1908, Art. 17, 2, 3.)

In the constitutions of the various committees an article shall be inserted requiring every secretary to keep a duplicate record of all receipts and disbursements.

Synod of 1934 decided

- A. That henceforth all Boards shall furnish not only complete financial statements in connection with their proposed Budgets, but also up-to-date inventories (as at the end of the last fiscal year) of all their assets for the use of the Budget Committee.

B. That all Boards which have financial matters to report to Synod shall have on hand, at the beginning of synodical meetings, a sufficient number of mimeographed copies for all delegates, these copies to contain complete financial statements and proposed budgets. (Acts 1934, pages 72, 73, Art. 90.)

Synod of 1934 also ruled that all congregations in the future requesting subsidies from the General Home Mission Committee shall provide sufficient information to Synod in order that your Budget Committee may be able to render an equitable advice. (Acts 1934, page 76, Art 90.)

Auditing Committee.

An auditing committee shall be appointed by each Synod to examine the books of the Treasurer of all Synodical funds. (Acts 1918, Art. 27, 4.)

Fiscal Year.

The fiscal year runs from January 1 to December 31. (Acts 1920, Art. 43, 19.)

Standing Committees are chosen in their entirety by each Synod to serve till the next Synod. (Acts 1898, Art. 98.)

Church Papers.

For the supervision of our Church Papers, **The Banner and De Wachter**, the Synod appoints a committee of seven members incorporated as "The Publication Committee of the Christian Reformed Church". Four members of this

Committee are chosen by one Synod, and three by the following.

The Synod appoints only the Editors-in-Chief of **De Wachter** and **The Banner**. The Department Editors are appointed by the Publication Committee, in consultation with the Editors-in-Chief. (Acts 1924, Art. 72, B, 4, p. 81.)

The Publication Committee is also charged with the editing and publication of the **Year-book**, containing the official statistics of our Church. (Acts 1930, Art. 22, [10] page 17.)

RULES FOR CHURCH VISITATION

GENERAL RULES

Church visitation, that according to Article 44 of the Church Order must be made annually in the congregation, requires for its orderly procedure the following:

- a) Every Classis appoints from its midst two members and an equal number of alternates, with the instruction to examine the conditions of the congregations within its boundaries;
- b) The visitors notify the Consistory at least eight days beforehand of the day and the hour of their arrival;
- c) All members of the Consistory see to it that they attend the meeting designed for church-visitiation. Every member that remains absent is bound to give the reason of his absence to this meeting. If not one-half of the members are present, no church-visitiation can be made;

- d) The president of the Consistory sees to it that all the books of the congregation are present at the meeting for examination of the visitors;
- e) One of the visitors functions as president and the other as clerk of the Consistory, and in the church to which either belongs, he takes his seat with the members of the Consistory and the other one functions as president and clerk both.

THE EXAMINATION

Questions to the Complete Consistory

- a) Have you two preaching services regularly on the Sabbath, once from a text freely chosen, and once after the order of the Heidelberg Catechism, so that no Lord's Day is omitted?
- b) Does the consistory determine the matter to be read in the absence of a minister?
- c) Is Communion celebrated at least four times annually after a preparatory sermon and followed by an applicatory sermon?
- d) Is family-, sick-, and poor visiting regularly made by the members of the consistory according to the requirements of their offices?
- e) Does the consistory attend to it that catechetical instruction is given regularly?
- f) Are the members of the consistory elected according to the Church Order, and in case of retirement,

* As accepted by Synod 1884, Acts, Art. 75—including minor revisions by various later Synods.

- does this take place according to the established order?
- g) Have the Forms of Unity been subscribed by all the members of the consistory, minister, elders and deacons, and when there is a church-school, by the principal?
- h) Does the consistory meet at regular intervals according to the need of the congregation and are the acts properly recorded and kept?
- i) Are all matters that come up considered according to the ecclesiastical rules?
- j) Is church discipline exercised faithfully according to the Word of God and the rules of the Church?
- k) Is *censura morum* held among the members of the consistory before every administration of the Lord's Supper?
- l) Do the parents see to it that their children make use as much as possible of the schools that are in harmony with Christian Reformed principles?
- m) Are moneys and deeds of property of the administration of the church as well as of the poor thus kept in a safe place, that there can be no cause of distrust, nor difficulties in case of retirement or death?
- n) Is the church active according to ability for the extension of the Kingdom within as well as without its boundaries?
- o) Is the spiritual condition of the congregation satisfactory? Are unity, peace, and love present?

- p) Do the children of the congregation quite generally assume their prerogatives and responsibilities as they come to years of discretion?
- q) Are the collections as prescribed by Classis and Synod taken according to the respective rules?
- r) Is the consistory aware whether there are any members of secret organizations in the congregation, and if so, are they disciplined?
- s) Are you engaged in the abolition of the so-called baptized-member-system?

Questions to the Elders and Deacons, while the Minister or Ministers are Absent

- a) Is the minister faithful to the Word of God and the Church Order in the exercise of the Ministry of the Word and in the administration of the Sacraments?
- b) Does he regularly give catechetical instruction, does he visit the sick faithfully, and does he attend to family-visiting with the aid of the elders?
- c) Does he manifest himself in his family and public life as a godly man, and does he study diligently?
- d) Does he use the Forms of the Church in the exercise of his office and does he conduct public worship unto edification?
- e) Has he a sufficient income corresponding to the needs of a well-ordered family?

Questions to the Minister or Ministers and Deacons in the absence of Elders

- a) Do the elders regularly attend the congregational gatherings and consistory meetings?

- b) Do they assist the pastor faithfully in all things?
- c) Do they visit the congregation as much as possible, and do they endeavor to prevent or to remove all offense?
- d) Do they visit the catechetical classes from time to time to see how they are conducted and attended, and when necessary do they assist the pastor in catechetical instruction?
- e) Do they conduct themselves in their family and public life as examples for the congregation?

Questions to the Minister or Ministers and Elders in the absence of the Deacons

- a) Do the deacons attend regularly the congregational meetings and the meetings of the consistory, and if there are such, also the deacons meetings?
- b) Do they faithfully discharge their duties to the poor and the orphans?
- c) Are the collections counted by the deacons jointly or, where there are very few deacons, in the presence of the pastor or one or more of the elders? (Acts 19:28, Art. 132.)
- d) Do they administer the funds with discretion in consultation with the minister and elders; do they make double entry of the receipts and disbursements, and do they give an account of these at set times?
- e) Do they show themselves in their family and public life as exemplary Christians?

At the conclusion of their visitation of all the churches, the Visitors shall prepare a report of their findings and acts and submit it to the first meeting of Classis.

Article 51.

The Missionary Work of the Church is regulated by the General Synod in a Mission Order.

Missionaries:—

The calling and sending of Missionary Ministers shall be the task of a local church—if, however, circumstances demand, the calling and sending is to be done by a combination of churches in the manner determined by these churches themselves, subject to the stipulation of Synod and Classis. (Acts 1912, Art. 20.)

Synod of 1918 decided, that

- (1) Separation of the official and the membership relation in special circumstances, as in the case of our missionaries, can not be considered contrary to Reformed Church Polity;
- (2) That the Reformed principles of Church Polity regarding membership as also regarding the obligations of the consistory with respect to the members and the administration of the Sacraments, demand that our missionaries in our present mission field, though they must remain officially connected with the sending church, must, as members, belong to the Rehoboth congregation. (Acts 1918, Art. 52, 1, 2, page 57.)

Lay-Workers:—

Inasmuch as it does not militate against Reformed Church Polity to employ unordained missionaries in the mission field, and inasmuch as there are localities in our

mission field where such helpers may be used to good advantage, the employment of lay-workers for such places is to be recommended, always, however, with the consent and under the supervision of the Synodical Delegates; and their ecclesiastical status rests only in the mandate they have received from the sending church or churches. (Acts 1914, Art. 52, ii. 3.)

