

**1980**  

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**AGENDA**  

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**FOR**  

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**SYNOD**



**1980**  

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**SYNOD**  

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**JUNE 10 TO 20, 1980**

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

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

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## Preface

The special prayer service for the Synod of 1980 will be held Monday evening, June 9, 1980, at 8:00 PM in the Brookside Christian Reformed Church, 3600 Kalamazoo Avenue S.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. The pastor of this congregation, the Rev. Dale W. Vander Veen, will be in charge of the prayer service.

The synod will begin its sessions Tuesday morning, June 10, at 9:00 PM in the Fine Arts Center on the Knollcrest Campus of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The pastor of the convening church will serve as president pro-tem until the Synod of 1980 is duly constituted and its four officers have been elected.

Our congregations are also requested to remember the synodical assembly in intercessory prayers on Sunday, June 8. Let us together pray that God may bless our denomination as we engage in so many phases of the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us pray, too, that God may give his wisdom and guidance to the delegates who will be coming to the forthcoming synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.



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

### DELEGATES—PLEASE NOTE

1. Delegates who travel by automobile are reminded of the decision of synod, that traveling together will effect considerable savings to synod.
2. Plane travel is the most economical for delegates, since expenses for lodging and meals are not incurred.
3. Bring with you your copy of the Agenda for 1980 and all other supplementary materials that may be sent for you.

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## DELEGATES TO THE SYNOD OF 1980

Delegates		Alternates	
<b>Classis Alberta North</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	J. Boonstra G. Pols	Ministers . . . . .	M. Pool C. Tuininga
Elders . . . . .	J. Den Otter J. Winkelaar	Elders . . . . .	H. Debbink G. Abma
<b>Classis Alberta South</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	G. Hogeterp J. Tuininga	Ministers . . . . .	P. Meyer H. Wildeboer
Elders . . . . .	S. de Walle B. F. Konyenbelt	Elders . . . . .	S. Prins F. VanLaare
<b>Classis Atlantic Northeast</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	J. Admiraal R. Hartwell Jr.	Ministers . . . . .	J. Vander Laan R. Bouwkamp
Elders . . . . .	L. Visser G. Oppewall	Elders . . . . .	
<b>Classis British Columbia</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	W. L. Vander Beek H. G. Samplonius	Ministers . . . . .	H. Numan Jr. G. Vink
Elders . . . . .	T. Vander Wal P. Haagan	Elders . . . . .	D. De Rover P. Langbroek
<b>Classis Cadillac</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	J. Vanden Hoek R. Graves	Ministers . . . . .	R. Walter
Elders . . . . .	J. Monsma M. Morrison	Elders . . . . .	W. Boss H. DeGroot
<b>Classis California South</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	B. Huizenga C. Nyenhuis	Ministers . . . . .	W. Bierling L. Tanis
Elders . . . . .	N. Hogan J. De Young	Elders . . . . .	G. Boerfyn P. Boertje
<b>Classis Central California</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	H. Petroelje T. Wevers	Ministers . . . . .	V. Vanderzee E. Marlink
Elders . . . . .	S. Bouma G. Hollander	Elders . . . . .	G. Van Spronsen P. Van Dyken
<b>Classis Chatham</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	D. Los A. Vanden Ende	Ministers . . . . .	J. Kerssies A. Beukema
Elders . . . . .	A. Dieleman D. Veenstra	Elders . . . . .	B. Zylstra T. Kreeft
<b>Classis Chicago South</b>			
Ministers . . . . .	A. J. Schoonveld G. P. Hutt	Ministers . . . . .	R. M. Hartwell, Sr. D. A. Zylstra
Elders . . . . .	R. Chen R. Dekker	Elders . . . . .	M. Hooker C. Dykstra



**Classis Columbia**

Ministers . . . . . F. D. Rietema  
 J. E. Jeffers  
 Elders . . . . . B. S. VanDyken  
 W. B. Jansen

Ministers . . . . . O. J. Hogan  
 R. A. Bruxvoort  
 Elders . . . . . H. W. Pieksma  
 S. Kooima

**Classis Eastern Canada**

Ministers . . . . . A. Dreise  
 G. Ringnald  
 Elders . . . . . B. Schriver  
 G. Van Starckenburg

Ministers . . . . . M. D. Geleynse  
 J. LaGrand  
 Elders . . . . . J. Orkar  
 A. Ver Boon

**Classis Florida**

Ministers . . . . . R. Ritsema  
 G. Aupperlee  
 Elders . . . . . M. Zylstra  
 R. Zeeff

Ministers . . . . . J. Vander Plate  
 J. Van Ens  
 Elders . . . . . K. Schraeder  
 H. Vander Laan

**Classis Grand Rapids East**

Ministers . . . . . H. Admiraal  
 R. Van Harn  
 Elders . . . . . G. Harris  
 H. Veldkamp

Ministers . . . . . H. G. Entingh  
 V. Geurkink  
 Elders . . . . . W. De Boer  
 A. Verhoef

**Classis Grand Rapids North**

Ministers . . . . . H. G. Vanden Einde  
 R. J. Timmer  
 Elders . . . . . J. DeKorne  
 W. Pettes

Ministers . . . . . J. H. Bergsma  
 F. Gunnink  
 Elders . . . . . G. Kok  
 J. Daling

**Classis Grand Rapids South**

Ministers . . . . . J. D. Eppinga  
 L. Kerkstra  
 Elders . . . . . J. Nagel  
 J. W. Borst

Ministers . . . . . J. M. Hofman  
 A. H. Jongsmas  
 Elders . . . . . J. Morren  
 J. Van Laar

**Classis Grandville**

Ministers . . . . . H. N. Erffmeyer  
 R. Noorman  
 Elders . . . . . D. Veldman  
 A. Vander Wall

Ministers . . . . . S. Cammenga  
 P. Bakker  
 Elders . . . . . H. Bruxvoort  
 C. Los

**Classis Hackensack**

Ministers . . . . . A. Arkema  
 W. Ribbens  
 Elders . . . . . R. Godfrey  
 A. Dragt

Ministers . . . . . D. Boonstra  
 J. C. Rickers  
 Elders . . . . . H. Fortuin  
 C. Mast

**Classis Hamilton**

Ministers . . . . . J. Zantingh  
 J. W. Jongsma  
 Elders . . . . . J. W. Bakker  
 B. Dykstra

Ministers . . . . . J. J. Hoytema  
 H. Katerberg  
 Elders . . . . . F. VanderVelde  
 D. Wesseling

**Classis Holland**

Ministers . . . . . C. Bolt  
 J. Roeda  
 Elders . . . . . D. Branderhorst  
 R. Pothoven

Ministers . . . . . L. Hofman  
 H. Roelofs  
 Elders . . . . . S. Greydanus  
 M. Gritter

Ministers . . . . . W. Kosten  
 B. Averill  
 Elders . . . . . J. Chardon  
 B. Sikma

Ministers . . . . . C. Bishop  
 J. Cooper  
 Elders . . . . . C. Heida  
 S. Ryzebol

Ministers . . . . . G. P. Holwerda  
 H. Schutt  
 Elders . . . . . R. Wunderink  
 D. Mulder

Ministers . . . . . J. Stulp  
 F. R. De Boer  
 Elders . . . . . H. Johnson  
 A. Broekhuizen

Ministers . . . . . B. Becksvooort  
 D. Van Loo  
 Elders . . . . . K. Ludema  
 R. Kooistra

Ministers . . . . . G. W. Vanden Berg  
 P. Veltman  
 Elders . . . . . H. Mulder  
 A. Van Someren

Ministers . . . . . H. Baak  
 J. Riemersma  
 Elders . . . . . H. Mast  
 E. Walhof

Ministers . . . . . H. Bultje  
 T. Verseput  
 Elders . . . . . L. Van Rees  
 S. Sytsema

Ministers . . . . . M. De Young  
 A. De Vries  
 Elders . . . . . J. Eekhoff  
 A. Kneppe

Ministers . . . . . N. R. Rylaarsdam  
 J. Reiffer  
 Elders . . . . . E. Tiesman  
 R. J. Poel

**Classis Hudson**

Ministers . . . . . W. Kooienga  
 B. Blankers  
 Elders . . . . . J. Szto  
 H. Schoonejongen

**Classis Huron**

Ministers . . . . . A. Vanden Berg  
 H. Bout  
 Elders . . . . . H. Rumph  
 B. Haverkamp

**Classis Illiana**

Ministers . . . . . D. Janke  
 C. Bremer  
 Elders . . . . . J. M. Vander Aa  
 J. Van Til

**Classis Kalamazoo**

Ministers . . . . . C. De Ridder  
 S. Bultman  
 Elders . . . . . E. Joling  
 W. De Vries

**Classis Lake Erie**

Ministers . . . . . J. Boot  
 W. Verhoef  
 Elders . . . . . E. Knapper  
 J. Natelborg

**Classis Minnesota North**

Ministers . . . . . J. Nutma  
 C. W. Flietstra  
 Elders . . . . . L. Kiel

**Classis Minnesota South**

Ministers . . . . . P. Brouwer  
 R. Lammers  
 Elders . . . . . O. Van Essen  
 A. Attema

**Classis Muskegon**

Ministers . . . . . K. Wezeman  
 K. Vis  
 Elders . . . . .

**Classis Northcentral Iowa**

Ministers . . . . . A. Hannink  
 J. Elenbaas  
 Elders . . . . . B. Dodd  
 E. Christians

**Classis Northern Illinois**

Ministers . . . . . G. Vanderhill  
 E. Shuart  
 Elders . . . . . J. M. Post  
 H. L. Bielema

**Classis Orange City**

Ministers . . . . .	T. Vanden Heuvel	Ministers . . . . .	N. Kloosterman
	J. Ebbers		J. Sittema
Elders . . . . .	J. Jonker	Elders . . . . .	D. Schmidt
	R. Schaap		J. Scholten

**Classis Pacific Northwest**

Ministers . . . . .	A. Cammenga	Ministers . . . . .	N. Vogelzang
	R. Vermeer		P. Holwerda
Elders . . . . .	H. Vander Pol	Elders . . . . .	J. Van Aniel
	R. Bengelink		M. Vander Pol

**Classis Pella**

Ministers . . . . .	D. Draayer	Ministers . . . . .	W. A. Stroo
	I. W. Meuzelaar		D. G. Zandstra
Elders . . . . .	W. W. Dieleman	Elders . . . . .	H. I. Slings
	G. Rozenboom		L. D. Van Wyk

**Classis Quinte**

Ministers . . . . .	H. Mennega	Ministers . . . . .	H. Salomons
	J. Kuipers		G. Corvers
Elders . . . . .	J. Feenstra	Elders . . . . .	G. Zwart
	R. Pypker		G. Hartemink

**Classis Rocky Mountain**

Ministers . . . . .	A. W. Heersink	Ministers . . . . .	A. J. Veltkamp
	T. Dykman		G. R. Erffmeyer
Elders . . . . .	R. Buus	Elders . . . . .	J. T. Vander Meulen
	E. Anema		T. Van Eerden

**Classis Sioux Center**

Ministers . . . . .	C. W. Niewenhuis	Ministers . . . . .	D. L. Smit
	E. J. Knott		J. D. Van Regenmorter
Elders . . . . .	M. D. Van Soelen	Elders . . . . .	F. H. Breukelman
	J. B. Boogerd		L. Vanden Bos

**Classis Toronto**

Ministers . . . . .	H. J. Bierman	Ministers . . . . .	L. M. Tamminga
	C. Tuyl		P. Nicolai
Elders . . . . .	K. Knoops	Elders . . . . .	K. Schenk
	A. Buisman		J. Feddema

**Classis Wisconsin**

Ministers . . . . .	N. Haan	Ministers . . . . .	D. Kamper
	G. Heyboer		L. Howerzyl
Elders . . . . .	E. Gabrielse	Elders . . . . .	F. Oosterhouse
	R. VanderWeele		A. Lensink

**Classis Zeeland**

Ministers . . . . .	B. Byma	Ministers . . . . .	H. Vanden Heuvel
	H. Vanderwell		R. Meyer
Elders . . . . .	H. Mulder	Elders . . . . .	E. Nagelkirk
	R. Vander Laan		P. Osterbaan

# REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

## REPORT 1

### I. THE BACK TO GOD HOUR

*Worlds Beyond* by David De Groot catches something of the spirit that gripped us when at the end of the year 1979 we were able to celebrate forty years of The Back to God Hour ministry. This book records the seemingly irresistible force that continued to thrust this broadcast ministry further and further out into our world. The story involves thousands of people—among the more important elements of this book are the long lists of those who have participated in this broadcast and of those who do so right now. Surely this broadcast ministry could never have grown as it did if it were not for a shining vision which many shared. And none of it would have happened at all except for the great work of God. Whatever vision men had, whatever skills and talent and persistence, all were his gifts.

During 1979 the production of our broadcast ministry swelled to new levels and a calculation of what was done yields the hard-to-comprehend information that approximately sixty-five thousand programs were released during this twelve-month period. When we calculate the length of the programs involved, we learn that if all the programs were played consecutively, it would take two years, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day, before the entire year's broadcasts would be heard. This is an enormous output. And a striking characteristic of this production is that it was accomplished with relative ease. To be sure, it took a great deal of work among those who write scripts and speak and produce the programs, and it took a great deal of money, but when one thinks of how far-reaching this outreach has been, the return on the investment of dollars and human resources has been very great. Such is the nature of electronic communication, and thus the opportunity the church now has to use such tools must be viewed as exceptionally significant.

Our sense of celebration, though, was not simply a response to a large and impressive broadcast venture, but on the deepest level our jubilation grew from the conviction that the work performed has not been in vain. We may believe that this ministry, which has now grown to include eight major languages and which can be heard in virtually every part of the world, is a ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, and its accomplishments must be described in terms of what Jesus is pleased to do with the preaching of his Word.

We stress this especially at this time when we are all troubled by the presence in the world of the so-called electronic church. The electronic church is not an altogether healthy development: it is a church without walls, without fellowship, without discipline, without obligations, and,

one fears, in some cases, without the authentic gospel. In general, the electronic church has expressed itself most strikingly in connection with television, but radio has been involved as well, and many of the disturbing characteristics that have accrued to television religion have corrupted radio religion too.

It is our conviction that the usefulness of The Back to God Hour ministries is directly related to the fact that The Back to God Hour organization and the church that stands with it are committed to a view of preaching that insures the importance of the many programs that are released. Our commitment to preaching demands that the direction our work takes be controlled by the contents of the Scriptures—not first of all by the latest development in broadcast gimmickry, nor even by a sophisticated analysis of what the audience wants. To be sure, we feel enormous obligations to be all things to all men in order that we may win some (I Cor. 9:22), but with this we believe that our primary responsibility is to ask continuously what the Scriptures say, so that we can determine from them the message that must be proclaimed.

Thus we are not intimidated by the excesses and deformations that are found in much media religion today. (We are reminded that if one wants to view critically any element of the religious scene nowadays, it is possible to receive a negative impression.) And we are greatly encouraged by the Bible's own description of the singular effectiveness of the preached Word and of the way God has ordained to employ preaching to accomplish his purposes.

It is not necessary nor appropriate for us within this report to enter deeply into the biblical data which highlights the importance of preaching, but we wish to inform the church that such material is often the subject of discussions among those who represent you in this work, and we encourage one another with frequent examination of the Bible, learning from it the strategies we must employ. For within the Bible we find not only the message we proclaim, but we discern information about the way the Christian message must be related to the several cultures we seek to penetrate. And it is this that we would like to highlight in our report to you this year; we would like to indicate how we believe the Bible wants us to react to the worlds we reach.

### *ENGLISH LANGUAGE BROADCASTS*

Our English language broadcasts reflect an understanding that the English-speaking world is diverse and complex. This means that we feel compelled to develop several kinds of programs, with most of them geared to the circumstances within North America, and with one developed especially for Third World nations that use English.

So far as North America is concerned, our main programming effort is the regular Back to God Hour broadcast. In the preparation of this program we realize that our nation (and we may speak of "our nation" from both an American and a Canadian perspective) has been deeply influenced by several forms of Christianity as well as by the cults. There is, therefore, a polemic element in The Back to God Hour material, and the polemic aspect is primarily oriented to views of the Bible that dilute its

trustworthiness and authority, and to views that tend to fragment it—as dispensationalism does.

In addition to the polemic dimension of this ministry there is also an aggressive opposition to the increasingly hostile world view which has yielded such degenerations of human life as abortion on demand. This problem and the problems of secularization of law and continuing lack of justice with respect to Christian education are matters with which the North American release of *The Back to God Hour* regularly deals.

It is our conviction that the covenantal hermeneutics that distinguishes the Reformed response to Scripture is especially helpful in preparation of materials designed to take issue with the massive deformations that mar our present age; and the Reformed world-and-life view is a strong antidote to the secular world-and-life view that is rampant. The emphasis upon the prophetic in preaching, which has lived among us for so long, is a strong encouragement to speak forthrightly and specifically about the problems that defile North American life.

And with this, there is always a call to conversion and salvation which brings men and women to faith. Within the course of each year, *The Back to God Hour* explores the work of Jesus Christ from several perspectives in order to make clear the way of salvation by faith alone, by grace alone.

The accomplishment of the goals that have been mentioned is achieved primarily through the regular *Back to God Hour* program, but these program offerings are supplemented by others which are geared to somewhat less ambitious ends. "Insight" is a four-and-a-half-minute daily program which is aired on nearly one hundred stations on a public service basis (programs are provided to the stations at no cost to them; they in turn provide free time for the programs). Low key, sometimes almost sounding secular, "Insight" has developed an appreciative audience. It consistently provides a viewpoint that contrasts with the often trivial views that dominate the airwaves. And we produce spot announcements for home mission stations that request special media packages which enable them to achieve greater visibility in the communities they serve. These spots were implemented in Boise, Idaho; Columbus, Missouri; and Houston, Texas.

The regular *Back to God Hour* broadcasts are also broadcast overseas, using missionary radio stations. Programs that are suitable only for North America, however, are not released overseas. But we also produce a special daily half-hour broadcast called "Radio Today," which is specifically designed to meet the need of in-depth Bible study of those who have not had the opportunity to study the Bible before. These programs are aired especially in East Africa and the Indian subcontinent, and are part of project Bonaire Plus. From a survey taken among listeners in Africa recently 92 of 395 responses designated "Radio Today" as the favorite broadcast. When responses come from Kenya, India, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, and from many other places like those, we rejoice.

It is important for the church to remember that this work is going on, for actually "Radio Today" is one of the primary production respon-

sibilities of the English language department. These programs cover a broad spectrum of Christian teaching within a given week. Some of the programs deal with Reformed doctrine, adapted from the Heidelberg Catechism, for use overseas; others are free messages on various scriptural themes; and at least three each week are a commentary on a Bible book, such as the Gospel according to Mark. We carefully avoid political and social issues when we produce overseas broadcasts and concentrate exclusively on the Bible and the doctrines of the church. We know that these programs are being used not only by ordinary listeners, but also by church leaders who use the material to equip themselves to teach others.

In this connection, we must stress that most of our material is available to our listeners in printed form. This is true of the regular radio messages which are published in *The Radio Pulpit*, but it is also true of "Insight" and of the overseas "Radio Today" broadcasts. And the English language audience also receives *Today*.

The synod of last year (Acts of Synod, p. 56) has asked that this year's report "include an analysis of the domestic English broadcast which will include a statement of the philosophy and goals as well as statistical information on audience response."

What is the philosophy or mandate of The Back to God Hour? We see the work of The Back to God Hour as the contemporary expression of what was envisioned as the goal of this work at the very beginning, when it was still a shining hope in many hearts: namely, to bring the distinctive truths of the gospel in the light of our Reformed confession as they relate to the church, the home, the state, and society.

So far as statistical information is concerned, the following information covers the year 1979:

Letters received . . . . .	18,559
Estimate of weekly audience:	
The Back to God Hour . . . . .	1,150,000
"Insight" . . . . .	150,000
Total exposures in the course of one year . . . . .	67,600,000

These figures are very conservative and have been arrived at by taking into consideration the number of letters received and the various ratings for the stations.

In our office, we continuously monitor the response to our broadcast and compare the response with the dollar investment for every station; when stations fail to perform to acceptable standards, we drop them. It is important that our stations be examined continually, for stations that have done well for us may suddenly become disappointing, possibly because of a management change or because of some local situation. Of the total dollars available for our total broadcast operation, a specific and set amount has been earmarked for English domestic broadcasting, and consequently we are careful that the stations we use are of the highest quality.

As broadcasters, though, and certainly as a church, we are curious about the impact of The Back to God Hour broadcasts which cannot be described in quantitative terms. That is, what is the effect of all this on

the hearts of human beings? In answering this, we should begin by stating that we believe that the impact of this work is very great indeed. And when we use the word *believe* in this instance, we use it in its strictest sense. We believe the impact is great because the Scriptures are being proclaimed, and such activity is surrounded by rich promises of the Lord. We believe that the messages and programs are prepared with the help of the Holy Spirit of God, and we believe, as well, that the Holy Spirit accompanies them.

And there are many times when word-of-mouth contact or letters will confirm our faith in this biblical proclamation. There is evidence that organizations that wish to promote some of the great viewpoints which we have with respect to education and justice use The Back to God Hour material in their work. We know that hundreds of churches use our material regularly in their church program—*Today* is used in churches of many denominations. We receive word that church leaders use The Back to God Hour messages; we know that sometimes our material is used in the training of church personnel: by the Salvation Army, for example, and in some instances by Roman Catholic institutions.

But the most heartwarming news we ever receive is the news telling us that people have been changed by the broadcast. Some letters tell of the way those whose marriages were breaking up have been helped to reestablish their love; some tell of a turning away from pornography; some tell of a growing recognition that the Reformed faith is exceptionally intriguing and biblically faithful. And some tell of the way a broadcast can be used by God to turn a person from darkness to light. It is not our custom to include letters in our synodical report, but from time to time it is necessary to assure the church that God is using his broadcast Word mightily and to allow the church to share our great joy with us. You would be interested in what a man from Orlando, Florida, wrote last October:

I am writing to inform you that as a direct result of one of your programs I happened to hear recently, I feel I have made a personal decision concerning my relationship with Jesus Christ.

And a young man from Kingston, Ontario, wrote us last November:

I have been reluctant to write you, but I feel that I must thank you for the impact your last program has had on my life. By chance, it seems, I tuned in to The Back to God Hour on CKLC in Kingston. Your sermon held my attention and I left the dial at that station. Your message forced me to confront the ugly hollowness of my life and haunted me all day until I finally gave my life to Christ. Please pray for me—especially that I will find the courage to share my new joy with my friends who are still as lost as I was but one week ago.

Such response is encouraging, and it is frequent. We thank God for it. And it is especially gratifying when we learn that people who have been touched find their way into the church. In the nature of the case, we are especially encouraged when this involvement occurs with one of our own churches. This happened in the case of one Chicago listener who has lived a stormy life and who now has become a member of one of our churches.



"I never knew," he said, "that people could be so loving and interested." He discovered this after having been hospitalized and having received the warm attention of a Chicago-area church. Another family listened to the broadcast in Pennsylvania and, upon moving to the Chicago area, joined our Elmhurst church, wanting to belong to a church that was related to The Back to God Hour. We hear about such situations frequently, although the news often comes back to us in roundabout ways.

In this connection, the church should know that near the end of the year 1979, the groundwork was laid to bring into The Back to God Hour organization a minister who will have the full-time responsibility of exploiting the potential for follow-up that attends our English domestic broadcast. He will be especially interested in developing techniques and instruments that will enable us to have more frequent face-to-face and church-to-listener contact with those who respond to our work.

So far as our overseas releases of The Back to God Hour are concerned, it is difficult to assess statistically their full impact, for many of the people who respond to them respond directly to the stations which air the broadcasts and in some instances we do not receive information about their reactions. Moreover, many of the listeners are too poor to write us. Yet, we find that we generally receive an extra week's mail from overseas each month. In other words, if we receive between 250 and 500 letters in a week from our domestic listeners, we will receive another 300 to 400 letters a month from our foreign listeners. We consider this very encouraging.

As we conclude our report dealing with the English language ministry of The Back to God Hour, we return to the matter of the goal of this work, stated, as we have seen, in general back in 1938 with the words "to bring the distinctive truths of the Gospel in the light of the Reformed confession as they relate to the church, the home, the state, and society." Now it is possible to elaborate on this goal to a certain extent and to break it down into the following components:

1. The Back to God Hour seeks to call people to conversion. So far as North America is concerned we have an enormous responsibility to make clear to listeners that they can be saved only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In connection with this goal it is necessary to present the basic contents of the gospel repeatedly.
2. The Back to God Hour must also provide believers of varied maturity and varied circumstances with biblical material that will enable them to attain a fuller knowledge of Christ and the way of life described in the Bible. It is our conviction that the health and strength of true faith is directly related to a proper knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Therefore we are committed to exploring, in-depth, certain primary biblical doctrines and ideas. Each message contains many biblical references, and the printed form of the message always locates these references for the reader. This goal, so relevant to our North American ministry, the goal of *edification*, is also strongly expressed in our daily English broadcast overseas.

3. The Back to God Hour also has the responsibility of speaking critically and prophetically to our age. Surely this note is strong in the work of the Old Testament prophets, in Christ's own ministry, and in the ministries of the apostles. This goal operates especially in connection with the ministry to North America which is currently plagued by the impact of false ideas, especially as these are related to secular humanism; we can do this here because of the great freedom we have. Thus these broadcasts sometimes contain a note of dismay and announce that the judgment of Almighty God will fall if repentance does not occur.

It should be clear from the description of this work thus far that it is designed to accomplish those goals which are appropriate for any preaching ministry. It is our conviction that this broadcast ministry is a bona fide preaching ministry since it is rooted in the Bible and is the same kind of event as occurred when Jesus preached and when the apostles preached and when preaching became an integral element within the early church. Such is the outreach and impact of our English language ministry, which uses both radio and the printed page. We glorify God for the fruits he has given!

#### ARABIC LANGUAGE BROADCAST

Strange how Muslim words have slipped into our vocabulary over the last several months—*imam*, *the ayatollah*, *ruhollah*, and others. Carefully, we have mastered their pronunciation and, focusing our attention sharply, we have begun to sense their meanings. The Arab mind—this is different from ours. Jesus was grieved once by the hard heart of the Pharisees (Mark 3:5)—he was referring to the characteristic way the members of that sect filtered everything they saw and heard through the fine grid of their own prejudices and misinterpretations. There is a hard Arab heart too, an Arab mind, and the Rev. Bassam Madany works constantly to know it and to penetrate it with the preaching of the Word.

Given the impact Arab culture and viewpoints are having on our lives, there are within the missionary enterprise new attempts to understand the Arab mentality better and to devise effective ways of responding to it with the Christian gospel. There are those who call for large adjustments of the Christian message so that it will be both more understandable and more acceptable to the followers of Muhammad. There are others who suggest that in our approach to Muslims, we must make clear to them that we do not wish to violate the precious cultural accretions which have grown up over the centuries; we challenge them to accept the Bible and Jesus and then to discover how these can be molded into their ancient ways.

At The Back to God Hour we follow such developments with interest, but carry on our work with the general presupposition that the Bible brings judgment on the Quran and that the Christian views of God, of man, and of salvation are views which cannot be assimilated into what was first a Muslim world view; nor do we feel that the Muslim world view can be shaded and modified so that it is somewhat compatible with the Christian faith.

In his approach to the Muslims, Mr. Madany considers the Scriptures as the controlling, dominant element in all that he does; there is the conviction that the scriptural language and methodology do not admit of modification or adjustment; there is, for example, a classic quality about the way the Bible describes the atonement, and we may not suggest that it has a close equivalent in Muslim doctrine.

At the same time, Mr. Madany carefully responds to his thorough knowledge of the people he is reaching and he introduces into his work certain strategies and techniques that distinguish his work from the other ministries. For example, he carefully avoids ever speaking of the "Gospel of Mark" or the "Gospel of Matthew" because of the Muslim misunderstanding that there are actually four different Gospels found at the beginning of the New Testament. Somewhat laboriously he forces himself to say each time "The Gospel according to Matthew," or "The Gospel according to Mark" so that the impression is continuously enforced that there is but one gospel.

The preparation of each message for the Arab target involves careful attention to such details. Himself a Syrian, Mr. Madany understands the Arab mind, and he never rests from keeping informed about modern Arab culture by reading Arabic newspapers and journals and by occasionally visiting the Middle East personally. And we are grateful that the response to the program once again during the past year has indicated that millions have listened to these broadcasts with serious attention. The letter count for the year diminished compared with 1978 because of the necessity of adjustments in the Arabic language network, but still an average of well over seven hundred letters a month were received.

The programs were heard over Trans World Radio both in Monte Carlo and Cyprus, over Radio Cyprus itself, over ELWA, over FEBA in the Seychelles, and over WFR in Florida. During the year, our mailing address was in jeopardy in Khartoum, but again God protected, and the mailing arrangements that have functioned so well for twenty-one years have continued to serve us efficiently. The literature ministry has been broadened to include the availability of *The Teachings of the Holy Bible*, a new work in the Arabic language, related to the Heidelberg and Genevan catechisms. And the literature ministry, which is so widespread and so intensive, now reaches Arabic-speaking students in universities within North America. Beginning with a pilot project at Utah State, interest has spread to thirty universities, including M.I.T., Harvard, and Ohio State.

A very important development in connection with the Arabic ministry was the completion at the end of the year of arrangements with the Committee on Foreign Missions of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church which has allowed the Rev. Victor Atallah to work with the Rev. Mr. Madany. Mr. Atallah is a native of Egypt, and he knows the Arab mind. Beginning on January 1, Mr. Atallah began an arrangement whereby he works in our office approximately eight months of the year counseling with listeners by letter. The remaining months of the year he will spend in the Middle East, working with listeners where they live, with a view to bringing them together in fellowships of Christians—into churches. This

work is very dangerous and must be carried on with great wisdom. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church considers the Rev. Mr. Atallah's work part of their worldwide mission outreach and joins in financing this project; this provides our Arabic ministry with an exceptionally significant opportunity to give our listeners the fullest possible attention.

With each passing year, it seems there arises from the Middle East a strong and fearsome power which is directly related to the destiny of the world in which our church lives. Hostages, energy shortfalls, wildly soaring gold markets—all these we sense are rooted in the world Mr. Madany speaks to every single day. As we pray for his ministry and that of Mr. Atallah, we may do so with the conviction that of all the things that are occurring in the turbulent Middle East today, none are more decisive than the bold invasion of God's salvation-bringing Word.

### *SPANISH LANGUAGE MINISTRY*

The Rev. Juan Boonstra, a native and citizen of Argentina, carries on the Spanish language ministry of The Back to God Hour. He is acutely aware of the special characteristics of the vast field to which he brings the gospel. And surely the most significant of them all is the fact that Latin America did not feel the power of the Reformation. This isolation from Reformation influence has formed the culture of the lands reached by our Spanish language ministry, and most of all, it has determined the religious life of this part of the world. Specifically, this means that the Roman Catholicism that has put its roots down here was not purified by the counter-Reformation; among other things, the Roman Catholic accommodation motif so dominant in its mission theory has produced a form of Roman Catholicism which has been grafted onto religious events that are closely related to Indian religions and other primitive faiths.

Today the religious scene in Latin America has been complicated (and enriched from a certain point of view) by the fervent evangelistic activity of many North American organizations. Pentecostalism has been expanding with great rapidity throughout the continent. And with this, the cults have been extremely active.

The preaching of the Word of God to this complex cultural context drives Mr. Boonstra back to the Scripture, and he carefully selects materials which he feels will confront the Latin American people in terms of the specific religious and cultural elements of their lives. In some instances, what he does evokes the fierce opposition of the authorities. It is ironic that his own homeland considers his program too sharply put, too obviously biblical, and has declared it unwanted; the military government has made this decision. But today the program still comes into Argentina by means of broadcasts that originate elsewhere; and there are small stations within the country that are willing to play the broadcast at considerable risk to themselves.

It is not easy to prepare programs week after week which must address the complexities of South American life. It is for this reason that Mr. Boonstra works hard at staying familiar with the lands he speaks to. In 1979, he held a campaign in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, which provided an opportunity to establish in-depth contact with his listening audience.

Evaluations of this campaign support the conclusion that this approach is a valuable one. Three times, three thousand seats in a stadium were filled, other Protestant churches joined the effort, and hundreds of people requested personal Christian counseling. During March, 1980, a similar campaign is planned for Concepcion, Chile. Not only do such occasions provide our Spanish language minister with a chance to become better acquainted with our listeners—and they with him—but these occasions enable him to deepen his knowledge of the cultures he is reaching.

The Spanish language ministry is also very effective in North American cities where there are large numbers of Spanish-speaking people; and the work in Spain itself is being improved and upgraded. We have arranged that our messages can enter Spain from Monte Carlo, and recently local stations have also become available.

This ministry has been especially blessed not only by the many evidences of the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of thousands of listeners who write in each month, but also by churches established as a direct result of this mission. The congregation in Tegucigalpa, which became the nucleus congregation for the *Reforma '79* campaign held there, came into existence several years ago because of the broadcast. And the churches in Batey Tarana in the Dominican Republic are also singular evidences of special fruit on this ministry; they now number seven small indigenous congregations. The Spanish department of The Back to God Hour is distinguished by earnest work with an expanding mailing list and by continuous work with those who have responded and who still do so. At this writing, the department is anticipating the addition of Mr. Jack Roeda, a man with many years of experience in Latin America, who will supervise much of the administration that accompanies this work and who will give special attention to insuring that our contact with our listeners becomes increasingly fruitful.

### CHINESE LANGUAGE MINISTRY

When the Rev. Edward Van Baak and the Rev. Henry Bruinooge crouched near the floor of their room in Shanghai to avoid the fire of the occupying Communist troops, they were about to leave a China that was extremely hostile to the Christian faith they represented. They witnessed the end of the era of missions which, in the minds of the Chinese then, was associated with colonialism, with the imperialism of the West. The courageous missionaries who had labored with sacrifice and diligence up to that time had had to painstakingly overcome the animosities that accompanied these associations. Today such animosities seem to have largely disappeared, and the Chinese language programs of The Back to God Hour now find a new openness as they enter this vast land.

What has happened, it seems, is that the attitudes of the Communist regime against all "superstition" have cleared away the underbrush of religious misunderstanding and have given the average Chinese an inquiring spirit with respect to Christianity. This does not mean that the nation is waiting to turn to Christ, not at all; for the tenets of godless Communism have been well-learned. But it does mean that it is now

possible for that part of the Chinese population below fifty years of age to listen to Christian proclamation without prejudice.

With the improvement of relationships between China and the United States during 1979, we have observed a great advance in our Chinese language mission. Our Chinese broadcasts invade the fourteen coastal provinces that comprise 90 percent of the world's one billion Chinese. The Rev. Isaac Jen, himself a native of Shanghai, has seen his ministry touch hundreds of people in mainland China itself as letters have come in from that area. Last year it was possible for Mr. Jen and his wife Lily, who works closely with him in this ministry, to spend six weeks in mainland China, covering an itinerary which brought him into many of the country's major cities and enabled him to examine conditions in rural areas. As Chinese-speaking persons, he and his wife and son Cornelius were able to move through the land freely. His trip was a personal triumph for him and found him entering his homeland exactly thirty years to the day he had left it. This close contact with China has convinced him that strong remnants of Chinese Christian groups still remain in the country (see also the Rev. Edward Van Baak, "Open Churches in China," in the Banner, January 4, 1980), and has updated his knowledge of his homeland.

What he has learned is that mainland Chinese must be reached with the preaching of the Word of God in a very simple and direct way. That is, it is necessary to bring the unembellished message of the Scriptures without thinking too much about many of the doctrinal deviations which form the background of our work when we speak to North America. The mainland Chinese listen to the message and recognize it as part of the "superstition" which their government had for so long ridiculed and outlawed, but they are at the same time deeply impressed with the beauty of Christianity and intrigued by the plan of salvation. One young Chinese wrote that his only acquaintance with Christianity at all "had been certain passing references to it in a novel he had read, and he had had no idea that it was such a beautiful religion." He confessed that he was thoroughly unfamiliar with Jesus Christ, knew nothing about repentance, and wanted to learn more about these matters. What strikes the Rev. Mr. Jen and us is the openhearted and unprejudiced response to gospel proclamation here, entirely different from the responses of listeners in other lands who almost always react to what they hear about Jesus in terms of certain ideas they had about him before.

In response to the spiritual hunger in China itself, it was possible to strengthen our penetration into the country with the acquisition of TWR Guam, which has proven very effective. Stations in the Philippines, in Korea, in Hong Kong, and in Macao also enable us to reach Chinese people both in mainland China and near it. The Chinese department produces a number of different programs, each designed to attract the attention of the Chinese in a different way. The regular preaching program, "Good News for the Whole World," is both in Mandarin, the most widely used Chinese dialect today, and in Cantonese. We also have a program which is in both Chinese and English; this capitalizes on the great interest in learning English among the mainland Chinese today; it too is in both Mandarin and Cantonese.

Gradually we are developing a literature support program for this ministry. *Today* is now printed in Chinese, and other teaching materials are available. An unusual feature of our Chinese literature is that it can be used by both Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking people. Cantonese and Mandarin differ so far as pronunciation is concerned, but the written material is the same for both dialects; this means that Chinese people around the world can read our literature even though they might have difficulty understanding one another in ordinary conversation. Thus this literature is also very useful among Chinese refugees who have been adopted by some of our churches. An important publication for our Chinese ministry has been a book which contains sixty lessons on the Bible with a literal Chinese translation of the English alternating with each line of English type; this is especially useful for those Chinese-speaking people who want to learn English.

Another gratifying development connected with our Chinese work has been the establishment in Vancouver, British Columbia, of a Chinese-speaking church. This work began as Classis British Columbia felt obligated to provide services for those who responded to the Chinese language pastor there, the Rev. Stephen Jung, with Chinese-speaking refugees who have come to that region. Such events show how the preaching of the gospel bears fruit in many directions.

We are extremely grateful to God for bringing together a dedicated Chinese staff, both in Chicago and in Hong Kong, and we should feel ourselves exceptionally privileged as a denomination to be able to carry on this ministry at this very strategic time.

### FRENCH LANGUAGE MINISTRY

The address "2 rue de Leningrad" seems to contradict the message of a Christian world view which comes from The Back to God Hour Center located there. But at this Paris address, the Rev. Aaron Kayayan, working closely with his wife Carmen, conducts a French language ministry which is making an impact not only on the continent where French is spoken, but in Africa as well.

The preaching of the Word—this is the central task of all The Back to God Hour ministries; and *Perspectives Reformees*, the French ministry, does this in an environment that has been superheated with the latest philosophical ideas and with remnants of all the philosophical systems that have been developed in the past. Such a context demands the development of special sensitivities on the part of the preacher, and Mr. Kayayan is well equipped by education and temperament to carry on this work. His messages reflect awareness of current thought and exhibit skill in applying the message of the Scriptures to his situation.

There are elements of this ministry which make it especially difficult and elements as well that fill us with special rejoicing. So far as the difficulties are concerned, the absence of a sizable vigorous Reformed community in France today forces Mr. Kayayan to work in a measure of isolation, which is not healthy. Closely connected with this is the fact that it has thus far been impossible for us to secure adequate help for him in this work. For a time, during 1979, Mr. Al Van Dellen and his wife

Gwen, Reformed Bible College graduates, assisted the Rev. Mr. Kayayan, and it was our hope that this could continue. But the French government has adopted an increasingly negative stance with respect to Americans working in that country, and we could not secure a visa renewal for this couple. At present we are still praying that dedicated personnel, preferably French people, can be found to staff this ministry so that we can realize the full potential of this work.

On the plus side, the French language ministry was singularly blessed when in 1979, in addition to the many good responses from France itself, there was a special response from Zaire in Africa. This contact, initiated already in 1978, was brought to fullness when Mr. Kayayan and the Rev. William Van Tol of the Board of World Missions visited the many listeners in Zaire. As things stand now, it appears as if there is a sizable group of people there who want to pursue the Reformed faith—they are known as the Christian Reformed Church of Zaire. And Mr. Kayayan is working out arrangements for short-term follow-up among them, consisting of a plan to send a missionary minister of the Independent Reformed Church of France to be with them. Books have also been sent—among them copies of a new edition of Calvin's *Institutes*, sent to several select leaders of the new group. It is also hoped that a program for theological education can be worked out for specially gifted and Spirit-called young men of the Zaire church.

The project, in addition to being immensely encouraging for Mr. Kayayan, has provided us with an occasion to work closely with the Board of World Missions on a very important project.

The French language ministry is also supported by an ambitious literature program. We would like to commend this ministry to the churches for special prayers; it is our hope that God will soon raise up someone within France to work closely with Pastor Kayayan so that the full potential of this already extremely important ministry may be realized.

### INDONESIAN LANGUAGE MINISTRY

During six months of 1979, the Rev. Junus Atmarumeksa, along with his wife and two children, was able to spend time in the United States; Mr. Atmarumeksa attended Calvin Seminary for postgraduate work. This was a refreshing experience for him, one which enabled him to renew contacts within the Christian Reformed Church and to immerse himself in theological study. As he carries on his Indonesian ministry with its many responsibilities, Mr. Atmarumeksa is under continuous pressure. Resuming his work in August of last year, he could do so refreshed and reequipped to carry on.

Indonesia is the fifth largest country in the world and covers a territory which in size would extend from Seattle to the farthest eastern limits of the United States. This immense area is filled with thousands of islands, about three thousand of them inhabited. Radio is thus a very important tool for reaching these people. Our Indonesian broadcast enters the country from Manila, the Philippines; and it is distributed, as well, all over the land by sixty-two small, independent radio stations. During 1979 it was possible to strengthen our coverage of this great country with



the use of a new broadcast from the island of Guam. This appears to be very effective. And this addition to this network has become the special interest of the Reformed Church of Australia, which is assuming a financial responsibility.

The preaching of the Word to Indonesia is surrounded with its own peculiar problems and difficulties. The Indonesian government has established laws which could be detrimental to the work of our radio missionary in that country, but thus far they have not enforced them. And the religious mix within the land confronts a missionary with a complex mission problem. The country is predominantly Muslim; but there is a strong presence of Buddhism, too, and of other religions. Both the Rev. Mr. Atmarumeksa and his wife Arlyea are former Buddhists.