Synod 1934 authorized the Committee on Education to establish, as an experiment, a Bible School for Lay-workers and missionary training. This school is now operating in Grand Rapids, Michigan. (Acts 1934, page 79.)

Fields: (Jewish, Mormons, Heathen)—

Jews. The missionary work among the Jews has been delegated to the Classes Hackensack and Hudson, and the Classis Illinois. These labor respectively in the cities of Paterson, N. J., and Chicago, Ill. These Classes have charge of all the work in their respective fields, according to Rules approved by the Synods of 1918 and 1920, respectively.

Since 1918 no Synodical Delegates for Jewish Missions are to be appointed any more. Only a General Treasurer and his alternate are appointed by Synod. (Acts 1918, Art. 27.)

Synod rules that “an average contribution of \$2.20 for two years per family is required to carry on the work among the old covenant people”. (Acts 1930, page 120 [c].)

Mormons. The missionary work among the Mormons has been delegated to the Classis Pella. In case Classis Pella intends to continue the work, Synod advises that an

ordained Minister of the Word be called for that field, and pledges the support for this mission as formerly. (Acts 1918, Art. 27, B, 3.)

Heathen Mission (Indian and Foreign). For the matter of Heathen Missions Synod regularly appoints a Board consisting of one representative of each Classis of the Christian Reformed Church and three delegates at large who shall be elected by the Synod out of a nomination of six, presented by the Board of Missions and shall have an advisory vote at the meetings of the Board and of its Executive Committee. Acts 1928, Art. 52. They serve for the term of two years. This Board chooses from their own number an Executive Committee, that attends to urgent matters. (Acts 1914, Art. 52, ii, 1.)

The various mission posts are under the supervision of the sending churches touching confession and life of the missionary force, and also of the converts, together with the ordering of internal affairs. (Cf. Rules.)

Synod of 1924 authorized the change of the name of our Mission Board from "Board of Heathen Missions of the Christian Reformed Church", to "Christian Reformed Board of Missions". (Acts 1924, Art. 64, 3, p. 63.)

China:—

Our Church commences its missionary work in China, and not in the Sudan. (Acts 1920, Art. 34, 2.)

Synod definitely decides that China will be our Foreign Mission Field. (Acts 1922, Art. 28, 2.)

Our missionaries are to labor during the first two or four years preferably in consultation with a Church of Re-

formed Confession in the mission field. (Acts 1920, Art. 34, 4.)

In re the ecclesiastical position of the ordained missionary in China, Synod declares:

- a) That such a missionary shall retain both his membership and his office as minister in the church sending him to China;
- b) That he be permitted to accept associate membership in the Chinese church as long as that is necessary for the development of that church, and such membership is desired by the Chinese church.

Grounds:—

- (1) Thus the sending church retains full authority over the life and doctrine of the missionary;
- (2) In this way the sacraments can be properly administered in the Chinese church during the time that she has no ordained men of her own. (Acts 1926, Art. 42, a and b, page 41.)

Concerning the status of missionaries on foreign fields, Synod rules "Such missionaries have the same status as all our ministers, being officially pastors of the churches which called and sent them". (Acts 1930, Art. 111, pages 144, 145.)

In re the unordained missionary in China, Synod declares:

- a) That in matters dealing directly with Church Organization, doctrine, discipline, and with the administration of the sacraments, unordained missionaries have an advisory vote but no decisive vote;

- b) That in matters of general missionary administration, the disbursement of funds, the preparation of reports, and all matters not specifically ecclesiastical, unordained missionaries have a decisive as well as an advisory voice in the Mission;
- c) That unless the Board of Missions specifies differently each unordained missionary will have his or her own status in the Mission, co-ordinate with the ordained missionaries. Grounds:
- (1) Since unordained missionaries do not hold an ecclesiastical office, they have no right to exercise ecclesiastical functions;
 - (2) Since they have a definite appointment from the Board, they have a right to share in shaping the policies to which they must try to give expression;
 - (3) The work of unordained doctors, teachers, and woman evangelists is of such a nature that it cannot well be controlled by the ordained men. (Acts 1926, Art. 42, p. 41.)

Synod recommends the work among our Dutch brethren in South America for an annual collection or contribution. (Acts 1930, page 153 [G].)

Director of Missions:—

Synod appoints a Secretary of Missions especially connected with the Board of Foreign Missions, but also charged to plead for and promote the interests of the Home and Jewish Missions. (Acts 1920, Art. 34, 8.) His work is described in the Rules for Director of Missions.

Article 52.

Inasmuch as different languages are spoken in the churches, the necessary translations shall be made in the ecclesiastical assemblies, and in the publication of recommendations, instructions and decisions.

OF DOCTRINES, SACRAMENTS AND OTHER CEREMONIES.

Article 53.

The Ministers of the Word of God and likewise the Professors of Theology (which also behooves the other Professors and School Teachers) shall subscribe to the Three Formulas of Unity, namely, the Belgic Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dordrecht, 1618-'19, and the Ministers of the Word who refuse to do so shall de facto be suspended from their office by the Consistory or Classis until they shall have given a full statement, and if they obstinately persist in refusing, they shall be deposed from their office.

The Formula of Subscription for Ministers, etc., must be inscribed in the Consistorial as well as in the Classical Minute Book. It is also customary that candidates sign it after passing their classical examination. (Acts 1906, Art. 35, 5b.)

Article 54.

Likewise the Elders and Deacons shall subscribe to the aforesaid Formulas of Unity.

Article 55.

To ward off false doctrines and errors that multiply exceedingly through heretical writings, the Ministers and Elders shall use the means of teaching, of refutation, or warning, and of admonition, as well in the Ministry of the Word as in Christian teaching and family-visiting.

Article 56.

The Covenant of God shall be sealed unto the children of Christians by Baptism, as soon as the administration thereof is feasible, in the public assembly when the Word of God is preached.

Only in critical emergency and with the consent and in the presence of the Consistory, may Baptism be administered to sick children or adults outside of the meeting of the congregation; also it shall not be administered to condemned criminals, except with advice of classical delegates.

Baptism, administered by denominations, societies or persons that have formally broken with the trinitarian faith and manifest this rupture in the administration as often as a child is baptized, can no more be recognized as Christian Baptism. For the rest all Baptisms must be held valid, whether administered to children or to adults, whenever administered in or behalf of a group of christians by a minister of the Word called and recognized as such by them and in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. (This Article of the Synod of

1899 of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands is recognized by usage in our churches.)

Parents, presenting their children for baptism according to Holy Scripture and Church Order must both, or at least one of them, have owned their own Baptism by personal profession of faith. (Acts 1898, Art 94.)

Those under discipline of abstinence shall not present their infants for baptism, nor answer to the questions of the Form. (Acts 1892, Art. 49.)

The Baptism of adopted waifs is left to the discretion of the consistories. (Acts 1910, Art. 67, vi.)

Synod of 1930 answered the question "whether children who were not born of believing parents, but who are adopted by believers, may be baptized", in the affirmative. (Acts 1930, Art. 84, page 93.)

Article 57.

The Ministers shall do their utmost to the end that the father present his child for Baptism.

Article 58.

In the ceremony of Baptism, both of children and of adults, the Minister shall use the respective forms drawn up for the administration of this Sacrament.

Article 59.

Adults are through Baptism incorporated into the Christian Church, and are accepted as members of the Church, and are therefore obliged also

to partake of the Lord's Supper, which they shall promise to do at their Baptism.

Article 60.

The names of those baptized, together with those of the parents, and likewise the date of birth and baptism, shall be recorded.

Article 61.

None shall be admitted to the Lord's Supper except those who according to the usage of the Church with which they unite themselves have made a confession of the Reformed Religion, besides being reputed to be of a godly walk, without which those who come from other Churches shall not be admitted.