In such a situation, though, as elsewhere, the material found in the Bible constitutes the foundation of the messages presented. Mr. Atmarumeksa has several kinds of programs, some of them produced in cooperation with the Far East Broadcasting Company, an organization with which Mr. Atmarumeksa works closely. And in this country too there are often special indications of the saving way God uses the messages to touch people's hearts and to bring them to himself.

One convert from the Muslim faith, formerly a student in a Muslim seminary, became a Christian through one of our programs and today is studying to be a missionary. This is an example of the power of the living Word.

Mr. Atmarumeksa also encourages his listeners to use the Indonesian version of *Today*, a publication called *Wassiat*. At present more than thirteen thousand of these are sent out regularly. The readership is considerably larger than that.

### JAPANESE LANGUAGE MINISTRY

The book *Worlds Beyond* describes the Japanese programming carefully and in so doing shows how the Japanese ministry of The Back to God Hour responds to the special missionary challenge of Japan.

Two program formats air in Japan: "Window to Tomorrow," a fifteen-minute meditation, and "Morning Word," another meditation. Within those two formats, there are a variety of daily productions. A Japanese woman has a musical program one day a week. Another woman broadcasts a young people's program one day a week. A pastor's wife airs a program directed to housewives. Programming done by pastors fills the remaining four days of the week; on Sundays, a minister conducts a radio worship service; on another day a Bible-reading program; "The Life of Faith" discusses what it means to live one's life as a Christian; and "Box 190" answers questions listeners write in concerning Christianity (p. 66).

The programming for our Japanese ministry is complex and designed to attract the Japanese people in several different ways. This ministry, under the direction of the Rev. Henry Bruinooge of the Board of World Missions, has done an outstanding job in caring for listeners and giving them further instruction once they respond to the broadcast. In many in-

stances, listeners have found their way into churches; in some cases, they have attended special conferences, and baptisms have resulted from this.

Our work in Japan is hampered to a certain degree by the high cost of broadcasting caused by inflation and by the eroding dollar in relation to the Japanese yen. Lately, however, the currency problem has been moving in a more favorable direction so far as we are concerned. Nevertheless, Japan is one of the most expensive nations in the world in which to do mission work, and this has direct bearing on our radio work as well.

Near the end of 1979 arrangements were completed which allowed The Back to God Hour to extend an appointment to the Rev. Mr. Bruinooge to come to Palos Heights and become our first Minister of Broadcasting for Listener Contact. He has accepted this appointment, making it necessary for us to devise new ways of carrying on our Japanese work.

At present it appears as if it will be possible for us to have a Japanese minister, a minister of the Reformed Church of Japan, head up this work. It seems that the time has come for us to set up our Japanese radio work in the same way our French and Indonesian and Portuguese work is set up; in each of these cases we use a minister of the national church who reports directly to our office, though he works under the supervision of his own church as well. This will obviously change some of the elements of our Japanese work, but we feel that the changes will be good ones.

### *PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE BROADCAST*

One of the fascinating elements of the development of a radio ministry as extensive as our denomination's is that God raises up exactly the right people to do what must be done at a given time. Such a man is Dr. Wilson Castro Ferreira, a native of Brazil. One time Stated Clerk of his denomination; well-acquainted with the United States, having served a congregation in Newark, New Jersey; well-versed in the Scriptures as a professor of Old Testament at the Presbyterian Seminary in Campinas, Brazil; tireless and an able administrator, Dr. Ferreira became the person who established the Portuguese language ministry for us. Visionary pioneer work had been done by others, among them the Rev. William Muller, but it was left to Dr. Ferreira to put this work on a secure footing and create a good foundation for the future.

As the Word is preached to the Portuguese-speaking people of the large and vital country of Brazil, and also to Portuguese-speaking people in Africa, it is being carried on by a man who knows these cultures thoroughly. It is so important when one seeks to address a nation like Brazil that the person doing so is a son of the country.

Here again, as in our other ministries, the basic thrust is always the proclamation of the gospel. In many respects the remarks that have been made in this report regarding the culture of Latin America in connection with the Rev. Mr. Boonstra's work apply to Brazil as well. In this land, too, the full force of the Reformation had not come until just recently; it is this fact that conditions the determination of message content. With this, though, Brazil is characterized by all of the tensions that accompany a rapidly developing industrial nation, and a nation that is presently

engaged in exploration and discovery as it penetrates more deeply into the unknown jungles that make up so much of its land area. With all this, Brazil is a land that is luxurious and sensuous. Dr. Ferreira must keep all these elements in mind as he ministers to this country, a country which is in many respects the Japan of this hemisphere.

With all of his talents and ambition, we have had to recognize that the Rev. Mr. Ferreira is nearing retirement age—he hopes to retire in 1980. We have been very grateful that the Rev. Celsino Gama, formerly a student of Dr. Ferreira, is now completing his work in a master's program at Calvin Seminary and will be available for this work. It is our hope that he will be able to become directly involved near the end of the summer.

Sometimes, when the missionary interest of John Calvin is discussed, we are reminded that he became interested in a missionary venture to Brazil during his lifetime. That did not turn out to be effective. But we may see the radio work that is being done there now, as well as all the other missions carried on by those of the Reformed persuasion, as a fulfillment of Calvin's vision. There is no question that this exciting country is desperately in need of the message we have been equipped to provide.

### *RUSSIAN LANGUAGE MINISTRY*

As a concluding note to this report, it is a pleasure to announce that near the end of 1979, arrangements were made to begin our first Russian language broadcasts; the first of these are being prepared for airing. We are not prepared to evaluate this venture as yet, for this is still in the experimental stage. There are several things about this broadcast that are different from what we do in other language programs.

The program is being prepared by others who use The Back to God Hour English broadcasts as the basis of their work. We are using the wide range of English programs and are selecting only programs that would reasonably be expected to benefit the citizens of Russia, judged so by people who know that country. The programs are being prepared by Reach International, Inc., an organization that specializes in this activity and that works with our material in a very sensitive way.

Whether or not this approach to program production is valuable and whether or not this program will be useful on the long term will have to be evaluated. We will keep the churches informed about this matter.

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As we conclude this survey of the ministries of The Back to God Hour, we do so with a profound sense of humility. Those of us who are part of this work on a day-by-day basis consider ourselves unworthy to be involved in work so far-reaching and important. In all candor, it is impossible for us to take in the full sweep of this grand mission; only occasionally are we sufficiently moved by letters and reports telling of lives changed and of people growing in the faith. Some of the letters are so pathetic, others are so victorious, that they leave us shaken. But mostly, we cannot pause to react too lengthily to what we read and hear—there

is always more to be done, another program to be recorded, another shipment of tapes to be sent out. Yet we are working hard to give those who ask for help what they ask for, and we are continually trying to upgrade our ability to do this. It is felt that the addition to our staff of a Broadcast Minister for Listener Contact will be a definite aid. Even so, we do not expect that we will be able to do the full job.

And while this is frustrating, it is also part of the nature of this work—it is a work that is multiplied and multiplied and multiplied so that there is really no chance to keep up with everything that it accomplishes. This is the nature of electronic communication: it gives the church exceptional leverage, and relatively small amounts of work and investment yield enormous results. And basically, our conviction that this work is effective is only partially related to our conviction that the tools we are using are so efficient. More fundamentally, we feel that this work is as great and as important as it is because it is part of what Jesus had in mind when he said that the day would come when his followers would do even greater works than he had done (John 14:12).

It is not our intention to preach sermons to the church, yet we may at least indicate how we see our work in relation to Scripture. And it is striking, isn't it, that Jesus did suggest just before he was crucified that the day would come when his followers would do a very great work. When one examines the New Testament, it seems fairly clear that this great work was the expansion of the church to include all races and peoples, the building of the new temple for the Spirit, which would include all kinds of people (Eph. 2:19-22). We live in the time of the revelation of the great mystery that was hidden for ages: "that is, how the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

We view the creation of the electronic media as a special provision of God whereby the great outthrust to the Gentiles could be realized and the great ingathering of the Gentiles could be accomplished. And when we think of the astonishing broadcasting of the Word of God that is being accomplished through our diligent use of the tools at our disposal, we are confident that God is using this ministry gloriously.

We now commend this ministry to your prayers. Please pray for us who are involved. There are many of us who work in Palos Heights, and there are those in our offices overseas: in Paris, in Campinas, in Tokyo, in Jakarta, in Hong Kong, and in Madrid. Pray that we will be kept from accident as we travel. Pray that we may be given clear heads as we do our work; mostly, pray that we will be kept close to our Savior and to his glorious Word.

And let us all join together in prayer for the multitudes who are touched by these ministries. Occasionally try to imagine them as we do. So many people. So many needs. So many places. Pray with us that they will be prepared for the eternal home. Pray with us that the day may come soon when the last of God's elect children will be gathered in and Jesus will come back.

After all, that's what we are working for. It is, isn't it? Come quickly, Lord Jesus.

*MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION*

1. The committee request that the president, the Reverend J. Eppinga, and Dr. J. Nederhood be given the privilege of the floor when The Back to God Hour matters are discussed.

2. The committee requests that Dr. J. Nederhood be given permission to address synod on behalf of The Back to God Hour.

3. The committee requests that synod approve the Indonesian Broadcast for a period of four years (through June, 1984).

4. The committee requests that synod approve the Japanese Broadcast for a period of three years (through June, 1983).

5. Nominations:

Chicagoland Area:	Mr. Wayne Vriesman*
	Mr. William Van Staalduinen
Midwest Area:	Mr. Stanley Vermeer*
	Mr. Frank Gritters
Western Canada:	Rev. Jack Hielema
	Rev. David Tigchelaar

\*Denotes incumbent

6. The committee requests that the proposed budget for 1981 be approved and the quota of \$32.50 be adopted.

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

The Back to God Hour Committee  
Joel Nederhood, Director

## II. CRC-TV

Though The Back to God Hour has been working with television off and on since the year 1956 when Dr. Peter Eldersveld appeared in a series of thirteen programs, day-by-day, "hands-on" work with television production has occurred only since January, 1977. In February, 1977, The Back to God Hour Committee established CRC-TV as a division of The Back to God Hour operations, and that year the first regular, substantial funding was available for this work.

The Synod of 1977 received an in-depth report dealing with television called "Missionary Television"; this report included a survey of the function of television within North American society, expressed certain concerns about the church's use of this medium, and provided tentative projections for the denomination. In the following years, 1978 and 1979, The Back to God Hour has submitted progress reports to synod concerning the work of CRC-TV. Now there is a need felt to provide a more detailed description of our television activities, accompanied by an assessment of the current situation, along with an indication of the direction in which CRC-TV is presently moving.

So far as this report is concerned, the point of departure is the material presented to synod in 1977. That report developed the concept of "missionary television," and this concept remains central to the work CRC-TV is now doing and expects to continue. In connection with this concept, the report of 1977 stated that it is our intention to produce materials that will be useful in achieving a missionary goal.

The report expanded on this idea by saying:

When we highlight the concept *missionary television*, we also wish to express that our television work participates in the essential mystery that necessarily accompanies the church's mission. Among the elements of this mystery is the power of the Word of Scripture itself. It is our conviction that it is communication of the Scripture alone which can function as a means of grace. We therefore view our programs as vehicles that can move the message of the Scripture from the church out into the world where it can be effective and powerful. Moreover, we are also fully aware that the effectiveness of the church's mission is entirely dependent upon the work of the Holy Spirit; though human efforts must sometimes approach the heroic in the work of mission, it is God alone who brings the increase. The unspiritual man is not able to receive the things of the Spirit of God (I Cor. 2:14).  
(Acts of Synod 1977, p. 168)

The 1977 report continues to function as the base for this present report; the data it contained which dealt with the role of television in North American culture continues to be useful. An examination of current literature on this subject reveals that the material cited in the 1977 report is still pertinent and is still referred to. Though there are intriguing new studies which might profitably be examined, they do not provide new material of sufficient weight to justify analysis now. The 1977 study along with our general recognition of the pervasive impact of television

in our culture provides us with a useful background for this present continuation of the discussion of our missionary television responsibilities.

It is probably worthwhile to make a somewhat sociological observation here at the beginning of this report. And that is, we are aware that we submit this present report to synod in an atmosphere somewhat different from that prevailing among us in 1977 regarding our use of television. At that time one could sense a high degree of expectation and enthusiasm within the church regarding our entrance into television; there was a feeling that at last we would be able to make our mark in television as we had in radio. And there was a feeling that we would soon be on television regularly. In the nature of the case, the early expectations have been replaced by a realistic understanding of possibilities based on actual experience.

Along with insights gained through actual experience, our feelings about religious television have been affected by the growing prominence of the so-called electronic church. Evaluation of our television ministry could well tend to be colored by the generally negative evaluation of television religion even though our work, ecclesiastically controlled and determined as it is, cannot be considered part of the "electronic church" scene. Moreover, now that we have carried out several ventures in television and have the beginnings of a regular presence in this medium by means of "Faith 20," a body of thought concerning this subject has grown among us; this did not exist prior to 1977.

This change in atmosphere contributes to our maturity as a church and enables us to discuss missionary television and to plot our course more efficiently than we were able to before. Along with this, of course, the experience that has been gained over the last three years contributes to such maturity as well. There is no question that the report of 1977, and the report of 1976 which was also important, were formulated in a situation in which there was necessarily a rather high degree of abstraction—everything at that time was somewhat theoretical. And television is one field in which the abstract and the theoretical are not the most useful.

In the light of the projections made in 1977, it is necessary first of all to review what has happened in connection with the so-called semi-documentary which was introduced to the church in the report of 1977; it was the semidocumentary which was designed to enable us to break out of the Sunday morning ghetto and confront prime-time audiences with our message. In some cases CRC-TV documentary programs accomplished this goal.

#### *DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMS*

From February, 1977, to February, 1980, CRC-TV produced the following documentary programs, entitled:

- A Special Kind of Fatherhood
- A Special Kind of Book
- A Special Kind of Dying

A Special Kind of Sacrifice  
Honor Your Father and Mother  
Education—Where Are We?  
The Family—Who Needs It?  
Abortion—Another Side  
Facing Death  
Illegitimacy—Whose Concern?  
The Dawntreader (Inner-city Christian School)  
What Kind of Freedom?  
The Myths of Marriage—Part I  
The Myths of Marriage—Part II

Direct production costs for documentaries have ranged from \$5,000 to \$18,000 per program.

As the above documentary programs were developed, it became clear that the greatest effectiveness would be realized if we would allow more time for the development of each documentary and would invest our resources more heavily in the documentaries selected for production than we had originally planned. In other words, it became clear that our emphasis should be on quality rather than on quantity. Such an emphasis is also more compatible with the size of our production staff. This focusing of attention on several documentaries produced well is also encouraged by the fact that once a good documentary is produced, its release time is fairly lengthy. We found that once we had several programs available, they could be released in various parts of the country; and we found, too, that they could be released in some of the major markets more than once. This was the case with the documentaries on the myths of marriage and the program dealing with illegitimacy; these received even better response in the New York area the second time they were released than the first time. In the light of these findings, it is our plan to produce at least two and possibly three documentaries during 1980. Approximately \$360,000, or 40 percent of our television budget, has been designated for this work.

So far as the distribution of our documentaries is concerned, it has been possible to schedule some in prime time over top-rated stations in several major markets. Television stations are looking for something different from the usual run of religious television programs; therefore, it has been possible to interest program directors in our offerings, but such interest does not necessarily insure release of our materials over their stations. We have found that what is needed if the documentary material is to be properly aired is that extremely strong marketing abilities must be developed and maintained. We have discussed this with our advertising agency, and they have conducted studies and have served us with useful advice. We will continue to produce materials with great sensitivity to market realities and will work closely with our agency to achieve as large an exposure for them as possible.

As we survey the documentaries that have been produced over the last three years, it is our opinion that there has been an improvement in the quality of the work; the later programs have exhibited a greater degree of



professionalism and our personnel exercised increasingly greater control over program elements. There is a feeling of confidence within the organization that it is within the range of the abilities of the staff to produce good documentaries. And our staff can also be augmented by free-lance people as well—especially for on-location work in other cities.

Since the documentaries did not contain the usual solicitation for funds which are generally associated with religious television and since they did not have strong audience-response elements in them, it has not always been possible to determine their impact in terms of direct audience reaction. Industry acceptance, however, along with Nielsen ratings indicate that the documentaries thus far produced have done a significant job in reaching people with a viewpoint regarding the way we live in this age that is a strong alternative to the usual material they receive. According to our advertising agency, a four-week release of our documentaries near the end of 1979 was viewed by three million people.

There is good reason to believe that as program quality continues to improve and we build on the market experience already gained, we will be able to penetrate more markets. We expect also to be able to develop greater efficiency in the coordination of program releases and publicity—this will upgrade the impact of our materials in local communities. With greater exposure and greater awareness among our constituency not only of what we are doing but of the rationale behind it, we can expect that interest and enthusiasm for this work will grow in the years ahead. But most of all, we expect that continued work with the semidocumentary format will enable us to develop more skillful communication of the intended message. Handling documentary materials in a way that insures that specific impressions and messages are transmitted is considerably more difficult than exercising control over printed material.

The work we have done with semidocumentaries over the last years has confirmed the basic justification for the use of such television that is contained in the 1977 report to synod. That report developed the concept of "intrinsic interest," a concept that is very important in terms of attracting viewers to television material (Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 177-180). Material that is intrinsically interesting is material that is highly "watchable" for its own sake. Material that depicts conflict, for example, is more watchable than material that shows scenery. Showing men and women and children going about their ordinary activities at home or at school or on the job engages the attention of the viewer more than would simply showing a preacher preaching; this is because with the children playing, for example, there is always the element of the unexpected. Thus, by using materials that are of intrinsic interest—that is, interesting in themselves—we are able to capture the attention of the ordinary television viewer. For this reason documentaries have a special usefulness for missionary television.

Before concluding this discussion of documentaries, though, we should say that we harbor no illusions that we will be able to attract extremely large mass audiences to our material. It has been pointed out that television can do this only in the degree that it is highly entertaining; as soon as it attempts to educate, it sacrifices the mass element in its

outreach (Comstock, Chaffee et al., *Television and Human Behavior*, New York, 1978, p. 186). Nevertheless, documentaries are a recognized component of prime television time, and we can expect that high quality documentary material will be useful as we continue to conduct the work involved in doing missionary television.

### CRC-TV SPECIALS

As CRC-TV gradually developed a documentary capability, it also became possible to produce "specials"—programs prepared for special holidays. An Easter special and two Christmas specials, one in English and one in Spanish, have been produced. These programs involved rather large outlays of money for production, as well as a considerable investment in marketing. However, in general, these programs were aired on public service basis. While it is difficult to estimate the exact value of the public service time made available for these productions, it is felt that \$600,000 is a conservative estimate. A considerable advantage for such productions is that they can be used for several years. For example, we see no reason why the Christmas special produced near the end of 1979 cannot be used for at least five years. This means that the ultimate value of public service time which can be anticipated for the specials will be very large.

While the specials give us a great deal of satisfaction in terms of the exposure they have received and can potentially achieve, they do not provide us with a vehicle to communicate a strong message. Since they are designed for public service viewing, it is necessary to capitalize on the general themes that are associated with widely celebrated religious holidays. Nevertheless, it is our feeling that the specials have certainly expressed a significant Christian message and have allowed us to focus attention on the true meaning of the resurrection and the birth of Jesus.

In terms of our relationship with the television industry, it is important for us to have materials such as the specials available, for they provide us with opportunity to stay close to the stations we need for our regular distribution and enable us to establish stronger relationships with them. They also provide our staff with a challenging creative activity which upgrades their capabilities and often provides spin-off which contributes to our other productions.

In addition to the CRC-TV specials, CRC-TV has also produced other specials which have been integrated into our "Faith 20" series; these will be discussed when the "Faith 20" series is discussed.

CRC-TV has also produced two experimental children's programs, one called "A Time to Love" and the other "The Fixit Factory." The first of these was a dramatic production which involved shooting film outside of our studio and the use of a rather large cast. It was an attempt to express a Christian concept—namely, the importance of love in neighborhood relationships, especially as this involved children and older people, and it contained the usual conflict situation we associate with television dramatic productions. "A Time to Love," however, has remained in an unfinished form, and it has been useful for us mainly as an important ex-

ercise. It stands as an example of a kind of program we would like to produce regularly, but we have had to conclude that other priorities along with certain limitations that are part of our production potential at this time probably will make the regular production of such materials something that will have to wait several years.

"The Fixit Factory," however, has been completed and now exists as a prototype of a children's program that could conceivably run for an extended period of time. This production, which followed the other children's production by several months, indicates that our production capability is such that a program like this could be produced on a regular basis. The entire program, which was completed within our studio, holds promise as a children's series. It is our intention to investigate whether it will be possible to interest an organization or a foundation in the regular production of a program such as this. At present our own priorities do not allow us to produce this program on a regular basis.

"A Time to Love" and "The Fixit Factory" were produced because of our conviction that it is necessary for CRC-TV, in addition to its regular production responsibilities, to explore various program formats with a view to seeing whether there might be something in the children's field that we could do for an extended period of time and do well. Our marketing contacts indicate that there is a dearth of good children's programs and that if we could provide something regularly, there is a good possibility that it could be aired on a public service basis. The experience of the Christian Layman's League has also shown this. We all know, too, that children are the most "hooked" of our population so far as television is concerned, and we must assume that they are among the most influenced by it (see Comstock, Chaffee et al., "One Highly Attracted Public," *Television and Human Behavior*. New York, 1978, pp. 173ff.).

In addition to the documentary programs, the specials, and the children's experimental programs, CRC-TV has made two ventures into the field of television news—television journalism. One of these involved the filming of the special North American Presbyterian and Reformed churches' service of praise held at the Calvin Fieldhouse, June, 1978. This program was aired primarily in western Michigan. CRC-TV also televised many of the highlights of the 1979 Synod and produced a program that aired nightly in western Michigan, featuring important synodical events. Whether or not such ventures into television journalism should continue is a question. As it is now, few churches have expressed an interest in seeing the televised segments of the synod of last year; e.g., the material covering the matter of women in office. It is obvious that such activities may have sufficient value for the life of the church to warrant the further development of a journalistic capability at CRC-TV.

So far as journalistic television is concerned, it might be well to explore whether or not the development of this capacity should become the province of the Board of Publications, in somewhat the same way that *Today* and *The Radio Pulpit* is printed by the publishing house; *The Back to God Hour* would provide the hardware and personnel to the Board of Publications so that it could develop a regular journalistic contact with the churches, using videotape.

*"FAITH 20"*

Along with the activities described above, it has been possible to produce a weekly program called "Faith 20." Releases for this program began in April, 1979, and weekly programs have been produced ever since.

There are three components to the "Faith 20" element of CRC-TV production: a regular preaching-type program, "Faith 20" specials, and interview programs. At present we are committed to producing forty preaching-type programs for 1980, twelve interview programs, and two "Faith 20" specials.

It has been advantageous for us to produce our "Faith 20" programs, for it has enabled us to develop a regularity in our production and establish a regular presence on the air. The programs are relatively low cost, and during 1979 we committed only \$15,000 a month for their airing; this will be raised to \$25,000 a month during 1980. For the most part the programs are released on smaller stations, in some instances on cable. Nevertheless, we achieve very broad coverage for these broadcasts and have received mail from virtually every state and province in North America. This broad coverage has been made possible primarily through the use of the satellite release; our contract with a station in Portsmouth, Virginia, gives us access to all of the cable stations controlled by the Portsmouth facility.

The "Faith 20" series is primarily a preaching series—at least forty programs of the annual production are such—though the form which preaching takes on these programs is somewhat different from that expressed in a regular worship service. The program uses a living-room/study setting and attempts are made to introduce as many visually interesting components into the program as possible. Wherever possible, segments produced in connection with our documentary work are incorporated into these broadcasts.

The "Faith 20" specials that we have produced during the year 1979 were of the mass-rally type—one for Reformation Day and one for the fortieth anniversary of The Back to God Hour. These were produced outside of our studio and were considerably more costly than our regular "Faith 20" programs. We release them over our "Faith 20" network, though they are one hour long, in contrast to our half-hour "Faith 20" programs. We have also produced a shortened version of our specials, and these have been released in regular "Faith 20" time slots. These programs have been very well received. It is our plan to produce more of these in 1980, possibly two kinds: a rally-type meeting dealing with Christian education and a regular worship service situation.

The "Faith 20" interview-type programs introduce variety into this series and enable the series to accommodate types of materials that would not ordinarily be handled in a preaching format. We view these programs as opportunities to broaden the impact of our documentary capability as well. For example, a program dealing with substance abuse is planned for 1980, and in connection with it, it is our intention to interview individuals who are experts on this subject. In some instances we

can integrate their contribution along with other interesting visual material in the "Faith 20" series. We feel that the occasional presentation of an interview format will enhance the series. The successful television program produced by The Radio Bible Class uses these types of programs very effectively.

With "Faith 20," CRC-TV produces programs that have a missionary function in terms of several services which these programs provide. First of all, we recognize that preaching as such has a strong missionary impact. It is true, of course, that there are segments of the television audience which would tend to turn away from a preaching-type program, yet we know that at any given moment there are a certain number of people who have been especially prepared to receive the Word of God proclaimed. We learn of this constantly in connection with our radio work, and we know that the Word communicated by preaching is effective on television as well. Because of this, it is appropriate that a church like ours, with its strong emphasis on the Word preached, develop a preaching television ministry.

In addition to the general usefulness of preaching, it is our conviction that it is important for us to provide Reformed preaching to the television audience that is inclined to view preaching-type programs. There is among us the conviction that Reformed preaching is distinctive, and it is especially so against the background of so much television preaching which is so often simplistic, and manipulative, irresponsible and non-ecclesiastical. Thus our television preaching ministry provides a much needed contrast to ordinary television preaching. As such it is an antidote to the so-called electronic church.

In terms of missionary television, "Faith 20" also has an important function as supplement to the work of the local church. Our emphasis in distribution of this program is on local church tie-in, and it is our intention to capitalize on the relationship of the local church to this regular television offering. To be sure, such tie-ins can be established in connection with other types of production, too, but the "Faith 20" format allows us to produce programs regularly, on a weekly basis, and it is this weekly exposure which is especially valuable for the local church. The addition to The Back to God Hour staff of a special Minister for Listener Contact creates the staff function that will permit us to develop the relationship of the local church to "Faith 20" to an even fuller extent.

The preaching format also provides an opportunity gradually to develop a more and more effective television program. We are developing our own music library which involves bringing groups and individuals into the studio. We can expect that our "Faith 20" programs will continue to improve and as this happens they will become increasingly attractive to stations.

When we evaluate the preaching format, we must also remember that as things now stand it is an extremely significant expression of the church's pastoral responsibility. We have noted above that children are among the most "hooked" of our population so far as television is concerned. But there is another segment of society that is very attracted to television: that is the older group. Between seven and ten o'clock in the

evening more than half of the men in North America over fifty years of age are tuned in to television (Comstock, Chaffee et al., *Television and Human Behavior*, New York, 1978, p. 109). Older people are watching avidly, and many of them are more inclined to watch a program of preaching than are younger people. "Faith 20" can thus do an important job in delivering the message of the Scripture to people who are eagerly searching for the truth. There are many people like that in our society, and we have evidence that they are watching, and they are being converted, strengthened, and blessed by the "Faith 20" broadcasts.

\* \* \* \*

Along with the television developments that have been surveyed thus far in this report, there has occurred a simultaneous process of evaluation. When one examines the Acts of Synod of the church during the early forties when the regular Back to God Hour was being developed, he will find questions being raised then about the radio ministry, and occasionally synod even got into questions of program format. Thus, in connection with an activity as complex and demanding as television is, all of us feel that we are required to examine what we are doing and determine whether it is useful and worthy of continuation. It would be irresponsible simply to move forward blindly.

The evaluation process has consisted of various elements related to at least three components of the television ministry. First of all, there has been an examination of the relation of television to radio administratively. In this connection The Back to God Hour Committee erected a special *ad hoc* committee consisting of individuals outside the organization who are active in the business community; this committee served your committee with the following advice: Keep radio and television together so far as administration is concerned, but move in the direction of developing separate creative capabilities in both radio and television. This advice has been followed, though the funds received designated for each cause have been kept separate.

This *ad hoc* committee will continue to meet annually; its members are: Mr. Ray Seven, president, Noram Corporation; Mr. Wayne Vriesman, general manager, WGN; Mr. William Weidenaar, partner, Ruff & Grotfeld Ltd.; and Mr. Ira Slagter, vice-president, Time-Life for Circulation.

We have also been served well with evaluations of the program components of this ministry by a group which met at our office, viewed our programs, and furnished us with reactions and suggestions for future action. This group consisted of Dr. Clifford Christians of the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, Illinois; and Drs. Quentin J. Schultze and Robert S. Fortner both of the School of Journalism of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa; and Dr. Mark Fackler of the College of Communications of the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign, Illinois. Their comments have been exceptionally useful, especially since each of the last four mentioned has come into our church as an adult and is able to view the programs of our church with great objectivity; moreover their professional interest in communication qualifies them to help us a great deal.

The Back to God Hour Committee has also assigned a special subcommittee the task of examining our television ministry with a view to providing a thorough evaluation of every aspect of it, including management, personnel, program production and distribution, and the relationship of the television work to the radio work. At present there is no element of our denomination's broadcast ministry which is receiving more careful attention than is the television ministry.

In addition, our programs have been subject to continuing evaluation on the part of our constituency, and we have analyzed their response to a certain degree. In general, it can be said that we find material in the responses we have received from our constituency that could be used to support nearly any evaluation of our material one might make. In evaluating such reactions we must be careful to distinguish between response to specific programs and response to a specific kind of program. Frankly, we have not engaged in careful scientific analyses of responses simply because we feel that the level of our efforts to this point and the somewhat uneven response patterns do not provide us with data that is sufficiently strong to determine policy.

We have been extremely gratified by those who have gone out of their way to insure that "Faith 20" be made available in areas where we have not been able to place the program ourselves because of limited finances. In Los Angeles, a foundation consisting of one of our Christian Reformed families has assumed the cost involved in our going on Channel 22 and in supporting the broadcast with necessary advertising.

In general, it can be said that the response to our programs indicates that an acceptable level of success has been achieved by our programming thus far. When one remembers that we are working in a field in which our budget commitment is so low as to be virtually immeasurable, it is our feeling that a very gratifying return on our investment has been achieved.

We have also been involved in marketing research; our advertising agency carries this on for us. Thus far the material we have available indicates that there is a good market for whatever specials we produce, that the demand for our documentaries is not exceptionally strong, and that we may expect that our "Faith 20" materials can be rather easily placed in relatively noncompetitive markets. In terms of market research we must stress the fact that from an industry viewpoint our budget for this work is exceedingly low; it is so low in fact that the machinery available for measuring the impact of an organization like ours in the television industry is not very efficient. The marketing research devices that are currently employed for television are geared to measuring audience and station reaction to multimillion dollar expenditures. Moreover, they are generally exclusively oriented to mass demographics. In connection with a program offering like "Faith 20," we must rely to a large degree on data which we ourselves generate in connection with our own work, and with a somewhat more intuitive reading of what our program is doing. And in connection with our documentaries, industry response cannot be expected to be easily measurable, because we are a very small element in the television situation.

In any case, administrative, program, and marketing evaluations can never be considered terminated in a field as fast moving as television is. Up to the present our efforts have been concentrated primarily on production of materials that we could use to upgrade our skills and begin to make a penetration of the television industry. We fully expect that as we expand our activity and develop a stronger presence in the industry and on the airwaves it will be possible for us to expand our research activity and develop the necessary sophistication which will insure that the data provided will be increasingly useful.

With this we conclude a general survey of the actual situation with respect to the television ministry of our church and turn to various matters which now demand our consideration. There are certain questions that must be answered as we move forward. For example, it is necessary for us to determine the degree of commitment among us to a television ministry. Is it high, and is it strong? If our commitment is spotty and/or minimal we might as well admit to one another that our ministry will be ineffective. A television ministry, in the nature of the case, must gradually move up to a stronger position within the industry and to a stronger level of impact on the people it is reaching. Our current level of activity is acceptable if it is viewed as a stage on the way to greater development, but it is not acceptable if it is considered sufficient.

In connection with these kinds of matters, The Back to God Hour would like to express the following observations about the future of our television ministry.

In determining whether we should now advance with the television ministry we have begun, we must avoid certain attitudes which could unnecessarily prejudice our ultimate judgment. First of all, we must avoid thinking that our judgment regarding our use of television necessarily will have an impact on our use of radio. It is the feeling of your committee that we have not begun to come to the point where we might conceivably consider phasing out our radio work in favor of our television activity. It is our conviction that we are reaching two different audiences with radio and with television. This may not be true in areas where we have high concentrations of our denomination, for there are many in these areas who might possibly listen to both radio and television, but in general our radio and television audiences are different. This has been our experience in Spanish as well as in English; in areas where we had the Spanish broadcasts for a long time, the addition of television brought a new response to the Spanish ministry.

Secondly, we must not allow our own feelings about television to intrude. The television industry as we know it in North America is extremely disappointing. It is characterized by avarice, exploitation, and manipulation. We must remember that when we use this medium as a church we use it in a very specific way; we will not be able to produce programs that can directly compete with or replace "Mork and Mindy." "Missionary television" is our interest, and we are going to have to find a way to fit into the television spectrum that will be appropriate for what we are called to do. And each of our television offerings must be examined in terms of the necessity of making a missionary impact.



Thirdly, we must not attempt to solve the entire television program within our society, but must carefully delimit our considerations of our use of this medium. Though television is nearly omnipresent, it is still a mysterious power within our culture. Our attention has been called to its deadening impact on the viewer (James Vanden Bosch, *Banner*, September 7 and 14, 1979), while others have rejected this evaluation and insisted that the television viewer expresses a high degree of objectivity (Jack Mulder, "The Problem Is Ourselves," *Banner*, January 4, 1980). (See also our "Missionary Television Report," *Acts of Synod 1977*, pp. 172-174.) These matters are extremely interesting, and worthy of intense study in themselves. But in connection with our use of television, we should not feel that we have to arrive at a denominational position regarding them. After all, we do not engage in lengthy examinations of data which describe the impact of the print media in our culture before we use it ourselves. We simply assume that any force within our society that engages men's minds necessarily influences them. The same is true of television. There is no question that it engages men's minds, and there is no question that they are being influenced.

For the year 1981, The Back to God Hour Committee plans to continue its television ministry in the following ways: continued production of semidocumentary programs, development of "holiday" specials, production of spot announcements, and the weekly production of "Faith 20" as described in this report. In addition to this production we intend to upgrade our marketing ability and to develop more efficient research instruments. It is our intention to continue to subject our efforts to intensive scrutiny and evaluation, especially by our special television subcommittee. We will continue to provide synod with in-depth analyses and evaluations of our work.

The Back to God Hour Committee, then, would like to urge synod now to renew the commitment of our denomination to the television ministry. We ask synod to do this in terms of a positive response to the following recommendations:

1. That synod approve the activities and plans of CRC-TV and authorize a quota of \$11.00 for this work.
2. That synod recommend CRC-TV for one or more offerings for above quota needs.

The Back to God Hour Committee  
Joel Nederhood, Director

REPORT 2  
 CALVIN COLLEGE AND SEMINARY

This report covers actions of the Board of Trustees of Calvin College and Seminary from June 1979 to February 1980. A supplementary report will follow after the May 1980 meeting of the board.

I. INFORMATION

A. *The Board of Trustees*

1. The semiannual session of the board of trustees was held February 4-6, 1980. The board is composed of forty-seven members, of whom thirty-eight are classical trustees and nine are district trustees. Thirty-three ministers and five laymen represent the classes and the nine district representatives are all laymen, including one woman.

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

- President . . . . . Rev. Louis Tamminga
- First vice-president . . . . . Rev. John Medendorp, Jr.
- Second vice-president . . . . . Mr. Harry J. Bloem
- Secretary . . . . . Rev. John M. Hofman
- Assistant secretary . . . . . Rev. Donald Van Beek

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

4. Faculty-Board Conference

The faculty-board conference held during the February meeting brought trustees and members of both faculties together for discussion and fellowship. The conference centered in a presentation by Dr. Henry Beversluis entitled "Toward a Theology of Education." A panel consisting of three trustees and the dean of the faculty made appropriate response to the presentation. The conference was concluded with dinner at the commons.

5. Presentation of the History Department

Each year the college president arranges for a presentation by a department of the college in which the department is challenged to relate and demonstrate its approach to the problem of integrating faith and learning. The presentation this year was given by the History Department and was warmly and enthusiastically received by the trustees.

6. Ford Lewis Battles Publication Fund

The board approved the establishment of a Ford Lewis Battles Publication Fund. The purpose of the fund, established through an initial gift by

Dr. Battles, is to assist in the publication of materials related to John Calvin.

### B. *The Seminary*

#### 1. Faculty and Staff Matters

##### a. General Information

The Rev. Neal Plantinga began teaching in the Department of Systematic Theology at the beginning of the current academic year. There were no retirements from the faculty.

Two members of the faculty are on leave this year: Dr. Andrew Bandstra for the second and third quarters of the current year and Dr. Marion Snapper for the third quarter of this year and the first quarter of the next year.

Auxiliary services are provided by the following: David Holwerda (second quarter), Willis De Boer (third quarter), Harvey Smit, Richard Mouw, Melvin Berghuis, John Hamersma, Robert Rozema, and retired professors Anthony Hoekema and Henry Stob.

Dr. Ford Lewis Battles passed away on November 22, 1979, and the board of trustees adopted the following statement concerning Dr. Battles:

Dr. Battles was an internationally known Latin scholar and church historian. He was a man of wide interests, but his central emphasis was in his thorough mastery of the life and thought of John Calvin. He translated and annotated the edition of Calvin's *Institutes* edited by John T. McNeill. At the time of his death he was working on an edition of all of the prayers of Calvin which have come down to us. In his seven-year task of translating the 1559 *Institutes*, he immersed himself in the thought of John Calvin. He emerged from this effort as not only the recognized leader in North American Calvin scholarship, but as a convinced disciple of John Calvin.

It was this intellectual and spiritual pilgrimage which made Dr. and Mrs. Battles feel so much at home in the Calvin community. They made Grand Rapids their permanent residence, became members of the Calvin Christian Reformed Church, and he lent his services to the denomination's Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee.

He is survived by his mother, wife, two daughters, and two granddaughters.

We regret that it was not in God's providence to have Dr. Battles enrich our academic and spiritual life for a longer period of time, but we rest in his sovereign rule with heartfelt thanksgiving for the dedicated servant Dr. Battles was, also among us.

##### b. Faculty Reappointment

For the reappointment of Dr. Theodore Minnema, see II, Recommendations.

##### c. Reappointment of Coordinator of Field Education

For the reappointment of Rev. Robert C. De Vries, see II, Recommendations.

#### d. Sabbatical Leaves

1) Dr. David Engelhard was granted a sabbatical leave for two academic quarters, with additional leave time for the purpose of gaining pastoral experience; to begin in March, 1981, and terminate in August, 1982. Dr. Engelhard will spend the first three months of his leave in Clinical Pastoral Education. The next six months will be spent serving a congregation and the final period of leave will be spent in research.

2) Dr. Bastiaan Van Elderen was granted a sabbatical leave for the second and third quarters of the academic year 1980-81. Dr. Van Elderen's plans include a fifth season of excavations at Nag Hammadi, further research in the history of early Christianity, and the completion of current writing projects.

#### e. Nomination in Philosophical Theology

The board noted that the faculty was unable to submit a nomination at this time. The faculty assured the board that it will continue to provide teaching services through qualified temporary help and that the search for promising candidates will continue.

#### 2. Academic Matters—Course in Church Music

In a letter to the board of trustees and the seminary faculty, the Calvin Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids expressed a concern and need for more effective instruction in the area of church music. In its response to Calvin Church, the faculty agreed that the minister has an important role to fill in giving leadership to the church in the matter of music for worship. However, the faculty is under constant pressure to add required courses to an already crowded curriculum. The board, while it is sympathetic to this problem, requested the faculty to consider various ways in which it could institute more effective instruction in the area of church music.

#### 3. Administrative Matters—Coordinator of Field Education

The board approved various additions and changes in the job description of the position of Coordinator of Field Education. They are: reappointments for three-year terms limited to two such reappointments; a more definite procedure for appointment and an evaluation procedure before making a reappointment; a provision for periods of training leave; and an attachment of the salary to the regular pay scale.

### C. The College

#### 1. Faculty

##### a. Faculty Profile, September, 1979

During the current academic year the college faculty consists of 203 full-time members plus approximately 65 persons who teach one or more courses sometime during the year. Of the full-time faculty members 28 are on leave of absence, 16 are in their first full year of teaching at Calvin, 150 have an earned doctorate or the highest degree available in their fields, and 118 (58%) have tenure.

##### b. Staff Needs

The student-faculty ratio of 19:1 is used as a guideline for staffing in

1980-81. Using this ratio, there are staff openings for seven regular positions and nineteen temporary positions.

c. Recruitment of Minority Faculty Members

The board endorsed a faculty resolution regarding the active recruitment of minority faculty members and instructed the administration to proceed immediately to implement this resolution.

d. Leaves of Absence

Sabbatical leaves of varying lengths were approved for ten faculty members and non-sabbatical leaves were approved for six faculty members for 1980-81.

e. Honors and Achievements

The board took note of the faculty honors and achievements as presented in the president's report, and instructed President Diekema to convey the board's congratulations and appreciation to the faculty members for their accomplishments.

## 2. Academic Programs

a. The board approved the following new programs and courses:

- 1) a new concentration in Computer Science
- 2) a new group major concentration in Economics and Mathematics
- 3) the program areas and requirements in the Master of Arts in Christian Studies program
- 4) six new courses

b. Calvin Center for Christian Scholarship

Scholars working in the Calvin Center find that their activities do not end when their year at the center ends. Books and monographs must still be published and the invitations to lecture are numerous.

The 1977-78 Fellows—the first team—await the release of their tentatively titled book *OIKOS: Christian Stewardship and Natural Resources* by Eerdmans Publishing Company. A May, 1980, publication date is expected.

The 1978-79 Fellows—the second team—completed a draft of a book last summer. Its focus will be on the topic of public justice and educational equity.

The 1979-80 team is working on the topic "Toward a Reformed View of Faith and Reason." From all reports their work is progressing well. Six faculty Fellows and three student Fellows were appointed. Four of the faculty Fellows are from Calvin: Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff, who serves as coordinator; Dr. David Holwerda; Dr. George Marsden; and Dr. Alvin Plantinga. One was formerly a visiting professor at Calvin: Dr. Robert Manweiler. Joining them in January was Dr. George Mavrodes of the Philosophy Department at the University of Michigan. Dr. Hendrik Hart of the Institute for Christian Studies in Canada has also served as an Adjunct Fellow. Ronald Feenstra, a student in the seminary, plus Pieter Pereboom and Michael Hakkenberg from the college make up the student Fellows.

## 3. Administration

The board approved the realignment of the development office, in-

cluding the job descriptions of the director of development and the director of planned and special gifts. This realignment does not require additional staff.

D. *Business and Finance*

1. The board approved tuition rates for the year 1980-81 as follows:

a. *College*

	Annual Tuition 1979-80	Proposed for 1980-81	\$ Incr.	% Incr.
Non-Christian Reformed	\$ 2,680	3,000	320	12.0
Grand Rapids CRC	2,480	2,800	320	12.9
Over-ten-miles in Michigan	2,400	2,720	320	13.3
Out-of-state within 300	2,220	2,500	280	12.6
Out-of-state within 1000	2,140	2,420	280	13.1
Out-of-state over 1000	2,060	2,340	280	13.6

b. *Seminary*

	Annual Tuition 1979-80	Proposed for 1980-81	\$ Incr.	% Incr.
Undergraduate credit hour	\$ 26	29	3	11.5
Field education unit	14	15	1	7.5
Graduate credit hour	40	45	5	12.5

Under the proposed fee structure a full-time M.Div. student, taking 45 hours of course work and 15 units of field education, would pay \$1530 for 1980-81. The comparable rate for 1979-80 is \$1380.

2. The board approved the room-and-board rates for 1980-81 at \$1,520, an increase of 10 percent over the cost of \$1,380 in 1979-80.

3. The board approved the adoption of the revised operating budget for 1979-80, which showed a projected income of \$12,120,000 and projected expenditures of \$12,036,000.

II. *RECOMMENDATIONS*

A. *Seminary*

1. *Faculty Reappointment*

The board of trustees recommends the following faculty reappointment: Dr. Theodore Minnema, Professor of Philosophical and Moral Theology for two years.

2. *Staff Reappointment*

The board of trustees recommends the following staff reappointment: Rev. Robert C. De Vries, Coordinator of Field Education for three years.

B. *College*

1. *Reappointments of Administrators*

The board recommends the following administrative reappointments:

a. Anamarie Joose, M.A., Ed.S., Counselor in the Broene Center for two years (with faculty status)

b. John Verwolf, M.Ed., Director of Placement for two years (with faculty status)

## 2. Reappointments to the Faculty with Tenure

The board recommends the following reappointments with tenure:

a. Robert Albers, Ph.D., Professor of Chemistry

b. Wayne Joose, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

c. James Timmer, Ph.D., Professor of Physical Education

## 3. Terminal Appointments

The board recommends the following terminal appointments:

a. Nancy Chadburn, M.A., Visiting Instructor in Germanic Languages for one year

b. Kathleen Hubers, B.S., Instructor in Chemistry for one year

c. Charles Strikwerda, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Political Science for two years

d. David Timmer, B.A., Instructor in Religion and Theology for one year

## 4. Terminal Reappointment

The board recommends the following terminal reappointment: David L. Dunbar, Ph.D., Visiting Associate Professor of Romance Language for one year

## 5. One-year Reappointment

The board recommends the following one-year reappointment: Derald D. De Young, Ph.D., Visiting Associate Professor of Music

## 6. Regular Reappointments (two-year)

The board recommends the following two-year reappointments: (*italics indicates raise in rank*)

a. James A. Benthem, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Psychology

b. Hessel Bouma, III, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Biology

c. John H. Brink, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology

d. Elsa Cortina, Doctora en Pedagogia, M.A., Assistant Professor of Romance Languages

e. Roger L. De Kock, Ph.D., *Professor* of Chemistry

f. Richard E. Houskamp, D.S.W., Associate Professor of Sociology

g. Thomas L. Jager, Ph.D., *Professor* of Mathematics

h. James Korf, M.A., Assistant Professor of Speech

i. Gregory F. Mellema, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Philosophy

j. Ruth K. Rus, M.Mus., Assistant Professor of Music

k. David M. Snuttjer, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Psychology

l. R. Scott Stehouwer, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of Psychology

m. Roger J. Stouwie, Ph.D., Professor of Psychology

n. Henry Vander Goot, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Religion and Theology

- 
- o. Mary E. Vander Goot, Ph.D., *Associate Professor* of Psychology
  - p. Davis A. Young, Ph.D., *Visiting Associate Professor* of Physics (Geology)
  - q. Uko Zylstra, D.Phil., *Associate Professor* of Biology

The Board of Trustees  
Calvin College and Seminary  
John M. Hofman, secretary



## REPORT 3

## BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS

The decade which concluded not many months ago was an astonishing one in the history of world missions. The decade began with the revulsion of Vietnam starkly present. The mood was isolationistic, and even God's people were wary of overseas involvements. Recruitment was difficult in those days and missionaries themselves were suspect. The global vision mandated by our Lord was dulled by political crises and a mentality of disengagement. Some said that doors were closing upon the enterprise of world missions.

In the light of this somber beginning the events of the decade are particularly remarkable. The conviction of the unity of the people of God worldwide has become vibrant fact. Interdependence agreements are being written between mission and national churches around the world. The fear concerning "closed doors" turned out to be largely myth. While some doors were closed to the entrance of missionaries, opportunities burgeoned in other parts of the world far more swiftly than they could be met. In the third world, the Christian faith received serious attention after its initial rejection by peoples who had observed its ties to colonialism. At last the Christian faith could be observed on its own merits, apart from its deeply resented Western trappings. The purpose and worth of the mission enterprise was deeply felt by congregations who supported missions to a larger degree than ever before, even while its costs skyrocketed. Recruitment again became exciting and rewarding even though mission was carried on overseas in the context of turbulence and animosity.

Since synod last met, the Somoza regime has toppled in Nicaragua, and new unrest looms in El Salvador and Guatemala. Yet even in these countries the restless multitudes are very open to the gospel of him who said, "The truth shall set you free." It is that conviction that has spurred our sending as we launch into the new decade. CRWM missionaries are now appointed to fifteen countries overseas as God's people send their representatives to be physically present in the distant reaches of God's world. The pages that follow are CRWM's accounting of that sending.

## I. ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

A. *The Board*

The annual meetings of the board took place from February 12 to 14, 1980. The executive committee met bimonthly in accordance with the Mission Order. The officers during 1979 were: Rev. Eugene Bradford, president; Rev. Jacob Vos, vice-president; Mr. David Radius, treasurer;

Mr. John Brondsema, recording secretary; Dr. Eugene Rubingh, executive secretary.

The eighteen members of the executive committee are elected annually by the board. The following administrative committees bring recommendations to the executive committee: officers, finance, communications, personnel, and recruiting. Field minutes are processed and recommendations made by the Africa, Asia, and Latin America area committees. A Global Outreach Committee meets twice yearly to assess overall deployment and to coordinate current and future strategy.

Administrative positions and personnel are as follows: Executive Secretary, Dr. Eugene Rubingh; Africa Secretary, Rev. William Van Tol; Asia Secretary, Rev. Edward Van Baak; Latin America Secretary, Rev. Bernard Dokter; Business Secretary, Mr. Donald Zwier; Accountant, Mr. James Tamminga; Communications Secretary, Mr. William Schultze; Support Services Coordinator, Mr. Ellis Deters; Personnel Assistant, Mrs. Eleanor Bergsma.

Position descriptions for all administrative staff were considered and adopted by the board during its 1980 sessions.

#### B. *Representation at Synod*

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

#### C. *Nominations for Board Membership*

Certain vacancies exist in the positions prescribed in the Mission Order for members-at-large. The following slate of nominees is presented for synod's consideration. Profiles of each nominee will be presented to the appropriate synodical committee.

Western Canada .....	Mr. Norman Brouwer*
	Mr. Gerben Dykstra
Far West US .....	Dr. Harold De Jong*
	Mr. George Schutt
Eastern US .....	Mrs. Julia Bosma*
	Mr. John Last, Sr.
Midwest US .....	Mr. John De Groot
	Mr. John Vander Haag
Central US .....	Mr. Jack Elenbaas
	Mr. Nelson Gritter

\*Denotes incumbent

#### D. *Re Appointment of Asia Area Secretary*

In the light of synod's request that synodically appointed personnel be subject to reappointment every four years, CRWM recommends to synod the reappointment of the Rev. Edward Van Baak as Asia Area Secretary. The Rev. Mr. Van Baak has functioned in this office since its inception and before that time served as missionary in both China and Japan. The prescribed CRWM evaluation was carried out and a

thorough interview was conducted with Mr. Van Baak during the time of the annual board sessions. On the basis of his gifts, performance, and a satisfactory interview, the board heartily recommends his reappointment as Asia Area Secretary.

#### E. *Presentation of Missionaries*

Synod has regularly received greetings from its missionary family through representatives on home service. In this way synod may become personally acquainted with these representatives of the church's missionary endeavor. Therefore, CRWM once again requests permission for missionaries on home service or under appointment to be introduced to synod.

## II. GENERAL MATTERS

### A. *Communications*

In 1979 there were 431 churches involved in the support of CRWM missionaries above quota. We are pleased to report to synod that this is an increase of 27 congregations and that 34 congregations increased the number of missionaries supported. This response to our communication regarding overseas inflation and the devaluation of the dollar is most heartening. Our commitment to full communication with the sending church lies, we believe, at the heart of this support level.

Throughout the past year, special efforts have been made in cultivating interest among organizations within the congregations. Some two hundred groups, including Sunday schools and societies, responded to these efforts. Our telephone-answering device operates when the office is closed and provides a sixty-second recorded message with prayer and praise items. In 1979, 12,432 calls were registered. Approximately seventeen hundred contacts were reported in 1979 by missionary personnel on home service and office staff. Seven classes established mission-emphasis tours in which world missionaries participated. The Women's Missionary Union tours in the spring and fall continued to provide meaningful contacts. Our annual report to the constituency entitled "World to Win" has again been published and is ready for distribution. Several pages of financial data are included in this report. Audio-visual productions were undertaken in 1979; outstanding among these is the new Philippine 16mm film entitled "Mission: The Philippines."

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

Churches overseas related to CRWM are invited annually to be represented at the CRC synod. Special invitations were sent this year to the Christian Reformed churches of Nigeria in view of the fact that this is the sixtieth anniversary of the arrival of Miss Johanna Veenstra in that country. It was further decided to send an open-ended invitation to the churches in Cuba inasmuch as they were unable to attend in 1979.

### C. *Evaluation and Planning*

For many years missionaries have provided the board with semiannual reports regarding their ministries. Over the past few years, however, a comprehensive evaluation system has been developed in an effort to achieve a fuller understanding and analysis of the total missionary endeavor. The evaluation system adopted by the board was put into operation during 1979 and provides avenues whereby missionaries may be supported as they reflect upon the course of their ministries. It also provides a system whereby they can integrate their work into the total program. Finally, it provides a system whereby the field secretaries may report to the area secretaries who provide annual reports to the executive secretary who in turn reports to the Global Outreach Committee of the board. Some revisions still must be made in the total package; however, the program provides a structure for accountability which the churches have every right to expect.

In addition to this emphasis on evaluation, the board is moving in the direction of giving attention to long-range planning. To that end, every field has been requested to prepare a specific mandate for its operations as well as a strategy statement which embodies its planning for the next five- to ten-year period. It is our hope that through this process the mission need not simply react to events as they develop, but may be creative in the establishment of long-range goals as it seeks to discern and follow the will of the Lord.

### D. *Concentration and Diffusion*

The Global Outreach Committee of the board is mandated to consider the deployment of CRWM resources worldwide. To that end a number of criteria have been drawn up through the years. Yet at the very outset of this process the question was posed: Is it the CRWM intention to send relatively few missionaries into *many* fields (broad deployment), or to concentrate the sending to relatively *fewer* areas with a larger number of missionaries active on each field (concentrated deployment)? The CRC entered the 70s with mission work in nine lands, all more or less well known to the constituency. Since 1971, however, missions have been authorized in eight additional countries. Should the board continue to seek new fields in order to staff these fields with a small number of missionaries in each field? Or should the board in general concentrate on staffing the fields which are already our responsibility and attempt on those fields to provide a full-orbed witness of word and deed?

In a paper prepared by the staff, it was argued that our first responsibility is to the challenges on the fields where we now serve. Here the establishment of a viable church with a significant number of congregations must be kept in the forefront of our goals in distinction from the aim to establish small denominations of widely scattered churches in many lands.

The board adopted the following policy statement:

The goal of CRWM outreach is the planting and/or development of a significant number of churches and a Christian community within a specific geographical area, so that these churches may fellowship to-

gether and so that they can consolidate their forces in order to most effectively engage in outreach, Christian education, doctrinal development, leadership training, and the development of a distinct identity and self-concept. This goal involves the mission, therefore, in a commitment to word-and-deed ministries in such combination and integration as may prove expedient and effective in a given culture.

With the adoption of this policy, the board was cognizant of the problems that may arise with the concentration of missionary resources. The policy was, therefore, carefully circumscribed to avoid excessive establishment of mission institutions or the creation of a climate of dependency.

#### *E. Transfer of Missionaries to Other Fields*

The board decided that when ordained missionaries are transferred to a different field they should be issued a call by either their present calling church or a new calling church. In the case of unordained missionaries, it was decided that they be recommissioned by either their present commissioning church or another commissioning church. If transfer takes place during a term of service, installation or commissioning will take place during the subsequent home service.

It was felt that through the adoption of this policy, the sending church would be more fully involved with the missionary it is calling. It was also felt that since the letter of call or commissioning designates the field of labor, it was appropriate that a new call or commissioning take place.

#### *F. Mission Order Revision*

Article I, Section 6 of the Mission Order states that synod shall appoint the executive secretary and the area secretaries upon recommendation of the board and shall arrange for their call and installation. Upon further reflection, however, it became apparent that arranging for calling and installation is more properly the responsibility of the board. Therefore it was considered appropriate to request synod to make this change in the Mission Order, thus placing the responsibility for the arrangement of calls, installation, and commissionings where it properly and actually resides. The current and the proposed readings are here presented side by side:

### ARTICLE I

#### THE SYNOD OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

##### *Current Reading*

Section 6. Appoints the Executive Secretary of Missions and the area secretaries upon recommendation of the board and arranges for their call and installation.

##### *Proposed Reading*

Section 6. Appoints the Executive Secretary of Missions and the area secretaries upon recommendation of the board.

ARTICLE II

THE BOARD FOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD MISSIONS

*Current Reading*

Section 7. Designate calling and/or commissioning churches, present to them nominations, supply information and guidance to the churches, and jointly sign the letter of call or commission.

*Proposed Reading*

Section 7. Designate calling and/or commissioning churches, present to them nominations, supply information and guidance to the churches, jointly sign the letter of call, and arrange for the installation or commissioning of all Christian Reformed World Mission missionaries and synodically appointed administrative staff.

G. *Sierra Leone Administration*

Extended and fruitful discussions have taken place with the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee regarding the joint word-and-deed ministry in the target country for hunger alleviation. We are pleased to report to synod that a joint Statement of Agreement regarding the administration of the project was adopted as required by synod. CRWM looks forward to continued fruitful cooperation with CRWRC which synod has designated as the lead agency in this hunger-alleviation program.

H. *Recognition for Missionary Service*

The board also takes grateful notice of the years of service rendered by the missionaries who terminated service with CRWM in 1979. They are listed under the fields in which they served (II, A, 3; III, B 4, c; and III, C, 4).

III. FIELDS

A. *Africa*

1. *Missionaries*

Liberia

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Bosserman\*  
Miss Margaret Enter  
Rev. and Mrs. Mark Scheffers  
Rev. and Mrs. Larry Vanderaa

Nigeria

Rev. and Mrs. Sidney Anderson\*\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Baas  
Rev. and Mrs. Ralph Baker  
Rev. and Mrs. Willem Berends  
Mr. and Mrs. Albert Bierling  
Miss Peggy Blik\*\*  
Dr. and Mrs. John Boer  
Miss Diane Boot\*\*  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Buys  
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Cok

Mr. and Mrs. James Ritter  
Miss Christine Roos  
Mr. and Mrs. Otto Rouw  
Miss Ruth Salomons  
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Schemper  
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Schepel  
Mr. and Mrs. Dick Seinen  
Mr. and Mrs. John Sjaardema  
Rev. and Mrs. George Spee  
Miss Dorothy Sytsma

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Cremer	Miss Leny te Nyenhuis**
Miss Margrieta De Bruyn	Mr. and Mrs. Paul Theule
Mr. and Mrs. John De Jager	Miss Geraldine Vanden Berg
Mr. and Mrs David Dykgraaf	Mr. Mike Van Der Dyke
Mr. and Mrs. William Dykhuis	Miss Julie Vander Laan
Mr. and Mrs. William Evenhouse	Miss Ruth Vander Meulen
Mr. and Mrs. John Gezon	Miss Wilma Vander Steen
Mr. Mark and Mrs. (Dr.) Giny Hoekman	Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Vander Weide
Mr. Mark Hoekstra	Miss Frances Vander Zwaag
Miss Angie Hoolsema	Dr. and Mrs. John Van Dorp
Mr. and Mrs. Andy Horlings	Rev. and Mrs. Lester Van Essen
Miss Mary Kaldeway	Miss Gertrude Van Haitzma
Miss Frances Karnemaat	Miss Leanne Van Leeuwen
Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Kiekover	Miss Tina Van Staalduin
Miss Margaret Kooiman	Mr. and Mrs. Case Van Wyk
Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Koops	Mr. and Mrs. Larry Van Zee
Mr. and Mrs. Cornie Korhorn	Dr. Fred and Mrs. (Dr.) Hazel Veenstra
Miss Alie Kuipers	Miss Ruth Veltkamp
Mr. and Mrs. Barry Meyer	Mr. and Mrs. Norman Viss
Rev. and Mrs. Timothy Nelson	Dr. and Mrs. Hendrik Visser
Dr. and Mrs. Dale Peerbolte	Mr. and Mrs. Abe Vreek
Mr. and Mrs. Allan Persenaire	Miss Phyllis Warsen**
Dr. and Mrs. Keith Plate**	

*Key*

*-Short Term or Volunteer*

*\*\*Associate Missionaries*

*\*\*\*On Loan from PCA*

## 2. Church-Mission Relationship

Significant changes in relationships with national churches in Africa occurred in 1979. In Nigeria CRWM has concluded many transfer agreements with the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) and the Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv (NKST). Literature, rural health, scholarship, and rural development programs and the Veenstra Seminary were transferred to CRCN. Literature, rural health, and scholarship programs among the Tiv were transferred to NKST. Arrangements are presently being made to transfer ownership of Mkar Christian Hospital to NKST. Property related to these institutions is also being transferred. Other programs and institutions had been transferred previously. The churches have developed their own constitutions and boards to administer these programs and institutions.

At the conclusion of these transfers the mission will continue to have direct ownership and responsibility only for Benue Leprosy Settlement and a few service programs such as aviation.

This does not mean that missionaries and financial assistance are being withdrawn from the transferred ministries. Two agreements based on CRWM's Church-Mission Interdependence Guidelines have been negotiated by which CRWM will continue to provide missionaries and financial aid to church-owned programs until the churches have adequate human and financial resources of their own.

The congregational, classical, and synodical functions of CRCN and NKST are completely independent of the mission. For example, no financial aid is given for the construction of church buildings or salaries of

pastors. Nor do we have missionary pastors serving Nigerian congregations.

But missionary and financial support is given to various synodical boards and committees of Nigerian churches. These include:

Mission boards and evangelism committees, scholarship boards, literature boards, literacy committees, rural health boards, a rural development board, Christian leadership training center committees, Veenstra Seminary Board, Smith Memorial Bible College Board, Benue Bible Institute Board, Reformed Theological College of Nigeria Board, Theological College of Northern Nigeria Board, Mkar Christian Hospital Board, and education committees.

Approximately fifty missionaries are responsible to these national church boards and committees. CRWM assumes responsibility for their salaries and amenities. For 1981, \$240,000 has been budgeted as grants to aid the operation and capital expenses of these boards and committees.

In effect, we are rapidly reaching the point at which we no longer have a separate mission council alongside the Nigerian churches. Rather, our missionaries work within and for the churches' boards and committees. The national church synods are assuming the responsibility and authority of the mission council. They now make requests for assistance directly to CRWM.

In Liberia, our mission is much younger but efforts are being made right from the start to work within and for national church entities rather than by means of mission institutions or programs alongside of the churches. Negotiations for such relationships move slowly since both our mission and national churches are concerned to preserve theological and organizational integrity.

The search for new mission outreaches in Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and French-speaking Africa must deal with comity arrangements. For years there have been gentlemen's agreements between various churches in assigning territory in order to avoid competition. Not all missions and churches have the resources needed to evangelize their assigned territory and planning for new areas of work requires comity negotiation.

### 3. Missionaries and Church Leadership

Since 1978 many veteran missionaries to Africa have retired or resigned: Dr. H. Boer, Mr. and Mrs. R. Browneye, Miss N. Chapel, Miss M. Dykstra, Dr. and Mrs. P. Ipema, Mr. and Mrs. J. Koetze, Miss M. Kooiman, Mr. and Mrs. W. Lemcke, Miss M. Mast, Miss D. Sytsma, Miss R. Vander Meulen, Miss A. Vissia. Each of these missionaries served more than twenty years in Africa. Miss A. Vissia who retired in 1979 was the first missionary to be sent out after Nigeria was chosen as a mission field in 1940. We thank God for her thirty-seven years of dedicated service. Together these missionaries gave over three hundred years of service in Africa and God has rewarded their faithfulness with a large and growing church. Other members of the Nigerian team who retired in 1979 are Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Bosserman, Mr. and Mrs. Don



Bremer, Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Brinks, Mrs. Lynn Koetje, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Lambers, Jr., Dr. and Mrs. Ronald Lett, and Mr. Allen Vander Pol.

We note the death of the Rev. Istifanus Audu at the age of ninety-six in December, 1979. The Rev. Mr. Istifanus, who served in World War I, had become a Christian in the 1920s. In 1947 he became the first ordained minister of the CRCN and had remained active until very recently.

While the number of missionaries serving in Nigeria gradually declines, there is a rapid increase in Nigerian church leaders. Twenty years ago the CRCN and NKST had about 20 pastors and 100 evangelists. By 1979 the numbers had climbed to 118 pastors and 481 evangelists. Three theological schools and six Bible schools now train pastors, evangelists, and other church leaders. The most recent addition is the E. H. Smith Memorial Bible College opened by CRCN in 1980. It will provide two years of advanced training for evangelists.

Increasing numbers of Nigerian leaders are being trained both in Nigeria and overseas. CRWM plans to provide the churches with grants of over \$100,000 for the training of leaders in 1981. Scholarship assistance from CEACA, RBC, Geelong, and other schools enables students to obtain advanced training abroad.

#### 4. New Outreach

An agreement has been reached with CRWRC for placement of church development missionaries in Sierra Leone. It is anticipated that two missionaries will be sent by CRWM in 1980 to work with CRWRC staff.

The Liberia missionaries are working in Grand Bassa County among the Bassa people. Our Liberia strategy calls for a survey in 1980-81 of a second site among Liberia's unreached peoples, with the placement of missionaries beginning in 1982.

Recognizing the gradual decrease of missionaries working with the CRCN and NKST churches in Nigeria, our Nigeria strategy calls for a survey of unreached peoples among Nigeria's eighty million people in 1980-81. We anticipate that a new mission in Nigeria, possibly in conjunction with the mission boards of the Nigerian churches, can begin by 1982.

CRWM has approved the placement of a missionary in French-speaking Africa for a two-year period to conduct a survey and plan outreach in countries where Christians are few. The Back to God Hour will cooperate with its French broadcast.

#### 5. 1979 Highlights

Rural health ministries, including dispensaries and maternity centers at Kunav, Serti, and Baissa, were transferred to the ownership of the national churches. Over seventy-four dispensaries, maternity centers, and village health centers are involved.

The Sudan United Mission, of which our Nigeria mission is a part, celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary at Wase Rock. Since 1904 eight denominations, with over fifty-four hundred churches and an average Sunday attendance of one million people, have sprung up from the labor of early missionaries.

The Literature Program of the mission was transferred to the ownership of the Nigerian churches. Additional bookstores are being built.

Fifty thousand RSV Bibles, donated by the WHBL and funded primarily through gifts from the Canadian Christian Reformed churches, were distributed free to students in Nigeria's secondary school system.

Miss Margaret Dykstra completed the translation of the New Testament into the language of the Takum Jukun. The New Testament is being printed by the WHBL.

The Christian Rural Development Program at Mararraba, Nigeria, supported by CRWRC missionaries and money, was transferred to ownership of the Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria.

Nurse Margaret Enter began a pilot project for the preventive health program in Liberia.

Nigeria elected a civilian government after thirteen years of military rule. The government was peaceably installed on October 1, 1979, and relations with churches and missions are congenial.

Initial steps for transfer of the ownership of Mkar Christian Hospital to the NKST Church were taken. Projected time of transfer is November, 1980. The hospital employs 450 Nigerians and serves over 200,000 patients each year.

Over five thousand adults and children were baptized by the Nigerian churches in the past year.

The Theological Education by Extension program for church leaders in Liberia has been expanded.

Mission Boards of Nigerian churches have sent out twenty-four Nigerian missionaries.

## B. Asia

### 1. Missionaries

#### Guam

Mr. and Mrs. Con Douma

Rev. and Mrs. John Schuring\*

#### Japan

Rev. and Mrs. Henry Bruinooge

Rev. and Mrs. Michiel De Berdt

Rev. and Mrs. Ray Hommes

Mr. and Mrs. Jack Jones

Rev. and Mrs. Gerrit Koedoot

Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Kress

Mr. and Mrs. Sid Norman

Rev. and Mrs. William Stob

Rev. and Mrs. Richard D. Sytsma

Rev. and Mrs. Richard E. Sytsma

#### Philippines

Mr. and Mrs. Vicente Apostol

Rev. and Mrs. Gary Bekker

Rev. and Mrs. Henry De Vries

Rev. and Mrs. Art Helleman

Rev. and Mrs. Mark Knoper

Rev. and Mrs. Dick Kwantes

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Munro

Rev. and Mrs. Henry Smidstra

Rev. and Mrs. David Stravers

Rev. and Mrs. Edward Vander

Berg

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Visser\*\*

Rev. and Mrs. Maas Vander Bilt

#### Taiwan

Rev. and Mrs. Carl Afman

Rev. and Mrs. Peter Jong

Rev. Gary Roest

Rev. and Mrs. Mike Vander Pol

### Missionaries on Loan

Rev. and Mrs. Albert Hamstra  
(Bangladesh)

Rev. and Mrs. Tom De Vries  
(Papua New Guinea)

Rev. and Mrs. Erik Schering  
(Papua New Guinea)

Rev. and Mrs. Philip De Jonge  
(Jordan)

Rev. and Mrs. John Houseward  
(Australia)

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Stadt (New  
(Zealand)

#### Key

\*Short Term

\*\*Intern

## 2. General Events

The mission to Asia at the end of the 70s was enacted against a background of the confusing and disastrous emigration of thousands of people from Vietnam, and the loss of their precious, ancestral roots on the mainland of Asia. A genocidal holocaust was inflicted on Kampuchea (Cambodia). Chronic poverty in the south central area of India and Bangladesh gnaws at the conscience of the whole world, and stands in stark contrast to the wealthy gulf states on the west of Asia and the spectacular economic success in countries east of Asia. In the oil-rich countries of Asia, as well as Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore, there was an infusion of capital that was unique, a remarkable political stability in spite of the events in Iran and Afghanistan, extensive technological education, and marketing and export of the goods produced in Asia. The discovery of massive resources in some parts of Asia produced an infusion of hope among the citizens. New balance and moderation developed in the leadership in China, around which the rest of Asia revolves and from which it derived a sense of well-being. There was a growth in materialism and a departure from traditional spiritual emphases in Asian religious endeavors from one side of the continent to the other.

## 3. Effect on Missions

The security of most of Asia has helped in the recruitment of missionaries. Asians have perceived that the post-Vietnam problems have not been caused by Western "Christian" nations. Economic improvement has created an atmosphere in which churches can hope to become self-supporting. Some of the churches have expanded their outreach into foreign mission enterprises that are uniquely Asian. There has been growth in the churches in Asia: steady growth in Japan, very encouraging growth in Thailand and the Philippines, and phenomenal growth in South Korea—perhaps the greatest in the world. There has been a general call by religious leaders for return to spiritual concerns, respect for the elderly, obedience to parents, peace between neighbors. Hence, there is optimism for the 80s, especially for the increased involvement of Asian missionaries from Asian churches involved in Asian outreach with the North American missionary as a helper.

## 4. Report from Fields

### a. Japan

Two major events during 1979 tended to effect a significant change

of direction and geographical focus in the mission in Japan. One of these was the transfer of six organized churches from the supervision of the mission to the fellowship of the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Church in Japan. This raises to twenty-three the number of congregations that have been formally transferred, and leaves eight mission posts in stages of development toward organization. The second event was the initiative that has been shown by the Eastern and the Central presbyteries in evangelistic outreach under their own direction, and the strong request that missionaries be recruited to work under assignment with the presbytery in these areas.

The decision by the board to sell houses no longer needed in the Tokyo area, where these churches have been organized, and to use the proceeds to build churches in the new areas opened the possibility of new posts for the Rev. M. De Berdt (Tsukuba) and the Rev. R. E. Sytsma (Koshigaya) in Ibaraki and Saitama prefectures. The Rev. William Stob continues in Narita in Chiba prefecture, and the Rev. R. D. Systma in Numazu, Shizuoka prefecture. The Rev. Mr. Hommes is in Kunitachi, part of Tokyo prefecture, and the Rev. Arnold Kress in Aomori prefecture in the north. Six missionary families are engaged in church planting in six different prefectures—the mission takes on a whole new perspective geographically.

Four missionaries have elected to transfer their areas of work. The Vander Bilts and Kwanteses will take up work in the Philippines in 1980 and the Koedoots in 1981. The Rev. Henry Bruinooge has accepted a call to the home office of the Back to God Hour. Three of these men were in specialized services, all of which are appreciated by the Reformed Church of Japan. Thus far the student ministry, the literature work, the radio work, and the itinerant ministries pioneered by the mission have not captured the imagination of the RCJ to the point where they wish to adopt them as their own. The RCJ continues a deep appreciation for the church-planting ministries, asks for new missionaries, and invites their participation in the work of the presbyteries' missions. The RCJ will be able to continue to staff Kobe Seminary with its own personnel resources when Mr. Koedoot leaves.

The board has agreed to attempt to replace these four men—no easy task since they represent eighty years of experience in Japan and fluency in the language. The new men will enter a whole new style of mission, two in the Tohoku (northern Honshu) area where the Rev. A. Kress is working and where a new presbytery will be born out of the Eastern (mostly Tokyo area) Presbytery. Two men will be assigned to the Central Presbytery area (mid-Honshu, with Nagoya as a hub) in which the Rev. R. D. Sytsma is already at work. The decision to replace the men who are leaving rested primarily on the needs in the new areas, the urgent appeals of the presbyteries, the past cordiality of relationships, and the conservation of financial resources in more cost-effective ministries.

The focus of church planting is thus being strengthened as the RCJ specifically desires; the work is being directly allied with presbytery outreach; and the work is expanding into areas in which the RCJ has

taken the initiatives in evangelism. Ancillary services will be turned over to para-church committees or associations of church members. This is the way Kobe Seminary began, and it is also the way Shizuoka Blind Center and the Takehara Rehabilitation Center operate. Both of the latter works of mercy were substantially helped and encouraged by the Japan mission and both enlarged their facilities in 1979. The mission's involvement at Christian Academy continues—the Jones and Norman families are loaned to this school for missionary children.

b. Guam

The ministry to Micronesian students on and near the University of Guam campus was set back when the pastor to these students, the Rev. Minoru Louis, died suddenly in June, 1979. He had worked part-time for the United Bible Society, and part-time for Faith Church under a grant from World Missions. A replacement for this effective national pastor is being sought.

The Rev. and Mrs. George Cooper have served on Guam since 1977, extending their overseas service into 1980. When their home service assignment occurred during the church's busy season, a temporary replacement was found in the Rev. and Mrs. John O. Schuring who volunteered to return to Guam for a four-month ministry.

Faith Church volunteers conducted a Daily Vacation Bible School in three Micronesian locations. The Rev. Minoru Louis had made some of the arrangements for these sessions just before his death. Faith Church is still considering relocation to a property it has bought near a residential area. The church continues to cooperate with the Korean Presbyterian Church of Guam of which the Rev. David Hwan Jo is the pastor. Faith Church has also made a specific request for a loaned pastor to replace the Cooper family.

The bookstore experienced a record year of sales. Under ten years of management by Mr. and Mrs. Con Douma the bookstore has shown sales greater than the previous year in every instance except one. The effect of a new general service bookstore which opened in late 1979, on the same road, will be closely watched during 1980.

c. Philippines

Permission was requested and granted during 1979 for the organization of two new congregations, both on Luzon Island. San Francisco Del Monte was organized under the leadership of the Rev. and Mrs. Ed Vander Berg, and Calauan, under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Alex Munro. Because these two congregations are so far from the Negros Island congregations that were organized in 1976, there is a possibility that a second classis of the Christian Reformed Church of the Philippines will be formed.

New missionary outreach was initiated in Pasig, in metro Manila, by the Rev. and Mrs. Henry Smidstra, and on Panay Island by the Rev. and Mrs. Henry De Vries in Iloilo, where they cooperate closely with the work of Mr. and Mrs. Vicente Apostol in Pavia.

Four families continued their assignments at the Christian Reformed Seminary and Bible College. The second-year enrollment was gratify-

ing—most of the first class returned as a second class, and thirty-six students enrolled as the new first-year class. The resignation and departure of the Rev. and Mrs. Johan Tangelder from the field, illness in missionary families, and the home service of the Rev. and Mrs. Dave Stravers during 1979 put strains on the faculty. The missionaries responded by assisting each other and the school thrived. Musical programs and athletic activities were developed and a strong spirit of devotion and cooperation was experienced within the student body. The Rev. and Mrs. Gary Bekker serve as the administrators of CRSBC. In spite of short-staffing, remodeling continued as planned, and at the end of the year the warehouses of which the "campus" was comprised had been transformed into an efficient dormitory, office, classroom and library facility.

The mission continues to encourage community development, nutritional, and social relief programs. The four staff members provided by CRWRC for work in the Philippines carry out their tasks in cooperation with the organized churches and some of the mission posts. Plans were developed for the Luke Society to introduce medical programs in Negros and Panay islands. The encouragement thus given to the national church has resulted in joint evangelistic endeavors by World Missions and the Christian Reformed Church of the Philippines in Cadiz, Binalbagan, and Victorias, all on Negros Island.

Outreach on Luzon Island has also continued—in the leprosarium at Tala, and in a remote village in Bayawas where whole families were baptized and a significant segment of the village has now become evangelically Christian.

In response to the enthusiastic reception of the gospel in communities where World Missions is involved, the staff has drawn up an imaginative strategy statement that calls for expansion in twenty-seven communities in the Philippines. Budgetary provisions for several years of work has been made and recruitment has continued with encouraging results. The Kwantes and Vander Bilt families from Japan will transfer to Luzon in 1980 and the Koedoot family will eventually transfer from Japan to teach at CRSBC. Intern positions have been approved for 1980 and replacements for CRWRC workers leaving the field have been encouraged. Thus the Philippine mission continues to implement the synodical principles stated in the Mission Order and the mission principles of 1975 through the pursuit of a holistic ministry of word and deed.

#### d. Taiwan

Two significant shifts in emphasis occurred in the mission to the Chinese people during 1979. One of these was a reduction in the amount of local broadcasting by the Rev. Peter Tong in Taiwan, and a continuation of his radio messages from the shortwave stations in the Philippines. These Chinese language broadcasts reach all the provinces of coastal China. It appears that such broadcasts had a significant effect in the preservation of Christian meetings and the up-building of Christian groups during periods of isolation and opposition occurring on the mainland in the early 70s. In response to changed

needs and new opportunities, greater emphasis will now be placed upon a literature ministry, with materials being published in both Taiwan and Hong Kong.

Another change in emphasis was the expansion of the area of mission to the four million Chinese people who live in Hong Kong. The Rev. Gary Roest has accepted that assignment, and while he is a part of the Taiwan mission for purposes of fellowship and administration, his work and language study will be under the direction of the Chinese Church Research Center located on the premises of the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong, and directed by the Rev. Jonathan Chao.

Both Mr. Vander Pol and Mr. Afman continue to serve congregations of the Reformed Presbyterian churches on Taiwan. The Rev. Mr. Vander Pol's major assignment is ministry to the Taipei International Church, while the Rev. Mr. Afman is moderator of a Presbyterian congregation in Soong Shan.

#### 5. Loaned Ministries

Nine of the missionaries in Asia work under the direction of other organizations or congregations. We are in this way recognizing the autonomy of national churches, and the management resources that are available in other countries. We are thus preserving or developing the dignity and autonomy of sister congregations or groups which are in need of personnel resources that can be provided by the Christian Reformed Church. We are in this manner also reciprocating the loan of many national pastors and evangelists to the missions in Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines in years past. The exercise of loans of personnel to other organizations is a recognition of the growth that is shown by national churches, and the need for *their* initiative and leadership in the mission to Asia during the 1980s.

#### 6. Historical Note

Synod of 1980 will mark the sixtieth anniversary of its decision to begin work in Asia. In 1920 synod decided to send three families to China. The mission continued with many interruptions until 1950, when the Rev. Albert Smit left the field. Thirty-three missionaries were appointed for work in China. About half of them have received the Lord's rewards for their labors. Of the original six persons sent to China the Rev. Harry Dykstra is blessed with vigorous health and continues an avid interest in China. Early this year Mrs. Albert H. Smit passed away, mourned by four children whose lives are dedicated to the service of the church, three of them in the Japan mission.

During these sixty years, the church in China remained alive, even though it was frequently immersed in the crucible of revolution and war. It appeared to be a bruised reed when the government of the People's Republic was formed in 1950, and the chief tester of the church was no longer a placid Confucianism but an aggressive Communism. Now that the constitutional warrant to oppose religion has been exercised with greater restraint, the church which went underground is emerging—resil-

ient and energetic. Numerically, its losses have been replenished. Spiritually, its fiber has been stiffened. No specific information has yet been gleaned from the towns and villages where CRC personnel formerly lived and witnessed, nor from thousands of other relatively insignificant villages in China. Travelers to the larger cities report enthusiastic response to the restoration of church buildings for the hours of public worship. Yet some Christians accustomed to the format of "the church in your house" have reservations about meeting in state-owned churches whose pastors are state supported. We know with certainty that God has protected his church in China; how he did this and what we must learn from our suffering but victorious brothers are the lessons to be taught by the Chinese, to us, in the 80s.

C. *Latin America*

1. Missionaries

Argentina

Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Brinks  
(on study assignment)  
Mr. and Mrs. Raúl Giménez  
Rev. and Mrs. John Hutt  
Rev. and Mrs. Jack Huttinga

Miss Eunice Kimm\*  
Mr. John Medendorp\*  
Dr. and Mrs. Sidney Rooy  
Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Stob  
Rev. and Mrs. Louis Wagenveld

Brazil

Rev. and Mrs. Carl Bosma

Rev. and Mrs. Charles Uken

Central America

Rev. and Mrs. Paul Bergsma  
Rev. and Mrs. James Dekker  
Rev. and Mrs. Wayne De Young  
Miss Joan Kamphouse  
Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Klaasen  
Rev. and Mrs. José Martínez\*\*  
Rev. and Mrs. William Renkema

Rev. and Mrs. Arnold Rumph  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Schipper  
Mr. and Mrs. Gary Teja  
Rev. and Mrs. John Van der  
Borgh  
Miss Debbi Vugteveen\*  
Mr. and Mrs. John Wind

Mexico

Mr. Ed Aulie\*  
Mr. and Mrs. John De Young  
Miss Winabelle Gritter  
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Korf  
Mr. and Mrs. Nick Kroeze  
Mr. and Mrs. Abe Marcus  
Rev. and Mrs. Gerald Nyenhuis

Dr. and Mrs. Derk Oostendorp  
Mr. and Mrs. John Paul Roberts  
Rev. and Mrs. Larry Roberts  
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Roeda  
Rev. and Mrs. Robert Ruis  
Mr. and Mrs. James Visser\*  
Dr. and Mrs. Hans Weerstra

Puerto Rico

Rev. and Mrs. Merle Den Bleyker  
Rev. and Mrs. Thomas De Vries  
Rev. and Mrs. Arie Leder

Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott  
Rev. and Mrs. Ronald Sprik

Key

\*Volunteers

\*\*On Loan from PCA

There are several particularly significant concerns that are occupying the Latin American mission efforts these days. Our report on Latin America will center around these major issues.



## 2. National Autonomy

The most dramatic issue is that of increasing desire by the national church to have a greater voice in her affairs and to be treated as a fully equal partner in the church. This is certainly a legitimate concern. The church frequently asks for direct contact with the CRC, rather than working through channels of Field Council. She wants to have a voice from the very beginning in what is going on within her borders. She is asking for direct granting of funds which are to be expended in kingdom causes according to the national church's ideas of priority.

CRWM here finds itself in a creative tension. On the one hand, the board is mandated to direct responsibly the resources which are placed at its disposal. On the other hand, World Missions sees as a very legitimate demand of the national church her desire for a greater voice in her own affairs.

Particularly in Argentina and in Mexico this desire is being felt. Argentina is in conversation with the missionaries and with the board for the establishment of a better understanding of her responsibilities, privileges, and prerogatives. Also, Mexico is on the move. In November of 1979, the national Synod of the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico was formed. Naturally, this national synod will want to know where it stands and what its responsibilities are in connection with the work of the Christian Reformed Church

## 3. Church Growth

There is a concern for growth in numbers as well as a concern for maturity and development in the church's affairs. Unfortunately, the latter is more difficult to measure than the former.