- (1) In the examination of those who desire to be admitted to the Lord's Supper, use shall be made chiefly of the Compendium. It shall be demanded of all who apply for admission that they be sound in faith and blameless in conduct, as has always been demanded in the Reformed Church. The names of those whose examination resulted favorably shall be made known to the congregation at least one Sunday before public confession, that it may become evident whether there are objections to their admission. (G. R. 56-57.)

Form for the Public Confession of Faith.

Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ:

We thank our God concerning you for the grace of

God which was given you in Christ Jesus, that you were made desirous of professing your faith publicly here in the presence of God and His Holy Church, and of obtaining the privileges of full communion with the people of God.

You are now requested to answer sincerely the following questions:

First: Do you heartily believe the doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament, and in the Articles of the Christian Faith, and taught in this Christian Church, to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation, and do you promise by the grace of God, steadfastly to continue in this confession?

Second: Do you openly accept God's covenant promise, which has been signified and sealed unto you in your baptism, and do you confess that you abhor and humble yourself before God because of your sins, and that you seek your life not in yourself, but only in Jesus Christ your Savior?

Third: Do you declare that you love the Lord, and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, to mortify your old nature and to lead a godly life?

Fourth: Do you promise to submit to the government of the Church and also, if you should become delinquent either in doctrine or in life, to submit to its admonition and discipline?

N.N., what is your answer?

(Answer): I do. (To be given individually.)

I charge you then, beloved, that you by the diligent

use of the means of grace and with the assistance of your God continue in the confession which you have just made. In the name of Christ Jesus our Lord, I now welcome you to full communion with the people of God. Rest assured that all the privileges of such communion are now yours. May the God of all grace, who called you unto His eternal glory in Christ, after that you have suffered a little while, Himself perfect, establish, strengthen you. To Him be the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Let us pray. (The use of this prayer is left optional.)

Heavenly Father, we thank Thee that Thou hast from the beginning embraced in Thy covenant the children together with their parents. We thank Thee that Thou didst cast the lot of these Thy servants in the Christian Church from the first, and didst grant them all the manifold blessings of Christian culture. We bless Thee that Thou didst in their case add the special grace of Thy Holy Spirit, so that of their own wills they have come here today to confess Thy truth and to consecrate their lives to Thy service. We earnestly beseech Thee that Thou wilt continue to carry on the good work Thou hast commenced in them unto the day of complete redemption. Increase in them daily the manifold gifts of Thy grace, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Grant them the happiness of promoting the glory of their Lord and the edification of His people. Deliver them in the temptations of this life and in the extreme trial of death. And in that day when Thou makest up Thy jewels, set these Thy servants also in Thy crown, that they may shine as stars, to Thy praise, for ever and ever. Amen. (Acts 1932, Art. 93.)

All those that come to us from other denominations must be examined as to their confessional soundness and fitness to partake of Communion, because of the sanctity of the Lord's Supper. The Form of Reception is left to the discretion of the consistories. The congregation, however, must be given an opportunity to present possible objections. (Acts 1904, Art. 125, 6.)

In the examination by the Consistory the question shall always be put to those who desire to be received as members and admitted to the Lord's Supper, whether they belong to any society bound by oath or solemn vow. (Acts 1867, Art. 15.)

Article 62.

Every Church shall administer the Lord's Supper in such a manner as it shall judge most conducive to edification; provided, however, that the outward ceremonies as prescribed in God's Word be not changed and all superstition avoided, and that at the conclusion of the sermon and the usual prayers, the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper, together with the prayer for that purpose, shall be read.

Touching the use of the Individual Cup, Synod of 1918, Art. 42, xv, and 1920, Art. 26, 14, 15, decided: "To establish no rule in this matter, but to leave it to the discretion of the consistories."

Article 63.

The Lord's Supper shall be administered at least every two or three months.

Article 64.

The administration of the Lord's Supper shall take place only there where there is supervision of Elders, according to the ecclesiastical order and in a public gathering of the Congregation.

- (1) It is permitted to administer the Lord's Supper in the homes of those, who have been ill for many years, provided the congregation be represented. (Acts 1914, Art. 19.)
- (2) The administration of the Lord's Supper must always be preceded by a Preparatory sermon and followed by an Applicatory sermon. (Acts 1912, Art. 72, 9.)

Article 65.

Funeral sermons or funeral services shall not be introduced.

Carrying corpses into the church building at funeral services belongs to the indifferent things (Acts 1886, Art. 57, 3), and cannot as such be considered improper, but whether it is to be allowed in the congregation shall rest with the discretion of the Consistory. (Acts 1888, Art. 36.)

Article 66.

In time of war, pestilence, national calamities, and other great afflictions, the pressure of which is felt throughout the Churches, it is fitting that the Classes proclaim a Day of Prayer.

Article 67.

The Churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, the Day of Prayer, the National Thanksgiving Day, and Old and New Year's Day.

Sabbath Keeping. Dordrecht, 1618-'19.

- (1) There is in the Fourth Command of the Divine Law a ceremonial and an ethical element.
- (2) The ceremonial element was the Rest of the Seventh day after Creation, and the strict observance of that day imposed especially on the Jewish people.
- (3) The ethical element, that a certain definite day be appropriated for religion and for that purpose so much rest as is needful for religion and its hallowed contemplation.
- (4) The Sabbath of the Jews having been abolished, the Day of the Lord must be solemnly hallowed by the Christians.
- (5) The day since the times of the Apostles has already been observed by the primitive catholic church.
- (6) This day must be so consecrated to religion that on that day we rest from all toilsome works, except those of charity and present necessity. Also from all such recreations as hinder religion.

In adjudicating upon a concrete case, Synod of 1926 declared as follows regarding the six points given above:

- (1) Although they are "kerkelijkje bepalingen", their nature determines their authority, in as much as it is self-evident that they are doctrinal in character. In that sense they are, therefore, "vast en bindend";
- (2) They constitute an interpretation of Lord's Day 38, because the same fundamental idea that the divine imperative of the fourth commandment also applies to the New Testament Church, in its observance of the day of rest and worship, is found in Lord's Day 38, and elaborated in the six points;
- (3) The six points of 1881 are to be regarded, even as the three points of 1924, as an interpretation of our Confession. First, the Synod of 1881 did not add a new confession to the Forms of Unity, but accepted the six points as an interpretation of the confessional writings in so far as they express the Reformed position relative to the fourth commandment. Secondly, that such an interpretation given by Synod must be regarded as the official interpretation and is, therefore, binding for every officer and member of our denominational group. Thirdly, one cannot place his personal interpretation of the Confessions or a part thereof above the official interpretation of Synod. That would make void the significance and power of the Forms of Unity. (Acts 1926, Art. 136, II, 1, 2, 3, pp. 191, 192.)

Article 68.

The Ministers shall on Sunday explain briefly the sum of Christian Doctrine comprehended in the Heidelberg Catechism so that as much as pos-

sible the explanation shall be annually completed, according to the division of the Catechism itself, for that purpose.

The Benediction, like the Salutation, is, by common consent of the Christian Church of all ages, to be pronounced only upon those assemblies of God's people in which they, with their children, meet with God for the specific purpose of corporate worship. (Acts 1934, Art. 145, page 136, XIII.)

With a view to dangers from without that threaten sound doctrine, and in consideration of the great need of and the very meager interest in the regular development of dogmatical truths, Synod emphasizes the time-honored custom of catechism preaching, and the Classes are urged to give proper attention to this matter, that the regular consideration of the catechism may be observed. (Acts 1902, Articles 103 and 110.)

Article 69.

In the Churches only the 150 Psalms of David and the Collection of Hymns for Church use, approved and adopted by Synod shall be sung. However, while the singing of the Psalms in divine worship is a requirement, the use of the approved Hymns is left to the freedom of the churches. Acts 1932, Art. 144.