Recently the little paper, *The Church Around the World*, gave us these statistics: "In 1926 there were 69,000 protestants in Latin America. . . . Now there are an estimated 20 million, or 6% of the population. . . . Pentecostals account for two out of three protestants." It is naturally the desire of CRWM in Latin America to participate in this growth. Therefore, a search is being conducted for the best possible strategy for growth in numbers but also in depth. Some of the areas in which we work report very good numerical growth. In other cases, such as Brazil, we can report little numerical growth; yet there has been significant leadership development. We desire to increase our effectiveness in this area as well.

## 4. Missionary Commitment

In years past when a man or woman accepted the missionary challenge that was normally believed to be a lifetime commitment. This is no longer the case. Many missionaries think in terms of giving a certain slice of their life to this calling. Therefore, the mission continues with a rather active turnover of personnel.

In Argentina by the end of 1980 there will be a drastic diminishing of numbers on the field. Miss Cecelia Drenth and Mr. and Mrs. Raúl Giménez are leaving Argentina. The Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Brinks,

after a period of study in the States, are requesting a transfer to another Latin American field. We are grateful to have the continued service of this experienced missionary family. The Rev. Harvey Stob is enjoying a year of study, having been awarded the Centennial Missions Scholarship. As a net result, Argentina is dropping to almost one-half of its former CRWM mission strength unless replacements can be found.

Brazil is also suffering from a great change in personnel. The Rev. and Mrs. Willem Dirksen have left and the Rev. and Mrs. Carl Bosma have expressed their plans to leave Brazil at midyear. This will leave the Rev. and Mrs. Charles Uken as our only representatives in that vast country.

Central America has lost one missionary family, Mr. and Mrs. Ryan Veeneman. Mr. Veeneman is returning to the seminary, and it is our hope that he will be returning to missionary service at the conclusion of his studies. Mexico is suffering the loss of veteran missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Jack Roeda. They have accepted an assignment with our sister agency, the Back to God Hour, and will continue to be active in the work in Latin America.

In Puerto Rico, the Rev. and Mrs. Frank Pott have tendered their resignation. In addition to their replacements, we will be needing during 1980 three missionaries for the new field in the Dominican Republic. This certainly presents a significant challenge to the mission. Besides recruiting them, the board must provide orientation and language study for its new missionaries.

On the positive side, however, is the fact that those missionaries who return to serve the church in North America return with a strong mission vision and are valuable in promoting the mission effort of the church. The mission experience enriches the lives of those who go, and also makes available to the mission over the years a vast variety of talent and ability.

##### 5. The Need for a Holistic Ministry

As anyone who is aware of the current political and economic situation in Latin America knows, there is a great deal of turmoil and expectation in almost every Latin American country. There are vast numbers of underprivileged people and a deplorable lack of political freedom. These people look about them and desire a better life for themselves and their nations.

Therefore the mission wrestles with the need for a gospel that speaks to the whole man. This is an ever-present topic at mission meetings and conferences. In one area, that of Oaxaca in Mexico, there is a cooperative program carried out together with the CRWRC in an effort to have a holistic mission outreach to the people. This region was also chosen as a pilot area for the hunger alleviation program. This program is being watched with great interest as a possible pattern for future missions of this kind.

CRWM is well aware of the physical needs of the Latin American peoples, and at the same time it is aware of the need to keep central the verbal witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## 6. Education

In order to meet the needs of the emerging church for leadership, a strong emphasis is put on education. In Puerto Rico much effort is expended in a seminary. Three men of the total mission force of five are engaged predominantly in the work of the seminary. Most of the students of that seminary are from other than Reformed or Presbyterian backgrounds. The challenge is to connect this outreach to church growth and church development on the island.

Education has an important place in Mexico also. Two missionaries are involved in the Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City, which continues to provide leadership for the Independent Presbyterian Church as well as for the National Presbyterian Church. The fastest growing area of the church, numerically speaking, is in the southeast part of Mexico. There is a question of whether the seminary in Mexico City provides the best possible training for that part of the country.

In Central America the training of the leadership is being done by extension. The Rev. Paul Bergsma is active in this work. We are also involved in training in Guatemala with the presence of the Rev. Arnold Rumph in the Mariano Galvez University Theological Department, and of the Rev. James Dekker, professor for the seminary of the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala.

In Brazil we are not involved in formal leadership training, but there is a strong effort to give lay training to the national believers.

Our involvement in education in Argentina is twofold. There is lay training by extension so that the people may be equipped to do more within the church. Dr. Sidney Rooy is active in this extension work and also is a teacher and administrator in Union Seminary in Buenos Aires.

## 7. General

Latin America is clearly not a static mission field. It is active, vibrant, changing, and needy. It provides an exciting challenge for 1980. There is urgency in this work, since it is necessary to reach out before circumstances make it impossible. We ask your prayers for these matters presented.

## IV. FINANCIAL MATTERS

### A. *General Overview*

The year 1979 was one in which the missionary enterprise took new heart. While the cost of missions worldwide continued to escalate, the sending churches rallied to support the endeavor in a manner which offered profound encouragement to the missionary family. Not once was it necessary to miss a payroll or to restrict recruitment. We were able to maintain staff levels in the face of continued dollar devaluation in some countries, and spiraling inflation in others as, for example, Argentina, which ended 1979 with an annual inflation rate of 140 percent. We continue to enter into agreements with national churches as responsibilities are increasingly transferred to these churches. These interdependence

agreements are written on the basis of carefully stipulated guidelines which share CRC resources and avoid the specter of dependency.

At the beginning of 1980, twenty-nine positions were open for recruitment. These openings contributed to the excellent financial situation which CRWM enjoyed at the end of the decade. We continue to be committed to the filling of these openings during the course of this year.

#### *B. Australia/New Zealand and Jordan*

The Synod of 1977 provided for the possibility of CRC pastors serving among the Australian Reformed churches for a limited period of time. The Rev. and Mrs. John Houseward currently serve at Toowoomba in Queensland, Australia, and more recently the Rev. and Mrs. Paul Stadt have accepted the call to serve in New Zealand. Nevertheless, the funding requirements for 1981 may be satisfactorily met with a quota amount of ten cents per family.

In 1978 synod assigned to CRWM the recruitment and staffing for the Amman International Church in Jordan. In 1979 the Rev. and Mrs. Philip V. De Jonge departed to serve in that country and synod is therefore requested to carry forward the thirty-five cents per family quota amount for 1981 in order to continue this ministry.

#### *C. Contingency for Inflation and Devaluation*

Once again CRWM is presenting a request for a supplementary quota amount to compensate for the possibility of on-going dollar devaluation and overseas inflation. It is our conviction that it is simply responsible planning to look ahead to the possibility of this inflation overseas which might seriously disrupt the continuation of certain missionary programs were we not to plan in this manner. Thus the board requests a quota amount of \$1.50 which may be used in 1981 in the event that these overseas costs continue far in excess of that which obtains in North America.

#### *D. Change in Fiscal Year*

At its annual board sessions, it was decided to request synod to adopt the establishment of a September–August fiscal year beginning on September 1, 1982, with an interim eight-month fiscal period from January 1 through August 31, 1982. This decision is the result of a long-felt need to cut down the time between preparation and implementation of the budget. In swiftly changing situations overseas it becomes increasingly difficult to budget so far in advance. A new fiscal-year arrangement will also provide additional time for the annual audit and for the preparation of annual reports for the board and for synod. (Note: The fiscal year of three sister agencies—the Board of Publications, Calvin College, and CRWRC—end on August 31.)

#### *E. Financial Policies Manual*

A manual of denominational financial policies was endorsed by CRWM and recommended to the Synod of 1980 for adoption for denominational agencies.

### F. Salary Scale Information

Synod of 1978 instructed all agencies requesting quota support to include the schedules of salary and fringe benefits in their annual reports. CRWM complied with this instruction in its agenda report last year even though a uniform policy had not yet been adopted by synod for denominational agencies. Since that time such a denominational salary schedule has appeared and CRWM is within the stipulated ranges in every case. CRWM herewith presents its salary scale information according to the guidelines given to us:

#### 1. Missionary salaries, 1980.

- a. Basic salary: married employees \$12,700  
single employees \$10,000
- b. Prior service increase: \$50.00 per year of prior service with a ten-year maximum; Applicable work undertaken previous to employment with CRWM in a field similar to or qualifying the individual for CRWM service.
- c. Service increase: \$100 per year for each year of service with CRWM.
- d. Children's allowance: \$400 per year per child.
- e. Cost of living subsidy on all fields where applicable.
- f. Payment of 2.05% of salary as an allowance to the ordained for social security or pension plan purposes.
- g. Payment of pension plan payments and all medical and hospitalization costs.
- h. Payment of 50% of dental expenses.
- i. Provision of housing on field and during home service.
- j. Provision of automobile or transportation costs overseas.
- k. Assistance toward excessive education costs for children.

#### 2. Office Staff Salaries, 1980

During 1979, the uniform salary ranges for 1980 were established and published in the Acts of Synod. CRWM is grateful for this step which it, together with other agencies, has persistently requested and which provides for a uniform method of disclosure. CRWM has therefore followed the synodically prescribed guidelines for 1980 as requested, and stands ready to follow any level of disclosure which synod may desire. The information requested is as follows:

<i>Classification</i>	<i>Synodically Approved Salary Range</i>	<i>Number of Staff</i>
Executive Staff I	\$24,000-\$36,000	1
Executive Staff II	\$21,600-\$32,400	3
Executive Staff III	\$19,400-\$29,200	1
Administrative Staff I	\$17,600-\$26,400	2
Administrative Staff II	\$14,200-\$21,200	1

In addition to the staff noted above, CRWM also employs two office assistants and six secretaries. Total administrative costs during 1980 are estimated at 7.6 percent of budget.

G. *Treasurer's Report*

The budget for 1979 was approximately \$5,000,900, and we are happy to report that our actual income slightly exceeded that amount. Sufficient funds were on hand at all times during the year to meet all obligations to our missionaries and for the progress supported and budgeted for by synod.

Our auditors, Arthur Andersen and Company, are in the process of preparing their statements as of December 31, 1979, and when these are completed they will be given to the Synodical Interim Finance Committee for presentation to synod through its Advisory Committee on Finance.

H. *Budget for 1981*

A complete breakdown of the budget for 1981 will be submitted to the officers of synod and to members of its finance advisory committee when synod meets. A summary of the budget follows:

DISBURSEMENTS

Personnel Costs:		
Salaries	\$2,827,475	
Missionary Expenses	342,000	
Medical Expenses	112,300	
Travel and Freight	286,650	
Housing and Inland Travel	<u>713,300</u>	
Total Personnel Costs		\$4,281,725
Program Costs		1,401,324
Capital Costs		418,751
Field Expansion		204,300
Administration		552,300
Fund Raising		189,000
Contingency for Inflation/Devaluation		<u>90,000</u>
Total 1981 Budget Disbursements		<u>\$7,137,400</u>

INCOME

Quota Receipts at \$62.30 per family	\$3,656,400
Missionary Support	1,910,000
Gifts and Offerings	1,350,000
Field Receipts	100,000
Miscellaneous	<u>121,000</u>
Total 1981 Budget Income	<u>\$7,137,400</u>

I. *Quota Request for 1981*

Basic quota for World Missions	\$60.35
Quota for contingency—inflation/ devaluation World Missions	1.50
Continue Australia/New Zealand program assigned by synod to CRWM	.10
Continue Jordan program assigned by synod to CRWM	<u>.35</u>
Total quota requested for 1981 per family	<u>\$62.30</u>

### *J. Request for Special Offerings*

We are requesting approval of a budget of \$7,137,400 and quota income of \$3,656,400. The balance of \$3,481,000 must be raised through missionary support, gifts and offerings, and income derived from field, and miscellaneous receipts. To meet this financial need, it is urgently necessary that the Board for CRWM be recommended for one or more special offerings. Therefore, we respectfully request that synod continue CRWM on the list of denominational causes for one or more offerings during 1981.

### V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In accordance with synod's mandate, CRWM convened the initial meeting of the Translation and Educational Assistance Committee (TEAC). This new entity is presenting its own report to synod; included in it is the report of the Spanish Literature Committee which was formerly found attached to the CRWM report.

During 1979, our first missionary family entered the country of Jordan and missionaries were recruited for Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. An on-site study of Zaire was conducted by the Africa Area Secretary, the Rev. William Van Tol, in the company of the Rev. Aaron Kayayan of the Back to God Hour. CRWM does not recommend the establishment of a mission there at this time, although it was decided to persist in investigation and analysis of challenges in Francophone Africa. A missionary will be assigned to this survey during the course of 1981.

The revolution in Nicaragua caused significant disruption of CRWM's ministry in that country, though unusual and unexpected blessing followed upon that turmoil. One such blessing was the organization of the Christian Reformed Church in the city of Managua. The stability of El Salvador and Guatemala is in serious doubt at this writing. In Mexico, the synod of the Independent Presbyterian Church was organized, and significant growth was reported among the peoples of the Yucatan Peninsula. Changes in the staffing in Japan resulted in the transfer of several seasoned missionaries from that field to the Philippines. Nigeria celebrated the return to civilian rule during 1979, and the mission engaged in the continued process of the transfer of authority and responsibility for programs to the national churches. With thanks to God the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Sudan United Mission was celebrated.

Significant challenges confront CRWM as the new decade opens before us. It is imperative that we review the Guidelines for Interdependence which chart our cooperation with national churches overseas. Adjustments must be made which are compatible with the changing situation which we have entered. Each field is engaged in the preparation and update of Strategy Statements which are documents relating to long-range planning. We hope to continue our conversations with the CRWRC regarding joint administration procedures on fields overseas. CRWM has gone on record as being committed to a unified presentation of the gospel to man as a unity of body and soul.

The new decade will undoubtedly pose serious challenges and threats to missionary endeavor. At the same time, there is the distinct possibility that this decade may witness the greatest missionary advance of the century. This possibility is based on the fact that the church of Jesus Christ is established today in parts of the world where heretofore it was unknown. With this increased base, the church may more effectively launch out into other cultures and among other peoples. Furthermore, the church has an increased sense of its solidarity and unity worldwide. At the same time, we remember that the number of people without the gospel in Africa and Asia has more than doubled since the beginning of this century and will likely be more than tripled by its end, if the Lord tarries. It is that challenge that spurs us on to send heralds to distant places in the name of him whom God sent into our world for the salvation of his people.

#### VI. SUMMARY OF ITEMS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ACTION

- A. Representation at synod, I, B.
- B. Nominations for board membership, I, C.
- C. Reappointment of Asia Area Secretary, I, D.
- D. Presentation of missionaries, I, E.
- E. Delegation from World Missions related churches, II, B.
- F. Mission Order revision, II, F.
- G. Financial matters:
  - 1. Continue Australia/New Zealand program, IV, B.
  - 2. Continue Jordan program, IV, B.
  - 3. Quota for contingency-inflation/devaluation, C.
  - 4. Change in fiscal year, IV, D.
  - 5. Financial Policies Manual, IV, E.
  - 6. Budget for 1981, IV, H.
  - 7. Request for basic quota of \$62.30, IV, I.
  - 8. Request for special offerings, IV, J.

Board for Christian Reformed World  
Missions  
Eugene Rubingh, Executive Secretary



## REPORT 4

## CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

## I. INTRODUCTION

"Lead on, Lord" is the theme of Home Missions as it enters its second century of service. At a dinner on February 27, 1980, the Board of Home Missions celebrated the goodness of the Lord as experienced by Home Missions during the past 100 years. The first century of Home Missions activity was marked by growth. In 1879, one home missionary was sent out and in 1979, 245 persons received financial support through Home Missions. From a budget of \$500 in 1879, the needs of Home Missions now exceed \$5,000,000. In the beginning, the primary concern was to gather people of Dutch descent into small churches. Home Missions ministries now are bringing the gospel to many different tribes and races that live in Canada and the United States. Over the past 100 years, much significant mission service has been rendered. Hundreds of people have been converted and brought into the church. The needs of many have been met in the name of Christ. Church planting among people of various racial and ethnic backgrounds has taken place.

While praising God for the good things that have been accomplished during the past, Home Missions now wishes to challenge the denomination to think of the past as preparation for the future. God has placed the Christian Reformed Church in two great nations and he has equipped her for the task of being his witnesses in these lands. Looking around at the people of the United States and Canada—people who have been fed stones for bread, who are exploited by the peddlers of temporary satisfaction, and who are caught in the downward spin of secularism—the church prays: "Lead on, Lord. Help us to see the needs of the people around us. Make us aware of the resources you have given us. Inspire us to speak the gospel clearly and demonstrate the kingdom vividly. Make us messengers of hope, communicators of faith, and illustrators of love. By your Spirit draw thousands of people into membership in our churches, open our hearts to receive them. You have been leading, Lord, now lead on!" At the centennial celebration dinner, Dr. Richard De Ridder of Calvin Theological Seminary challenged those present to "be convinced of our indispensability in the mission of God, not in an ultimate sense, but in the sense of the purpose for which God has set us in his kingdom and church and in his world today." At the end of the evening, board members, staff, office and regional personnel, along with guests, joined in singing: "Lead on, O King Eternal, we follow not with fears; for gladness breaks like morning where'er thy face appears. Thy cross is lifted o'er us, we journey in its light; the crown awaits the conquest, lead on, O God of might."

While the celebration of 100 years of Christian Reformed Home Missions included some festivities, these were minimal and the celebration was primarily expressed in doing mission work. Outreach ministries were carried on in Home Missions fields and through all of the churches that take their evangelism responsibility seriously. During the past year, a revised Home Missions Order and a report on Biblical Evangelism were approved by synod. An International Home Missions Conference was held. Twenty-two new persons were recruited. Some new buildings were constructed. Evangelism training was provided. Two Home Missions churches became Stage IV. New work was begun in Loveland, Colorado; Houston, Texas; Fairfield, California; and Vancouver, British Columbia. Considerable attention was given to the development of the churches and schools on the Indian field. Efforts among special language groups were fruitful and special mention should be made of the progress among the Koreans as well as the door of opportunity among French Canadians.

With the increased mobility of people, the difference between the work of World Missions and Home Missions is becoming less distinct. Both are engaged in cross-cultural ministries and there is increased use of each other's insights and resources. Personnel of each of these boards find themselves seeking the counsel and assistance of the other. One of the expressions of common concern resulted in the awarding of a Mission Fellowship to Dr. Peter Ipema who has been commissioned to work with the two boards of missions and Calvin Theological Seminary in exploring the challenge of Islam and recommending how the Christian Reformed Church should respond. A report is scheduled for 1980.

The past year has been a good year for developing interrelationships both within and outside of the denomination. Within the denomination, Home Missions has enjoyed good working relationships with the various boards and agencies. The Mission Coordination Council is proving helpful. Some new things were done cooperatively with The Back to God Hour and better understanding and closer relationships have been established with the Fund for Needy Churches Committee. Contact is maintained with the home missions personnel of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council as well as the Reformed Church of America.

When one reviews the past reports of Home Missions to the synod, one is struck by the change. When there were ten fields, the report included a description of the work in each place. Up to a few years ago the entire audited financial report was included in the printed agenda. The expansion of the work coupled with the desire of synod to keep its agenda a reasonably sized volume has necessitated elimination of much of this interesting information. Descriptions of each field and statements about each missionary cannot be included. Individual reports of home missionaries are available from the office, especially to those churches which provide missionary salary support. The fully audited financial report is submitted to synod under separate cover and is available upon request. The 1980 SEED Report, which reviews the progress of Home Missions in pursuit of its present five-year goals, is also available to those who ask. During 1980, new five-year goals will be formulated. Through

ads and articles in various publications, denominational mailings, and such things, Home Missions seeks to provide more of the detail and drama of its exciting work.

## II. THE BOARD

The board, which consists of a delegate from each of the classes plus eleven board members-at-large, met February 26-28, 1980. Between the annual board meetings, the executive committee met eight times.

### A. Officers of the Board

Mr. Marvin Van Dellen, President  
 Rev. Edward Cooke, Vice-President  
 Rev. John G. Van Ryn, Executive Secretary  
 Rev. Roger G. Timmerman, Assistant Secretary  
 Mr. Gerard J. Borst, Treasurer  
 Mr. Joseph T. Daverman, Assistant Treasurer

### B. Subcommittees of the Executive Committee

Administration Committee: Mr. M. Van Dellen, Rev. E. Cooke, Mr. J. Daverman, Rev. R. Timmerman  
 Evangelism Committee: Rev. W. Leys, Rev. R. Walter, Jr., Rev. R. Fisher, Mr. G. Vander Bie, Rev. G. Postema  
 Finance Committee: Mr. H. Nieman, Mr. J. Daverman, Mr. H. De Haan, Mr. H. Soper, Mr. M. Van Dellen  
 Fields Committee #1 (Indian): Rev. M. Doornbos, Rev. B. Mulder, Rev. E. Cooke, Rev. M. Groenendyk, Miss G. Vander Ark  
 Fields Committee #2: Rev. R. Opperwall, Rev. G. Hutt, Rev. R. Timmerman, Mr. B. Sharpe, Rev. W. Swets  
 Personnel Committee: The staff

## III. OFFICE PERSONNEL

### A. Staff

Executive Secretary . . . . . Rev. John G. Van Ryn  
 Minister of Evangelism . . . . . Rev. Wesley Smedes  
 Treasurer . . . . . Mr. Gerard J. Borst  
 Fields Secretary . . . . . Rev. Peter Borgdorff  
 Personnel Secretary . . . . . Rev. Duane E. VanderBrug  
 Associate Minister of Evangelism . . . . . Rev. Henry De Rooy

### B. Support Personnel

Church Relations Secretary . . . . . Mr. Stanley Koning  
 Controller . . . . . Mr. Howard Meyers  
 Graphic Artist . . . . . Mr. Joe Vriend  
 Planned Giving Consultant . . . . . Mr. Ed Berends  
 Bookkeeper . . . . . Miss Jeanne Faber  
 Secretaries: Julie Koster, Wilma Vanden Bosch, Karen Talsma, Hilda Althouse, Gert Rotman, Judy Nieuwkoop

### C. Developments

Mr. Ed Berends, after serving as a member of the board and executive committee, volunteered to give part of his time to the development of a Planned Giving Program for Home Missions. Mr. Berends is excellently qualified to this task and the board rejoices in his generous offer. The

Rev. Henry De Rooy, who has ably served two terms as Associate Minister of Evangelism, was reappointed to another four-year term.

The position of Communications Coordinator remains unfilled. While the search for a qualified person continues, other staff persons are assuming extra responsibilities. The present appointment of the Rev. Wesley Smedes extends to April, 1981. The search for a new Minister of Evangelism involved reviewing and contacting over twenty-five possible candidates. The Administration Committee was thankful for the interest and the qualifications of the persons contacted. Some removed their own names from consideration. The board, at its annual meeting, reviewed the process of the Administration Committee, interviewed two candidates and selected one, the Rev. Dirk Hart. The board also reviewed the work of the Rev. John G. Van Ryn as Executive Secretary and is recommending his reappointment (Home Missions Order, Article 4, Section 4).

#### *D. Reappointment of the Rev. John G. Van Ryn as Executive Secretary*

John Van Ryn has been serving as Executive Secretary since 1974. He was appointed for an initial term of two years and a second term of four years. The board now recommends that he be reappointed as Executive Secretary for a four-year term.

#### *E. Appointment of the Rev. Dirk Hart as Minister of Evangelism*

Dirk Hart is a graduate of Calvin College and Seminary. He also spent one year at Westminster Theological Seminary. Being ordained into the Christian Reformed ministry in 1966, he has served in Truro, Nova Scotia; Montreal, Quebec; and is now the pastor of the First Church in London, Ontario. His God-given gifts are obvious to the people whom he has served as pastor as well as to his colleagues in classis and the denomination. He has a deep commitment to the Reformed faith and is sensitive to theological issues. His enthusiasm for evangelism has been demonstrated along with his ability to inspire and teach others to engage in the work of evangelism. The Board of Home Missions is convinced that he will be an excellent addition to its staff and will provide competent leadership to the denomination. The board heartily recommends that Dirk Hart be appointed as Minister of Evangelism for an initial two-year term.

### IV. FIELDS

#### *A. General Information*

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

receiving assistance from the board through the Grant-in-Aid program.

Among both kinds of fields, there are two types of ministries. One is church planting. These are ministries initiated and developed in strategic places where there is a need for a Christian Reformed church, there is opportunity to do evangelism, and there is potential for organizing believers into new congregations. The second type is called specialized ministries. These are ministries that have been initiated and developed when there has been strategic opportunity to address the needs of students, military personnel, seafarers, or other groups. The goal of such mission activity is the extension of the church of Jesus Christ, although the organization of a new Christian Reformed congregation is not anticipated.

The total number of ministries under the auspices of Home Missions currently stands at 140. The scope of ministries included involves core cities, suburbs, reservations, campuses, military bases, and seaports. Various minority groups are represented in the above. Presently, there are 100 denominational fields and 39 Grant-in-Aid fields.

### B. Regional Home Missionaries

Immediate supervision of and consultation for these ministries is provided by the Regional Home Missionaries through the coordination of the Fields Secretary. The Regional Home Missionaries are:

Canada .....	Rev. John Van Til
Eastern United States .....	Rev. Ron Peterson
Mid-East United States .....	Rev. Paul Vermaire
Rocky Mountain .....	Rev. Dirk Aardsma
Western United States .....	Rev. John Rozeboom
Southwest (Indian Field) .....	Rev. Earl Dykema

### C. Present Fields and Personnel

#### INDIAN MINISTRIES

##### Reservation Churches

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

##### Specialized Ministries (On-Reservation)

Crownpoint, NM; Christian School—Miss L. Feenstra, Miss M. Heiman
Rehoboth, NM; Christian Education Office—Miss H. Nyhof
Rehoboth, NM; Christian School:
Houseparents: Miss J. Ensink, Mr. & Mrs. S. Gonzales, Mr. & Mrs. R. Kamps, Mr.

& Mrs. J. Lee, Mr. & Mrs. J. Lineweaver, Mr. & Mrs. S. Siebersma  
 Dining & Kitchen Staff: Mr. M. Apol, Miss N. DeKleine, Mr. W. Hoekstra, Mrs. K. Savino  
 Educational Staff: Mr. R. Polinder, Supt.; Miss A. Boyd, Mr. J. De Korne, Mr. M. De Young, Mr. K. Faber, Miss J. Gough, Mrs. L. Harvey, Miss L. Helland, Mrs. G. Hendricks, Mr. G. Hendricks, Mr. C. Kloosterman, Mrs. M. Koning, Mr. K. Kuipers, Mr. S. Pikaart, Miss R. Posthuma, Mr. D. Van Andel, Mr. K. Vander Laan, Miss R. Vander Woude, Mr. J. Van't Land, Mr. T. Weeda, Mr. E. Yazzie  
 Custodian/Maintenance Supervisor—Mr. R. Kerr  
 Rehoboth, NM; Industrial Staff—Mr. E. Oppenhuizen, Mr. T. Tibboel, Mr. J. Den Bleyker, Mr. A. Bosscher, Mr. J. Harkema, Mrs. V. Henry  
 Zuni, NM; Christian School—Mr. A. De Jong, Prin.; Mrs. B. Berghuis, Mr. S. Chimoni, Miss D. Doornbos, Miss K. Stroven, Mr. S. Vander Molen, Miss S. Vander Wulp, Miss R. Walstra

*Churches Off-Reservation*

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

*Specialized Ministries (Off-Reservation)*

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

**CITY AND SUBURBAN**

*Church Development*

Anaheim, CA (Spanish)—Rev. C. Nyenhuis  
 Appleton, WI (GIA)—(Vacant)  
 Atlanta, GA—Rev. F. MacLeod  
 Bakersfield, CA—Rev. N. Vanderzee  
 Boise, ID—Rev. D. Lagerwey  
 Brigham City, UT—Rev. E. Boer, Mr. M. Anderson  
 Burbank, IL (GIA)—Rev. L. Meyer  
 Burke, VA—Rev. W. Ribbens  
 Calgary, AB (GIA)—Rev. K. Verhulst  
 Cape Coral, FL (GIA)—Rev. R. Pontier  
 Cedar Rapids, IA—Rev. K. VanDeGriend  
 Champaign, IL—Rev. A. Menninga  
 Chicago, IL  
     Hispanic (Vacant)  
     Hyde Park (Chinese)—Rev. P. Han  
     Lawndale (GIA)—Ms. B. Clayton  
     Pullman (GIA)—Rev. C. Kromminga, Jr.  
     Roseland (GIA)—Rev. A. VanZanten  
 Cochrane, ON—Mr. A. Vanden Akker  
 Colorado Springs, CO (GIA)—Mr. J. Hart  
 Columbia, MO—Rev. R. Steen  
 Corvallis, OR—Rev. H. Spaan  
 Dallas, TX (GIA)—Rev. D. Zandstra  
 Davenport, IA—Rev. R. Goudzwaard  
 Dayton, OH—Rev. J. Hollebeek  
 Denver, CO, Sun Valley (GIA)—Rev. L. Roossien  
 Detroit, MI, Nardin Park Community—Rev. N. Newell.  
 East Grand Forks, MN—(Vacant)  
 East Islip, NY—Rev. P. Kelder  
 El Paso, TX—(Vacant)  
 Enumclaw, WA (GIA)—Rev. W. Ackerman  
 Fairfield, CA—Rev. G. Hofland  
 Flagstaff, AZ—(Vacant)

Flanders Valley, NJ—Rev. J. Vander Ark  
 Ft. McMurray, AB—Rev. W. Smit  
 Ft. Wayne, IN—Rev. E. Holkeboer  
 Fredericton, NB—Rev. J. Klumpenhouwer  
 Fresno, CA—Rev. M. Reitsma  
 Gaylord, MI (GIA)—Rev. J. Vanden Hoek  
 Helena, MT (GIA)—Rev. J. Moes  
 Honolulu, HI—Rev. R. Palsrok  
 Houston, TX—Rev. J. Holleman, Rev. K. Tanis  
 Indian Harbour Beach, FL—Rev. J. G. Aupperlee  
 Iowa City, IA—Rev. L. Vander Zee  
 Jacksonville, FL—Rev. H. Karsten  
 Kalamazoo, MI, Lexington Green (GIA)—Rev. M. Buwalda  
 Kamloops, BC—Rev. D. Tigchelaar  
 LaCrosse, WI—Rev. J. Osterhouse, Rev. T. Louwerse  
 Lake City, MI (GIA)—Mr. W. Vander Heide  
 Los Angeles, CA  
     Chinatown (Vietnamese)—Rev. J. Tong  
     Crenshaw—Rev. G. Van Enk  
     First—(Vacant)  
     Korean (GIA)—Dr. J. Kim  
     Orange County/Korean (GIA)—Dr. J. Lee  
 Loveland, CO—Rev. H. De Young  
 Mason City, IA—Rev. M. De Young  
 Meadowvale, ON—Rev. H. Lunshof  
 Miami, FL, Good Samaritan (Spanish)—Rev. R. Borrego, Mrs. S. Menchaca  
 Nanaimo, BC—Rev. A. Likkel  
 New Glasgow, NS—Rev. A. Dreise  
 Norfolk, VA—Rev. J. Rickers  
 Oakdale, CA (GIA)—Rev. J. Van Dyken, Jr.  
 Ogden, UT—Rev. A. W. Heersink, Mr. T. Koeman  
 Olympia, WA—Rev. S. Workman  
 Paterson, NJ  
     Madison Avenue (GIA)—Rev. J. Algera, Miss J. Gill  
     Northside (GIA)—Mr. G. Onugha  
 Richfield Springs, NY (GIA)—Rev. T. Toeset  
 Roseville, MI (GIA)—Rev. J. Busscher  
 Riverside, CA—Rev. L. Van Essen  
 Sacramento, CA (GIA)—(Vacant)  
 St. Cloud, MN (GIA)—Rev. P. Kortenhoven  
 St. Louis, MO—Rev. W. Stroo  
 Salt Lake City, UT, Immanuel—Rev. A. Kuiper  
 San Francisco, CA, Golden Gate—Rev. P. Yang  
 Syracuse, NY—Rev. W. De Vries  
 Tacoma, WA (GIA)—Mr. H. Bauer  
 Terre Haute, IN—Rev. P. Brink  
 Tri-Cities, WA—(Vacant)  
 Vanastra, ON (GIA)—Rev. P. Mantel  
 Vancouver, BC (Chinese)—Rev. S. Jung  
 Virginia Beach, VA—(Vacant)  
 Washington, PA—Rev. D. Bouma  
 Windsor, ON—Rev. P. Hogeterp  
 Winnipeg, MB, Hope Center (GIA)—Rev. D. Habermehl  
 Winter Haven, FL (GIA)—Rev. J. Van Ens  
 Yakima, WA, Summitview—Rev. F. Rietema

## SPECIALIZED MINISTRIES

### *Campus*

Akron, OH (GIA)—(Vacant)  
 Ames, IA (GIA)—Rev. F. Walhof  
 Bellingham, WA (GIA)—Rev. D. Bosscher

Big Rapids, MI (GIA)—Rev. K. Zorgdrager  
Boulder, CO—Rev. S. Verheul  
Columbus, OH—Rev. E. Lewis  
Detroit, MI—Rev. J. Natelborg  
Edmonton, AB (GIA)—Rev. T. Oosterhuis  
Guelph, ON—Rev. E. Den Haan  
Hamilton, ON (GIA)—(Vacant)  
Iowa City, IA—Rev. J. Chen  
Kingston, ON—Rev. W. Dykstra  
Lafayette, IN—(Vacant)  
London, ON—Rev. J. Westerhof  
Los Angeles, CA (Vacant)  
Madison, WI—Rev. K. Bulhuis  
Minneapolis, MN—Dr. W. Monsma  
Mt. Pleasant, MI (GIA)—(Vacant)  
Paterson, NJ—Rev. K. Vander Wall  
Tempe, AZ—Rev. M. Nieboer  
Toronto, ON—Rev. D. Pierik  
Vermillion, SD (GIA)—Rev. M. Davies  
Waterloo, ON—Dr. R. Kooistra

#### *Seaway*

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

#### *Servicemen's Homes*

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

#### *Unclassified*

Middlesboro, KY, Appalachia—Rev. T. Limburg  
Denver, CO, Ecumenical Concern (GIA)—Dr. R. Bard  
Salt Lake City, UT, Bible Academy—Mr. A. Sprik

### D. *Developments in 1979*

#### 1. *New Churches*

Work was started in Fairfield, California; Houston, Texas; Vancouver (Chinese), British Columbia; and Loveland, Colorado. Initial attempts were made to find missionary personnel for new church development in Nanaimo, British Columbia; and Virginia Beach, Virginia.

#### 2. *Graduating Fields*

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

Tucson, Arizona and South Windsor, Connecticut graduated during 1979. Progress toward organizational development with a number of other churches is being discussed and significant progress has been made.

### E. *Statistical Information*

In reviewing the annual reports of all fields (including fields supported through the Grant-in-Aid Program) the following is gratefully noted for the year 1979:



	1979	1978	Change
Number of families in HM churches	1850	1825	+25
Number of nonmember families attending	549	487	+62
Average morning attendance	7395	6953	+442
Average evening attendance	3188	3083	+105
Sunday school and/or church school enrollment	3744	4224	-480*
Adult baptisms	64	83	-19
Professions of faith	193	196	-3
Reaffirmations of faith	156	144	+12
Infant baptisms	245	195	+50

\*A change in federal regulations on the Indian Field has significantly reduced the number of students enrolled in religious educational classes.

*Note:* The above statistics do not include attendance at twenty-two campus ministries supported by denominational funds. It is estimated that another two thousand persons are involved in these ministries.

These statistics reveal some of the hard data of ministry. The statistical information must be put in the context of the whole. Innumerable activities and acts of ministry were performed for groups and individuals resulting in the improvement of the quality of life for many. Such things are not reflected in statistical tables but are eternally significant.

#### F. *Development Scheduled for 1980*

##### 1. Graduation of Fields

Present planning and agreements indicate that three churches will graduate during 1980. Four additional ones are already scheduled for 1981. Hopefully there will be more. Increasing costs and uncertain economic conditions play a major role in the hesitancy of congregations to be separated from denominational support. These facts also have a direct bearing on the possibilities of beginning new ministries.

##### 2. New Fields

###### a. Nashville, Tennessee

In response to a recommendation from Classis Illiana, the board granted the request of a group of Christians in Nashville to begin a Christian Reformed church there. This state capital is growing and all indications point to a good future for the city. The nucleus for the church consists of people committed to the Reformed faith and of diverse backgrounds. Because most of them have their roots in the south this should constitute a good base for outreach and evangelism. This work will be evaluated after two years and before any capital expenditures are made.

###### b. Montreal, Quebec (French speaking)

Classis Eastern Canada and the board have been working closely during the past two years in addressing the challenge of ministering to the French-speaking people of the Province of Quebec. The Christian Reformed Church has been influential in the organization of the Alliance de la Reforme Evangelique (ARE) and the producing of evangelical literature in French. There are many indications that the people are receptive. The classis and board are convinced that now is the time to initiate a church planting ministry and place a French-speaking home missionary in Quebec.

c. Los Angeles, California—Hispanic

Home Missions is seeking to address the growing challenge of addressing the Hispanic people in the fastest growing minority in the United States. There are over two million Hispanics in Los Angeles County or more than in the countries of El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, or Puerto Rico. There is an excellent opportunity to work with these people in the Sun Valley area using the facilities of the Bethel Sun Valley Church. This ministry will be among people who are middle class and enjoy a high rate of employment and better living standard than those of the barrios of East Los Angeles.

3. Other Developments

Over the past years the First Church of Los Angeles has been experiencing a decline in membership. In 1977, at their request, the church became a stage three Home Missions field. The board and consistory have been working together but in late 1977 it became apparent that the white commuting membership and leadership was dwindling to nothing. The congregation decided to dissolve and offered its building to Home Missions providing the denomination would carry on a work in this urban black context. The board has agreed and this is now a Stage One field.

The Indian Center in Denver, Colorado, which was a Grant-in-Aid field, at the request of First Church of Denver, has become a regular denominational field.

G. *Development of Indian Churches*

1. Report of Progress

In February, 1978, a committee which became known as the Committee for Indian Church Growth was appointed jointly by the Board of Home Missions and the Council of Indian Churches with the following mandate: "To make a study to determine what becoming indigenous and self-supporting means for the Indian churches, taking into serious consideration the unique cultural, educational, and economic characteristics of the Indian people. This committee is to propose the best ways to promote this kind of indigenous development of the Indian churches, and its implications for adjusting present programming and improving administration on the part of the Board of Home Missions."

In 1979, this committee submitted a major study report which contained the following: an historical summary of Indian Missions, especially that of the Navajo churches; information regarding the unique cultural, educational, and economic characteristics of the Indian (Navajo) people; summarized responses from the churches on matters pertaining to church growth; biblical guidelines for the growth of Indian churches. Both the Council of Indian Churches and the Board of Home Missions received the report for information. They also adopted the proposed guidelines as "biblical guidelines for the development of the Christian Reformed Indian churches. These guidelines are as follows:

a. The principle

In building his kingdom, God, by his Word and Spirit, mandates

and enables Christ's church to grow spiritually and numerically through the personal and communal witness of his people.

b. The practice

- 1) The church obedient to God's will can expect to grow, and as an indispensable part of its life of total commitment must urgently and prayerfully seek and gather the lost with the call to conversion and obedience.
- 2) The church, in planning for growth, must train its members in comprehensive discipleship. The training must include both the principles and practice of seeking the lost and gathering them into its fellowship.
- 3) The church must utilize natural human relationships, viewed as God-given bridges, for the communication of the gospel.
- 4) The church must so arrange its life as to extend loving acceptance to all whom the Lord brings into its fellowship.
- 5) Differing cultural expressions of the faith, both in worship and ministry, should be encouraged as helpful to church growth.
- 6) The church, by continuing study, must get to know both itself and the world in which it ministers.
- 7) The church should invest its mission resources where the need is most evident and growth can be expected.
- 8) The direction, staffing, and funding of a mission outreach should be as much as possible the responsibility of the local group.
- 9) A group of worshiping believers should be given early recognition as a church possessing the necessary gifts, rights, and responsibilities which Christ has granted his church.

In February, 1979, the Committee for Indian Church Growth was instructed to work closely with the Indian churches in developing the implications of their report, giving special attention to the questions: "(1) The organization of Indian congregations; (2) the possible formation of a classis of Indian churches; (3) increasing the effectiveness of salaried personnel; (4) local responsibility for real and physical properties." Copies of the reports of the committee presented to the board in 1979 and 1980 are available upon request from the Board of Home Missions office.

In fulfilling its mandate, the Committee for Indian Church Growth consulted at various times with the consistories/steering committees of the Indian churches. These discussions included a range of questions from ecclesiastical development to the more administrative matters of seeking to encourage greater local authority and decision making. Significant progress has been made in understanding the adjustments necessary to increase the effectiveness of salaried personnel and to encourage local responsibility for real and physical properties.

The Committee for Indian Church Growth has made a number of recommendations concerning administrative adjustments in present Home Missions practices. Local responsibility is being encouraged and developed. Much work still needs to be done and Home Missions is able to address these things within the context of its responsibility except for what may be called "ecclesiastical development." In this area the attention of the synod is needed.

## 2. Need for Denominational Recognition

The Council of Indian Churches, at its meeting January 19, 1980, unanimously decided to petition Classis Rocky Mountain to overture the Synod of 1980 to approve the concept of the Council of Indian Churches taking steps toward becoming an officially recognized classis within the Christian Reformed denomination and possessing certain unique features. Also that synod authorize the Council of Indian Churches, in consultation with the Board of Home Missions and Classis Rocky Mountain, to develop and refine the concept and plan for becoming a classis, and report back to synod in 1981.

The Board of Home Missions at its annual meeting in February, 1980, reviewed the entire report of the Committee for Indian Church Growth and the request of the Council of Indian Churches. It decided to endorse the petition of the Council of Indian Churches to Classis Rocky Mountain, relative to the concept of the Council of Indian Churches taking steps toward becoming a classis within the denomination. This endorsement was based on the conviction that ecclesiastical recognition and organization which recognizes the unique cultural characteristics of the Indian churches is an essential ingredient in the development of our Indian congregations. Classis Rocky Mountain was informed of the endorsement of Home Missions when it considered the petition at its March 4 and 5, 1980, meeting. Classis acted favorably and is sending an overture to synod. Home Missions wishes hereby to inform synod of its support of the overture.

## H. Grant-in-Aid Fields

The Board approved the following Grants-in-Aid:

1. Renewals	1980	1981	1982
Akron, OH	\$ 3,000	\$ 6,000	\$ 6,000
Ames, IA	1,625	3,000	2,750
Appleton, WI	5,000	10,000	—
Bellingham, WA	2,250	4,000	3,500
Big Rapids, MI (Campus)	6,000	13,200	14,500
Burbank, IL, Immanuel	4,000	8,000	7,500
Calgary, AB	4,500	8,000	7,000
Cape Coral, FL	2,000	—	—
Chicago, IL, Lawndale	6,000	9,000	9,000
Chicago, IL, Pullman	6,000	11,000	10,000
Chicago, IL, Roseland	6,000	11,000	10,000
Colorado Springs, CO	3,000	5,500	5,000
Dallas, TX	4,250	8,000	7,500
Denver, CO, Sun Valley	3,750	7,500	7,500
Edmonton, AB (Campus)	3,950	7,500	7,000
Enumclaw, WA	2,500	2,500	—
Gaylord, MI	3,250	6,000	5,000
Hamilton, ON (Campus)	2,250	4,350	4,200
Helena, MT	5,000	10,000	10,000
Kalamazoo, MI, Lexington Green	1,250	2,000	1,500
Lake City, MI	1,750	1,750	—
Los Angeles, CA (Korean)	2,750	4,000	3,000
Montreal, PQ (Seaway)	2,250	4,500	4,500
Mount Pleasant, MI	2,750	4,000	3,500
Oakdale, CA	3,375	4,500	2,250

Paterson, NJ, Madison Ave. (#1)	5,400	11,520	12,480
Paterson, NJ, Madison Ave. (#2)	3,825	8,000	8,500
Paterson, NJ, Northside	7,400	14,800	15,000
Regina, SK	3,000	4,000	2,000
Richfield, NY	4,600	9,000	8,500
Roseville, MI	5,000	10,000	10,000
St. Cloud, MN	3,000	—	—
Salem, OR	2,500	4,000	3,000
Tacoma, WA	3,200	5,600	4,000
Toronto, ON (Rehoboth)	1,900	3,200	2,100
Toronto, ON (Unclassified)	5,250	—	—
Vanastra, ON	1,800	2,400	1,200
Vancouver, BC (Seamen)	2,250	4,500	4,500
Vermillion, SD	1,750	2,500	1,500
Winnipeg, MB, Hope Centre	2,400	4,200	3,600
Winter Haven, FL	7,100	10,000	8,000
<b>2. Renewals</b>			
Jackson, MS	\$ 5,000	\$10,000	\$ 8,000
Long Beach, CA (Seamen)	75% of salary excluding housing costs as per normal procedure—not to exceed the amount originally requested		
Orange County, CA (Korean)	4,000	7,000	6,000

## V. Personnel

Pastors, teachers, evangelists, houseparents, industrial workers, administrators, secretaries, youth workers, seminary interns, volunteers—244 people with a rich variety of gifts from God work in the Christian Reformed Home Missions team in 140 different places. These people employ their gifts for the extension of the kingdom of our Lord.

High priority is placed on recruiting home missionaries, assessing their work for maximum effectiveness, and continually updating their skills and abilities for effective working. Nothing less is required of the people whom God sends.

### A. Field Staffing and Personnel Recruiting

Much attention is given to right placement, and the matching of gifts and needs. A SEARCH process has been developed by Home Missions to identify the needs of fields and the gifts of people being called into leadership positions for those fields.

In SEARCH, the field, in consultation with Home Missions, makes explicit the results that they desire from their missionary, the environment in which the missionary will be working, the ministry functions they expect their missionaries to perform, and the motivation they look for in their missionary.

The missionary also does the same analytical and reflective thinking regarding himself and the place where he has served to compare the results of his ministry with the expected results of the field which is calling him.

Both the field which is calling and the missionary who is called write the results of their reflection in a "Profile." These profiles, then, are the basis for conversation between the calling field and the missionary called.

Underlying this is prayer. The field doing the calling and the person being called pray for guidance. They believe that God has the right per-

son for the field and a right place for the missionary. SEARCH is part of the way God shows his will. This SEARCH process has proved beneficial. Perhaps it can be useful beyond Home Missions. Home Missions has had conversation with Ministers Information Service regarding it. Churches interested in it may contact the Home Missions office.

#### *B. Personnel Assessments*

The Personnel Assessment Policy approved by the 1976 Synod has been very valuable in Home Missions work and in the lives of the missionaries who were assessed. Personnel assessments are now a regular part of Home Missions in an effort to use money, time, and gifts as faithfully as possible. Assessments provide a way to monitor activities and deal with difficulties or problems before they become critical.

During 1979, approximately one-fifth of the entire Home Missions team were assessed. It appears that this process would have value in the church beyond Home Missions. Home Missions has presented the matter to the Ministers Information Service and to various churches that have requested copies of the policy and procedure.

#### *C. Personnel Training*

Home Missions now "thinks training." Training is an integral part of the work. Through in-service training, Home Missions provides time and money for individualized training in line with the recommendations that come from one's personnel assessment. During the last year, one-half of the Home Missions personnel made use of this time and money.

In 1979, all home missionaries and their spouses, together with Grant-in-Aid people and Classical Home Missions personnel attended an international Home Missions conference at the Rocky Mountain YMCA Camp. Dr. Andrew Bandstra and the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven provided inspirational teaching from the New Testament.

The result of training is continued usefulness of personnel with their gifts being maximized in the Lord's service.

#### *D. Volunteer Personnel*

Kingdom awareness demands the use of all the gifts that God has given his people.

Besides salaried personnel, Home Missions provides ways in which the gifts of God's people can be utilized on a volunteer basis. Home Missions itself has placed twenty-five volunteers in its fields and in churches to serve a year as long-term volunteers. Many more have been used for shorter periods of time. Home Missions has also worked with the Synodical Committee on the Use of Members Gifts in the formation of a volunteer resource bank. This is designed to give leadership to the entire denomination in using the gifts of God's people for the work of ministry.

### VI. EVANGELISM

To fulfill its mandate to promote the work of evangelism in all of the churches of the denomination, Home Missions has endeavored to serve

the churches in evangelism by means of education, training, materials, and consultation.

#### A. Education

In the area of education a number of significant things were accomplished:

1. A consistory study on the growing church entitled "Close-Up" was used in eighty-five churches.
2. A conference on rural evangelism was conducted in Sioux Center, Iowa, with the findings printed up in an attractive brochure, "Evangelism in Small Towns and Rural Areas," and distributed to rural churches to stimulate their outreach.
3. Twelve articles on evangelism concerns were published in the Banner.
4. Six issues of "Reach," a newsletter for evangelism committees and pastors, were published.
5. "Home Missions News" was sent to the entire membership.
6. Seminars on the growing church were conducted in churches.
7. Progress has been made on the program to assist churches in understanding the role of gifts in ministry and to enable congregations to identify and utilize the gifts of members so that the church's whole life may be a witness of God's saving power. This program will be pilot tested in the fall of 1980 in a number of our churches. Frequent meetings have been held with synod's Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts.

#### B. Training

1. *Witnessing Where You Are*: These conferences, designed to enable people to identify themselves with Christ in a natural way wherever they are, were conducted in seventy-three churches and areas.
2. *Congregational Evangelism Training (CET)*: This on-the-job training program in doing evangelism was provided for sixty churches. A special training session was conducted for seminarians of Calvin Seminary.
3. *Coffee-Break Evangelism*: Mrs. Neva Evenhouse was employed part-time to coordinate this program. Thirty-one leadership training workshops were conducted for churches. A total of 51 percent of the churches have ordered some Coffee-Break materials.
4. *Summer Workshop in Ministry (SWIM)*: Approximately 340 of our young people received training in ministry from our pastors in sixty-eight different churches and Home Missions fields.

#### C. Materials

Home Missions continues to freshen the flow of Reformed evangelism materials for churches. During the past year some materials have been revised, others replaced. After a history of almost twenty years, "The Way" was discontinued for a number of reasons, including copyright

problems. Its place has been taken by "Our Home," a community distribution piece that addresses the growing concern for the family and demonstrates the church's resources for dealing with it.

Many of the materials published in 1979 were designed to help Reformed people enhance their understanding of evangelism. An attractive reprint of the evangelism report approved by the 1979 Synod and recommended to the churches, "Biblical Evangelism" was made available to the churches with a study guide.

Neighborhood evangelism was aided by the production of "The Family," a one-time tabloid for mass distribution which, like "Our Home," demonstrates the church's concern for, and ministry to, families. A complete list and samples of evangelism materials are available from the office upon request.

#### *D. Consultation*

Consultation in evangelism was provided by the Home Missions staff and Regional Home Missionaries through correspondence, telephone, and meetings with evangelism committees and consistories. Another tool of consultation is Mission Analysis and Projection (MAP), a more intensive and in-depth analysis of the church program. This was provided for seven churches.

### VII. CHURCH RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating the needs and opportunities of Home Missions to all the people and churches of the denomination to obtain their prayer and financial support is a great challenge. Efforts were increased to help the denomination to be joyfully aware of what God is doing through the efforts of home missionaries and through the outreach activities of Christian Reformed churches. These efforts were pursued as aggressively and creatively as possible within a limited budget and with insufficient office personnel. Various means of communication were used ranging from informal conversation to cable television.

There seems to be no substitute for personal presence. Many personal appearances involving eleven missionaries were scheduled through Women's Missionary Unions. Scores of speaking and preaching engagements were arranged in individual churches where general and particular ministry progress and concerns were reviewed.

The print medium was used for the greatest number of messages, broadly disseminated in news and advertising format in periodicals like the Banner, de Wachter, Calvinist Contact, Insight, Missionary Monthly, Home Missions News and the Mission Courier. Direct mail messages voicing the need for offerings and for help in erecting the Rehoboth Fellowship Hall went to consistories. General mailings were made at Easter, in the fall, and at the end of the year.

Communication in audio-visual media was small. Two slide programs, "The Lord Gives Life" and "Strong to Save," were produced. Much more needs to be done using this medium.

The response of the denomination to the many good messages of God's work through missionaries and churches is impressive. It is reflected,



among other ways, in the generous above-quota dollar support given by 275 congregations for home missionaries and projects they designate. Six more are in special prayer support relationships. During 1979, 30 congregations entered the financial salary support arena for the first time while 34 others added missionaries to those they already supported. As a result of missionaries leaving fields, and so forth, 25 relationships were discontinued. By the end of the year a total of 157 home missionaries, of whom 17 were in Grant-in-Aid status, were receiving prayer and financial support, plus four more who were receiving prayer support. Presently 22 missionaries and 21 in Grant-in-Aid fields are receiving no designated support. Congregations are urged to consider the possibility of providing salary and prayer support for these. Specific information is available from the Home Missions office. Establishing supportive relationships is of great assistance in meeting the financial needs of the board and is a wonderful encouragement to the missionaries.

#### VIII. FINANCE

By the end of 1979, sufficient funds became available to meet all obligations to our missionaries and to programs supported and budgeted for by synod. The budget for 1979 was approximately \$5,000,000. A full, audited report for the year ending December 31, 1979, by Seidman and Seidman, Certified Public Accountants has been given to the Synodical Interim Committee requesting that it be presented to synod.

##### *A. General Information*

With gratitude it is noted that actual income rose \$640,000 over the previous calendar year. While overall income exceeded budget expectations by \$70,000, income from churches for salary support was \$33,000 less than had been anticipated. Providentially, income from real estate payments was sufficiently above 1979 projections to offset this difference. The board is grateful for the willingness of churches to respond to encouragement to undertake direct support of home missionaries and to respond to the need for above-quota gifts so that the denomination's work of establishing new churches in the United States and Canada can continue to meet the challenge that we face.

1. The percentage of total quota income received in 1979 was approximately 1 percent greater than the amount received in 1978. The increase in quota participation by Canadian churches rose approximately 4 percent in 1979. While the percentage of quota received from United States churches over the last ten years remained at a fairly constant 97 percent, the percentage of quota received from Canadian churches over the last ten years increased from 42 percent to the present 82 percent.

2. Income from direct missionary support continued to increase during 1979 although at a less rapid pace than has been experienced in recent years. While a budgeted increase of 15.7 percent was anticipated for 1979, actual salary support rose 11.5 percent or approximately \$33,000 under budget. The actual salary support for 1979 amounted to \$883,000. The number of support relationships between missionaries and churches

increased from 434 in 1978 to 518 in 1979. Presently 496 of these relationships are found in United States churches and 22 in Canadian churches. The total number of churches which supported home missionaries in 1979 was 308.

3. Income from above-quota sources other than direct missionary support increased almost \$23,000 in 1979 representing a 6 percent increase over 1978. A comparative analysis of the number of churches taking offerings for above-quota needs in 1978 and 1979 discloses the following:

	Total	
	1979	1978
United States Churches		
Number	355	376
Percent	54	58
Canadian Churches		
Number	42	46
Percent	22	26
Total		
Number	397	422
Percent	47	51

In addition, \$54,000 was raised for the Rehoboth Fellowship Hall and \$37,200 was raised for the Crownpoint Christian School building, thus attracting contributions for capital funds through special solicitation, for these nonbudgeted needs.

4. Income from real estate repayments was approximately \$64,000 over the anticipated amount during 1979 as a result of payments from churches which were not anticipated. More than half of this total came from Chula Vista, California. The Chula Vista Community Church separated from the denomination. The Board of Home Missions requested immediate payment of the outstanding indebtedness to the denomination represented by loans made by the Board of Home Missions and the Church Help Fund. This payment was received in July of 1979.

5. The following compilation lists the loans outstanding to those Home Missions churches which have been developed with denomination assistance (as of December 31, 1979).

a. Former Home Missions Churches (Stage Four)

UNITED STATES

Akron, OH.....	\$ 56,000	Boca Raton, FL.....	52,000
Albuquerque, NM.....	77,738	Boulder, CO.....	46,550
Anchorage, AK.....	115,585	Colorado Springs, CO.....	31,041
Anaheim, CA.....	4,950	Columbus, OH.....	18,523
Bellevue, WA.....	78,500	East Tucson, AZ.....	63,192
Bellingham, WA.....	25,000	Ft. Lauderdale, FL.....	28,200
Binghamton, NY.....	60,000	Farmington, MI.....	62,674

Fort Collins, CO	45,000	Scottsdale, AZ	71,312
Fountain Valley, CA	79,000	South Bend, IN	15,737
Franklin Lakes, NJ	17,850	South St. Paul, MN	48,941
Greeley, CO	66,000	Tacoma, WA	40,000
Hayward, CA	50,000	Toledo, OH	33,723
Inkster, MI	26,440	Visalia, CA	46,778
Jackson, MI	24,637	Walnut Creek, CA	13,011
Le Mars, IA	250	Wappingers Falls, NY	50,000
Madison, WI	9,825	Washington, DC	20,560
Miami, FL	25,088	Webster, NY	60,000
Minneapolis, MN, Calvary	33,750	West Portland, OR	56,000
Monsey, NY	1,425	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$1,979,187</u></b>
New Brighton, MN	45,000		
Orlando, FL	55,247		
Palo Alto, CA	32,411		
Philadelphia, PA	26,973		
Pompton Plains, NJ	6,250		
Portland, OR	31,642		
Queens, NY	71,563		
Quincy, WA	4,168		
Richton Park, IL	28,388		
Sacramento, CA	26,250		
Salem, OR	40,915		
St. Petersburg, FL	28,800		
Salt Lake City, UT	23,300		
San Jose, CA	3,000		

## CANADA

Brockville, ON	\$ 1,189
Charlottetown, PEI	30,000
Grand Prairie, AB	26,925
Halifax, NS	43,000
High River, AB	6,625
Prince George, BC	47,700
Stratford, ON	13,571
Vernon, BC	9,809
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$ 178,819</u></b>

## b. Present Home Missions Churches

## UNITED STATES

Atlanta, GA	\$ 126,400
Bakersfield, CA	63,200
Boise, ID	126,000
Brigham City, UT	40,825
Cedar Rapids, IA	81,000
Champaign, IL	35,118
Columbia, MO	52,924
Corvallis, OR	36,350
Davenport, IA	63,728
Dayton, OH	50,000
East Grand Forks, MN	30,000
East Islip, NY	51,005
El Paso, TX	51,500
Flagstaff, AZ	73,500
Flanders Valley, NJ	58,170
Ft. Wayne, IN	69,000
Fresno, CA	63,129
Houston, TX	954
Indian Harbour Beach, FL	60,894
Iowa City, IA	50,000
Jacksonville, FL	142,000
Kennewick, WA	50,000
La Crosse, WI	124,180
Mason City, IA	55,276
N. Virginia, VA	148,000
Norfolk, VA	50,800
Ogden, UT	50,595
Olympia, WA	78,000
Richton Park, IL	11,823

Riverside, CA	48,500
St. Louis, MO	66,500
Salt Lake City, UT	50,000
South Windsor, CT	50,000
Syracuse, NY	67,920
Terre Haute, IN	63,416
Washington, PA	58,000
Yakima, WA	65,930
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$2,364,637</u></b>

## CANADA

Guelph, ON	\$ 78,585
Kamloops, BC	10,000
Fredericton, NB	47,494
Meadowvale, ON	100,000
New Glasgow, NS	64,900
Toronto, ON	49,176
Windsor, ON	128,800
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>\$ 478,955</u></b>

## URBAN FIELDS

Albuquerque, NM (Indian)	\$ 78,753
Chicago, IL (Chinese)	118,779
Chicago, IL (Indian)	104,615
Detroit, MI	24,710
Harlem, NY	34,000
Honolulu, HI	70,000

Los Angeles, CA (Chinese).....	59,500	San Francisco, CA (Chinese).....	56,459
Los Angeles, CA (Spanish).....	31,000	San Francisco, CA (Friendship	
Miami, FL (Spanish).....	150,866	House).....	128,250
Norfolk, VA.....	55,353	San Francisco, CA (Parsonage).....	52,430
Salt Lake City, UT (Indian).....	17,750	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,058,560</b>
San Francisco, CA (Indian).....	76,095		

6. Site Selection and Building Programs

Activity on-field in site selection and building programs continued at a rapid pace during 1979. The following reflects 1979 activity:

Site Selection in Progress

- Kamloops, British Columbia
- Navajo, New Mexico
- Fairfield, California
- Houston, Texas
- Loveland, Colorado
- Corvallis, Oregon
- Albuquerque, New Mexico

Site Selection Completed

- Boise, Idaho
- Columbia, Missouri

Building Programs in Progress

- Atlanta, Georgia
- Burke, Virginia
- Columbia, Missouri
- Church Rock, New Mexico
- Shiprock, New Mexico

Building Programs Completed

- La Crosse, Wisconsin
- Jacksonville, Florida
- Rehoboth Dining Hall
- Windsor, Ontario

CHRISTIAN REFORMED BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

Summary of Proposed Budget

Period January 1 to December 31, 1981

SUPPORT FROM	AMOUNT	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
QUOTAS		\$4,425,000	70.7
ABOVE QUOTA			
Church collections and donations	\$ 490,000		
Church missionary support	<u>1,125,000</u>		
TOTAL ABOVE QUOTA		1,615,000	25.8
OTHER RECEIPTS			
Real estate repayments	\$ 140,000		
Indian field payments	30,000		
Interest	<u>50,000</u>		
TOTAL OTHER RECEIPTS		<u>220,000</u>	<u>3.5</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND OTHER RECEIPTS		<u>\$6,260,000</u>	<u>100.0</u>
EXPENDITURES			
PROGRAM SERVICES			
Evangelism	\$ 236,100		
Regular fields	2,434,200		
Minority and youth fields	<u>1,117,900</u>		

Indian fields	1,185,700		
Indian schools	686,000		
TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES		\$5,659,900	90.4
SUPPORTIVE SERVICES			
Management, general	\$ 378,600		
Fund raising	221,500		
TOTAL SUPPORTIVE SERVICES		\$ 600,100	9.6
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$6,260,000	100.0

### C. Salaries

#### 1. Field Personnel

The following schedule for 1980 is intended to provide a fair compensation to missionaries for the work they perform. While providing increases, Home Missions has not found it possible within its budget to keep up with the cost-of-living increases. By granting certain allowances, e.g., children's allowance, Home Missions' intent is to assist those with extra responsibilities and thus fulfill its mandate from synod to adequately provide for missionaries. Housing, hospitalization insurance, and pension are provided, as well as a mileage allowance for church business.

#### Ordained Ministers

D.Min./Th.D. ....	\$14,050
B.D./M.Div. ....	13,850
A.B. or less. ....	13,250

#### Unordained (layworkers)

Ph.D. Degree. ....	13,850
M.A. Degree. ....	13,200
A.B. Degree. ....	13,000
No degree. ....	10,000-12,500

Service allowance: \$100/year to 20 years

#### Children's allowance

Ages 1-6. ....	350
Ages 7-14. ....	450
Ages 15-21. ....	550

#### Christian school tuition allowance, per child

(Lesser of \$350 or 1/3 of tuition) ..... 300

Social security allowance (Ordained—United States only) ..... 50%

#### 2. Office Personnel

Staff and administrative persons are being paid within the guidelines set by the Synod of 1979 (Acts of Synod, pp. 443-444). Members of staff fall within the guidelines of Executive Level II, and support personnel within Administrative Levels I and II.

IX. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

- A. The board respectfully requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to its President, Executive Secretary, and Treasurer when matters pertaining to Home Missions are discussed.
- B. The board respectfully requests permission to present to synod, at one of its sessions, home missionaries who may be present.
- C. The board requests that synod reappoint John G. Van Ryn as Executive Secretary for a four year term (III, D.).
- D. The board requests that Dirk Hart be appointed as Minister of Evangelism for an initial two-year term (III, E).
- E. The board requests synod to act favorably on the overture from Classis Rocky Mountain relative to the formation of a classis of Indian churches (IV, G, 2).
- F. The board requests that synod approve the Armed Forces Fund for one or more offerings from the churches.
- G. The board urgently requests synod to place the Board of Home Missions on the list for denominational agencies recommended for one or more offerings.
- H. The board requests that synod approve a quota of \$75.55 per family for the year 1981.
- I. The board requests synod to receive and act upon the following nominations for board members-at-large:

1. Central United States

- a. Regular
 

Mr. Harold Soper*	Mr. Richard Wunderink
-------------------	-----------------------
- b. Alternate
 

Mr. Roger Rottschafer*	Nominee not elected as regular delegate
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2. Southwest (Indian Field)

- a. Regular
 

Mr. Herbert Thomas, Jr.*	Mr. Arthur Benally
--------------------------	--------------------
- b. Alternate
 

Mr. Ed T. Begay	Nominee not elected as regular delegate
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\*Denotes incumbent

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

## REPORT 5

BOARD OF PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Board of Publications was created by the 1968 Synod, but not "out of nothing." It was a merger of what had been until that time separate ministries in the Christian Reformed Church: Sunday School, Catechism, Vacation Bible School, de Wachter, the Banner, and a publishing house. The common denominator in the merger was printer's ink: all these ministries involved publishing, even if they had nothing else in common.

During the board's first decade, the various programs learned to live under one roof. There were moments when some family tension could be detected in our house, but overall the commitment to work together was firmly made and decently kept. During this time, however, there were few if any working relationships between various parts of the board—the Education Department and the Banner, for example. The only things these ministries "shared" were the presses behind their respective offices and the board over their respective committees.

That was changed when the 1979 Synod approved a major rearrangement in the Board of Publications' staff structure. A central administrative position was created, given a title (Executive Director), and filled (synod appointed A. James Heynen for a two-year term). The purpose of the change was to provide "a unified work force to serve as a publications ministry for the denomination"; proponents of the change spoke a good deal about things like "better coordination," "increased efficiency," and "staff accountability." Whether the staff can deliver all that the board promised remains to be seen, but our first few months with the new arrangement have been encouraging.

It's been a year of transition within the Board of Publications and the overhauled staff structure was only one of its marks. A new board president began his work last September; the Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen is only the third person to fill that office in our board's history. Mr. Peter Meeuwssen, who had for a quarter century been Business Manager for the board, retired near the close of 1979; Mr. Allen Van Zee assumed that position. Mr. Heynen had been Director of Education until he was given the title of Executive Director; to replace him in the Education Department, Dr. Harvey Smit was named Acting Director in addition to his responsibilities as Theological Editor. And in November, the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven arrived to begin preparation for his new work as Editor-in-Chief of the Banner.

With transitions come new beginnings, and there's a sense of newness in the Board of Publications these days. Fresh ideas are being suggested

and new directions are being considered. At the same time, most of our ministries have been molded in the history of our denomination. They are a part of our church's identity and none of us may frivolously tinker with them.

Both the Board of Publications and its staff are mindful that our ministries are not really *ours*. They belong to the church and her Lord and are merely loaned to us on trust. We mean not to violate that trust either by blind obedience to comfortable tradition or by reckless pursuit of current fads. We therefore welcome the church's evaluation of the reports and recommendations which follow.

## II. BOARD ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERSHIP

A. The Board of Publications consists of thirty-eight delegates, one from each classis in the denomination. The board meets annually in February and is served throughout the year by three standing committees (the Executive, the Education, and the Periodicals) which, together with a subcommittee on finance, supervise the various ministries of the board.

### B. Subcommittees

#### Executive Committee:

Miss Beryl Bean (1981)	Mr. Henry Kuntz (1981)
Mr. Hero Bratt (1981)	Mr. William Leys (1980)
Mr. Jack Brouwer (1981)	Rev. Sidney Newhouse (1980)
Rev. Morris Greidanus (1981)	Rev. Neal Punt (1981)
Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen (1981)	Mr. Bernard Scholten (1982)
Mr. Kenneth Horjus (1981)	Dr. Roger Van Harn (1982)

#### Executive Business Committee:

Mr. Jack Brouwer (1981)	Mr. Henry Kuntz (1981)
Mr. Kenneth Horjus (1981)	Mr. Bernard Scholten (1982)

#### Education Committee:

Mr. Roger Bratt (1982)	Mr. William Leys (1980)
Rev. Henry DeRooy (H.M. Rep.)	Rev. Sidney Newhouse (1980)
Mr. William Hendricks (1980)	Rev. Neal Punt (1981)
Mr. Kenneth Horjus (1981)	Dr. J. Marion Snapper (1980)
Mrs. Joann Knierim (1982)	Dr. Gordon Sypkman (1982)
Mr. Henry Kuntz (1981)	Miss Cora Vogel (1981)

The term of Mr. William Hendricks (member-at-large) expires in 1980 and he is not eligible for reelection. The nominee to replace him is Mr. Andrew De Jong (see background under C below).

The term of Dr. J. Marion Snapper (member-at-large) expires in 1980 and he is eligible to serve another term (see background, under C below).

Mr. William Leys and Rev. Sidney Newhouse (board members) have each served two terms and will be replaced by the Executive Committee.

#### Periodicals Committee:

Miss Beryl Bean (1981)	Mr. Preston Kool (1980)
Mr. Hero Bratt (1981)	Mr. Bernard Scholten (1982)
Mr. Jack Brouwer (1981)	Dr. Henry Stob (1981)
Rev. Morris Greidanus (1981)	Dr. John Timmerman (1980)
Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen (1981)	Dr. Roger Van Harn (1982)

The term of Dr. John Timmerman (member-at-large) expires in 1980 and he is not eligible for reelection. The nominee to replace him is Mr. Marlin Van Elderen (see background under C below).



C. When vacancies appear in the membership of the Education and Periodicals committees, those committees prepare nominations and the Board of Publications, "having the right to add to the nominations," elects new committee members and submits such names to synod for approval (Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 278-279).

The board respectfully requests that synod approve the following persons elected by the Board of Publications to serve as members on the Education and Periodicals committees:

Education Committee:

Mr. Andrew DeJong

Mr. De Jong graduated from Calvin College (1971) and Calvin Seminary (1977); his degree from the seminary was a Masters in Christian Education. He has served under the Board of Home Missions as director of youth evangelism services in the Toronto area, and was programming director for the Young Calvinist Federation for two years. Since graduating from Calvin Seminary, Mr. De Jong has been employed as director of Christian education and youth at Mayflower Congregational Church in Grand Rapids and, since 1979, in the Palos Heights Christian Reformed Church near Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. J. Marion Snapper

Dr. Snapper attended Calvin College, Central Michigan University, and Princeton Seminary before receiving his doctoral degree in education from the University of California, Berkeley (1958). He was a teacher in Lynden (Washington) Christian School, teaching principal in the Alameda (California) Christian School, and professor at Westmont College. From 1960 to 1974, Dr. Snapper was a professor in the Education Department of Calvin College and, since 1974, he has been Professor of Church Education at Calvin Seminary. He has been an office bearer in his congregation, was a delegate to the Synod of 1978, served on the committee which originally proposed the Unified Church School Curriculum, and has completed one term on the Education Committee.

Periodicals Committee:

Mr. Marlin Van Elderen

Mr. Van Elderen graduated from Calvin College (A.B.) in 1966 and completed one year of graduate study at Harvard University. After a two-year stint in the United States Army, he returned to work at the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company where, since 1972, he has been editor-in-chief. Mr. Van Elderen is also Editor-in-Chief of the *Reformed Journal*. As an elder of the Grace Christian Reformed Church, Mr. Van Elderen has been a frequent delegate to Classis Grand Rapids East and was, in 1975, elected to represent that classis at synod. He is married to Meribeth Yoder; the Van Elderens have three daughters.

D. In recent years, the work of the Education Committee has largely focused on the development of training services and materials which are part of the BIBLE WAY Curriculum. That curriculum has, in turn, been

widely used not only in the Christian Reformed Church but also among congregations of the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and various Presbyterian fellowships. In light of those developments, the Board of Publications has approved a proposal which would create a new, advisory position within the Education Committee. That proposal, together with its grounds, is now recommended for synodical approval.

The board respectfully requests:

1. That the board be authorized to create an advisory position on the Education Committee to be filled by a qualified person from the RCA in 1980.
2. That this person be chosen by the Education Committee in consultation with the Program Coordinator for Christian Education, General Program Council, Reformed Church in America, and be approved by the board (or its Executive Committee) and by synod (or its Interim Committee); and that it be someone residing in the general Michigan area.
3. That the board be authorized to create a similar advisory position on the Education Committee to be filled by a Presbyterian person in 1981.
4. That the board review this entire action in 1983 considering whether such advisory positions should be continued.

*Grounds:*

- a. This action would be consistent with the commitment to "an expanded ministry in the distribution of Reformed church education materials beyond the Christian Reformed Church" adopted by the Board of Publications and approved by synod in 1977. To carry out such an expanded ministry more responsibly it would be helpful to have continual, monthly advice from persons on the Education Committee who can represent non-CRC users of our curriculum.
- b. It would be advantageous in planning new courses and evaluating present courses to be able to compare with other curriculum resources and to receive advice from persons within the Reformed tradition but with different church histories, experiences, and practices.
- c. It would be wise to provide major users of the BIBLE WAY curriculum with a regular channel through which to respond with comments, criticisms, and suggestions. According to our 1978 statistics, out of the 1619 accounts, 788 are CRC, 472 are RCA, and 253 are Presbyterian (various denominations). The RCA is thus the first major non-CRC user of our curriculum.
- d. Since this action would be initiated by our board and the positions would be advisory in nature, decision-making power regarding the education program would remain in CRC hands.

E. The Board of Publications wishes to respectfully inform synod that the following recommendation with regard to membership of the board's standing committees has been approved: "Should a member of a stand-

ing committee have more than three unexcused absences per year, he (she) [shall] be removed from membership on the committee."

F. The board respectfully requests permission for the following persons to represent the Board of Publications when synod considers matters pertaining to our ministry:

For the Board:	Rev. Alvin Hoksbergen, Board President Rev. Sidney Newhouse, Board Secretary Mr. A. James Heynen, Executive Director
For the Banner:	Dr. Lester DeKoster, Editor-in-Chief
For de Wachter:	Rev. William Haverkamp, Editor-in-Chief
For Education:	Dr. Harvey Smit, Acting Director of Education
For Business:	Mr. Allen Van Zee, Business Manager

### III. PROGRAM AND POLICY

#### A. Education

The history of the Board of Publications' Education Department is very directly tied to the history of the BIBLE WAY Curriculum. That curriculum was mandated by the 1970 Synod, and the editorial staff grew with the curriculum. A teacher training program was begun in 1976 under the direction of Mrs. Cecilia Mereness. All other staff members in the Education Department, including the Director, perform editorial tasks in the areas of art, journalism, pedagogy, or theology. And the editors are also the "promotion department," since we believe that those who develop the materials are best equipped to explain them to the churches.

The first courses in the BIBLE WAY Curriculum appeared in 1972. Since then new courses have been added each year. By September (1980) materials in this curriculum should be available for students ranging from three years of age through seniors in high school. In addition, two extensive courses for adults have been completed (*A Place to Stand*, a study of the ecumenical creeds and Reformed confessions, and *Beyond Doubt*, a confessional course that explores questions of faith). New courses for young adults and adults are now being developed according to plans previously approved by synod.

According to a 1978 decision of synod (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 32, pp. 35-36), course material in the BIBLE WAY Curriculum is "on a replacement cycle of ten years." That means those courses first released in 1972 are to be replaced with new material in 1982; courses published initially in 1974 are to be replaced in 1984; and so forth. In order to achieve that schedule, a curriculum review committee began a thorough examination this past year of the BIBLE WAY Curriculum's guidelines, structures, goals, content, and pedagogy. In addition to the work of that committee, staff members pored over literally thousands of questionnaires and interviewed hundreds of pastors, teachers, parents, and students in "listening tours" across Canada and the United States.

The recommendations below concerning curriculum revisions and guidelines are the result of those efforts.

Perhaps the most exceptional recommendation is the one concerning resources for exceptional people: mentally impaired children and young adults. We who pride ourselves on covenant theology and the confession that salvation is not earned by any merit of our own—including our intelligence—may have a unique opportunity to demonstrate that confession through these resources.

1. The Board of Publications respectfully requests that synod approve the following change in the production of BIBLE WAY materials: instead of the current schedule of thirteen lessons per quarter (13, 13, 13, 13), the new issue of BIBLE WAY materials be organized on a schedule of 12, 12, 12, 10, with the optional use of the summer quarter (10 lessons) for special summer programs.

2. The board respectfully requests that synod approve the following outline of summer quarters:

	YEAR ONE	YEAR TWO
	<i>Jesus, My Savior</i>	<i>Living for God</i>
BIBLE FOOTPRINTS (Ages 4 & 5)	All About Jesus	People Around Me
BIBLE STEPS (Grades 1 & 2)	People Jesus Loved	Learning with Jacob (new)
BIBLE TRAILS (Grades 3 & 4)	Teachings of Jesus (new)	Learning with David (new)
BIBLE GUIDE (Grades 5 & 6)	Gospel of John	Relationships
BIBLE CROSSROADS (Grades 7 & 8)	Discipleship	God's Government

Note: These are suggested titles which may be revised.

3. The board respectfully requests that synod approve the following working guidelines regarding memory work for the new issue of the BIBLE WAY courses:

- a. That accuracy in memory work is important.
- b. That memory work be designed for long-term retention and, therefore, that materials for memory be chosen carefully and used repetitively.
- c. That a rationale be given for the pattern of the materials that are chosen.
- d. That the memory work be presented within its context.
- e. That in addition to memory work of texts and questions and answers from the Heidelberg Catechism, there also be the development of a "where to find it" program of memory work.

4. The board respectfully requests that synod direct the Education Department to provide both curriculum materials and training services to

help local congregations develop and maintain special church education programs for mentally impaired persons.

*Grounds*

- a. There are an estimated 8,630 mentally impaired persons in the CRC (Acts of Synod 1979, Report 38, p. 667). In areas where there is a large concentration of CRC members, some programs of varying quality have been set up through local Christian institutions, but in other areas many such persons are receiving no adequate church education.
- b. When such persons are baptized into the fellowship of the covenant community, the church accepts an obligation to impart to them a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to teach them the way of the Lord insofar as they are capable of being taught. The Education Department has received a number of urgent requests for a special education curriculum from people who feel the educational ministry to these covenantal members is not being adequately fulfilled.
- c. There appears to be no published special education curriculum available which is written from a Reformed perspective.
- d. Since other fellowships experience this same lack, a special education curriculum would provide a good opportunity for expanded ministry and for cooperative efforts (especially with other churches of the Reformed persuasion).
- e. The teacher trainer network of the Education Department could be trained to assist churches in organizing programs of special education according to a model that would fit the curriculum produced.

B. *The Banner*

Dr. Lester De Koster, the Banner's Editor-in-Chief for the past decade, made his final report to the Board of Publications during the annual board meeting in February. The last "De Koster Banner" is scheduled for August 29, 1980. On September 5 subscribers will see the firstfruits of the new Editor-in-Chief, the Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven.

In his February comments to the board, Dr. De Koster gave high marks to staff members who served with him and cordial thanks to committee and board members who had guided him. At a banquet honoring the retiring editor, the board paid tribute to Dr. De Koster in a program and an address from which the following excerpts are taken:

We were not surprised by his keen mind or his brilliant arguments; if we'd not actually heard him debate, we'd at least heard *about* his debating. And we were not surprised by his devotion to John Calvin; he'd warned us amply about that during his interviews. What surprised us most about you, Les, was your passion. You took positions and defended them fiercely; you saw trends you found dangerous and attacked them aggressively; you waded into delicate waters and sometimes stirred them with a flourish that left us stunned.

You have not been fearful or unwilling to publish your critics. You have not avoided editorial risks which would make you, and

sometimes all of us, vulnerable. You have never wasted the paper by repeating mindless platitudes or intoning pious phrases which have no meaning. You have written your mind boldly, clearly, to the utter delight of fans and the absolute consternation of critics.

1. The Board of Publications respectfully requests that synod recognize Dr. Lester De Koster for his contributions to the Christian Reformed Church over the past four decades and particularly since 1970 as Editor-in-Chief of the Banner.

2. The board respectfully informs synod that the following "Policy Statement on the Publication of Movie Reviews" has been approved by the Periodicals Committee and endorsed by the Board of Publications.

### *A Policy Statement on the Publication of Movie Reviews*

#### **Background**

a. The Synod of 1966 declared: "All of this indicates the need for film critique in the Reformed community and it places upon the Christian community—in distinction from the church—the solemn obligation to go to work in this field. The idea that our colleges might introduce courses in the subject of cinematography and that our church publications might provide reviews is worthy of further consideration. There is urgent need for providing guidance and information and for the development of good Christian taste in these matters. Many people who state that they only go to see 'good movies' do not know what they are talking about" (Acts of Synod 1966, p. 341).

b. Synod of 1976 approved a statement of purpose for the Banner which includes the following: "...to stimulate our membership to serious reflection upon the content of the Christian faith as it relates to our surrounding culture, the Banner is to provide editorials, in-depth studies, and special articles which are written to guide and challenge our members in understanding the culture which surrounds us today; in particular, moral and theological issues, all in the light of our Reformed faith" (Agenda for Synod 1976, p. 139).

#### **Basic Principles**

a. Filmmaking is a morally acceptable enterprise which significantly reflects and shapes the culture of a people.

b. Whatever lawful human endeavor shapes the culture of people is in principle open to the Christian and should either be entirely claimed for Christ or selectively utilized to advance his cause.

c. Although there is a deep-seated antithesis between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world, a meaningful distinction may be made between Christian, non-Christian, and anti-Christian films and plays.

d. Anti-Christian films which contravene the gospel, undermine authentic human values, and offend Christian sensibilities should be denounced.

e. Non-Christian films are, by the common grace of God, often serviceable to the ends of God's kingdom.

f. Since good and evil are mixed in every cultural product, the Christian should exercise enlightened discrimination in the use of these products.

g. Since discrimination must be acquired and demands constant cultivation, such training and nurture should be provided as shall enable Banner readers increasingly to make a Christian assessment of film offerings.

### **Derived Guidelines**

a. It is both appropriate and desirable that the Banner publish film reviews by competent Christian critics.

b. Since not all films can possibly be reviewed, those selected should be culturally significant and hold interest for a considerable portion of Banner readers.

c. Reviewers must draw upon their critically sharpened faculties to increase the Christian's appreciation of the film arts, thus extending Christ's dominion over this aspect of modern culture.

d. Reviews should comport with the basic principles enunciated above and should enable the Christian viewer better to discriminate between films compatible with Christianity and those not so compatible, to judge between integrity or its lack, and to perceive good workmanship as distinguished from the shoddy and cheap.

e. The goal which reviews should seek to attain is not to insulate the Christian community from worldly culture but to develop the capacity to deal with it maturely and creatively.

### **Prudential Observation**

Recognizing that movie-reviewing is as yet a new thing among us, the reviewer is to bear in mind that: (a) offense can often be avoided by prudent choice of words; (b) the average viewer will be more sensitive to a film's real or apparent moral stance than to its technical quality; (c) the average reader's deepest concern is likely to be the film's impact upon the moral behavior of himself and/or his children.

### *C. De Wachter*

Subscriptions to and appreciation for the denomination's last Dutch-language journal have remained constant in recent years. The magazine continues to fill an important role in the lives of more than two thousand subscribers.

The Editor-in-Chief, the Rev. William Haverkamp, has graciously assured the board that his reappointment (see IV, C below) should not inhibit a decision to cease publication of *de Wachter* should that be necessary; the board, however, has no current plan to discontinue publication of this periodical.

#### D. *Special Issues*

1. The 1978 Synod asked for a feasibility study of a loose-leaf liturgical book for use in worship services. The 1979 Synod approved production of such a book subject to an additional "market test" survey to determine the demand for this item.

After a few false starts, the board is now engaging in a fairly extensive feasibility (market test) study in conjunction with the denominational Liturgical Committee. Results of that study should be complete in time for a supplementary report to the 1980 Synod.

2. The 1979 Synod authorized "the establishment of a common address and office for our denominational agencies and their registration under Canadian tax laws" and authorized "the Synodical Interim Committee to call a meeting of representatives of the agencies and the Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada to work out the details involved" in such a venture (Acts of Synod 1979, Art. 93, p. 117).

The Board of Publications has approved a plan to utilize approximately 250 square feet in the proposed Canadian office, to contract for part-time staff services in that office, and to explore during the coming year what expansion of services (if any) would be appropriate for our ministry in this or other Canadian centres.