Synod 1934 granted permission to our Holland speaking churches "om de gezangen die op de laatste Synode der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland zijn aangenomen, in den eeredienst te zingen". (Acts 1934, Art. 153, page 148.)

Synod approves the two hymns, the "Gloria Patri", and the Response "Hear our Prayer, O Lord", for use in public worship. (Acts 1930, page 189.)

Synod of 1930 adopted overtures from two classes that warned against the danger of neglect of the psalms, and that took the position that our church should remain chiefly a psalm singing church. (Acts 1930, page [8].)

Order of Worship for the First Service on the Lord's Day:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Votum | or 1. Psalm |
| 2. Salutation | or 2. Invocation or Votum |
| 3. Psalm | or 3. Salutation |
| 4. Reading of the Law (followed by the Summary of the Law in Matthew 22 if so desired) | |
| 5. Psalm of Penitence or Devotion | |
| 6. General Prayer, concluded with the Lord's Prayer (the latter by Minister only, or by Minister and Congregation) | |
| 7. Offering and Psalm | |
| 8. Offertory Prayer (optional) | |
| 9. Scripture Lesson | |
| 10. Sermon | |
| 11. Prayer | |
| 12. Psalm (with or without Doxology) | |
| 13. Benediction | |
| 14. Doxology, if desired here. | |

(Acts 1928, Art. 62, and Acts 1930, Art. 113, and 117.)

Though the introduction of choir-singing is left to the

discretion of the consistory, Synod nevertheless discourages choir-singing as a distinct element of public worship on the following grounds:

- (1) The danger exists that congregational singing shall be curtailed.
- (2) If the choir sings separately there is the difficulty of maintaining the principle of Article 69 of the Church Order.
- (3) Synod declares that, although it would discourage the introduction of choir-singing in public worship (except as an aid to congregational singing) it leaves the final decision with regard to the question to the local consistories. (Acts 1926, Art. 57, XVI., 5, p. 70.)

In cases where choirs exist or shall be introduced, Synod insists that only those Psalms or hymns shall be sung which are approved by Art. 69 of our Church Order; or such anthems which contain only the exact words of portions of Scripture. (Acts 1930, Art. 90, page 101.)

Synod decides that the New Order of Worship (as revised) is laid before the churches with the recommendation of Synod, and that its introduction is left to the discretion of each local church. (Acts 1930, page 187.)

Synod amends the decision of 1926 relative to choirs by adding a warning to the consistories of churches having choirs that such consistories exercise close supervision regarding the membership of the choir and permit the singing of no songs which are not included in Art. 69 of our Church Order. (Acts 1928, Art. 67.)

Synod urges all consistories to see to it that the

memorization of Psalter verses is emphasized in the Catechism and Sunday School classes. (Acts 1932, Art. 144.)

Article 70.

Since it is proper that the matrimonial state be confirmed in the presence of Christ's Church, according to the Form for that purpose, the Consistories shall attend to it.

Synod of 1934, which adopted a new Form for the Solemnization of Marriage (see Acts 1934, page 295) decided not to adopt the Dutch version of the new Form, but to continue the use of the old Form, or whatever new Form may be adopted by the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. (Acts 1934, Art. 58, page 33, A.)

Marriages within the three most intimate degrees of relationship are to be condemned as improper. Those of less close blood-relationship also are to be discouraged, but touching eventual cases, the ecclesiastical assemblies concerned shall judge. (Acts 1896, Art. 62, 3b.)

Synod of 1906 ruled that there is but one Biblical ground for Divorce, namely fornication. (Acts 1906, pages 21, 111.)

Synod of 1890 answered the following questions in the negative, "may the man from whom the woman legitimately divorced herself, because he committed adultery, in case he remarries while his first wife is living, be a member of the church?" (Acts 1890, Art. 66.)

Synod decides that a person, once divorced upon non-Biblical grounds, and having withdrawn from the church, can again be received into the church after sincere peni-

tence is shown, and confession of this sin is made, though all efforts to re-establish the marriage tie with the divorced party prove fruitless. (Acts 1926, Art. 54, VI., p. 54.)

Synod of 1908 re-affirmed and gave a reasoned defense of this position, taking the ground that such a guilty party was still before God bound to his first wife. (Acts 1908, page 39.)

At the Synod of 1934, a report, advising Synod, among other things, "to re-affirm the deliverances upon the status of persons divorced and re-married made by the Synods of 1890 and 1908"; was **tabled**. (Acts 1934, page 146.)

In re the admission or re-admission of persons "illegitimately divorced and re-married", Synod

- A. **Rejected** the position of the Committee on Divorce that such parties can be received into the church, "if they sincerely repent of and confess their sins".
- B. **Tabled** the advice of the Minority Report to declare that such parties (with three exceptions) can not be received into the church "so long as the present marriage union continues or the original marriage partner continues to live".
- C. Appointed a committee to consider the practical application of the principle adopted by the Synod of 1890 and re-affirmed by the Synod of 1908, this Committee also to consider the minority report and both the reports of the Pre-advisory Committee of this Synod, and to present its conclusions to the Synod of 1936. (Acts 1934, page 146.)

OF CENSURE AND ECCLESIASTICAL ADMONITION

Article 71

As Christian Discipline is of a spiritual nature, and exempts no one from Civil trial or punishment by the Authorities, so also besides Civil punishment there is need of Ecclesiastical Censures, to reconcile the sinner with the Church and his neighbor and to remove the offense out of the Church of Christ.

- (1) Parents that do not send their minor children to attend catechetical instruction, shall be admonished, and if they persist in their neglect, they shall be disciplined, and if this is of no avail, they shall be excommunicated.
- (2) Parents who, for conscientious objections, dare not have their children baptized, shall be patiently instructed and admonished, and if this is of no avail, they shall be disciplined. (Acts 1888, Art. 57, b.)
- (3) If it becomes manifest that a member belongs to a secret, oathbound organization, and he refuses to leave such organization, he shall be disciplined. (G. R., Art. 55.)

Article 72.

In case any one errs in doctrine or offends in conduct as long as the sin is of a private character, not giving public offense, the rule clearly prescribed by Christ in Matth. 18 shall be followed.

Article 73.

Secret sins of which the sinner repents, after being admonished by one person in private or in the presence of two or three witnesses, shall not be laid before the Consistory.

Article 74.

If any one, having been admonished in love concerning a secret sin by two or three persons, does not give heed, or otherwise has committed a public sin, the matter shall be reported to the Consistory.

Unions. (Acts 1916, Art. 36, 9.)

- (1) There are not sufficient data to show that membership of the Church is incompatible with membership of the so-called Neutral Unions, unless it can be established that a certain Union gives constitutional warrant to a certain sin or sins, or shows in its regular activities that it champions sin.
- (2) As long as we are not fully assured in this matter and cannot maintain the position once assumed, the present standing of many of our church-members as "tolerable" is undesirable.

Synod of 1930 called attention to various ways in which the church can and should "promote the organization of Christian labor organizations and of other Christian organizations in the social sphere of life." (Acts 1930, page 74, F.)

Unions.

I. The question whether it conflicts with our Christian principle that members of the Church at the same time are members of organizations in the social realm that are not founded on christian basis and labor from christian principles, must be answered:

That every Christian must be considered at liberty to cooperate with his neighbor in every legal domain of society, and that as a member of society he has a perfect right to cooperate (share) in joint enterprises, or to unite with others in an organization, when the evident aim of such enterprise is not in conflict with the general principles of justice laid down in the Word of God.

II. The questions: Of what nature is the solidarity of the Unions and similar organizations? Is every member of such organization responsible for the resolutions and acts of such organization or no? are answered as follows:

- 1) That a Christian who is a member of a social organization, of whatever nature, is bound of God faithfully to exert his influence as a Christian and to fight for justice and righteousness;
- 2) That by consent or silence he becomes fully personally responsible for whatever is sinful in the resolutions and practices of the organization to which he belongs;
- 3) That, in order to be personally free from guilt, he must with all seriousness protest against such actions that pass the boundaries of right and according to ability he must endeavor to check the evil; and if the organization, in spite of this protest, persists in the perpetration of this evil, then it becomes

the Christian's duty to renounce his membership of such organization.