3. The 1978 Synod instructed "all those agencies requesting quota support to include their salary and fringe benefit schedules in their annual reports" and to include those reports in the agenda (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 77, p. 94). In 1979 the Board of Publications participated with other denominational agencies in reporting through the "Uniform Salary Policy" (Acts of Synod 1979, Report 20-A, pp. 442ff.). At the same time, the Uniform Salary Policy explicitly excluded the Board of Publications' printing plant employees from its consideration on the following grounds: "The printing plant . . . bases the salary of its employees on the prevailing local (union or nonunion) printing plant rates in the area. Accordingly salary policies and schedules are predetermined by competitive wage scales to which the board must adhere" (Acts of Synod 1979, Report 20-A, p. 442).

In its most recent meeting, the Board of Publications decided that *in addition* to participating in the Uniform Salary Policy a salary schedule of *all* board employees (including number of persons, wage brackets, and benefits packages for each category) should also be prepared and provided to synod annually. The board's Executive Committee was mandated to complete this work and intends to provide such information in a supplementary report to the 1980 Synod.

4. The 1978 Synod instructed the Board of Publications, together with other denominational agencies, "to include in its annual report what has been accomplished in alerting the church to the issues of social justice" (Acts of Synod 1978, Art. 50, p. 64).

In nearly every issue of *de Wachter* and the *Banner* during the past year, either editorials or articles (or both) took up matters of social



justice, social concern, and the Christian's responsibility in and to the world. Materials published by the Education Department have repeatedly addressed those concerns, both in general curriculum materials being produced and in special publications such as *For My Neighbor's Good* (a study of world hunger and structural change based on the 1978 report of the Task Force on World Hunger).

#### IV. PERSONNEL

There were, as the introduction to this report notes, numerous changes within the staff of the Board of Publications during the past year. The Education Department was especially hard hit.

The 1979 Synod removed Mr. A. James Heynen as the Education Department's Director and Managing Editor and appointed him Executive Director for the board. Dr. Harvey Smit, the Education Department's Theological Editor, then assumed the Director's duties in his department in August. The Executive Committee also appointed the Rev. Robert Meyering to the Managing Editor's post; he joined the staff in October. Mr. Paul Stoub had been the Education Department's Art Editor for seven years; he left to begin a new career and was replaced by Mr. Charles Spitters. Dr. Edwin Walhout, who had been Adult Education Editor since 1976, resigned his position in September. In organizing the new staff structure, the Executive Director removed two other staff members from this department: Ms. Dorothy Kuperus became Copy Coordinator, heading up all areas of typesetting, proofreading, and composition for the board, and Mrs. Alida Arnoys became assistant and secretary to the Executive Director. Mrs. Jill Overholt was hired as the Education Department's new secretary, filling the position Mrs. Arnoys had vacated. For a while it looked like "musical chairs" in the Education Department, but by early winter Dr. Smit and his reorganized staff were well into planning and producing new materials.

The board approved two new staff positions (together with job descriptions, statements of qualification, and selection process) to be filled during the coming months: for the Education Department staff, an Associate Pedagogical Editor to work especially with revisions of existing materials and development of new curriculum for elementary levels; and for the Banner, an assistant to the editor who will work as a journalist, supplementing the work of Miss Gertrude Haan and taking over assignments previously completed by the Rev. Buursma.

Since the board's creation thirteen years ago, the processes for appointment and reappointment of personnel have evolved; they have not been thoughtfully prescribed. The Executive Director has been instructed to provide the board, at its next annual meeting, with a recommended set of procedures in this regard.

In addition to these actions taken by the board and its committees during the past year, the board in its annual meeting also took action with regard to three staff members who were eligible for reappointment.

A. The board respectfully informs synod that Mrs. Cecilia Mereness has been reappointed as Coordinator of Teacher Training for a two-year

term beginning September, 1980. Mrs. Mereness began working for the board in her present position on March 1, 1976. She has done a superb job of getting the teacher training program organized and underway and of maintaining it as a progressively more valuable service to the churches.

B. The board respectfully requests that synod appoint Dr. Harvey Smit to the position of Director of Education and Theological Editor for initial term of two years.

*Grounds:*

1. We said of Dr. Smit last year when recommending his reappointment as Theological Editor: "He provides a consistently Reformed perspective for our work. He offers leadership and gentleness, both of which are appreciated by the entire staff." He has continued to exhibit those qualities and others (skills in planning, administration, and coordination, for example) since being named Acting Director some months ago.
2. Dr. Smit has earned the respect and affection of the Education Department staff and others during his time as Acting Director and Theological Editor.
3. Dr. Smit is readily qualified by his educational background, theological insight, maturity, and insightful leadership to enable the Education Department to meet the challenges of the 1980s.

C. The board respectfully recommends that synod reappoint the Rev. William Haverkamp to a three-year term as Editor-in-Chief of de Wachter.

*Ground*

Rev. Haverkamp's long record of distinguished service in this position, his remarkable vitality, and the loyalty he enjoys among his readers all make him uniquely qualified for reappointment.

## V. FINANCE

A detailed financial report containing both information on and analysis of our various ministries is given to the Board of Publications at each annual meeting. That same material, together with other data, is available to any synodical delegate desiring additional financial information on this work.

The Board of Publications' fiscal year runs from September 1 through August 31. That financial calendar was inherited during the history of our publishing work when our fiscal year was made to parallel the program year of the congregations we served—since church schools, for example, started in the fall, so did our fiscal year. Quota receipts, however, are calculated on the calendar year (January–December). Careful readers of our board's budgets will notice that adjustments for our fiscal year must always be made when calculating income from quota receipts.

During the early 1970s the Board of Publications experienced some financially dismal years. During the more recent years our finances have

been somewhat better. We're now revising (and, in some cases, creating) a long-range plan for both program and finances. One goal of that plan is to enhance year-to-year consistency in overall financial expectations and in annual quota requests.

It's worth noting that, while the operating costs for the Board of Publications have increased dramatically in the past five years (due to increased programming, market shifts, and, especially, inflationary pressures), quota requests brought by the board have steadily decreased. The budget adopted by the board for 1981 continues that trend. Though it recognizes increased operating costs and other related expenses, it assumes a per-family quota decrease of 16.7 percent from 1980.

A. The Board of Publications respectfully submits for synod's information audited financial statements for the fiscal year which ended August 31, 1979, and the budgets for fiscal years 1980 and 1981.

#### BALANCE SHEET

As of August 31, 1979

#### ASSETS

##### CURRENT

Cash on hand and on deposit		\$ 115,169
Accounts receivable/Quotas receivable		444,695
Inventories		369,006
Prepaid expenses and other		<u>204,532</u>

TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS AND OTHER ASSETS		\$1,133,402
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##### EQUIPMENT

Machinery & equipment, office furniture & fixtures, and truck	\$ 1,251,934	
Less accumulated depreciation	<u>306,282</u>	\$ 945,652

TOTAL ASSETS		<u>\$2,079,054</u>
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#### LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

##### CURRENT

Accounts payable	\$ 33,492	
Accrued expenses	<u>150,586</u>	
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		\$ 184,078

DEFERRED INCOME		221,468
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EQUITY		<u>1,673,508</u>
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TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		<u>\$2,079,054</u>
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SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

ACTUAL RESULTS

Sept. 1, 1978-Aug. 31, 1979

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>% of Totals</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Support:			
Quotas		\$ 220,643*	9.7
Revenues:			
Subscription revenue	551,816		
Church education	732,851		
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>779,067</u>	<u>2,063,734</u>	<u>90.3</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE		\$2,284,377	100. %
EXPENDITURES			
Program services:			
Periodicals	\$ 541,822		
Church education	588,092		
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>567,361</u>		
Total program services	\$1,697,275		84.1
Supporting services:			
Management & general	<u>321,958</u>		<u>15.9</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		<u>\$2,019,233</u>	<u>100. %</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY)		<u>\$ 265,144</u>	

\*Quotas calculated at \$3.50 per family.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

BUDGET

Sept. 1, 1979-Aug. 31, 1980

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>% of Totals</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Support:			
Quotas		\$ 197,000*	8.0
Revenues:			
Subscription revenue	\$ 630,000		
Church education	840,000		
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>810,000</u>	<u>2,280,000</u>	<u>92.0</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE		\$2,477,000	100. %

## EXPENDITURES

Program services:		
Periodicals	\$ 654,000	
Church education	719,000	
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>659,000</u>	
Total program services	\$2,032,000	84.2
Supporting services:		
Management & general	<u>382,000</u>	<u>15.8</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		<u>2,414,000</u> <u>100. %</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY)		<u>\$ 63,000</u>

\*Quotas calculated at \$3.00 per family.

## SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITY

## BUDGET

Sept. 1, 1980-Aug. 31, 1981

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Totals</u>	<u>% of Totals</u>
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Support:			
Quotas		\$ 167,000*	6.1
Revenues:			
Subscription revenue	\$ 690,000		
Church education	965,000		
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>904,000</u>	<u>2,559,000</u>	<u>93.9</u>
TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE		\$2,726,000	100. %
EXPENDITURES			
Program services:			
Periodicals	\$ 709,000		
Church education	858,000		
Other sales & services to the denomination	<u>735,000</u>		
Total program services	\$2,302,000		84.6
Supporting services:			
Management & general	<u>420,000</u>		<u>15.4</u>
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		<u>\$2,722,000</u>	<u>100. %</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY)		<u>\$ 4,000</u>	

\*Quotas calculated at \$2.50 per family.

B. The board respectfully requests that synod approve a quota of \$2.50 per family to support the ministries of the Board of Publications during (calendar year) 1981.

VI. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

- A. Board of Publications' representation at synod (Sec. II, F)
- B. Board of Publications' committee membership (Sec. II, C)
- C. Education Committee advisory position (Sec. II, D)
- D. Schedule for BIBLE WAY materials (Sec. III, A, 1)
- E. BIBLE WAY summer quarter outline (Sec. III, A, 2)
- F. Guidelines for memory work (Sec. III, A, 3)
- G. Curriculum and services for education of mentally impaired persons (Sec. III, A, 4)
- H. Recognition of Dr. Lester De Koster (Sec. III, B, 1)
- I. Appointment of Dr. Harvey Smit as Director of Education and Theological Editor (Sec. IV, B)
- J. Appointment of the Rev. William Haverkamp as Editor-in-Chief of de Wachter (Sec. IV, C)
- K. Quota of \$2.50 per family for 1981 (Sec. V, B)

Board of Publications of the  
Christian Reformed Church

A. James Heynen, Executive Director

## REPORT 6

## CHRISTIAN REFORMED WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

## I. INTRODUCTION

For the first time during 1979, CRWRC used its objective setting and report system during a complete fiscal year. The results of this system will be seen in some of the reports of work accomplished in each field.

A. *Hunger Alleviation Program*

## 1. Hunger Alleviation Education

The work of hunger alleviation education in the denomination went on as planned, strengthened by the addition of Mr. Michael Bruinooge to CRWRC's staff as World Hunger Educator. The materials for the Day of Prayer and Fasting were much appreciated by most churches, although some churches complained that their materials for the Day of Prayer and Fasting arrived late, were too elaborate, or that they did not receive enough copies. The pamphlet discussing the biblical basis for fasting was especially useful. Of churches responding to a survey done by CRWRC board members, 81 percent said they participated in some way in the Day of Prayer and Fasting.

Approximately 350 churches have hunger coordinators; the others are receiving their materials through the secretary of deacons. Slightly more than \$285,000 was contributed to the Special Hunger Fund during CRWRC's fiscal 1979 (January–August, 1979) and another \$500,000 during September, 1979–January, 1980. A total of \$85,000 was spent to support the interim hunger project in Mexico, the planning for Sierra Leone, and the Hunger Alleviation Education program.

To date, 11,740 copies of *And He Had Compassion* have been distributed. *For My Neighbor's Good*, the Education Department's edited version of the Task Force on World Hunger's report on structural change, was not completed until January, 1980, and therefore only 1,090 copies have been distributed at this writing.

## 2. Hunger Alleviation Action

The past year has been devoted to careful planning of the program in Sierra Leone, the "target country" approved by synod last year. Mr. Louis Haveman of CRWRC's Nigerian staff, with the concurrence of Christian Reformed World Missions, was chosen to do the in-depth study of that country.

The final report accepted by CRWRC and CRWM was the result of his work, along with a visit to the field by John De Haan, Executive Director of CRWRC; the Rev. William Van Tol, African Secretary of CRWM; Mr. Wayne Medendorp, Program Director of CRWRC; and Mr. Robert Bosch, Field Director-elect for Sierra Leone.

In this report, an agreement as to the administrative structure of the field was reached, together with agreements about sites, schedules, and staffing.

The report establishes priority areas for beginning work and lists staff needed. The two boards are committed to having a team of six people in the Koranko area by December of 1980. They are further committed to another team in the Krim area by December of 1981. If denominational funding is adequate, a third site, in the Limba area, will be added.

A field director for the first team was appointed in 1979—Mr. Robert Bosch of CRWRC's Jordan staff. He and his family (wife Linda and son Matthew) will take up residence in Sierra Leone just as soon as visas are obtained.

The budget for the first full year of functioning is approximately \$300,000. Each team will result in an expenditure of \$300,000 to \$350,000 per year. Thus the Sierra Leone budget will be approximately \$1,000,000 *per year* when the project is completely staffed. The current plan covers a fifteen-year period and commits the denomination to a program that will cost between \$10,000,000 and \$15,000,000 over that time.

The biggest obstacle to rapid implementation of the complete program is the availability of mature, experienced, qualified staff. CRWRC urges pastors to help CRWRC and CRWM in obtaining the necessary personnel to make the CRC's special hunger project a reality as soon as possible.

### *B. Relationships with Other Agencies*

During March, 1979, Christian Reformed World Missions and CRWRC began meeting to discuss field structure. Those meetings have continued on a somewhat regular basis, and have focused primarily on our working relationships in, and the field organization for, Sierra Leone.

CRWRC is grateful to the administration, officers, and board of CRWM for their cooperation in making possible an agreement for Sierra Leone. We know that both CRWM's and CRWRC's administrations, officers, and boards devoted much time, energy, and prayer to obtain a mutually satisfactory working agreement for this special project. We praise God for answered prayers!

We believe that this agreement and the cordial relationships which preceded it are a good omen for additional agreements for all fields where CRWM and CRWRC work jointly. Finding solutions for all fields will not be easy, but we believe it can and will be done.

The most desirable relationship between CRWRC and the Board of Home Missions would be one in which joint planning took place. We do not have that relationship now, but by next year CRWRC's domestic programs will enable this kind of planning to begin. The Board of Home Missions has been responsive to CRWRC in the past and we believe the same cooperation will continue.

The Back to God Hour has been responsive in helping our society realize God's mandate about demonstrating his love in our response to world hunger. Some time in the future, we believe that additional joint planning between the two agencies would be desirable.



The Mission Coordination Council has great potential in enabling joint planning to take place among the mission agencies of the CRC.

Several other agencies, some denominational, others independent, have made contributions to the success of the World Hunger project. United Calvinist Youth and Christian Schools International have both taken positions of active leadership on hunger issues. Calvin College, Dordt College, Reformed Bible College, and Trinity Christian College have engaged their student bodies in various ways to mobilize their concern for World Hunger. The Education Department of the Board of Publications did excellent work in their editing and distribution of the CRC's two important World Hunger documents—*And He Had Compassion on Them* and *For My Neighbor's Good*.

CRWRC continues to have annual meetings with the NAPARC churches on diaconal matters. Representatives of these groups are requesting their synods to endorse CRWRC as the coordinating agency for domestic disaster relief and refugee resettlement.

Meetings have taken place to explore better cooperation with the Reformed Church in America. More meetings are planned.

### C. Social Justice

CRWRC is distributing copies of *For My Neighbor's Good* to all pastors and congregational Hunger Alleviation Coordinators. As church groups work their way through *And He Had Compassion*, and on to *For My Neighbor's Good*, CRWRC hopes to provide a third package of material on life-style changes.

In 1979, synod designated CRWRC "to convene a meeting of all potential members of such a coalition [of Christian agencies, groups, and persons of Reformed persuasion to bring the Word of God to bear on structural problems] with the goal of establishing a permanent group (with the clear understanding that it will not be a denominationally funded group)."

CRWRC found the convening of such a meeting difficult. Instead CRWRC is sponsoring a "miniconference" in April, 1980, a small group of lay people recommended by their pastors, to lay the groundwork for CRWRC's work on social justice and structural change. We believe that such work must rest on a firm foundation of common agreement across a wide spectrum of Christian Reformed Church members. The miniconference is charged with determining this "common ground."

During June, 1980, CRWRC also plans participation in a conference of Reformed people interested in structural change. Both of these conferences will explore the issue of whether a permanent coalition is necessary and feasible.

## II. BOARD AND OFFICERS

The Executive Committee includes the following:

John Ellen—Alberta North	Dr. Norman Boeve—Muskegon
Arthur Jackson—Atlantic Northeast	Jay A. Anema—Pacific Northwest
John Gernaat—Cadillac	Gerry Jonkheer—Quinte
Martin VanderZwan—Chatham	Bruce Hulst—Zeeland
Dave Gabrielse—Grand Rapids East	Donald Pruis—Member-at-Large

James Sjoerdsma—Grandville  
Herschel Lubbers—Holland  
Richard Kuiken—Hudson  
John Vander Ploeg—Kalamazoo  
Kenneth VerBurg—Lake Erie

Dr. James Heersink—Member-at-Large  
Kenneth Holtvluwer—Member-at-Large  
Donald J. Swierenga—Member-at-Large  
Rev. John Bergsma—Member-at-Large  
James Tuinstra—Member-at-Large

The officers serving the board this year are:

John Vander Ploeg—President  
James Tuinstra—Vice-president  
Donald Pruis—Treasurer  
Bruce Hulst—Secretary  
Dave Gabrielse—Asst. Secretary/Treasurer  
Rev. John Bergsma—Ministerial Advisor

### III. DISASTER AND EMERGENCY RELIEF

#### A. Domestic Disaster

During 1979 CRWRC Disaster Response Services proved itself of inestimable value in meeting the needs of disaster victims in the United States and Canada. CRWRC offered help to twelve communities, including help with cleanup, rebuilding, training for local volunteers, advocacy, and technical assistance with organizing the local church response.

A core of volunteers has been given monthly training sessions in managing disaster response; this group offered technical and organizational help to stricken communities. The largest program of response involving both Lawton, Oklahoma, and Wichita Falls, Texas, reported 18,645 hours of labor by CRWRC volunteers.

Woodstock, Ontario, was a "special" disaster in the hearts of the CRC because a Christian school and a Christian Reformed church were destroyed, along with the homes of several church members. The denomination responded with an outpouring of more than \$100,000 in gifts to help Woodstock rebuild.

Refugee resettlement became an important part of CRWRC's domestic emergency work in 1979. Si and Rene Kamminga spent four months in Thailand working with Canadian immigration officials in selecting refugees for resettlement by Canadian Christian Reformed churches. Ten percent of all Indochinese refugees in Canada were resettled by Christian Reformed churches, a record that the CRWRC board took note of with a resolution of commendation for the Canadian churches. United States churches resettled 546 refugees; 87 United States churches await families at this date.

#### B. Foreign Disaster

While CRWRC responded to a half dozen different foreign disasters during 1979, the most prominent was the civil war in Nicaragua. Aid, both cash for food purchase and shipments of food, was channeled through CEPAD (Evangelical Committee for Development and Emergency Relief). CRWRC's Central American Director, Peter Limburg, was in Nicaragua several times during the relief period, and was impressed with the Christian dedication and concern of the CEPAD staff as they distributed the relief supplies to those displaced by war.

The other major foreign disaster disbursements in 1979 were in Dominica (\$15,000) and the Dominican Republic (\$40,000) for home rebuilding after Hurricane David swept through the Caribbean. In both these islands, aid was channeled through local, evangelical Christian groups.

#### IV. FOREIGN PROGRAM OUTREACHES

During fiscal 1979 (January—August, 1979) CRWRC programs had the following success in meeting their objectives:

##### A. *Asia*

###### 1. *Bangladesh*

Staff: Peter and Peggi Vander Meulen, Director  
Marve and Peg De Vries, Irrigation Specialist  
Martin Mostert, Agriculturist  
Kees Poppe, Extensionist  
Doug Seebeck, Extensionist

The Bangladesh staff hoped to increase the crop production of 250 small farmers from 1100 to 1600 tons of grain, from 3 tons to 18 tons of vegetables, and from 65,000 heads of cabbage to 100,000. They were successful in reaching only 50 percent of these goals because of drought during the rainy season. In response to the need created by the drought the staff instituted a program of giving out wheat to needy families who brought in rat tails. The goal was to decrease the rat population, feed the neediest poor, and offer activity to those who could not farm. The rats-for-food program was designated by the United States Agency for International Development as one of the most creative and successful relief projects they know about.

The Bangladesh staff also intended to work with 50 needy families who had no access to land to help them find other ways to generate income. This goal was not met because CRWRC was unable to find qualified staff to run this program.

###### 2. *India*

Staff: No expatriate staff

In India CRWRC funds a midday feeding center for 150 children and two medical clinics which served 3,000 persons during 1979. The programs are administered by the Christian Reformed Churches of South India.

###### 3. *Jordan*

Staff: Robert Haan, Director

In 1979, final plans were made for closing down CRWRC's Jordan program as of March 31, 1980. As we reported to synod last year, CRWRC had long been disturbed by its inability to incorporate an evangelical witness into this program. In its last year, CRWRC-Jordan served 167 persons, reaching its goal with approximately half of these.

###### 4. *Korea*

Staff: No expatriate staff

CRWRC phased out of its final Korean program—the Family Assistance Program—early in 1980. During 1979, 6,800 persons were served in the family assistance program, nearly all of them achieving the goal of increasing their vocational skills, their medical care, or their educational opportunities. This program is now entirely phased over to the Sinal Presbyterian Church.

#### 5. *The Philippines*

Staff: Ivan and Joy De Kam, Director  
Bill and Dorothy Fernhout, Nutritionist  
Eleanor Haan, Social Worker  
Peter and Hennie Vellenga, Agriculturist  
Andy and Kris Ryskamp, Community Developer  
Dave and Cindy Veenstra, Community Developer

The CRWRC staff in the Philippines agreed to work with 720 families in 1979, to improve nutrition, sanitation, and income levels for them. At the end of the year, the staff had actually served 1132 families.

While the nutritional objectives were not entirely realized, the sanitation and self-help projects went beyond expectations. Especially rewarding was the fact that seven diaconal groups in Christian Reformed churches in the area all met their goals for assuming increased responsibilities.

### B. *Africa*

#### 1. *Niger*

Staff: Markus and Mary Ann Frei, Agriculturist  
Pat and Eveline Franje, Agriculturist

The CRWRC involvement in Niger began as a response to the severe drought in the Sahel Region of Africa. Markus and Mary Ann Frei and Pat Franje are CRWRC employees on loan to the Sudan Interior Mission. Markus and Mary Ann are completing their last term of service in Niger as we envision the phaseover of the agricultural projects that have been developed under their guidance. Pat Franje is involved in reforestation projects. The CRWRC anticipates completion of its commitment to the SIM by 1982.

#### 2. *Nigeria*

Staff: Louis and Janice Haveman, Director  
Bulus Ali, National Director  
Steve Nikkel, Agriculturist

Christian Rural Development became an entirely independent entity during 1979, with CRWRC's Steve Nikkel serving as an advisor to Nigerian Director Bulus Ali. The program served 586 farmers in 1979, increasing their crop production and improving their poultry production. It also improved stewardship in ten congregations.

#### 3. *Sierra Leone*

(See I, A, Hunger Alleviation Program)

### C. *Latin America*

#### 1. *Costa Rica*

Staff: No expatriate staff

CRWRC provides financial assistance to Alfalit, International, a Christian organization which promotes reading and writing skills among adults throughout Latin America. Use of the funds and the results achieved are monitored by CRWRC staff in Central America.

### 2. *Guatemala*

Staff: Peter and Paula Limburg, Central America Director

Working through the Presbyterian Church of Guatemala, CRWRC had as one of its goals to increase crop production, improve health, and achieve basic literacy for 250 Maya-Quiche Indians. This goal was met. CRWRC also supported Alfalit of Guatemala in working with 1500 illiterate adults, and provided educational opportunities for 275 children and 24 adults in a squatter community called "The Fourth of February" (after the date of the 1976 earthquake).

CRWRC had agreed with an indigenous group called Pro-Salud to train health leaders for 14 communities. This agreement was not kept, and the training was turned over to local medical students instead. The latter arrangement is working well.

### 3. *Haiti*

Staff: Dave and Deb Genzink, Director  
 Jim and Judy Zylstra, Director-elect  
 Sandy Beelen, Nurse  
 Cloe Ann Danford, Nurse  
 Lavon Tinklenberg, Nurse  
 Dick and Mary Both, Agriculturist  
 Dave Kobes, Agriculturist

CRWRC-Haiti had a three-pronged approach during 1979. The first was to increase the farm production of 300 farm families by 20 percent. The actual results showed that 360 families increased their production by 30 percent—a heartening degree of success for the staff.

The medical prong of the program was less successful, largely because CRWRC had a difficult time recruiting nurses. We still have one vacant nursing position in Haiti. This program met only 50 percent of its goal of having 190 of 375 children achieve normal weight.

The literacy prong of the program ran into severe difficulty during 1979 and had to be completely reorganized.

### 4. *Honduras*

Staff: Darryl and Donna Jean Mortensen, Agriculturist  
 Betty Roldan, Nutritionist

CRWRC lends three staff people to the Evangelical Committee for Development and National Emergency (CEDEN) in Honduras. Their goals for 1979 were to increase the production of 110 farm families and to bring 80 percent of the 440 children in those families to normal weight. These goals were achieved. In addition, CRWRC helped 800 families gain basic literacy skills.

Working with the Christian Reformed Church of Honduras, CRWRC helped the deacons of that church reach out to 190 undernourished children, bringing 80 percent of them to normal weight, and preparing 30 preschoolers from disadvantaged homes for success in the early years of public school.

### 5. Mexico

Staff: Clare and Shirley De Boer, Director  
Sam Vander Ende, Agriculturist  
Bill and Hilda Vander Klippe, Agriculturist

The work in the Yucatan Peninsula was completely phased over to a local committee during 1979. In the Oaxaca Valley, CRWRC staff worked with 600 farmers to improve their crop production and family income.

In the isolated villages around the valley, 180 farm families had their production improved through the training of 16 crop promoters for their villages. This is the "Interim Hunger Project" approved by both CRWRC and CRWM and is funded from the Special Hunger Fund.

### 6. Nicaragua

Staff: Joel Zwier, Agriculturist

Civil war once again disrupted CRWRC's regular programming in Nicaragua during 1979. Extensive relief assistance was given through CEPAD (III, B, Foreign Disaster). However, both the agriculture work and the work with malnourished children continued in areas not affected by the war. The objectives set in early 1979, on the assumption of peace, were 50 percent achieved in spite of the war.

## V. DOMESTIC PROGRAM

### A. Community Development Projects

#### 1. Middlesboro, Kentucky

Staff: Jim Boldenow, Director  
Don Zeilstra, Community Worker

The CRWRC staff was extremely successful during 1979 in helping local Christian groups develop their skills in bringing services to the poor of their communities. The Middlesboro Cooperative Ministries group, Interfaith of Bell County, and the Christian Family Services were all functioning on their own by the end of the year with consultation and funds from CRWRC staff.

#### 2. Pennington Gap, Virginia

Staff: Del Willink, Director

Two housing corporations were functioning on their own (with consultation) by the end of 1979—Tri-County Housing Corporation and Lee County Housing and Development Authority. The St. Charles community will soon begin a major economic development program based upon recommendations of a major research study supervised by CRWRC. The Lee County Emergency Service was functioning entirely independently by the end of 1979 and had helped 155 families with budget planning, employment, or emergency services. Most heartening was the fact that the Emergency Service has become an arm of the local churches.

#### 3. Mississippi Christian Family Services

Staff: Elvinah Spoelstra, Director  
Susie Evans, Supervisor of Special Education

A total of 29 developmentally disabled youngsters and 20 adults received training at Mississippi Christian Family Services during 1979. An additional 50 handicapped persons were given services in their homes. Through a program of pastoral care, four area churches were given training in diaconal work and regular Bible studies.

CRWRC has plans for phasing all of these community development programs over to their local communities within five years.

#### B. *Diaconal Ministries*

During 1979 CRWRC renewed its commitment to work closely with diaconal conferences and the deacons of the Christian Reformed Church. We hope to establish even closer ties with them in the next five years and to offer them additional resources for training and technical assistance.

In order to assist diaconal groups in meeting the needs in their local communities, CRWRC gives grants to local groups. Such grants are given with the understanding that the local churches will give increasing amounts of support to these local projects as CRWRC funding decreases.

In 1979 CRWRC ended funding for five such projects. It continued funding for the following:

##### 1. *Denver Diaconal Conference*

Project: Native American Urban Transition Program—ministry to Indian girls and families migrating to the Denver community.

Assistance: Funds for director's salary and partial program support costs.

##### 2. *Chicago Area Classes*

Project: Roseland Christian Ministries Center—a comprehensive worship, training, service program in the former Back to God Hour building.

Assistance: Cooperative ministry with the Board of Home Missions, SCORR, Chicago classes, and CRWRC, with each contributing approximately one-fourth of total program costs.

##### 3. *Denver Third Christian Reformed Church Diaconate*

Project: Sun Valley Christian Family Services—a ministry to Spanish Americans in the Sun Valley and Las Casitas community, based at the Sun Valley Community Church (a BHM church).

Assistance: Total project costs, including director's salary and program support costs.

##### 4. *Midwest/Canadian Conference*

CRWRC began funding for a project for native Canadians in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.

#### C. *Disaster Response Services*

CRWRC's reorganized disaster service proved its value in 1979 as the trained managers offered technical assistance to twelve communities struck with disaster. Hundreds of volunteers gave thousands of hours of volunteer labor.

Monthly training sessions honed the managers' skills even further.

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## VI. ADMINISTRATION, MATERIAL RESOURCE CENTER, FINANCE

### A. Administration

The Grand Rapids staff includes John De Haan, Executive Director; Karen De Vos, Director of Communications; Merle Grevengoed, Finance Director; Wayne Medendorp, Foreign Program Director; Neil Molenaar, Domestic Program Director; Jane Ritsema, Executive Secretary; Michael Bruinooge, World Hunger Educator; Andy Ryskamp, Communications Assistant; Chris Cok, Accountant; Fran Vryhof, part-time assistant in refugee resettlement; Art Schaap, Manager of Material Resource Center; and secretaries Connie Bolt, Kathy Door, Helen Linders, and Sheryl Vanden Berg.

CRWRC appointed a full-time Canadian director in early 1980. Harry Veldstra took up duties on May 1, replacing Peter Zwart, who served CRWRC faithfully and well as part-time director for many years.

1. Salaries—All salaries of executive, administrative, and office staff included in our total 1980-81 budget are in amounts within the SIC recommended salary ranges under the Denominational Agencies Uniform Salary Policy.

2. Audits—The audit firm of Touche Ross & Company was appointed to audit the books in the United States and Canada. The 1981-82 field audits, wherever feasible, will be done by firms which have an affiliation agreement with CRWRC's primary audit firm. In addition to financial audits, CRWRC has agreed to work toward auditing field performance on a small, random basis to insure that both baselines and results have been recorded at all levels.

### B. Material Resource Center

The board decided in 1979 to phase out the used-clothing operation of the Material Resource Center because the demand for used clothing is much less than formerly and because a cost analysis showed that CRWRC could purchase whatever it needed from other organizations at less cost than maintaining the Resource Center.

In February, 1980, the board voted to close the Material Resource Center altogether by the end of August, 1980. Both disaster relief and development aid have changed over the years. The demand for material goods is considerably less than in previous years and those goods that are needed can generally be shipped directly from the supplier. The need for storing large quantities of material goods is largely gone.

### C. Finances

Financially, 1979 was a blessed year for CRWRC. The income for the general fund increased by approximately 6 percent over that for 1978. The disaster income kept pace with a very busy disaster year—including large amounts for Woodstock, Ontario; and Nicaragua. The Special Hunger Fund received \$478,974 in 1979 and an additional \$229,307 during January of 1980.

The board adopted a budget for 1980-81 at its February meeting. This is the first time the budget has been stated as a gross budget, including



field income, grant income, and general receipts, as well as the budget for the new project in Sierra Leone. Therefore, it is not strictly comparable to previous budgets.

The following budget represents CRWRC's plans for 1980-81. It includes funds for researching projects in El Salvador and Liberia and for research of possible expansion in Niger and/or the Philippines.

1980-81 BUDGET

FOREIGN

Bangladesh	\$ 507,252	
Costa Rica	140,621	
Guatemala	112,895	
Haiti	239,608	
Honduras	261,378	
India	12,600	
Liberia	20,000	
Mexico	135,727	
Nicaragua	128,710	
Niger	43,323	
Nigeria	278,555	
Philippines	277,291	
Sierra Leone	290,249	
El Salvador	55,636	
South America/Benue	5,000	
Expansion	15,000	
		\$2,523,845

DOMESTIC

Mississippi	\$ 113,960	
Kentucky	103,640	
Pennington Gap	67,552	
NAUTP	11,106	
Roseland Christian Ministries	5,506	
Sun Valley	19,156	
Winnipeg	35,294	
Refugee	36,770	
DRS	48,042	
Diaconal	115,630	
		\$ 556,656

CONTINGENCY 61,610

EDUCATION 46,561

TOTAL PROGRAM \$3,188,672

SUPPORT SERVICES

Administration	\$ 319,785
Fund Raising	216,601

Resource Center	23,839	
Deferred Giving	20,000	
		<u>\$580,225</u>

**TOTAL BUDGET** \$3,768,897

*D. Request for approval for denominational offerings*

CRWRC requests that synod commend the work of mercy to our churches and urge them to take offerings on a regular and sustaining basis to provide the necessary funds for this ministry.

**VII. ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS-AT-LARGE**

CRWRC presents the following names to synod as nominees for three board member-at-large positions and three alternates (alternate to be chosen between the nominee not elected and the alternate nominee):

- Sociologist:* James Haveman, Jr.  
Anne Schreuder
- Alternate:* Ted Rottman
- Accountant:* Edgar Westenbroek  
Chris Schauer
- Alternate:* Edward Zeilstra
- Minister:* Rev. W. Van Dyk  
Rev. Jacob Boonstra
- Alternate:* Rev. John Witvliet

CRWRC thanks the Rev. John Bergsma, James Tuinstra, and Donald Pruis, the retiring at-large members for their years of dedicated and excellent service.

**VIII. SUMMARY MATTERS REQUIRING SYNOD'S ATTENTION**

- A. Representatives at synod—CRWRC requests that its President, John Vander Ploeg; Minister Board Member, the Rev. John Bergsma; and its Executive Director, John De Haan, be granted the floor when matters pertaining to our work are discussed.
- B. Approval of plans for 1980-81 (VI, C—Budget)
- C. Approval for Offerings (VI, D)
- D. Election of board members-at-large (VII)

Christian Reformed World  
Relief Committee  
John De Haan, Executive Director

## REPORT 7

## BACK TO GOD TRACT COMMITTEE

## I. MEMBERSHIP

Calvin Bremer, Ren Broekhuizen, Jack De Vos, Willard De Waard, LaVern Haas, Stephen Lambers, Cheryl Nielsen, Kenneth Swets, and William Vander Hoven.

The Rev. Mr. Bremer is completing his second three-year appointment and is not eligible for reappointment. The Rev. Mr. Broekhuizen is completing his first three-year appointment; he is eligible for reappointment.

## II. ACTIVITIES

One of the more significant activities of this committee during the past year was the publication of a new series of tracts called the "God Made It All" series. Begun in late 1978 and completed early in 1979, these tracts were designed to be used in a "tract of the month" series in the churches. There are twelve tracts, each in full color, and each with an accompanying promotional poster. We ordered 100,000 of each tract printed, or a total of 1,200,000 tracts in this series alone. We sent samples and a quantity of one tract to each church, and are in the midst of promoting the series once again. Publications of this series placed a serious economic drain on the committee's resources, as evidenced by our financial statement that follows, and we're hopeful that our churches will receive at least one offering in support of our work.

Our catalog has been completely revised, but we are holding back on having it printed until our economic situation improves. We are "charging" \$2.00 per one hundred tracts.

A number of new tracts have been printed this year; many of the older tracts have been revised, redesigned, and republished.

We have made a number of contacts with our churches, aiming specifically at evangelism committees and others likely to use our tracts. We also have sent tracts to some organizations not part of the denomination but whose activities made such contributions important.

Tract displays—manned and unmanned—were set up in several places, including the Sunday School Convention, the Reformed Conference on Evangelism, and at synod.

Tracts were sent free of charge to all SWIM teams that responded to our suggestion to ask for quantities, and to each chaplain.

## III. PROCEDURES

The committee meets monthly in the denominational building (providing there's room there for us; on two occasions we had to meet elsewhere, i.e., at Calvin College and at Christian Schools Inter-

national). Three subcommittees are responsible for (1) authors and titles; (2) editing copy and readying it for publication; and (3) promotion of the finished products. The full committee makes all final decisions.

Mrs. Angie Westerhuis conducts committee business, i.e., filling orders for tracts, typing minutes, and arranging for tract publication. She is appreciated by all of us.

Our tracts are printed, warehoused, and mailed by personnel of the denominational building.

Wayne De Jonge designs our tract covers and ads, and advises re general layout and design. He, too, is much appreciated.

#### IV. STATISTICS

During 1979, the committee dispensed a total of 370,788 tracts. Of that number, 36,729, or about 10 percent of the total, were given away (to chaplains, to SWIM teams, as promotional samples); 12,800 were sold in the form of "sample packs"; and 321,259 were dispensed as regular sales.

#### V. FINANCES

The committee receives its funds via gifts and offerings from individuals and churches. Only a small part of our funds are received via sales. Expenses are confined to the costs of clerical and distribution services, printing, and other production costs, tract-cover designs, and a small gratuity sent to those who author new tracts.

Here is a summary of our fund transactions for 1979:

Balance, January 1, 1979	\$16,431.65
Receipts, January-December, 1979	<u>18,065.31</u>
TOTAL	34,496.96
Disbursements, January-December, 1979	<u>33,878.97</u>
Balance, December 31, 1979	\$ 617.99

A full financial statement and auditor's report will be submitted.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

We respectfully request that synod urge the churches to consider this committee as worthy of moral, prayerful, and financial support, and to urge that at least one offering be received in support of the work.

Two committee members must be named as replacements of those whose terms expire. Names of nominees have been submitted for synod's consideration and selection.

Back to God Tract Committee  
Kenneth L. Swets, secretary

## REPORT 8

## BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

## A. Majority Report

## I. MANDATE AND HISTORY

The mandate of the Bible Translation Committee contains two parts: (1) "to advise synod concerning the designation of Bible versions to be used in worship services," and (2) "to inform the churches concerning the quality of new translations" (Acts of Synod 1969, p. 49). Since the formation of this Committee on Bible Translation as a standing committee, no report has been made to synod based on the first part of the mandate. The last recommendation concerning the designation of a version to be used in worship services was made by the Revised Standard Version Study Committee and approved by the Synod of 1969 (Acts of Synod 1969, pp. 48ff). The work of the standing committee has been directed exclusively toward informing the churches concerning the quality of new translations, and has consisted of published reviews of the following versions: Today's English Version, The Living Bible: Paraphrased, The New English Bible, and the New International Version-New Testament. Because the Old and New Testament of TEV were reviewed separately, the number of review articles has been five. These have appeared in the Banner, de Wachter, and Calvinist-Contact.

Three overtures concerning the possible use of the New International Version were submitted to the Synod of 1979. Responding to these overtures, synod adopted the following recommendations:

1. That synod withhold action on designating the NIV as one of the versions acceptable for use in worship services.

*Ground:* The Bible Translation Committee is planning to complete its review of the NIV and to make a recommendation regarding the use of this version to the Synod of 1980.

2. That synod declare this to be its answer to Overtures 4, 5, and 6 (Acts of Synod 1979, Art. 21, II, C).

In response to this action of synod and because the committee judges that NIV should be considered as a possible version to be used in the worship service, we submit the following report and recommendations concerning the New International Version.

## II. A REVIEW OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

The impetus for the production of another Bible version, which has now culminated in the publication of the New International Version, was created by the critical response to the publication of the RSV in

1952. Although it is difficult today to remember the dispute created by the RSV, at that time many conservative groups and churches considered the RSV to be unacceptable. The Synod of 1954, on the basis of a study report, rejected its use as an approved version for public worship (a decision later set aside when the Synod of 1969 approved the RSV for use in public worship). In that atmosphere of distrust created by the initial negative response to the RSV, the Synod of 1956 appointed a committee, composed of the members of the Old and New Testament departments of Calvin Seminary, to study the possibility of sponsoring the production of another translation in cooperation with other conservative churches. In 1957 the Educational Division of the National Association of Evangelicals appointed a similar committee. After two joint meetings of these committees, the decision was made to call a broader conference to test the feasibility of preparing another translation. From this point on, there was no longer any official participation of the CRC committee. The broader conference was held in 1965, and a Committee of Fifteen was formed to oversee the work of a new translation.

This Committee of Fifteen enlisted the services of more than one hundred scholars from various countries (including the United States, Canada, England, Australia, and New Zealand) and from more than a dozen evangelical denominations ranging from Baptist to Presbyterian to Episcopalian to Mennonite—including several from the Christian Reformed Church. Professors Marten Woudstra and John Stek have served on this Committee of Fifteen (now called the Committee on Bible Translation), Dr. Edwin Palmer has served as full-time executive secretary since 1968, and several other members of the CRC have participated in the work of translating and editing. Participation on this project has occurred on an individual basis and does not reflect any official approval or participation by any denomination. The project was sponsored by the New York Bible Society (now the New York International Bible Society) and more recently it received major financial backing from the Zondervan Publishing House.

All of the scholars who participated in the project are conservative/evangelical in their theological position and are committed to the "authority and infallibility of the Bible as God's Word in written form. They believe that it contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, that it sheds unique light on our path in a dark world, and that it sets forth the way to our eternal well-being" (Preface to NIV, p. viii). We agree with this commitment to the Scriptures, but in a review it is necessary to observe that although theological stance can influence translation, it does so only within certain minimal limits. Translation is a complex art, and the possibilities of translation are limited finally by the meaning of the words themselves. In most instances it is difficult to demonstrate that differences in translations, which exist among the major standard versions, reflect differences in theological stance. In any case, the scholar's commitment to Scripture does not guarantee a perfect translation. Thus, as scholars, the NIV translators recognize that "the work of translation is never wholly finished" and that "like all translations of the Bible, made as they are by imperfect man, this one un-

doubtedly falls short of its goals" (Preface, pp. ix, x). Consequently, they have incorporated a number of corrections and revisions into the present edition of the New Testament. The NIV New Testament was published already in 1973, and many suggestions for improvement were made in various reviews (for example, see this committee's review, the *Banner*, July 23, 1976). Hence the NIV-New Testament which is now being published in the first printing of the entire Bible (1978) is in some respects a second edition. In addition, because of the ease with which changes can be made on the master tape used in modern printing, some 250 changes (many minor) are being inserted without any indication of a new edition. Thus the more recent publishings of NIV will not be precisely identical with the earlier ones. We assume that after several years of use a second edition will be forthcoming.

Since the quality of a translation cannot be judged simply on the basis of the theological stance of its translators, it is necessary to review the principles of translation actually used, the adequacy of the text adopted, and the accuracy of the translation. Only after these are evaluated can a recommendation be made regarding its suitability for use in worship services. Thus we shall ask, What kind of a translation is the New International Version? Do its principles differ from those governing other modern versions? Is it more accurate? Is it more contemporary in expression? Although we have previously reviewed the NIV-New Testament, we shall include comments on the New Testament in this review because some of the criticisms contained in the original review no longer apply to the present edition.

#### A. *The Text*

All modern translations differ significantly from the text used by the King James Version. Some words or phrases, or even in several instances entire verses, are now omitted or relegated to the footnotes. Thus when the RSV appeared in 1952 and Today's English Version in 1966, both were accused of tampering with the text of the Bible. Persons making such charges were simply comparing these translations with the KJV, assuming that the KJV was indeed an accurate rendition of the text written by the apostles.

If one compares the New International Version with the KJV, one discovers the same omissions found in other modern translations (for example, I John 5:7; John 5:4; and special comments indicating uncertainty about John 7:53-8:11; and Mark 16:9-20). But by now most persons have learned that there is no reason for using the KJV as the basis for comparison; the KJV was itself based on inferior manuscripts of the Bible. Without detracting from its beauty and the significant impact it has had on the English-speaking world, the judgment must be made that the Hebrew and the Greek text used by the KJV is not as accurate as the text available today.

Because of the discovery of ancient biblical manuscripts and the advance of the science of textual criticism, biblical scholars agree that today we have a much more accurate text of the Bible; that is, the text available to translators today more closely approximates the original writings of

the biblical authors than the text used by the King James translators in the seventeenth century. This text developed by the textual critics has been used as the basis for the NIV. The Preface declares concerning the New Testament that "where existing manuscripts differ, the translators made their choice of readings according to accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism" (p. ix). In our judgment this has been done well, although we wish to raise some questions about the application of these principles in certain instances.

The Preface claims that "footnotes call attention to places where there was uncertainty about what the original text was" (p. ix). In other words, the promise is made that where there are significant differences in the manuscripts of the Bible, the reader of NIV will be alerted to that fact by appropriate footnotes. In our judgment this promise has not been adequately fulfilled. Such footnotes are very few in number: for example, there are none in Galatians and only one in Revelation. In two cases in Revelation where NIV adopts a reading at variance with the judgment of most textual critics (Rev. 15:3; 22:21), there are no footnotes to indicate this. The text of Jude 22-23 is also uncertain, but NIV has no footnote indicating this. NIV's translation includes three distinct groups for which concern must be shown, whereas some others believe the better text indicates only two distinct groups. A footnote indicating this difference or at least indicating uncertainty would be useful. Thus the instances in which the reader is made aware of "uncertainty about what the original text was" is less than what one may expect. There are more uncertainties about the original text than NIV indicates. In most books of the New Testament, the footnotes in NIV provide less than what is promised in the Preface.

The text used as the basis for translating the Old Testament is the standard Hebrew text, called the Masoretic Text. Here also the NIV translators followed the accepted principles of textual criticism, and where the Hebrew text seemed doubtful or unclear appeal was made to other ancient manuscripts, versions, or to Targums. In rare cases, in order to get an improved reading, NIV divides the Hebrew words differently than the Masoretic text does. All of these practices are common to all translations, but again there are places where legitimate questions can be raised.

Sometimes the Hebrew text seems unclear or even incomplete, and translators must seek help from ancient versions. However, it is not always evident why they follow the ancient versions in some instances but not in others. For example, in Genesis 4:8 NIV follows ancient versions in inserting Cain's statement, "Let's go out to the field," a statement not contained in the Hebrew text. Again in Genesis 4:15 NIV chooses the reading of the versions, "not so," in place of the Hebrew, "Very well." The text of I Samuel 1:5 is obscure, yet NIV gives no indication of this in a footnote. The question is whether Elkanah gave Hannah a single or a double portion, and although most interpret the Hebrew and the Greek as indicating the former, NIV chooses the latter. In the Hebrew text, I Samuel 13:1 is clearly defective. Many modern translations simply present it in this form without giving either Saul's age or length of reign.



NIV chooses to fill these in: "Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years." In two footnotes, NIV indicates that the Hebrew has neither the number thirty nor forty, and NIV also places brackets around them to indicate that the translators are supplying these numbers. But the textual basis for "thirty" is very weak, and for "forty" nonexistent. Here NIV refers to the speech in Acts 13:21 where Paul says Saul reigned forty years. However, since this is not the "forty-two" which NIV has in I Samuel 13:1, the footnote suggests that Paul uses a "round number." In this way NIV succeeds in harmonizing the Scripture, but does so without a textual basis.

NIV follows the Septuagint in I Kings 6:16, "from floor to ceiling," rather than the Hebrew, "unto the walls," without indicating this in a footnote. The footnote added at Deuteronomy 32:43 seems incomplete. It mentions that the Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls have an additional line, "and let all the angels worship him," thus indicating the source of the quotation in Hebrews 1:6. However, these sources contain another additional line which begins the verse, "Rejoice, O heavens, with him." Thus these sources actually contain three lines in place of the one line in the Hebrew text, and the footnote makes no mention of it. In addition, it would be useful at Hebrews 2:7 to indicate that "the angels" in the quotation from Psalm 8:5 is found in the Septuagint, "you have made him a little lower than the angels." Even though NIV has translated "elohim" in Psalm 8:5 as "heavenly beings" rather than as "God," i.e., "you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings," most agree that the author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 8:5 from the Septuagint. Elsewhere NIV has the very helpful practice of placing in footnotes the form quoted by the New Testament: for example, Genesis 11:12-13; Exodus 1:5; Amos 9:12.

A similar criticism concerns alternate translations in footnotes. All translators know how difficult it is to determine the precise meaning of certain Greek words or phrases. However, since they are forced to choose a single translation for the text, footnotes are used to indicate alternate translations. NIV promises that where "another interpretation was possible and of sufficient importance" (Preface, p. x), it would be placed in a footnote. In our judgment there is a bare minimum of such alternative translations in NIV.

For example, the translation "servant of Christ" (Rom. 1:1; II Cor. 4:5; etc.) may be adequate, but many believe that "slave of Christ" would be stronger and more precise and should be mentioned in a footnote. "The basic principles of the world" is an excellent translation of the Greek phrase found in Galatians 4:3, 9 and a possible translation of the same phrase found in Colossians 2:8, 20, but certainly a footnote should mention the translation which many still prefer, "the elemental spirits of the universe." NIV translates Colossians 1:19, "For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him." A footnote indicating the alternate translation would be most appropriate: "for in him all the fulness was pleased to dwell." There is considerable dispute whether "Mystery" should be part of the title given to the woman in Revelation 17:5 as translated in NIV, yet no footnote indicates the other possibility. Other examples from the

New Testament could be given, but these illustrate the committee's concern that NIV chooses too exclusively for one translation without indicating in footnotes other possibilities as often as it should.

Why mention all these examples? First, to point out that the translators of NIV, like all other translators, must make judgments at certain points concerning what the original text was; and secondly, that persons holding the same commitment to Scripture as the Word of God as the translators do legitimately question some of the judgments made. In addition, since the translators of NIV wish it to become one of the standard Bible versions, it should be made more complete in its use of footnotes to inform the reader concerning the judgments that have been made concerning both text and translation.

### *B. Some Principles of Translation*

Translation is a difficult art. The translator must decide in advance whether to stay as close as possible to a word-for-word translation, or try instead to give the meaning of the original in the best English possible. He must also decide whether a given word in Hebrew or Greek should always be translated by the same English word, or whether he should allow the context to determine whether a variety of English words should be used to capture the various nuances of a particular Hebrew or Greek word.

No readable version could ever be completely a word-for-word translation. The result would be so stilted and foreign as to make it unsuitable for English readers. Therefore no version follows that procedure throughout. Some do so to a greater degree than others. Of all modern versions, the American Standard Version and the New American Standard Bible come the closest to being a word-for-word translation.

The more recent versions adopt to some degree what has been called "the principle of dynamic equivalence." The translator attempts to take the meaning of a phrase or sentence in Hebrew or Greek and render it as accurately as possible in understandable English. The New English Bible and Today's English Version use this method to a greater degree than others.

The RSV and the NIV fall between the two extremes. Both use to some extent a word-for-word translation, but both also feel free to use dynamic equivalence where this is useful. On a comparative basis, the RSV is probably more a word-for-word translation than is the NIV.

Together with most recent translations, NIV has decided also that it makes more sense not to restrict itself to using the same English word for a given word in Greek or Hebrew. The KJV and the ASV, on the other hand, followed the principle of using the same English word for a given Greek or Hebrew word as closely as it can be followed. But modern translators feel that it is more important to allow the context to determine the nuance of the Greek or Hebrew word.

For example, in the NIV the Hebrew word *chesed* is translated as "love," "mercy," "unfailing kindness," "unfailing love." Like the RSV, NIV gives more than ten different translations of the Greek word for "flesh," including "world," "sinful nature," "standards of this world."

The literal translation of I Corinthians 1:26, "Not many of you were wise according to the flesh," is stated more clearly in NIV's "Not many of you were wise by human standards," and the choice of "sinful nature" for "flesh" in Galatians 5:13-19 is superior to NEB's "lower nature." Using a variety of English words to capture the richness of important concepts makes passages more easily understood, but it makes word study more difficult.

Thus when judged in the light of these two basic principles of translation, namely, dynamic equivalence and using various English words to express the nuances of a single Greek or Hebrew word, NIV is clearly a very contemporary and helpful translation.

### *C. Accuracy of Translation*

It is interesting to note how the standards of accuracy have changed in the last several decades. When the principle of dynamic equivalence is adopted, accuracy no longer requires word-for-word translation. Whether or not certain words are omitted is determined primarily by what constitutes good English style. For example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 there are more than ten conjunctions ("and," "but") which introduce major clauses or sentences. NIV reproduces only three or four of these. (KJV and RSV reproduce about nine.) The Hebrew idiom, commonly translated "and it came to pass," found frequently in the Gospels is also usually omitted by NIV (as it is also by RSV). Is anything lost in such omissions? Probably not. When one reads NIV's translation of the Good Samaritan, the story is crisp, direct, and clear. An English translation need not literally reproduce items that are clearly only a matter of Greek or Hebrew idiom.

NIV is in general a highly accurate and articulate version. It does not strive for exceptionally catchy or novel translations but always uses its freedom with restraint. For example, the following translations are all very accurate and helpful: "this is the account of" for "these are the generations of" (Gen. 2:4; 5:1; etc.); "one blessing after another" in place of the literal "grace upon grace" (John 1:16); "one who speaks in our defense" as in the interpretation of Paraclete (I John 2:1); and the use of the progressive present in "No one who lives in him keeps on sinning" in place of "does not sin" (I John 3:6). "Let's have a feast and celebrate" in place of "let us eat and make merry" (Luke 15:23), and "God has judged her for the way she treated you" instead of "God has given judgment for you against her" (Rev. 18:20) are good examples of clarity and precision. One final example of a helpful use of interpretive paraphrase to clarify unfamiliar terms is found in Matthew 5:18, "I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished."

A good review, however—that is, one that will be most useful to the readers, to the translators, and to the synod that must make a decision concerning the use of this translation—should point out where improvement can be made. Thus, although this following section may be longer than that which affirms the good qualities, these criticisms by no means

intend to call into question the general excellence of the translation.

There are indeed places where the adequacy of the translation can be questioned. The first footnote in the NIV Bible should be omitted. In Genesis 1:2, attached to the phrase, "Now the earth was formless and empty," is a footnote that gives as a possible alternate translation, "Now the earth *became* formless." Most biblical scholars do not consider this a possibility at all, and it is clearly a concession to persons holding a theory of two distinct creations with a cataclysm between. Although "sky" may be in some respects a good translation of "heaven(s)" in Genesis 1, one does wonder—especially after reading the opening words, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—what happened to the created heavens in NIV's account. Further, since "sky" is used in Genesis 1, the phrase "the floodgates of the heavens" in the story of the flood (Gen. 8:2) seems no longer to be related directly to the creation account. Thus "sky" seems a bit limited for what the creation account has in mind.

"How long will you keep on being drunk?" seems to reflect better Eli's concern for Hannah than NIV's "How long will you keep on getting drunk?" (I Sam. 1:14). NIV also fails to translate the sense of purpose contained in I Samuel 2:8 which indicates that God raises the poor and lifts the needy *in order* to make them sit with princes and inherit a throne of honor. The consistent practice in the Old Testament of translating *Sheol* with "grave," is less than adequate, even though *Sheol* is placed in a footnote. The Greek *Hades* is also translated as "grave" in Acts 2:27, but without a footnote. Here the reader will have to observe that this is in a quotation from Psalm 16:10 in order to discover that "grave" refers to *Sheol*. However, in Revelation 1:18 *Hades* is retained in the text and no explanation is given in a footnote. Since *Sheol* and *Hades* refer to more than what a modern person understands by "grave," it would be better to retain these terms in the text and present an explanation in a footnote. Otherwise, one runs a risk of modernizing the text.

Ten years ago in our review of the RSV, we argued against the translation, "lift up a song to him who rides upon the clouds" (Ps. 68:4), and in favor of the literal Hebrew text, "Cast up a highway for him who rides through the deserts." NIV's translation of this verse is similar to that of the RSV, and again we would favor the translation of the Hebrew found in NIV's footnote. In that same review of the RSV, we took the position that only Psalm 110 is directly a messianic psalm; that is, only this psalm has no other fulfillment than in the person of the Messiah. All other messianic psalms have a prior fulfillment in Israel's history, as well as a final fulfillment in the Messiah. Thus, in Psalm 16:10 it would be better not to place "Holy One" in capital letters in "nor will you let your Holy One see decay," even though it is quoted in Acts 2:2 as fulfilled in Jesus. For the same reason, "Anointed One," "King," and "Son" in Psalm 2 should not be capitalized. Here we prefer the reading in NIV's footnotes. We also discussed the translation of Isaiah 7:14 in that review of the RSV. NIV has returned to the traditional translation "virgin" in place of RSV's "young woman." However, in that review it was mentioned that the ma-

majority of the committee judged that in terms of linguistic evidence the intent of the Hebrew word is not specifically virginity but simply to designate a young woman of marriageable age (without of course denying her virginity). It was also pointed out that some believe that this prophecy finds an initial fulfillment in the days of King Ahaz, and that the fulfillment in Jesus Christ in many ways transcends this initial fulfillment. In other words, like most of the messianic psalms, Isaiah 7:14 also may have had a dual fulfillment. The Septuagint does translate the Hebrew word as "virgin," and thus NIV has some support for its translation, but in view of these other considerations we believe it should acknowledge in a footnote the other translation as possible.

There are also some ambiguities in NIV. For example, one wonders in Exodus 20:4 whether "the waters below" refers to waters below the earth or simply to waters below heaven. The first is clearly intended by the Hebrew text but is not clear in NIV's translation. NIV has added the word "all" to the description of Nineveh's size, "it took three days to go all through it." What does that imply? Through all its nooks and crannies, or straight through? Why should "all" be added to the translation? It is clearer without it.

Since the NIV translators have already incorporated a number of corrections and revisions into the present edition, some of the criticisms made in our review of the NIV-New Testament no longer apply to this edition, but some are still valid. Although NIV has altered the translation of Matthew 9:18 in the story of Jairus' daughter to read, "My daughter has just died," the footnote giving the alternate reading, "daughter is now dying," should be dropped. This is not a possible reading of the Greek verb and it interjects unnecessarily a difficulty into the story, for if adopted it means that nowhere does the story state that the daughter has died. One wonders why the Greek future tense is translated as a present tense in Luke 4:4 and Matthew 4:4, "Man does not live on bread alone," rather than as a command, "Man shall not live by bread alone." NIV inserts "your" before "seeds" in Matthew 13:32, although the Greek says literally, "it is the smallest of all seeds." The insertion may avoid a problem in the mind of the reader since the mustard seed is not the smallest seed known, but the insertion is totally unnecessary in view of the nature of parabolic language and it has the effect of slightly blunting the point of the parable.

NIV has corrected a glaring error by retaining "Woman" in Jesus' address to his mother at Cana (John 2:4) and from the cross (John 9:16). NIV now translates it as "Dear woman," but the addition of "Dear," which is not in the Greek text, shifts the emphasis in the wrong direction. The problem is this. Some modern translators feel that in English it is disrespectful to address one's mother as "Woman." That is why the New English Bible simply translates "Woman" in these passages as "Mother," and the original NIV-New Testament omitted the address altogether. However, it was *no less uncommon* in the ancient world to address one's mother as "Woman," and the problem is not limited to the English language. When translators assume that the primary issue is to avoid the impression that Jesus is disrespectful, they end up missing the point of the

passage. Jesus' use of "Woman" as an address to Mary contains significant truths, both concerning his own relationship to Mary, and more broadly concerning the relativizing of the biological family in favor of the family of God (see also Mark 3:33-35). Jesus was not disrespectful, but he was asserting a significant truth. His address was as uncommon in his day as it is in ours, and therefore it should simply be retained.

NIV retains "hour" in John 12:23, 27 but translates the same word as "time" in John 2:4; 7:30; and 8:20. Most interpreters, however, believe that there is an important theme in John concerning Jesus' hour, and it would be useful to retain the word "hour" in the verses mentioned. In John NIV consistently translates the Greek word for "signs" as "miraculous signs." Though in places this is not totally wrong, it is better if not done, for it highlights precisely the aspect of signs which the Gospel of John does not. In any case, by so translating the word as "miraculous signs" in John 20:30, NIV unnecessarily excludes the possibility of including the cross as one of the signs, for the cross is not normally considered a "miraculous sign." Yet, in this Gospel the cross is the chief sign by which Jesus manifests his glory. This heightened emphasis on the miraculous is seen also in NIV's translation of the Greek word for "work" as "miracle" in John 7:3, 20; 10:25, 32, 38; 14:11. In some cases the work is a miracle, but in John the term "works" includes more than miracles. Thus when NIV translates "works" as "miracles" in 14:11, and Jesus then promises in 14:12 that his people will do what he has been doing and do even greater things, the clear inference is that greater miracles will be performed. Thus the heightened emphasis on miracles in translation is simply not accurate.

Several items in Galatians and Colossians also seem less than adequate. The footnote at Galatians 1:15, "from my mother's womb," probably reflects more accurately Paul's latent appeal to the call of Jeremiah than the phrase, "from birth," found in NIV's translation. In Galatians 3:20, "A mediator however does not represent just one party," NIV should follow its practice of placing brackets around words added for clarification. By adding the word "party," NIV chooses for a specific interpretation by adding a word not found in the original. Galatians 3:22 suggests more than NIV's translation that the Scripture "declares" that the world is a prisoner of sin. It says literally, "Scripture imprisons all things under sin." Scripture can make declarations concerning sin, but here it is said to be the agent which itself imprisons. The present translation of Colossians 2:11-12—the text dealing with circumcision and baptism—is an improvement over the first edition. However, NIV chooses the translation, "the circumcision done by Christ," without acknowledging that the translation, "the circumcision of Christ" is possible. It so happens that the latter translation has been considered to be of great theological importance by some. According to NIV's promise to provide alternative translations considered important, a footnote should be added.

At Hebrews 2:7 and 9, NIV probably stands alone among contemporary standard versions in the translation adopted, "a little lower than the angels." This translation misses the clear eschatological intent in the use of Psalm 8:4-6 by the author of Hebrews. Almost all agree that the

context requires the translation, "for a *little while* lower than the angels," which NIV now places in a footnote. In Hebrews 10:37 the quotation marks have been misplaced. The phrase "a very little while," should be considered part of the Old Testament passages being cited. Other items could be mentioned, but we will conclude with the following. The literalness of James 3:17 is surprising, "wisdom . . . is . . . full of . . . good fruit." "Good deeds" would be better. Why does NIV place quotation marks around the word "sinners" in Luke 6:32-34; 7:34? Normally quotation marks so used indicate that the term is not being used in its normal sense, but that is not the case here. Finally, the parentheses around Revelation 20:5 seem unnecessary and probably will cause confusion.

The criticisms listed above are not intended to give the impression that NIV is an inaccurate translation. Quite the contrary. These are intended only as suggestions for improving a very excellent translation.

#### D. *Effective Communication*

The line between translation and effective communication is very thin. In a sense the two issues are the same. But here we are interested in the question, how contemporary is the NIV?

NIV contains fewer archaic expressions than the RSV. The RSV still retained "thee" and "thou" in address to God, but NIV simply uses "you." The Preface defends this usage as follows, "The translators judged that to use these archaisms (along with the old verb forms such as "doest," "wouldest," and "hadst") would violate accuracy in translation. Neither Hebrew, Aramaic, nor Greek uses special pronouns for the persons of the Godhead. A present-day translation is not enhanced by forms that in the time of the King James Version were used in everyday speech, whether referring to God or man" (p. viii). NIV has made the right decision in this regard, and the RSV, which felt that it could not do so in 1952, will undoubtedly do the same in the future.

Other archaic terms still present in the RSV have been removed: NIV has "brothers" for "brethren" (Gal. 1:1), "in pains of childbirth" for "in travail" (Gal. 4:19), "sexually immoral" for "fornicators," and "inheritance rights as the oldest son" for "birthright" (Heb. 12:16). As a more recent translation than the RSV, NIV is more contemporary in its choice of words.

The style of the New International Version is characterized by a simple dignity. Its choice of words is contemporary but not colloquial, and its sentences flow with a simple rhythm. The paragraph format contributes to understanding and ease of reading. The poetry of the Bible has been done with excellent taste. The style is sufficiently simple to be enjoyed by the average reader without sacrificing the dignity of Scripture.

#### E. *Conclusions*

What does this mixture of praise and criticism say about the quality of the New International Version?

Perhaps a comparison with other widely used versions would be helpful. From the record sales of *The Living Bible: Paraphrased*, it is

clear that many people enjoy its flair and its freewheeling style. The Living Bible, however, is a paraphrase which incorporates all sorts of explanations and interpretive comments (some good, some very bad) into the translation. Consequently, a paraphrase has a higher incidence of error and gives more leeway to the bias of the translator. This is certainly the case with *The Living Bible: Paraphrased* (see review in the *Banner*, November 24 and December 1, 1972).

The New International Version is a translation, not a paraphrase, yet it does not limit itself to a word-for-word translation. There is freedom in translation which contributes to ease of reading and understanding. But the freedom is restrained and NIV cannot be accused of imposing any strong bias on the translation. Although it uses the principle of dynamic equivalence more extensively and consequently is less of a word-for-word translation than the RSV, it remains an accurate translation. It is far superior to *The Living Bible*.

Looking back over two decades of Bible translation, we note a remarkable change in attitude concerning what constitutes a good translation. Originally the King James Version was the standard for good translation, and the RSV was subjected to harsh criticism for its departures from the KJV by those who were conservative or evangelical in their theological position. Now it turns out that in many respects the RSV is based on rather conservative principles of translation. The more recent translations—the New English Bible, *Today's English Version*, *Jerusalem Bible*, and the New International Version—allow the translator much more freedom in communicating the message of Scripture. Although these are not paraphrases, they do not restrict themselves to word-for-word translation. Apparently most Christians today are not upset by this development. Most discover that these versions are as easy to read as any paraphrase and in the process also discover that in terms of accuracy they are far superior to any paraphrase.

What about the New International Version? Can it ever become the international and ecumenical version for the English-speaking world? That is hard to say. It must compete primarily with the RSV and the NEB. When the NEB New Testament appeared, many praised its excellence and thought that it would become the superior English version. But the NEB Old Testament was not as well received. Consequently, today the RSV has received the greater acceptance. There is even a Roman Catholic edition of the RSV. Thus of all the new translations, the RSV can lay claim to being the most ecumenical version in the English-speaking world.

The quality of the New International Version is such that it can compete with the RSV and NEB. It is simple, contemporary, dignified, and accurate. But more than that is involved in the acceptance of a new translation. Today we are in the position of having received translations from various traditions within the Christian church. Perhaps no one of these will ever dominate the English-speaking world. Maybe the process will turn out to be similar to that which preceded the acceptance of the King James Version. After a century in which various English translations were made, the KJV appeared. It was not a totally new version, for



it was influenced by and even literally borrowed from the earlier versions. Maybe that process will repeat itself in the future. On the other hand, it may be that the contemporary church will not only learn to live with a greater variety of translations but even desire it.

Synod should give some thought to this matter. When the Synod of 1926 made its first recommendation concerning a version to be used in the worship service, it chose the American Standard Version because it thought that it was both a reliable and a representative version. In other words, synod considered it important to use a version that had ecumenical standing. It so happened that the Synod of 1926 proved to be mistaken concerning the ability of the ASV to overcome the KJV in the English-speaking world, but it correctly affirmed the need to use only such versions as had wide usage among Christian churches. This same concern for a representative version formed one of the grounds for the recommendation of the RSV in 1969. Although the RSV is today the most widely used of the versions, the problem is that no English version can claim exclusively to be the ecumenical version in the English-speaking world. The committee report which recommended the use of the RSV did not suggest that the church should bind itself exclusively to the RSV. Instead, it stated that "the desire for uniformity in the use of Bible versions in the church is good, but may prove increasingly to be an impossible goal. Many new versions are appearing, and several of these are very good and may some day prove to be liturgically acceptable" (Acts of Synod 1969, p. 278).

We judge that the New International Version is one of these good translations, and that the criticisms we have made are not such as to render it liturgically unacceptable. Our judgment has been that in general NIV has made good choices in textual matters, and that its principles of translation have produced a version that is very contemporary and helpful, one that communicates effectively and with simple dignity. Although NIV cannot at this time support any claim concerning its ecumenical acceptance, its initial acceptance does indicate that it may become one of the important versions.

#### F. Recommendations

1. That synod designate the New International Version as one of the versions acceptable for use in worship services.

##### *Grounds:*

- a. The NIV, like the RSV, is superior to the King James Version and the American Standard Version, both of which have been considered acceptable for use in the public worship of the Christian Reformed Church.
- b. The NIV is a contemporary and accurate translation, characterized by the dignity required for liturgical use.
- c. The NIV appears to have the potential for becoming a representative version used widely in English-speaking Christian churches.

2. That synod give the privilege of the floor to Drs. A. Bandstra and D. Holwerda when this report is discussed.

Bible Translation Committee  
Andrew Bandstra, chairman  
David Holwerda, secretary  
Stanley Bultman  
David Engelhard  
Clarence Vos  
Louis Vos  
Marten Woudstra\*

\*Marten Woudstra, who is a member of both the NIV Committee on Translation and of this synodical committee, participated in the discussion, abstained from voting on the recommendations (although agreeing with them), but reserves the right to speak against some of the criticisms contained in the report.

## REPORT 8

## BIBLE TRANSLATION COMMITTEE

## B. Minority Report

This Minority Report agrees with the bulk of the Majority Report. Apart from some additional observations regarding the Review of the New International Version (Part II of the Majority Report), the major departure from the Majority Report is in the Recommendations.

This report will deal with the following matters:

- I. Additional observations regarding the NIV
- II. Criteria for the designation of a version as acceptable for liturgical use in the church
- III. Recommendations

## I. ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE NIV

A large part of the Majority Report is the result of extensive discussions in meetings of the Bible Translation Committee about various renderings in the NIV. Obviously, only a select number of examples could be cited to illustrate various phenomena. In addition, at times there were differences within the committee in evaluation of these phenomena. At times these matters involved some technical details of Greek and Hebrew philology which can hardly be included in a report of this type. Such data will be available to the synod and Advisory Committee to illustrate the items reviewed in the following discussion.

A. *The Text*

Generally, the NIV has followed the Greek text of the New Testament as found in the standard critical editions (Nestle-Aland, United Bible Societies). However, at times the NIV seems reluctant to depart from traditional readings, even though the textual evidence clearly demands such departure; e.g., the retention of Mark 16:9-20 and John 7:53-8:11 in a format (in spite of division lines and a note) identical to that of the established text.

The NIV has attempted to show in the footnotes the status of the textual variants. This is a complex matter and various designations have been used ("some manuscripts," "many manuscripts," "some early manuscripts," "some late manuscripts," etc.). This is a commendable intention, but such vague designations are not always accurate and certainly lack precision so that the reader at times is misinformed, misled, or perhaps even confused by this procedure.

However, in the case of the Old Testament the NIV has relied too heavily on the Masoretic Text (traditional Hebrew text), in spite of recent

developments in textual studies of the Old Testament. It has used variant readings occasionally where the existing Hebrew text was unintelligible. The judgment of the Majority Report on this matter seems too charitable. Recent advances in textual studies of the Old Testament are not adequately reflected in the NIV. Acknowledgment of the contributions of the Dead Sea Scrolls appears at times in the footnotes—however, the designation “Dead Sea Scrolls” in these footnotes is misleading, since in most instances for a given reading there is only one scroll as a witness. However, the NIV should have made greater use of the scrolls and the versions (especially the Septuagint) where they evidently correct, improve, or clarify the traditional Hebrew text.

The NIV has attempted to deal with the phenomenon of the quotations of the Old Testament in the New Testament. Frequently, the New Testament authors quoted from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament). In some instances this Septuagint text differed from the Masoretic Text (traditional Hebrew text “used throughout” by the NIV [Preface, viii]). To compensate for this difference and provide a source for the reading in the New Testament quotation, the NIV often gives the Septuagint reading as an alternative in a footnote in the Old Testament. This is a useful procedure, but not always consistently carried out since not all instances of this phenomenon are so handled (e.g., Isa. 40:8f [I Pet. 2:24]) and at times the footnote is inaccurate and misleading (e.g., Deut. 32:43 [Heb. 1:6]).

#### *B. Some Principles of Translation*

The Majority Report concludes that the NIV is “clearly a very contemporary and helpful translation.” It has followed the principle of dynamic equivalence—more so than the RSV but less than the NEB, TEV, and others. The Majority Report rightly concludes that “the RSV is probably more a word-for-word translation than is the NIV.” Dynamic equivalence is certainly a useful principle of translation; however, its limitation in terms of certain uses of a translation will be considered below.

#### *C. Accuracy of Translation*

The committee of necessity had to be selective in the illustrative material regarding the accuracy of the NIV. Given the use of the principle of dynamic equivalence, a translator exposes himself to greater criticism, since he is making some interpretive (and at times subjective) judgments in his rendering. Many of the illustrations in the Majority Report reveal this—and many more similar instances can be cited. Hence, to judge the accuracy of a translation is not easy, since this concept has various nuances. For the major purpose of this report, this judgment must be made in terms of liturgical usage.

#### *D. Effective Communication*

As a translation that tends toward being a paraphrase, the NIV communicates very effectively. To do so, it had to paraphrase certain Greek and Hebrew idioms and modernize certain ancient concepts and terms.

And that is not to be criticized, but to be recognized as necessary for communication. However, this is not the only criterion for the liturgical use of a version in the church, especially if other desirable features are sacrificed.

## II. CRITERIA FOR THE DESIGNATION OF A VERSION AS ACCEPTABLE FOR LITURGICAL USE IN THE CHURCH

### *Criterion 1*—Fidelity to the original text and language.

A *sine qua non* for the translation of any work for any use is that it is true to the original document being translated. This requirement is somewhat complicated in the case of the Bible since at present the *autographa* do not exist and the text must be established through critical studies of copies of the originals. Obviously, in liturgical usage in the church, the translation employed must display fidelity to the original document, insofar as possible. There are various ways in which this fidelity can and must be measured.

First of all, there is fidelity to the text. The translator must reckon with textual critical problems as he chooses a text to translate. On this score the NIV can be judged as acceptable, although, as indicated above, it displays some disturbing weaknesses.

Secondly, there is fidelity to the language. The translator must use all the resources available for the interpretation and translation of the biblical languages. However, here arises a very important dimension regarding a translation to be used for liturgical purposes in the church. Such a version must not be a paraphrase, since a paraphrase frequently involves major interpretive judgments which place the reader at the mercy of the theological bias of the translator. However, what about a translation that makes extensive use of the principle of dynamic equivalence? Since such a procedure must involve interpretive judgments in many instances, here too the theological bias of the translator will function. And the NIV has not been free of this. Its treatment of Matthew 13:32 ("all your seeds") = Mark 4:31 ("seed you plant") reveals an unnecessary solicitude for a particular doctrine by the additions of "your" and "you" in these texts. The addition of "his brothers" in Genesis 37:28 gives a reading to the passage (which may be correct) which the Hebrew does not contain. The NIV translation of Titus 2:11 has perhaps avoided a theological problem for some theologians, but has not done justice to the grammar. NIV translates Acts 10:20 ("do not hesitate") and 11:12 ("have no hesitation") in a harmonizing way whereas the Greek texts reflect different emphases (10:20—"without hesitation" and 11:12—"making no distinction" [RSV]). NIV has translated Exodus 9:16 and Romans 9:17 (which quotes Exodus 9:16) identically ("I have raised you up"), whereas the Hebrew verb in Exodus 9:16 does not mean the same as the Greek verb in Romans 9:17. This small sample of passages shows how a theological bias or a special interest can influence a translator's work.

The use of dynamic equivalence may promote greater clarity and understanding of a passage, but often this is at the expense of precision and fidelity to the original language. For private use, devotional reading,

and study purposes this may be acceptable. And the NIV is an excellent contribution to the collection of such versions. However, one must question whether a version employing the principle of dynamic equivalence can be used liturgically in the church. Obviously, this issue has not been adequately addressed by our liturgists and biblical scholars.

Third, there is fidelity to the message of Scripture. Generally speaking, the work of translation is an objective activity. The translator is employing various scientific methods, philological tools, stylistic devices, and similar analytical techniques to produce a good translation. However, it is possible that a subjective element—one's own theological perspective, bias, or prejudice—may intrude into the judgments made. When a church accepts a version for liturgical use, it must do so with the assurance that the special attributes of the Bible as the Word of God which it confesses are not mitigated or compromised. To do otherwise, would be self-defeating and mutinous.

However, this criterion must be used with caution. It runs the risk of being caught in a vicious circle wherein it is possible that certain doctrines or theological positions of the church are based on inaccurate translations, defective texts, or incorrect interpretations which in turn become the criteria for the acceptance or rejection of a new translation, text, or version. Hence, the church must maintain an openness to the new data which research and scholarship have provided.

When one speaks of the fidelity to the message of Scripture, he must avoid being involved in circular reasoning. Perhaps a few observations will put this into perspective. First, there is a basic confession that the church makes regarding the Bible as the Word of God which is not negotiable. That faith commitment is grounded in the Bible, to be sure, and any translation that vitiates or undermines it is to be rejected. In fact, such a translation would be rejected for numerous other weaknesses, given the nature of the Bible. Furthermore, given the complex science and art of translation, the theological perspective of a translator is not a blanket guarantee or a *prima facie* endorsement of a translation. Even in the NIV, a product of evangelical scholars, weaknesses have been observed. Hence, a church continually engaged in theological study and development must be deeply involved in the areas of textual criticism, Hebrew and Greek philological studies, exegetical analysis, and the major hermeneutical issues.

Finally, this criterion of fidelity to the message of Scripture must not be divorced from the ecumenical dimension considered below. If churches cannot agree in the area of a Bible translation, it is doubtful that there will be many other possible areas of agreement or cooperation. If there is a parting of the ways in the translation (reading) of the Bible, how much more in the understanding and application of it! This all-too-brief discussion of the matter of fidelity to the message of Scripture has highlighted the complex issues clustered around the Bible and its translation. On the one hand, the church must boldly maintain its high view of Scripture; but, on the other hand, it must promote areas of dialogue and cooperation—and an ecumenical Bible translation is a catalyst for such

discussions. At this time, it is not evident that the NIV has attained that status and stature in the churches.

*Criterion 2—Ecumenical acceptance of a version*

The church must avoid parochialism wherever possible without sacrificing integrity and truth. Some churches and groups promote their theology on the basis of their own peculiar translation of the Bible; e.g., the Jehovah's Witnesses. However, the weakness of this approach is patent to all. Hence, when a church designates a version for liturgical use, it must be assured that it is ecumenically acceptable. Such acceptance comes only after a period of time in which the version is tested. Regarding the NIV it is premature to designate it as liturgically acceptable. Its staying power and ecumenical acceptance have not been demonstrated, since its appearance is so recent. Even the Majority Report acknowledges this. Every new translation enjoys an initial euphoric response, usually promoted by extravagant claims of its publishers. The NIV's success as a commercial venture must not be confused with acceptance, nor the pithy endorsements of celebrities and leaders considered responsible evaluations. However, in-depth analysis requires time and very few such reviews of the NIV have appeared. To ascertain the staying power and durability of a version requires a minimum of five to ten years and the complete NIV Bible appeared in 1978. The NIV New Testament which appeared in 1973 has undergone revisions, consequently it must be evaluated in terms of the 1978 and later editions. It is too early to make any judgments about these qualities of the NIV.

The experience of the CRC with regard to the ASV should enjoin caution on this matter. In 1926 the synod chose the ASV to be used in the worship service as a reliable and representative version. That decision was wrong because the ASV turned out to be a "minority" version. The CRC was virtually the only church to use it. Similarly, now is not the opportune time to designate the NIV as acceptable for liturgical use in the church.

*Criterion 3—Readability in a liturgical setting*

One of the weaknesses of the ASV was its style, which made it difficult to read orally. This was largely due to its literalism—i.e., word-for-word translation. In contrast, the style of the RSV contributes to effective oral reading. From all appearances, the NIV likewise will be readable in a liturgical setting.

In conclusion, the NIV is a good translation, as the Majority Report has judged. It represents an impressive amount of work involving 115 scholars from more than a dozen evangelical denominations. It is one of the largest translation projects to date—the total cost reported at two and a quarter million dollars. In contrast, the translators of the RSV were not remunerated for their work and hence the project was completed with a much smaller budget.

However, the NIV has some weaknesses. These alone may not render it liturgically unacceptable, but they certainly do not commend it without qualification. Perhaps the major reservation regarding the liturgical acceptability of the NIV is its limited ecumenical acceptance,

due to its recent publication. The CRC will do well to wait some years before considering the designation of the NIV as an acceptable version for liturgical use.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That synod express its appreciation to the scholars involved in the preparation of the NIV, especially those members of the CRC.

B. That synod withhold action regarding the designation of the NIV as one of the versions acceptable for liturgical use.

#### *Grounds:*

1. The translation, although generally acceptable, has some features which make its suitability for liturgical use questionable.
2. The durability and staying power of this translation have not been demonstrated. Such a demonstration requires a longer period of general usage.
3. This translation has not received ecumenical acceptance nor become a representative version in the English-speaking Christian churches—an important criterion for liturgical acceptability.

Bible Translation Committee  
Bastiaan Van Elderen



## REPORT 9

## CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE

Chaplains are ordained ministers who represent the church, ministering to persons dislocated from the familiar environs of home and persons suffering from various forms of brokenness of life. Most chaplains have had special training in the pastoral dimension of ministry. Chaplains serve in institutions, in the military, and in business and industry. The Chaplain Committee, as a standing committee appointed by the synod, promotes chaplaincy. During 1979, the committee met regularly, carrying out the responsibilities previously assigned to it.

## I. ORGANIZATION

The synod has appointed the following persons (dates indicate end of term) to serve on the Chaplain Committee:

Rev. Duane Visser, chairperson, 1981; Rev. Marvin Baarman, vice-chairperson, 1982; Mr. Donald Swierenga, treasurer, 1981; Mr. Harold Mast, vice-treasurer, 1982; Rev. John Van Til (Canadian representative) 1982; Mrs. Jean Ettesvold, 1982; Mr. Evert Vermeer, 1982; Mrs. Gay Newhof, 1982; Mr. Neal Berghoef, 1980; Dr. Melvin Hugen, 1980. The Rev. Harold Bode has served the committee as Executive Secretary since 1973.

## II. MILITARY CHAPLAIN PERSONNEL

Since World War II, the Christian Reformed Church has had military chaplains. Currently, seventeen ministers serve full time as chaplains on Extended Active Duty with the military and seventeen serve part time with Reserve or National Guard units of the military. Our chaplains serve in assignments which bring a Reformed Christian influence reaching far beyond the boundaries of the denomination and reflect favorably on the denomination.

During 1979, Chaplain Robert Brummel left active duty with the Navy, and a Reservist, Chaplain Donald Belanus, went on Extended Active Duty with the Navy. Chaplain John J. Hoogland was promoted to the rank of Colonel, the first from the denomination to receive that rank while on active duty. Three chaplains have experienced cardiac problems. Six are currently serving overseas assignments in Korea, Germany, Japan, Guam and Turkey. A roster of active-duty chaplains with their branches of service, assignment, and date of induction follows:

*Air Force*

Chaplain, Major Ralph W. Bronkema, Hessisch Olderdorf, Germany (1966)  
Chaplain, Lt. Col. Henry Guikema, McChord AFB, WA (1962)

Chaplain, Lt. Col. Louis E. Kok, Izmir, Turkey (1962).