III. The questions: What is the duty of the Church in relation to this domain of life, and, more in particular: How must the Church deal with respect to members that are facing the problems arising from the struggle in social life, and have joined some organization or other?

Synod answers:

- 1) That the Church of Christ is duty bound through her power of the keys to purify herself from those that have joined themselves with organizations that are in essence in conflict with the Word of God. Such organizations are not only the secret societies, but also those organizations in the social order as either in their constitutions, official propaganda, or in their common practices reveal themselves as anti-christian.
- 2) That the Church in respect to those that have joined organizations that essentially are not in conflict with the Word of God, but in which is found much that is to be disapproved and in conflict with our christian principles (such as many organizations of employers and employees) must constantly instruct and reprove. The Church that always has the task to shed the light of the Word of God in all spheres of life, to warn her members against evil, to indicate the right principles, and to exhort to their application, must not neglect that task in the field of labor, and urge her members to seek their strength especially in Christian organizations.
- 3) That church discipline in the case of members that at the same time are members of organizations

that are not essentially in conflict with the Word of God in which is found much that is to be disapproved and in conflict with our christian principles, is to be resorted to only when it is evident that they are parties to and guilty of actions that are in conflict with the command of God. In other words whenever the aim of an organization as such is lawful and the organization in its constitution does not require of its members anything in conflict with the law, the Church shall not exercise discipline merely on the ground of membership in such organization, even though such organization both as to principle and practice, may have many faults. (Acts 1928, Art. 103.)

Synod rules that no one can remain an object of church discipline who persists in the resignation of his membership. (Acts 1918, Art. 53, iv.)

Synod of 1930 decided that the church should "promote the organization of the labor organizations and other Christian organizations in the social sphere of life," condemned "the anti-Christian spirit of the Marxian Socialism with its glorification of class hatred, class struggle and class ethics, and its principle that might makes right," and urged the exercise of "discipline in the spirit of love, but nevertheless with a firm hand whenever her members become guilty of propagating un-Christian principles in the world of labor, assume an unbrotherly attitude towards their fellow-Christians, take part in acts of violence, trample upon the fundamental principles of justice, or refuse to break with organizations that are avowedly anti-christian in character, or reveal throughout an anti-christian spirit in their activities." (Acts 1930, pages 74, 75.)

Synod of 1934 urged all our leaders, and in particular our laboring men, to give the Christian Labor Association of Grand Rapids, Michigan, their moral support. (Acts 1934, Art. 39, page 22.)

Socialism.

Consistories shall assume toward Socialism the same attitude as towards all departures from our principles. (Acts 1912, Art. 47, iii.)

Baptized Members.

- (1) Those baptized in infancy, having arrived to years of discretion, but that do not make a profession of faith, regardless of their walk otherwise, become, as unfaithful baptized members, the objects of church discipline, and if they persist in their sin, are to be excluded from the church.
- (2) In case of change of residence, such unfaithful baptized members may not be given a letter of dismissal, but at best a certificate of baptism and a statement of their conduct.
- (3) Before the Consistory proceeds to the exclusion of unfaithful baptized members:
 - a) an announcement must be made to the congregation with an exhortation for intercession, without mentioning the name; and
 - b) then the advice of Classis must be sought.
- (4) The exclusion of unfaithful baptized members ought to take place by official announcement to the church, and notice sent to the parties concerned, that they, because of their persistent un-

faithfulness as members of the covenant, in spite of all ecclesiastical admonition, henceforth can no more be considered as belonging to the church.

- (5) Excluded unfaithful baptized members, that return with penitence and repentance, cannot be received again into the church except by profession of faith, while in every concrete case it is left to the discretion of the Consistory whether a separate confession of sin shall be required. (Acts 1918, Art. 52, viii, f.)

Those baptized that have come to years of discretion and refuse to attend catechetical instruction, shall be admonished, and if they persist, be excommunicated. (G. R., Art. 62.)

Amusements.

While several practices are found in our circles which cannot pass the muster and while all our amusements, not only theater-attendance, dancing, and card-playing, should be judged in the light of our principles (see Acts 1928, Art. 96) yet Synod feels constrained, in pursuance of the decisions of the Synod of 1926 in the matter of amusements, to call particular attention to this familiar trio. It greatly deplores the increasing prevalence among us of these forms of amusement, urgently warns against them, and further refers our people to the material on the subject given in the report of the Committee on Worldly Amusements.

Synod urges all our leaders and all our people to pray and labor for the awakening and deepening of spiritual life in general, and to be keenly aware of the absolute indispensability of keeping our religious life vital and

powerful, through daily prayer, the earnest searching of the Scriptures, and through engaging in practical Christian works, which are the best antidote against worldliness.

Synod exhorts all our leaders to warn unceasingly against the prevailing spirit and forms of worldliness in order that our Reformed principles in these matters may be re-emphasized; insists that these warnings shall be given not only in the preaching, but also in our Catechism and Sunday School classes, in family-visitation, and in personal contact whenever occasion presents itself; and urges that these warnings shall be given also in our school-rooms.

Synod reminds consistories that in nominations for or appointments to positions of responsibility in our churches, careful attention should be paid to conduct in the matter of amusements; and suggests that also other bodies, such as Boards of Christian Schools, City Missions, etc., heed the same matter in their appointments.

Synod urges consistories to deal in the spirit of love, yet also, in view of the strong tide of worldliness which is threatening our churches very firmly with all cases of misdemeanor and offensive conduct in the matter of amusements; and, where repeated admonitions by the consistory are left unheeded, to apply discipline as a last resort.

Synod instructs consistories to inquire of those who ask to be examined previous to making profession of their faith and partaking of the Lord's Supper as to their stand and conduct in the matter of worldly amusements, and, if it appears that they are not minded to lead the life of

Christian separation and consecration, not to permit their public profession. (Acts 1928, Art. 96.)

Article 75.

The reconciliation of all such sins as are of their nature of a public character, or have become public because the admonition of the Church was despised, shall take place (upon sufficient evidence of repentance) in such a manner as the Consistory shall deem conducive to the edification of each Church. Whether in particular cases this shall take place in public, shall, when there is a difference of opinion about it in the Consistory, be considered with the advice of two neighboring Churches or of the Classis.

In case of transgression of the Seventh Command before marriage, the form of confession is left to the discretion of the Consistory, provided the confession is made at least before the whole Consistory. The advisability of announcement of the names to the congregation shall be determined by the consistory in each case. (Acts 1908, Art. 54, ix. Acts 1930, p. 47.)

Article 76.

Such as obstinately reject the admonition of the Consistory, and likewise those who have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, shall be suspended from the Lord's Supper. And if he, having been suspended, after repeated admoni-

tions, shows no signs of repentance, the Consistory shall at last proceed to the extreme remedy, namely, excommunication, agreeably to the form adopted for that purpose according to the Word of God. But no one shall be excommunicated except with consent of the Classis.

Article 77.

After the suspension from the Lord's Table, and subsequent admonitions, and before proceeding to excommunication, the obstinacy of the sinner shall be publicly made known to the congregation, the offense explained, together with the care bestowed upon him, in reproof, suspension from the Lord's Supper, and repeated admonition, and the congregation shall be exhorted to speak to him and to pray for him. There shall be three such admonitions. In the first the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned that he be somewhat spared. In the second, with the consent of the Classis, his name shall be mentioned. In the third the congregation shall be informed that (unless he repent) he will be excluded from the fellowship of the Church, so that his excommunication, in case he remains obstinate, may take place with the tacit approbation of the Church. The interval between the admonitions shall be left to the discretion of the Consistory.

Article 78.

Whenever anyone who has been excommunicated desires to become reconciled to the Church in the way of penitence, it shall be announced to the Congregation, either before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, or at some other opportune time, in order that (in as far as no one can mention anything against him to the contrary) he may with profession of his conversion be publicly reinstated, according to the Form for that purpose.

Article 79.

When Ministers of the Divine Word, Elders or Deacons, have committed any public, gross sin, which is a disgrace to the Church, or worthy of punishment by the Authorities, the Elders and Deacons shall immediately by preceding sentence of the Consistory thereof and of the nearest Church, be suspended or expelled from their office, but the Ministers shall only be suspended. Whether these shall be entirely deposed from office, shall be subject to the judgment of the Classis, with the advice of the Delegates of the (Particular) Synod mentioned in Article 11.

Synod decides that the rule is that the re-instatement of deposed Ministers of the Word must be effected by the same Classis that deposed him. (Acts 1918, Art. 52, i.)

Article 80.

Furthermore among the gross sins, which are worthy of being punished with suspension or deposition from office, these are the principal ones; false doctrine or heresy, public schism, public blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury, adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, filthy lucre; in short, all sins and gross offenses, as render the perpetrators infamous before the world, and which in any private member of the Church would be considered worthy of excommunication.

Article 81.

The Ministers of the Word, Elders and Deacons, shall before the celebration of the Lord's Supper exercise Christian censure among themselves and in a friendly spirit admonish one another with regard to the discharge of their office.

Article 82.

To those who remove from the Congregation a letter or testimony concerning their profession and conduct shall be given by the Consistory, signed by two; or in the case of letters, which are given under the seal of the Church, signed by one.

Members or baptized members moving to other localities where no Christian Reformed Church is found, may retain their membership in the church which they leave, if they notify the Consistory to this effect. If they neglect to do this, their membership lapses in one year and six weeks. The membership of such members as are located where no Christian Reformed Church is found must be transferred to the nearest church. If this is omitted, their membership lapses after one year and six weeks. (Acts 1910, Art. 67, x.)

No letter of dismissal will be granted to those that request it because of grievances against other members of the congregation; these disagreements must first be removed in the congregation where membership is held, according to the rule given by the Lord. (Acts 1898, Art. 89, 6.)

Letters with remarks must be accepted, then to further pursue the proper ecclesiastical course. (G. R., Art. 64.)

According to Article 82 of the Church Order, letters of dismissal must be given those removing from the congregation. And they cannot be received as members of another congregation until they there present their letter, while in case they do not present their letter their membership will ultimately lapse. (Acts 1914, Art. 63, 2.)

Letters from Other Churches.

- a) Letters from the Foreign Churches mentioned under Article 85 of the Church Order, are recognized as fully valid, so that persons presenting such letters are without further question admitted as members.

- b) Persons coming from non-affiliated Churches, but nevertheless considered as Churches that adhere to the Reformed Confession, shall, if proven to be sound in faith and life, be received by letter, provided they promise to submit to the supervision and discipline of the Consistory. This rule also applies to members of the present Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands. (Acts 1910, Art. 67, v.)

Persons coming from the Ned. Herv. Kerk shall not be accepted merely by letter, but in their case Article 61 shall apply.

Letters of baptism of the Ned. Herv. Kerk are received on condition that the Consistories receiving them have the assurance that the parties concerned were baptized in the Name of the Triune God. (Acts 1902, Art. 128, 66.)

Article 83.

Furthermore, to the poor, removing for sufficient reasons, so much money for traveling shall be given by the Deacons, as they deem adequate. The Consistory and the Deacons shall, however, see to it that they be not too much inclined to relieve their Churches of the poor, with whom they would without necessity burden other Churches.

Article 84.

No Church shall in any way lord it over other Churches, no Minister over other Ministers, no Elder or Deacon over other Elders or Deacons.

Article 85.

Churches whose usages differ from ours merely in non-essentials shall not be rejected.

Correspondence with Foreign Churches is entrusted to the Synodical Committee, which is to report concerning it to Synod annually. (G. R., Art. 5.)

- a) Correspondence with affiliated Churches known to adhere to the Reformed Standards, must be sought and maintained more than has been the case heretofore.
- b) This correspondence, however, is not to consist only in an exchange of greetings and formal calls, but also:
- (1) In sending delegates to each other's major assemblies, that there they may have advisory vote;
 - (2) In taking mutual heed lest there be deviation from Reformed principle in doctrine, worship, or discipline;
 - (3) In mutual counsel what attitude to assume towards others;
 - (4) In serving each other with advice, especially in case of proposed revision of Confession and Liturgy. (Acts 1914, Art. 17, 7, c.)
- c) That such correspondence be maintained with:
- (1) The Reformed Churches of the Netherlands.
 - (2) The Old Reformed Churches of Bentheim and Ostfriesland.

- (3) The Reformed Churches of South Africa.
And in our own country with:
- (4) The Reformed Church in America.
- (5) The United Presbyterian Church.
- (6) Synod and General Synod, Reformed Presbyterian Church.
- (7) Associate Presbyterian Church.

While the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands have expressed their readiness on this basic sense to entertain correspondence with our Church on this basis, except sub. 3, the correspondence with the affiliated churches in our country has not yet progressed beyond the exchange of greetings and formal calls.

In the appointment of delegates to Synods of other Churches, it shall be taken into account as much as possible that by sending those who live in the vicinity, expenses can be saved.

Article 86.

These Articles, relating to the lawful order of the Church, have been so drafted and adopted by common consent, that they (if the profit of the Church demand otherwise) may and ought to be altered, augmented or diminished. However, no particular Congregation, Classis, (or Synod) shall be at liberty to do so, but they shall show all diligence in observing them, until it be otherwise ordained by the General Synod.

MINISTER'S CONSISTORIAL CREDENTIAL

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of declares by these presents that the Rev. in this Church, from.....19..... to.....19..... has ministered in the office of Minister of the Divine Word faithfully and diligently, adhering in doctrine and life to the Word of God, as interpreted by our Forms of Unity and the Church Order.

And considering that sufficient reasons have been adduced for the Consistory to acquiesce in his acceptance of the call of the church of....., we unhesitatingly recommend him to the Classis of.....and to the Church of....., with the prayer that the great King of the Church, who says to this one of His servants "go", and he goeth, and to that one "come", and he cometh, may make him there also a rich blessing.

Resolved to grant him this testimonial of dismissal at our meeting of.....19.....

The Consistory of the above named Church,

..... President
..... Clerk

Classis.....in which the congregation of..... belongs, approves the above credentials and transfers our beloved brother in the Ministry to the Classis of..... in whose midst our brother expects to serve the church of.....as pastor and minister.

On behalf of said Classis,

.....
.....

Done this.....day of.....19.....

The Classical Committee of the Classis of.....
having examined the above credentials, approves them
and herewith authorizes the counselor of the church of
..... to proceed to the installation.

The above named Classical Committee,
.....
.....

CLASSICAL CREDENTIALS

L. S.

To the Classis of.....
of the Christian Reformed Church,
to convene19.....,
at

The Consistory of.....Christian Re-
formed Church, at....., has appointed
the brethren

..... and elder

as delegates to represent said Church at the meeting of
the Classis above referred to. The alternate delegates
are: elder..... and

We hereby instruct and authorize them to take part in
all the deliberations and transactions of Classis regarding
all matters legally coming before the meeting and trans-
acted in agreement with the Word of God according to the
conception of it embodied in the doctrinal standards of the
Christian Reformed Church, as well as in harmony with
our Church Order.

Instructions:

By order of the Consistory,

..... President

..... Clerk

Done in Consistory.....19.....

CALL-LETTER

The Rev.....
.....
.....

**Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our Father and Jesus
Christ our Lord**

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church at
.....herewith has the honor and the pleasure to in-
form you, that from a previously made nomination of
..... you, Rev., have been chosen by
.....vote at a legal congregational meeting held on
the.....day of19..... to be their Minister of
the Word and of the Sacraments.

On behalf of said congregation we therefore extend
to you the call, and come to you with the urgent request:
"Come over and help us."

The labors that we expect of you—should it please God
to send you to us—are: Preaching twice on the Lord's
Day, attending to catechetical instruction, to family vis-
iting and calling on the sick, and furthermore of all things
pertaining to the work of a faithful and diligent servant
of the Lord, all these agreeably to the Word of God, as in-

terpreted by our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht, as amended by the rules of our Church.

Convinced that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and to encourage you in the discharge of your duties, and to free you from all worldly cares and avocations while you are dispensing spiritual blessings to us, we, the Elders and Deacons of the.....Chr. Ref. Church do promise and oblige ourselves to pay you the sum of.....dollars, in.....payments, yearly, and every year as long as you continue the Minister of this Church, together with free use of parsonage, the free use of a telephone

Moreover, we promise free transportation of yourself, your family and your belongings (under provisions as stipulated in Articles 5, 10, and 11 of our Church Order.)

Now, dear Reverend Brother, may the King of His Church so impress this call upon your heart and give you light, that you may arrive at a decision that is pleasing to Him, and if possible for us mutually gratifying.

Done in Consistory, this.....day of.....19....., and subscribed with our names.

The Consistory of the Chr. Ref. Church of.....

Deacons

Elders

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....Counselor.

CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSION

The Consistory of the.....Christian Reformed Church of.....

Hereby Certifies that.....
(are) (is a) baptized member..... of the above named congregation and consequently subject to the instruction and discipline of the Chr. Ref. Church in America, and we therefore request the Consistory of the..... Church, at..... to take..... under their Christian direction and to continue to instruct..... in the doctrine of truth unto godliness.

Attending Divine Worship.....
Attending Catechism.....
General Remarks.....

..... President
..... Clerk

Done in Consistory.....

(To be returned at the earliest possible moment)

The Certificate of.....
from the..... Christian Reformed Church, of.....
..... has been duly received and accepted.

Dated..... 19.....
..... President
..... Clerk

Notice—The above mentioned shall be considered still a member of the..... Christian Reformed Church until this receipt is returned properly signed.

The Certificate of.....
Sent to.....

Date sent.....
Receipt Returned.....

- a) The election of Classical Mission Committees shall take place at the spring meeting of the Classes, during synodical years.
- b) The persons proposed to Synod as members of the General Committee shall be chosen from such members of the Classical Mission Committee as were recently elected, for a term of four years.

Article 3.

The work of these Committees is to be:

- a) The regulation of the labor of the Home Missionaries in the service of the Classis.²
- b) Looking for new mission fields and reporting about them to Classis.
- c) The execution of what its Classis charged it to do.

Article 4.

Every Classis has for its own Mission work, a treasury of its own, and under its separate management.

GENERAL HOME MISSIONS COMMITTEE

Article 5.

The General Home Missions Committee shall be composed of those members of the respective classical mission committees, who were appointed for four years (compare Art. 2), and elected by

²⁾ For the status of Home Missionaries see Art. 111, XI, sub. c.

Synod, with the Director of Missions **ex officio** member and secretary.

That Synod may proceed to this election, every Classis shall propose one member of its classical Home Mission Committee to serve as **primarius**, and one as **secundus**.

At every Synod one-half of the number of these members shall retire, but the retiring ones may be proposed anew and re-elected.

For the appointment of these members it is to be borne in mind that permanence, as much as possible, is in the interests of the cause which the Committee is serving.

Article 6.

The work of the General Committee shall be:

- a) The regulation and direction of all Home Mission work outside of the respective classical territory.
- b) The supervision of the entire work of Home Missions, in order to assist efficiently in such a manner that this work be carried on harmoniously in the whole territory, that there be neither neglect nor overlapping, and to see to it that the synodical decisions be faithfully carried out by all the parties concerned.
- c) The administration of the **General Treasury**, judging about the applications for support, that may come in, and in synodical years, to serve the Synod with

advice regarding this, as well as preparing the budget to be laid before Synod.

- d) Laying a complete report before Synod.
- e) Executing what Synod charged it to do.

Article 7.

The General Committee shall meet in synodical years, for this purpose convened in time by the Director of Missions.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Article 8.

The members of the General Committee of the Michigan and Illinois Classes shall constitute an **Executive Committee** for the execution of the decisions of the General Committee and for the regulating of **ad interim** matters, as well as of such things as require speedy action. As much as possible, the Executive Committee is to obtain, by correspondence, the approval of the majority of the members of the General Committee for these decisions.

The Executive Committee is to send a complete report of all of its transactions to all the members of the General Committee.

Article 9.

Every member of the General Committee shall keep his Classis and Classical Mission Committee

posted on the transactions of the General Committee, and the General Committee shall lay a report of the same before the Synod.

Article 10.

Expenses connected with the General Committee and the Executive Committee, are to be paid from the General Treasury.

THE DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

Article 11.

The Director of Missions shall prepare and keep up to date, complete statistics of the following particulars:

- a) What is done by every Classis in its territory.
- b) How much subsidy churches in need of aid require, and how much they have received.
- c) How many Home Missionaries are needed in every Classis to perform its task.
- d) Which salaries are received by these Home Missionaries in different localities.
- e) How much support each Classis has received from the General Treasury.

Article 12.

The data for these statistics shall be furnished annually and in time, to the Director of Missions,

by the members of the General Committee, each one for his own Classis.

On the basis of these data the General Committee, before every Synod, must prepare a **Home Mission Budget**, to be submitted to its judgment and approbation.

Article 13.

Through the Director of Missions, the General Committee is to establish and maintain contact with the churches and Emigration Bureaux in the Netherlands, in regard to those who emigrate from the Netherlands to the United States and Canada.

THE GENERAL TREASURY

Article 14.

Besides the Classical Treasuries for Home Missions, there shall be a **General Treasury**, of which the General Committee shall have charge. This Treasury shall serve for financing all the work of Home Missions that pertains to the Church in common. It is also to serve for the support of such Classes as are needing financial assistance. The amount of aid to be extended, is to be submitted to the judgment and decision of Synod.

For this General Treasury offerings are to be taken in all our congregations, at least once a year.

Article 15.

Applications for support from this Treasury are to be sent annually, in due time, by the Classes, to the Secretary of the General Committee.

Article 16.

The General Committee is charged in the course of a year, to diminish the support promised the respective Classes, if through removal of one or more missionaries, or ministers of subsidized churches, the expenditures of these Classes decrease.

Article 17.

The promised support, unless there be no need of it, ought to be paid out in full. The general Committee therefore has the right, and is charged with the duty, to do all within its power to render full payment possible, as for instance, by means of an appeal for a special offering.

Article 18.

The General Committee appoints a **treasurer**, who shall receive all moneys for the General Treasury, but is not to pay out any, except as directed by the General Committee.

Article 19.

The amount needed by the General Treasury shall be fixed by Synod, which at the same time shall indicate how much is looked for from each family.

During the years in which the Synod does not convene, the General Committee is authorized according to circumstances, to fix a budget.

RULES FOR THE SYNODICAL COMMITTEE**Article 1.**

The Synodical Committee of the Christian Reformed Church consists of three members, with the Stated Clerk as member ex officio and secretary.

Article 2.

Members of this Committee are chosen at each Synod from the ministers of the church by regular ballot for a term of two years. The term of the Stated Clerk is four years.

Article 3.

The Committee itself chooses from its number a President and a Treasurer.

Article 4.

This Committee is instructed to execute all matters recommended to it by definite instruction of Synod.

Article 5.

The Committee, through its Stated Clerk, maintains correspondence with other Churches, receives the missives addressed to the Christian

Reformed Church by other Churches, gives them general publicity where this is appropriate and answers them.

The Committee is also charged by Synod in case of general, crying sins, especially in case of Sabbath desecration, divorce and drunkenness, to agitate against these by petitions in the name of the whole Church.

Article 6.

In case any Classis should desire, the Committee is permitted, in weighty matters, to serve it with good counsel or to give advice, but never to obstruct any ecclesiastical assembly in its activities.

Article 7.

When a decision is taken by any Classis that should be given general publicity, or in which the co-operation of the churches is necessary and of which the execution can not well be postponed till the next Synod, the Synodical Committee may be requested to support such decision with its approval in case it considers this profitable.

Article 8.

The Committee shall give notice through "De Wachter" and "The Banner" of all weighty cor-

respondence or actions performed by the Committee that demand speedy publicity.

Article 9.

The Committee submits a written report at every Synodical gathering of all its activities performed since the last Synod.

Article 10.

The Committee shall be authorized to request the Synodical Treasurer to reimburse the members of the Committee for all necessary expenses upon proper receipt.

Article 11.

Every omission or transgression of the rules of this constitution renders the acts of the Committee with respect to the Church of none effect.

Article 12.

This constitution, drafted upon instruction of Synod of 1886, and accepted by that of 1890, remains in force until another Synod shall have amended it.

**PUBLIC DECLARATION OF AGREEMENT
WITH THE FORMS OF UNITY**

Of all the marks by which the True Church distinguishes itself from all human societies, the Confession of the Truth must be mentioned in the first place. The Savior therefore said, John 8:31: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed." And again: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven," Matthew 10:32. In obedience to the Lord and for the instruction of all, the Assembly of Elders, delegated by the congregations of the Christian Reformed Church, deem it proper that they publicly declare what the confession is of the Church here mentioned and of every one of its churches.

All the congregations of this Church believe all the Books of the Old and of the New Testaments to be the Word of God and confess as the true expression of their faith the Thirty-seven Articles of the Confession of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands, formulated by the Synod of 1618-'19, together with the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of the Dordrecht Synod against the Remonstrants (Arminians).

In conformity with the belief of all these congregations, we as members of their Synod, declare that from the heart we feel and believe, that all articles and expressions of Doctrine, contained in the three above named Confessions, jointly called the Three Forms of Unity, in all respects agree with the Word of God, whence we reject all doctrines repugnant thereto; that we desire to conform all our actions to them, agreeably to the accepted Church Order of Dordrecht 1618-'19, and desire to receive into our church communion everyone that agrees to our Confession.

May the King of the Church work this faith in the hearts of many and increase it, and those that have received a like precious faith with us show the grace shown them in fellowship to the glory of Him who prayed that all His own shall be one in Him.

ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

of the
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF.....

.....
We, the undersigned,.....
..... desiring to
become incorporated under the provisions of.....
.....do hereby.....
make, execute, and adopt the following Articles
of Association, to-wit:

First. The name assumed by this corporation,
and by which it shall be known in law, is.....
.....Christian Reformed Church of.....
.....

Second. The location of said church shall be in
....., County of.....
and State of.....

Third. The time for which said corporation
shall be created, shall be.....years.
.....

Fourth. The members of said church shall worship and labor together according to the discipline, rules and usages of the Christian Reformed Church as from time to time authorized and declared by the Synod of said Christian Reformed Church.

Fifth. We recognize, as the fundamental principles of our Church, in Doctrine and Government, the Bible as the infallible Word of God, and as founded thereon the Formulas of Unity of the Christian Reformed Church and the Church Order as revised by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church of 1914, and resolutions of General Synods before and after 1914 and not embodied in said Church Order. The said Formulas of Unity are: first, The Thirty-seven Articles of the Belgic Confession of Faith; second, The Heidelberg Catechism; third, The Five Articles against the Remonstrants.

Sixth. We irrevocably appropriate to the maintenance of the above mentioned Formulas of Unity and Church Order and Government forever such real and personal estate as this church now has or may hereafter acquire, and declare that to these objects alone it shall be applied. In case of any departure from the above established Standards of Doctrine and Government by any

portion of the church or congregation, such estate shall be held and enjoyed exclusively by those who adhere to said Standards and Government herein declared, and established as the basis of our church and congregation, and applied for the above named objects.

Seventh. Any person elected to the office of Elder or Deacon in said church, according to the Church Order (Constitution) and usages of the Christian Reformed Church, and the Pastor, if there be one, shall become and be a member of the Board of Trustees of said church, and the corporate functions of all offices shall cease on the vacation of the ecclesiastical office, but a vacancy in the office of Pastor shall in no way affect such Board of Trustees.

Eighth. Said Trustees may have a common seal and alter the same at pleasure, and shall take into possession and custody all the temporalities of the church, and shall make the rules and regulations for the management thereof, whether the same shall consist of real and personal estate, and whether the same have been given, granted, bequeathed or devised directly or indirectly to said church or to any person for its use.

Ninth. Said Trustees shall have the power and authority to bargain, sell, convey, mortgage,

lease or release any real estate belonging to said church or held by them as such Trustees, and to erect churches, parsonages, schoolhouses, and other buildings for the direct and legitimate use of said church, and to alter and repair the same, and to fix the salary of its minister or ministers (if, at any time, there be more than one) or anyone in its employ; **Provided**, That no such purchase, sale or conveyance, mortgage, lease or fixing of salaries shall be made unless the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of this church organization, of which said Trustees are officers, shall be first obtained at a meeting of such members of this church or congregation present and entitled to vote, duly and specially called for that purpose by notice given for two successive Sundays at the usual place of meeting next preceding such meeting; **Provided**, further, that no sale, mortgaging or conveyance shall be made of any gift, grant, or donation, conveyance, devise or bequest, which would be inconsistent with the express terms of plain intent of the grant, donation, gift, conveyance, devise, or bequest.

Tenth. The said Trustees may at any time hereafter, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Trustees, amend these Articles of Associa-

tion in any manner not inconsistent with the provisions of Articles Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth hereof; **Provided**, That before such amendments shall become operative, a vote in favor thereof at least two-thirds of the members of this church, present and entitled to vote, shall be obtained by said Trustees at a meeting of the members of this church, especially called for that purpose, and of which notice has first been given as is also provided for and required in Article Ninth hereof, and the requirements of the statutes of this State shall be fully complied with.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, We, the parties hereby associating for the purpose of giving legal effect to these Articles, hereunto sign our names and places of residence, at the.....
of....., County of.....
and State of....., this.....
day of....., A. D. 19.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

.....
.....

STATE OF.....

County of.....

On this.....day of.....A. D.,
19....., before us, a Notary Public in and for said
County, personally appeared

.....
.....
.....

known to me to be the same persons mentioned
herein, and who executed the foregoing instru-
ment, and severally acknowledged that they exe-
cuted the same freely and for the intents and pur-
poses therein mentioned.

.....
Notary Public for.....

My commission expires.....

We, the undersigned, the President and Secre-
tary of the Board of Trustees of the.....
do hereby certify that a meeting of said church
and congregation held on the.....

at the regular and usual place of meeting the fore-
going Articles of Association were adopted as the
Articles of Association of said.....
and that the said adoption of said Articles of As-
sociation were sanctioned and approved by a ma-
jority of the members of said church, present and
entitled to vote, being.....members
of the.....members present; that
public notice of said meeting was duly given for
two successive Sundays next preceding the date
of such meeting.

In testimony whereof we have hereunto sub-
scribed our names this.....day of

.....A. D. 19.....

.....President.

.....Secretary.

Approved by Synod of 1926, Article 57, Page
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by Abraham Kuyper

Translated from the Dutch by Professor Henry Zylstra.

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7. Speak!
8. He Alone Receives Us
9. Our Bond with the Believers
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