#### *Army*

Chaplain, Capt. Anthony Begay, Ft. Hood, TX (1978)  
 Chaplain, Major William Brander, White Sands MR, NM (1968)  
 Chaplain, COL John Hoogland, Ft. Monmouth, NJ (1959)  
 Chaplain, Major Herman Keizer, Ft. Monmouth, NJ (1968)  
 Chaplain, LTC Marvin Konynenbelt, USAGH, Honshu, Japan (1965)  
 Chaplain, Capt. Philip Touw, Gelnhausen, Germany (1977)  
 Chaplain, Capt. Marinus Van De Steeg, Ft. Leonard Wood, MO (1979)  
 Chaplain, LTC Paul Vruwink, Ft. Bragg, NC (1958)  
 Chaplain, Capt. Karl K. Willoughby, Korea (1967)

#### *Navy*

Chaplain, LTC Donald Belanus, Guam (1979)  
 Chaplain, CDR Herbert Bergsma, USS Hudson (1966)  
 Chaplain, LCDR Donald den Dulk, U.S. International University, CA (1975)  
 Chaplain, CDR Albert J. Roon, Alcohol Rehabilitation Center, VA (1966)  
 Chaplain, LCDR Raymond Swierenga, Great Lakes, IL (1960)

### III. INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAIN PERSONNEL

During 1979, nine ministers accepted positions to serve as institutional chaplains. Chaplain John de Vries, Jr. left chaplain service with the Federal Penitentiary System in Canada and has accepted a call to serve a church in the province of Ontario. Many of our institutional chaplains serve in special positions of leadership and influence. Some of them have gained higher standing in professional pastoral organizations during this year. The following chaplains serve full time in a variety of institutional settings and have received ecclesiastical endorsement from the Chaplain Committee:

Chaplain Louis Baker, Evanston General Hospital, Evanston, IL  
 Chaplain Robert Brummel, Jackson Memorial Hospital, Miami, FL  
 Chaplain Arlo Compaan, Near North Side Counseling Center, Chicago, IL  
 Chaplain Harold T. De Jong, St. Peter's Hospital, Olympia, WA  
 Chaplain Sidney Draayer, Christian Counseling Center, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Edwin Dykstra, Larue D. Carter Memorial Hospital, Indianapolis, IN  
 Chaplain Jerry Dykstra, Halifax Infirmary, Halifax, NS  
 Chaplain William Dykstra, State Prison of Southern Michigan, Jackson, MI  
 Chaplain A. Dirk Evans, Harper-Grace Hospital, Detroit, MI  
 Chaplain Eric Evenhuis, Voorman Psychiatric Medical Clinic, Upland, CA  
 Chaplain Jan Friend, Bethesda Hospital, Denver, CO  
 Chaplain Terry Hager, Community Counseling & Personal Growth Ministry, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Marvin Hoogland, Christian Counseling Center, Chicago, IL  
 Chaplain Gordon Kieft, Bethesda Hospital, Denver, CO  
 Chaplain James Kok, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Philip J. Koster, Pontiac General Hospital, Pontiac, MI  
 Chaplain John H. Lamsma, Federal Correctional Institution, Milan, MI  
 Chaplain William Lenters, Calvary Rehabilitation Center, Phoenix, AZ  
 Chaplain Peter Mans, Mary Free Bed Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Gerald Oosterveen, Dixon Developmental Center, Dixon, IL  
 Chaplain Elton Piersma, Life Enrichment Ministries, Muskegon, MI  
 Chaplain Henry Post, Foote Memorial Hospital, Jackson, MI  
 Chaplain Howard Sponholz, Cabrini Medical Center & St. Vincent's Hospitals, New York City, NY  
 Chaplain Robert Uken, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI

Chaplain Adrian Van Andel, VA Chaplain, Palo Alto, CA  
 Chaplain Larry Vande Creek, Family Practice Dept., OSU, Columbus, OH  
 Chaplain Thomas Vanden Bosch, VA Chaplain at Sioux Falls, SD  
 Chaplain Samuel Vander Jagt, Mercy Hospital, Davenport, IA  
 Chaplain Nicholas Vander Kwaak, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Siebert Van Houten, Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital, Hamilton, ONT  
 Chaplain Peter Van Katwyk, Interfaith Counseling Center, Cambridge, ONT  
 Chaplain Duane Visser, Pine Rest Christian Hospital, Grand Rapids, MI  
 Chaplain Ronald Vredeveld, Regional Developmental Center, Mt. Pleasant, MI  
 Chaplain Peter Winkle, Rehoboth Hospital, Gallup, NM  
 Chaplain Benjamin Ypma, Koinonia Medical Center, Muskegon, MI

#### IV. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL CHAPLAIN PERSONNEL

The Synod of 1977 granted permission to the Chaplain Committee to explore, design, and initiate active models of business and industrial chaplaincy for a period of three years. Much time has gone into exploring and designing models of business and industrial chaplaincy during the past three years. We are pleased to report to the Synod of 1980 that a parish-based model of industrial chaplaincy has been initiated and is being field-tested. The parish is the Ft. Lauderdale Christian Reformed Church. The council of that church has granted permission to its pastor, the Rev. Jack Vander Laan, to serve part time at Waste Management, Inc. The Chaplain Committee is encouraged by the excellent cooperation of the Church Council, the pastor, and the personnel of Waste Management, Inc.

#### V. THE YEAR OF 1979 IN REVIEW

##### A. *Institutional Chaplaincy*

Institutional chaplaincy, of the various kinds of chaplaincy, is one which is expanding most rapidly. Institutional chaplains serve in private, public, and religious general and psychiatric, state and provincial hospitals; county, state, provincial, and federal correctional facilities; centers for the developmentally disabled, rehabilitation centers for drug abuse, and counseling centers. Most of our chaplains serve in hospitals. The Chaplain Committee would like to assist in the placement of more chaplains in correctional facilities and in centers for the developmentally disabled. Persons in these institutions are often the forgotten members of society. Grace and gospel is also for them.

The fastest-growing segment of society in North America are those sixty-five years of age or older. The significant shift in society will have repercussions, ecclesiastically, economically, and politically. Some denominations are engaged in studies of "pastoral care for the aging." Some are predicting a rapid expansion of chaplain services for geriatric centers. We are beginning to receive inquiries about this form of ministry. We would note that some of our emeriti pastors are doing outstanding work in this area.

The Chaplain Committee, some years ago, received permission from synod to provide salary supplements for chaplains to bring their salaries up to the Fund for Needy Churches level. Even though we continue to encourage using institutions to raise the salaries of chaplains, a number of

our institutional chaplains do receive salary supplements. During 1979, approximately \$30,000 was used for this purpose. This amount is not very significant, when approximately \$1,200,000 in salary monies come from institutions being served by our chaplains.

Currently, due to inflation and the rapid rise in housing costs, newly placed chaplains often find it difficult to buy a home. To rent an adequate house is almost as expensive as making monthly house payments. During a tight-money period, higher down payments are demanded on the purchase of a home and most ministers, particularly the younger ones, do not have enough savings for the down payment. The Chaplain Committee is concerned about this problem, but is not certain how it should be resolved. The issue before the committee is: To what extent is it responsible for a chaplain's housing, since our chaplains are not in the direct employment of a church which normally either provides housing or a housing allowance? Would chaplains be eligible for loans from the Church Help Fund Committee through their calling church? We request the synod to advise the Chaplain Committee on how it should proceed in assisting newly placed chaplains in resolving housing-cost problems.

#### *B. Business and Industrial Chaplaincy*

The Chaplain Committee has explored business and industrial chaplaincy during the past three years since the Synod of 1977 formulated the mandate. Numerous contacts have been made and a number of interviews held with representatives from business and industry. Some are rather enthused about the possibility, most want to think about the idea for a time and most expressed a concern about the unstable economy. Currently, one sizable transportation company is seriously considering the prospect of engaging a chaplain. One church is considering assigning one of her pastors to explore a business chaplaincy in a growing metropolitan complex.

The Chaplain Committee has initiated a parish-based pastoral counseling model of industrial chaplaincy. The chaplain serves two days a week with Waste Management, Inc., in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. An excellent cooperative spirit prevails between the pastor, the consistory, and the industry. The industry is very pleased with the chaplain's ministry and is willing to assist the committee promoting industrial chaplaincy.

The Chaplain Committee does not envision business and industrial chaplaincy to expand rapidly and, therefore, requests the synod to extend our mandate for another three years. By 1983 we should have better information on which to make a decision regarding the future of business and industrial chaplaincy.

#### *C. Military and Veteran Administration Chaplaincy*

These chaplaincies have a longer history and therefore a kind of stability which other chaplaincies do not enjoy. Currently, our denomination does not have chaplains serving with the Canadian Armed Forces, but in the United States nineteen chaplains are serving full time in the military and Veteran Administration. The military and Veteran Administration environment provide excellent opportunities for ministry.

Through the General Commission on Chaplains and Armed Forces Personnel, the Conference on Endorsing Agents of the Armed Forces, and the Conference on Endorsing Agents of the Veteran Administrative Chaplaincy, our denomination works with many other denominations in raising the level of and validating the ministry in those institutions. One of our ministers, the Rev. James Lont, is serving his second two-year term as chairman of the General Commission. These organizations, which represent many denominations, have done some excellent work, especially the last few years.

## VI. AREAS OF CONCERN

There are three areas of concern affecting chaplaincy of which the synod should be apprized in the judgment of the Chaplain Committee. These are related, yet separable. They affect both Canada and the United States in some areas but not in others. The net result appears to be a downgrading of chaplain services.

### A. *Correctional Institutions*

There appears to be a downgrading of chaplaincy both in Canada and the United States on the federal level. In Canada the continuation of chaplain services in federal institutions is being questioned. The Christian Reformed Committee of Contact with the Government is responding to this issue. In the United States there is a trend, for example, in the Federal Bureau of Prisons to designate the chaplain as religious coordinator. There are those questioning whether a religious coordinator needs to be a theologically trained, denominationally related person. Such a person could be a believer or unbeliever or a member of a non-Christian sect. The Council on Pastoral Ministries to Correctional Institutions is resisting this trend. The Executive Secretary of the Chaplain Committee serves on this council and is currently on its executive committee.

### B. *Accreditation Requirements*

In the United States the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (JCAH) has completely deleted "the standards of pastoral services" section from the 1979 edition of *Consolidated Standards for Child, Adolescent, and Adult Psychiatric, Alcoholism, and Drug Abuse Programs*. The *Consolidated Standards* include chapters on standards for "activity services" and "vocational rehabilitation services" but fail to include basic standards for "pastoral services." The JCAH has a primary mission of promoting optimal patient care but the omission of basic standards of pastoral services ignores the significant role of religious faith and practice in the overall healing process. Such an omission by JCAH could well be interpreted as a downgrading of the importance of pastoral services. The Chaplain Committee has registered its protest by letter with the JCAH and recommended that the standard on pastoral services be promptly readmitted in the *Consolidated Standards*.

### C. *California Ruling re Accreditation*

More localized but no less important is a recommendation of the Cali-

ifornia State Personnel Board to the State of California, that future candidates for institutional Protestant chaplaincies *not* be required to have theological seminary training. Ostensibly, this recommendation accommodates candidates from Protestant churches which ordain persons without requiring theological seminary training. However, the real threat of this recommendation lies in the pluralist nature of Protestantism as viewed by the personnel board which would include a broad spectrum of religious sects. This recommendation too has been protested from many different sources.

#### VII. CANADIAN COMMITTEE REPORT—

(submitted by our Canadian representative, Rev. John Van Til)

Our Canadian Committee is a subcommittee of the denominational committee and has been assigned the responsibility of dealing with chaplaincy matters of the Christian Reformed Church of North America in Canada. Our chairman is a member of the denominational Chaplain Committee and either he or our secretary attends the monthly meetings of that committee.

##### A. *Organization*

Our membership consists of the Revs. John Van Til, chairman; Carl Tuyl, secretary; and Peter Van Katwijk. Mr. Van Katwijk was appointed to replace the Rev. Tony De Jager who found it necessary to resign.

##### B. *Responsibilities*

Our committee sees its primary areas of responsibility to be: promotion, recruitment, training, endorsement, and administration. In addition, we seek to keep informed on trends and directions in the field of chaplaincy in Canada and to provide input when warranted.

1. There are many opportunities for Christian Reformed ministers in chaplaincy today. In Ontario, particularly, several new positions have been opened recently. As a committee we feel hampered by the lack of qualified and interested ministers. We advertise the available positions and directly contact some men who have indicated an interest.

To keep informed about chaplaincy matters in the provinces as well as federally, we are working towards our goal of having the Christian Reformed Church represented on the federal and each province's Inter Faith Committee, Pastoral Institute, or other appropriate body. It is here that recruitment of chaplains usually takes place and where governments turn for advice. At this time we are so represented in several provinces and are in the process of establishing contact in several others.

2. To recruit men for chaplaincy we have made several representations at meetings of classes. We have arranged for a speaker from Canada to address the student body at Calvin Theological Seminary.

By way of a questionnaire we contacted all Christian Reformed ministers in Canada to ascertain their possible interest in chaplaincy. Those showing some interest have been contacted in person or by correspondence. We continue to explore additional ways of informing and attracting gifted ministers to chaplaincy.

3. A minimum of one quarter of Supervised (or Clinical) Pastoral Education is standard requirement for openings in chaplaincy. Stipends are available from several hospitals and training centres as well as from our committee to encourage and enable qualified men to pursue this type of preparation. Each year we advertise these stipends and invite interested persons to contact us.

4. Endorsement by the denomination is required by all institutions seeking to engage chaplaincy services. We provide this on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church. Recently we endorsed the Rev. Siebert Van Houten for a chaplaincy position at the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital.

5. Administration is provided mainly through the office of the Rev. Harold Bode, Executive Secretary of the Christian Reformed Chaplain Committee. He seeks to keep in touch with our chaplains and provide them with pastoral care.

#### *C. Christian Reformed Chaplains in Canada*

At present we have three chaplains: the Rev. Jerry Dykstra at the Halifax Infirmary in Halifax, Nova Scotia; the Rev. Peter Van Katwijk with the Interfaith Counseling Centre in Cambridge, Ontario; and the Rev. Siebert Van Houten at the Hamilton Psychiatric Hospital in Hamilton, Ontario.

The committee is confident that we are just at the beginning of a new period of awareness in our churches of the need to provide pastoral care to people in various institutions in our nation. The opportunities are many and the challenge to the Christian Reformed Church is great. May the Lord guide us into continued and expanded ministry with the resources he has given us.

#### *D. Area of Concern*

We are deeply concerned about the apparent intent of the federal government to cut back on chaplaincy services in the federal penitentiary system. (As we indicated earlier, in Ontario quite the opposite is happening.) Sometime ago we wrote to the federal ministry involved protesting this direction and urging a new look at the whole area of chaplaincy. We wish to address ourselves to issues such as these:

- the moral obligation of the government to supply chaplaincy services to inmates and staff.
- the role of the chaplain in the penitentiary system.
- the view that chaplains are ministers of Word and sacraments who have prophetic as well as pastoral responsibilities, not only to inmates but to staff and structures as well.

### VIII. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

(This section of the report has been written by the vice-chairman of the committee, the Rev. Marvin Baarman.)

The function of the Executive Secretary is particularly important in the chaplaincy. The relationship between a chaplain and his calling church is one of concern, but not of great moment, because no money is involved

in the relationship. There is no commitment of support. Therefore the chaplain finds the security of "home" in the Executive Secretary of the Chaplain Committee.

It is in this area of personal relationship that the Rev. Harold Bode, the Executive Secretary, has been most successful. Through the years of his service in this capacity he has built up a large store of goodwill and an *esprit de corps* among the chaplains. The chaplains feel at home with a sense of belonging.

This feeling of belonging is acquired at an expensive price to the Executive Secretary; many days each month on the road, many nights away from home and family, long hours of counseling and caring, and when he returns home his desk is loaded with correspondence and material which should be read to "stay abreast" of the issues involved in the broad picture of the chaplaincy.

In addition, Mr. Bode represents the denomination on several national organizations which keep an eye on chaplaincy in every area of service. He holds a position of responsibility as an officer in some of these national units.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. *Representation at Synod*

We request that our Executive Secretary, the Rev. Harold Bode, and Dr. Melvin Hugen be permitted to speak at synod on matters affecting the Chaplain Committee.

### B. *Presentation of Chaplains*

We request that active duty chaplains, both military and institutional, who may be present while synod is in session be presented to synod and one of each be allowed to speak briefly to the synod.

### C. *Committee Personnel*

Two members of the Chaplain Committee, Mr. Neal Berghoef and Dr. Melvin Hugen, have completed their second three-year terms with the committee and therefore are not eligible for reappointment. Each of them has served the committee with competent leadership and wise counsel, especially in the area of business and industrial chaplaincy. Mr. Berghoef is one of the best-informed persons in the denomination in business and industrial chaplaincy. We shall miss these committee members greatly.

To replace Mr. Berghoef on the committee, we present the names of Mr. Jerald Hop, the secretary/treasurer of Ter Haar-Venhuizen Cadillac Olds of Holland, Michigan, and a member of the Providence Christian Reformed Church; and Mr. William Greenfield, a businessman from Kalamazoo, Michigan, and a member of the Second Christian Reformed Church. To replace Dr. Hugen on the committee, we present the names of Dr. Richard DeRidder, Associate Professor of Church Polity and Church Administration at Calvin Seminary; and Professor Robert Recker, Associate Professor of Missions at Calvin Seminary.



*D. Business and Industrial Chaplaincy*

We request synod to extend the period of exploring, designing, and activating various models of business and industrial chaplaincy for another three years. Although we do not envision any rapid expansion of business and industrial chaplaincy, we judge it to be worthy of more effort and evaluation. This extension should provide an opportunity to initiate and evaluate a few more models of business and industrial chaplaincy.

*E. Housing-cost Problems*

We request synod to advise the Chaplain Committee on how it should proceed in assisting newly placed chaplains in resolving housing-cost problems. Would chaplains be eligible, for example, for loans from the Church Help Fund Committee through their calling church? Material for this is found in Section V, A of the report.

*F. Financial Matters*

The Chaplain Committee requests synod to approve the quota of \$4.45 per family for 1981. Please note that approximately \$1.35 of the quota will be used to pay pension premiums for chaplains.

**X. FINANCIAL STATEMENT, AUDITORS REPORT, AND PROPOSED BUDGET**

The financial statement for 1979 is attached. The auditor's report and proposed budget for 1981 will be available at the time of synod.

The Chaplain Committee,  
Harold Bode, Executive Secretary

CHAPLAIN COMMITTEE FINANCIAL REPORT  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA

Year Ended December 31, 1979

BALANCE - January 1, 1979			
Checking Account		\$ 6,006.92	
Savings Account		26,750.22	
Michigan Money Market C.D.'s		<u>50,000.00</u>	\$82,757.14
RECEIPTS			
Quotas		\$125,619.69	
Contributions & Gifts		1,064.78	
Bank Interest		4,805.49	
Other		<u>11,950.30</u>	143,440.26
TOTAL AVAILABLE			<u>\$226,197.40</u>
DISBURSEMENTS			
STAFF SALARY EXPENSE			
Executive Secretary			
—Base Salary	\$17,400.00		
—Child Allowance	2,900.00		
—Housing Allowance	4,400.00		
—Benefits - Pension	1,300.00		
- Insurance	1,295.82		
- Self-employment Tax	900.00		
Secretarial & Clerical	<u>4,086.41</u>	\$32,282.23	
OPERATING EXPENSE			
Travel	\$8,117.81		
Office	3,143.13		
Advertising & Promotion	3,330.71		
Memberships & Dues	<u>2,180.71</u>	16,772.36	
CHAPLAIN SERVICES EXPENSE			
Subsidies - Salaries	\$27,344.00		
- Training	23,500.00		
- Moving	3,611.48		
- Travel & Testing	742.50		
Retreats	6,320.40		
Development (Industrial)	-0-		
Contingency	-0-		
Pensions	63,244.51		
Miscellaneous	<u>1,390.77</u>	126,153.66	
LESS TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS			<u>\$175,208.25</u>
BALANCE - December 31, 1979			
Checking Account		\$ (770.92)	
Savings Account		21,760.07	
Michigan Money Market C.D.'s		<u>30,000.00</u>	
		<u>\$50,989.15</u>	<u>\$ 50,989.15</u>

## REPORT 10

## CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE

The Church Help Committee is pleased to report on its work in the year 1979. Regular meetings were held throughout the year to conduct the business of the committee. We considered twenty applications for loans. After very careful review of the applications and related information, we granted loans to nineteen congregations for a total of \$305,000. One loan was not granted due basically to the size and financial stability of the congregation requesting the loan.

We are pleased to report that the loan from the Chula Vista Community Church was repaid in full. The Paramus Christian Reformed Church has dissolved, and the loan to this church will be repaid in full by means of the committee assigned to dispose of the property and pay all outstanding debts.

Most of the loans were issued on a ten- and fifteen-year repayment schedule. Twenty-year loans are considered to be exceptional. In this way, we can be of assistance to more congregations.

We are grateful that nearly all of the churches are prompt in the repayment of their loans. Delinquencies in repayment have been few. Prompt repayment of the loans is crucial as our fund is a revolving fund.

We wish to inform synod that a Canadian account has been opened. As of January 1, 1980, all loans made to Canadian churches will be disbursed from the Canadian account and these loans are to be repaid in Canadian currency. Due to the many complications involved, we are asking that all loans made to Canadian churches prior to January 1, 1980, be repaid in American currency as per agreement. The by-laws of the committee will be altered to reflect the opening of the Canadian account and the payment of these loans in Canadian currency.

Two members began their services on this committee during this past year, namely, the Rev. John T. Ebberts and Mr. Bernard De Wit. The term of the Rev. James Cooper expires this year, and he is eligible for reelection. Inquiries concerning loans from the Church Help Committee, should be sent to the secretary, the Rev. John T. Ebberts.

## MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ATTENTION

1. We request that our secretary, the Rev. John T. Ebberts, be consulted on matters pertaining to the Church Help Committee when considered by synod or its advisory committee, and that he be given the privilege of the floor.

2. That synod approve the nomination of the Rev. James Cooper (incumbent) and the Rev. Marvin Heyboer, and elect one of the nominees.

Church Help Committee  
 J. Cooper, president  
 J. T. Ebbers, secretary  
 E. Huizenga, treasurer  
 L. Bouma  
 M. Breems  
 B. De Wit

THE CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE INC.  
 CHURCH HELP FUND  
 CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
 ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
 1979

SCHEDULE "A"

Cash Receipts and Disbursements

Cash on hand 12-31-78			
Northwestern State Bank			
Checking Account	\$49,246.44		
Savings Account	17,777.14		
Security National Bank			
Savings Account	36,267.16		
First National Bank			
Savings Account	23,593.54		
American State Bank			
Savings Account	20,654.03		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$147,538.31</b>
<b>Receipts:</b>			
Repayment of loans - Schedule "B"	\$342,328.98		
Interest	11,364.10		
U.S.-Canadian Exchange	2,838.14		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$356,531.22</b>
			<b>\$504,069.53</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>			
New loans - Schedule "B"	\$261,000.00		
Administrative expense	3,509.98		
U.S.-Canadian Exchange	3,474.86		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$267,984.84</b>
<b>Total cash</b>			<b>\$236,084.69</b>
<b>Cash on hand 12-31-79</b>			
N.W. State Bank, Orange City, IA			
Checking Account	\$55,134.13		
Savings Account	97,520.36		
Security National Bank, Sioux City, IA			
Savings & Time Certificates	37,570.10		
First National Bank, Sioux Center, IA			
Savings & Time Certificates	24,477.25		
American State Bank, Sioux Center, IA			
Savings & Time Certificates	21,382.85		
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$236,084.69</b>

THE CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE INC.  
 CHURCH HELP FUND  
 CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
 ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
 1979

SCHEDULE "B"

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-78	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-79
1	Abbotsford, B.C.-2nd	\$18,000.00	\$	\$ 1,500.00	\$16,500.00
2	Abbotsford, B.C.-Trinity	30,000.00		2,000.00	28,000.00
3	Ackley, IA	6,500.00		2,000.00	4,500.00
4	Acton, Ont.	400.05		400.05	none
5	Aetna, MI	6,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00
6	Agassiz, B.C.	6,061.70		2,783.33	3,278.37
7	Alamosa, CO	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
8	Albuquerque, N.M.-Chelwood	5,333.37		1,333.33	4,000.04
9	Alliston, Ont.	13,000.04		2,833.33	10,166.71
10	Alto, MI - Lake Side Com.	10,000.00			10,000.00
11	Ancaster, Ont.	10,000.00			10,000.00
12	Ann Arbor, MI	1,300.00		700.00	600.00
13	Atwood, MI	5,242.40		1,582.40	3,660.00
14	Bakersfield, CA	7,333.36		666.66	6,666.70
15	Beaver Dam, WI - Faith		20,000.00		20,000.00
16	Belding, MI - Oakwood	17,333.34		1,333.33	16,000.01
17	Belleville, Ont.-Maranatha	750.00		750.00	none
18	Bellingham, WA	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
19	Big Rapids, MI - Fellowship	9,000.00		1,500.00	7,500.00
20	Binghamton, N.Y. - Valley		20,000.00		20,000.00
21	Blenheim, Ont.	8,400.00		1,450.00	6,950.00
22	Bloomfield, Ont.	4,000.00			4,000.00
23	Blyth, Ont.	9,500.00			9,500.00
24	Boca Raton, FLA	6,000.00			6,000.00
25	Bowmanville, Ont.-Maranatha	5,500.00		5,500.00	none
26	Brandon, Man. - 1st	15,767.00		1,400.00	14,367.00
27	Brighton, Ont. - Fellowship		10,000.00		10,000.00
28	Britt, IA	1,775.00		1,535.18	239.82
29	Brookfield, WI-Milwaukee	13,333.35		1,333.33	12,000.02
30	Brooks, Alberta		20,000.00		20,000.00
31	Brooten, MN	1,980.00	10,000.00	660.00	11,320.00
32	Burbank, ILL - Immanuel	22,332.66		2,333.34	19,999.32
33	Burnaby, B.C.	2,200.00		1,000.00	1,200.00
34	Cadillac, MI	4,000.00		1,000.00	3,000.00
35	Caledonia, MI	8,481.02		8,481.02	none
36	Calgary, Alta.-Maranatha	1,750.00		750.00	1,000.00
37	Cambridge, Ont.-Maranatha	5,000.00		1,500.00	3,500.00
38	Cape Coral, FLA		10,000.00		10,000.00
39	Cedar Falls, IA	6,000.00		1,500.00	4,500.00
40	Cedar Rapids, IA	11,990.00			11,990.00
41	Cedar Springs, MI-Pioneer	12,500.00		1,416.66	11,083.34
42	Champaign, ILL-Hessel Park	9,000.00		9,000.00	none
43	Chatham, Ont. - Calvary	18,667.00		1,333.00	17,334.00
44	Chicago, ILL - Garfield	12,040.05			12,040.05
45	Chicago, ILL - Korean	26,646.00		2,004.00	24,642.00
46	Chilliwack, B.C.	9,837.50			9,837.50
47	Chula Vista, CA	16,001.00		16,001.00	none
48	Cobourg, Ont. - Grace	2,900.00		1,100.00	1,800.00
49	Cochrane, Ont.	9,333.34		1,333.32	8,000.02
50	Collingwood, Ont.	3,389.33			3,389.33
51	Colorado Springs, CO - Cragmor	13,333.34		1,333.33	12,000.01
52	Comstock Park, MI	13,833.34		1,833.32	12,000.02
53	Conrad, Montana	4,380.00		1,683.00	2,697.00
54	Coopersville, MI - Little Farms	7,333.36		666.66	6,666.70
55	Coquitlam, B.C.	8,666.68		666.66	8,000.02
56	Cornwall, Ont.-Immanuel	10,562.50		1,000.00	9,562.50
57	Crown Point, IND	1,500.00			1,500.00
58	Cutlerville, MI - Cutlerville Heights	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
59	Cutlerville, MI-Providence	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
60	Decatur, MI	19,333.34		1,333.34	18,000.00
61	De Motte, IND - Bethel	14,000.00		4,000.00	10,000.00

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-78	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-79
62	Denver, CO-Center of Hope	22,866.67		4,016.66	18,850.01
63	Denver, CO-Ridgeview Hills	13,666.69		4,666.66	9,000.03
64	Denver, CO-Trinity	7,250.00		1,200.00	6,050.00
65	Des Moines, IA	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
66	Dispatch, KA	18,500.00		1,500.00	17,000.00
67	Dorr, MI	13,333.35		1,333.33	12,000.02
68	Dundas, Ont. - Calvin	2,500.00		750.00	1,750.00
69	Dunnville, Ont. - Bethel	3,250.00		750.00	2,500.00
70	East Grand Forks, MN-Comm.	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
71	Edmonton, Alt. - Ottewell	4,250.00		750.00	3,500.00
72	Edson, Alt.	7,769.68			7,769.68
73	Emo, Ont.	2,605.00		1,350.00	1,255.00
74	Exeter, Ont.	2,500.00		750.00	1,750.00
75	Ferrysburg, MI	13,333.35		1,333.33	12,000.02
76	Flushing, MI-Good Shepherd	23,750.00		1,250.00	22,500.00
77	Forest, Ont.	4,156.25		1,218.75	2,937.50
78	Forest Grove, MI	15,000.00		3,000.00	12,000.00
79	Fort Collins, CO-Immanuel	19,334.00		2,333.33	17,000.67
80	Ft. Lauderdale, FLA	13,333.40			13,333.40
81	Framingham, MA	1,500.00			1,500.00
82	Freeman, SD - Bethlehem	14,500.00		3,200.00	11,300.00
83	Fruitport, MI	8,263.36			8,263.36
84	Fulton, ILL - Bethel	4,000.00		4,000.00	none
85	Gallatin Gateway, MON	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
86	Gallup, N.M. - Bethany	18,667.00		1,333.00	17,334.00
87	Gary, IND - Beacon Light	2,000.00			2,000.00
88	Georgetown, Ont.	2,250.00		750.00	1,500.00
89	Grand Prairie, Alt. - La Glace	976.09		333.66	642.43
90	Grand Rapids, MI - Arcadia	10,000.00		1,000.00	9,000.00
91	Grand Rapids, MI Bristolwood	3,333.37		833.33	2,500.04
92	Grand Rapids, MI - Grace	18,665.00		1,335.00	17,330.00
93	Grand Rapids, MI-Ideal Park	2,666.84		666.66	2,000.18
94	Grand Rapids, MI-Princeton	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
95	Grand Rapids, MI-Sunshine	6,000.00		1,000.00	5,000.00
96	Grangeville, Idaho	18,666.67		1,333.33	17,333.34
97	Grandville, MI - Hanley	13,333.35		1,333.33	12,000.02
98	Grimsby, Ont.-Mountainview	4,500.00		1,500.00	3,000.00
99	Guelph, Ont.	755.00		755.00	none
100	Halifax, Nova Scotia	3,249.01		665.64	2,583.37
101	Hamilton, Ont.-Immanuel	4,150.00		775.00	3,375.00
102	Hammond, IND	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
103	Hancock, MN	1,625.00	10,000.00	500.00	11,125.00
104	Hawarden, IA	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
105	Highland, MI		11,000.00		11,000.00
106	Hills, MN	12,000.02		1,333.33	10,666.69
107	Holland, IA	5,333.37		1,333.33	4,000.04
108	Holland, MN	1,190.00		500.00	690.00
109	Hollandale, MN		10,000.00		10,000.00
110	Houston, B.C.	7,800.00		1,200.00	6,600.00
111	Hudsonville, MI-Georgetown	30,000.00		6,000.00	24,000.00
112	Hull, IA - Hope	21,000.00		1,816.66	19,183.34
113	Indianapolis, IND	8,000.02		666.66	7,333.36
114	Ingersol, Ont.	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
115	Iowa City, IA - Trinity	6,600.00		600.00	6,000.00
116	Jackson, MI	1,000.00			1,000.00
117	Jamaica, N.Y. - Queens	6,500.00		500.00	6,000.00
118	Jenison, MI-Cottonwood Hts.	6,000.00		1,500.00	4,500.00
119	Kalamazoo, MI-EasternHills	12,000.00		1,000.00	11,000.00
120	Kalamazoo, MI-Faith	13,000.00		1,500.00	11,500.00
121	Kalamazoo, MI-Northern Hts.	3,000.00		1,500.00	1,500.00
122	Kalamazoo, MI-Southern Hts.	2,000.00		2,000.00	none
123	Kansas City, MO-Lane Ave.	12,000.00		1,333.33	10,666.67
124	Kelowna, B.C.	19,666.88		2,666.84	17,000.04
125	Kemptville, Ont. - 1st	26,000.00		2,000.00	24,000.00
126	Kennewick, WA - Tri Cities	20,000.00			20,000.00
127	Kentville, N.S.	8,750.00		1,250.00	7,500.00
128	Lacombe, Alt. - Bethel	1,000.00		1,000.00	none

No.	Church	Balance		Repay	Balance
		12-31-78	New Loans		
129	La Crosse, WI - Hope	20,000.00			20,000.00
130	Lake City, MI	23,800.00			22,266.67
131	Langley, B.C.	1,000.00		1,533.33	1,000.00
132	Leduc, Alt. - Ebenezer	10,000.00		1,000.00	9,000.00
133	Le Mars, IA - Calvin	10,000.00		666.66	9,333.34
134	Lindsay, Ont.	4,050.00			4,050.00
135	Listowel, Ont.	3,000.00		3,000.00	none
136	Long Beach, CA	15,000.00	5,000.00		20,000.00
137	Longmont, CO-Pleasant Val.	29,000.00		1,666.66	27,333.34
138	Lowell, MI - Calvary	19,666.67		2,333.33	17,333.34
139	Lucknow, Ont.	9,118.50		1,900.00	7,218.50
140	Lynden, WA-Mountainview	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
141	Lynnwood, WA	10,000.00		2,000.00	8,000.00
142	Madison, WI	7,926.75		2,666.66	5,260.09
143	Marysville, WA	8,000.00		1,333.33	6,666.67
144	McBain, MI	7,000.00		1,000.00	6,000.00
145	McBain, MI - Calvin		10,000.00		10,000.00
146	Medicine Hat, Alt.	8,000.00		1,250.00	6,750.00
147	Menno, S.D. - Peace	20,000.00	10,000.00	1,000.00	29,000.00
148	Mississauga, Ont. - Community	20,000.00			20,000.00
149	Middleville, MI	14,666.72		1,666.66	13,000.06
150	Minneapolis, MN-Calvary	1,250.00		250.00	1,000.00
151	Minneapolis, MN - 1st	18,000.00		2,250.00	15,750.00
152	Momence, ILL	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
153	Montreal, Quebec	12,000.00		1,500.00	10,500.00
154	Mountain Lake, MN	25,000.00		1,833.33	23,166.67
155	New Glasgow, N.S.-Emmanuel	16,000.00		3,000.00	13,000.00
156	Newmarket, Ont. - Bethel	4,500.00		750.00	3,750.00
157	Niagara Falls, Ont.- Rehoboth	2,500.00			2,500.00
158	Noordeloos, MI	10,000.00		2,000.00	8,000.00
159	Oak Harbor, WA		20,000.00		20,000.00
160	Ocheyedan, IA	12,000.00		2,000.00	10,000.00
161	Ogden, Utah	12,000.00		2,000.00	10,000.00
162	Ogilvie, MN	5,000.00		500.00	4,500.00
163	Olympia, WA - Evergreen	18,000.00			18,000.00
164	Omaha, NE - Prairie Lane	4,500.00	5,000.00	750.00	8,750.00
165	Onalaska, WI - Hope	9,333.34		1,666.66	7,666.68
166	Orangeville, Ont.	3,675.00		2,175.00	1,500.00
167	Orillia, Ont. - 1st	3,500.00		750.00	2,750.00
168	Orlando, FLA	13,000.00		2,000.00	11,000.00
169	Ottawa, Ont. - Calvin	750.00		750.00	none
170	Palo Alto, CA	19,333.37		2,000.00	17,333.37
171	Paramus, N.J.	14,000.01		3,500.01	10,500.00
172	Parkersburg, IA	10,500.00		1,500.00	9,000.00
173	Pembroke, Ont.-Zion	18,667.80			18,667.80
174	Penticton, B.C.	3,815.97		1,224.00	2,591.97
175	Peterborough, Ont.-Cephas	2,068.52		450.00	1,618.52
176	Phoenix, AZ - Orangewood	1,000.00		1,000.00	none
177	Pipestone, MN	20,000.00			20,000.00
178	Plainwell, MI - Calvary	9,000.00		1,400.00	7,600.00
179	Port Alberni, B.C. - 1st	5,800.04		2,200.00	3,600.04
180	Randolph, WI - 1st	6,000.00		6,000.00	none
181	Redlands, CA-Highland Ave.	750.00		250.00	500.00
182	Regina, SK - 1st	14,588.27		1,454.62	13,133.65
183	Renfrew, Ont. - Hebron	1,250.00			1,250.00
184	Richfield Springs, N.Y.- Trinity	25,500.00		3,500.00	22,000.00
185	Richmond, B.C.	1,950.00		1,950.00	none
186	Riverside, CA	6,000.04		666.66	5,333.38
187	Rockford, MI	6,500.00		1,500.00	5,000.00
188	Rock Rapids, IA	16,000.01		1,333.33	14,666.68
189	Rock Valley, IA - Trinity	12,500.00		1,500.00	11,000.00
190	Roseville, MI - Immanuel	10,000.00	10,000.00	1,250.00	18,750.00
191	Rudyard, MI	4,666.72		666.66	4,000.06
192	Sacramento, CA	6,500.00		1,500.00	5,000.00
193	Saginaw, MI-Community	3,000.00		2,000.00	1,000.00
194	St. Joseph, MI	13,333.35		1,333.34	12,000.01

No.	Church	Balance 12-31-78	New Loans	Repay	Balance 12-31-79
195	San Francisco, CA - Golden Gate	7,333.36			7,333.36
196	San Jose, CA - Moorpark	6,000.00		2,000.00	4,000.00
197	Saskatoon, Sk. - Bethel	6,950.00			6,950.00
198	Sauk Village, ILL-Emmanuel	16,000.00			16,000.00
199	Sheboygan, WI - Calvin	1,000.03		333.33	666.70
200	Sheldon, IA - Immanuel	19,666.70		2,500.00	17,166.70
201	Sibley, IA	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
202	Washington, D.C. Silver Spring, MD	24,900.00		2,650.00	22,250.00
203	Simcoe, Ont. - Immanuel	11,130.68		1,600.00	9,530.68
204	Sioux Center, IA-Covenant	8,000.00		1,000.00	7,000.00
205	Sioux City, IA - 1st	5,960.00		830.00	5,130.00
206	Smithers, B.C.	1,140.00		380.00	760.00
207	Smithville, Ont.	13,333.32		1,500.00	11,833.32
208	South Holland, ILL-Peace	1,500.00		1,500.00	none
209	Stony Plain, Alt. - Hope	5,500.00		5,500.00	none
210	Stratford, Ont.	10,502.00		1,000.00	9,502.00
211	Surrey, B.C.	4,650.00		1,600.00	3,050.00
212	Taber, Alt.	4,333.31		1,000.00	3,333.31
213	Tacoma, WA	20,000.00		1,333.33	18,666.67
214	Telkwa, B.C.	14.30			14.30
215	Terra Ceia, N.C.	8,271.09			8,271.09
216	Thayer, IND-Roselawn Comm.		20,000.00		20,000.00
217	Toledo, Ohio-Community		20,000.00		20,000.00
218	Toronto, Ont.-Fellowship	6,750.00		1,250.00	5,500.00
219	Toronto, Ont.-Woodbridge- Maranatha	16,000.00		2,000.00	14,000.00
220	Tracy, IA		20,000.00		20,000.00
221	Troy, MI-Northern Hills	7,666.73		2,000.00	5,666.73
222	Truro, N.S. - John Calvin	10,400.00		4,179.00	6,221.00
223	Tucson, AZ - Elim	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
224	Vancouver, WA - Trinity	14,000.00		2,000.00	12,000.00
225	Vauxhall, Alt.	400.00		200.00	200.00
226	Vergennes, VT-Champlain Valley	17,333.34		1,333.34	16,000.00
227	Vernon, B.C.	11,436.45		3,066.00	8,370.45
228	Victoria, B.C.	1,206.25			1,206.25
229	Vogel Center, MI	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
230	Wallaceburg, Ont.	1,500.00			1,500.00
231	Walnut Creek, CA	13,856.24		1,383.00	12,473.24
232	Wappingers Falls, N.Y. - Immanuel	16,000.00			16,000.00
233	Washington, D.C.	18,000.00		2,000.00	16,000.00
234	Waupun, WI - Bethel	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
235	Wayland, MI	5,800.00		1,600.00	4,200.00
236	Weland Junction, Ont.	9,916.70		1,416.66	8,500.04
237	Wellsburg, IA - 2nd	3,000.00		1,000.00	2,000.00
238	Whitby, Ont. - Hebron	1,375.00		750.00	625.00
239	Williamsburg, Ont.	625.00		625.00	none
240	Windsor, Ont. - Ambassador Community		20,000.00		20,000.00
241	Winter Haven, FLA - Cypress Gardens	20,000.00		1,000.00	19,000.00
242	Winnipeg, Man. - Kildonan	1,000.00			1,000.00
243	Winnipeg, Man. - Transcona	7,500.00		2,500.00	5,000.00
244	Wisconsin Rapids, WI	13,333.35		2,333.35	11,000.00
245	Wyoming, MI-Roger Hts.	1,250.00		1,250.00	none
246	Yakima, Wa.-Summitview	18,000.00		3,000.00	15,000.00
247	York, Ont.-Maranatha	8,866.72		1,266.66	7,600.06

\$2,255,887.76

\$261,000.00

\$342,328.98

\$2,174,558.78



THE CHURCH HELP COMMITTEE INC.  
 CHURCH HELP FUND  
 CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH  
 ORANGE CITY, IOWA  
 1979

## SCHEDULE "C"

Administration Expense	
Meetings and Mileage	\$ 821.77
Secretary	550.00
Assistant Treasurer	1,200.00
Henry De Groot, C.P.A.	75.00
Postage and supplies	255.29
Board of Home Missions	431.92
Fidelity Bond	176.00

Total

\$3,509.98

## SCHEDULE "D"

1979

Statistical information on loans and repayments:

	<u>Beginning Balances</u>	<u>New Loans</u>	<u>Repayments</u>	<u>Ending Balances</u>
1979	\$ 2,255,888	\$ 261,000	\$ 342,329	\$ 2,174,559
1978	2,204,148	394,575	342,835	2,255,888
1977	2,206,382	321,000	323,235	2,204,148
1976	2,227,059	324,300	344,976	2,206,382
1975	2,263,746	262,000	298,687	2,227,059
1974	2,337,480	254,337	328,071	2,263,745
1973	2,288,987	360,000	311,508	2,337,480
1972	2,243,449	348,765	303,227	2,288,987
1971	2,288,873	233,000	278,424	2,243,449
1970	2,279,792	281,400	272,320	2,288,873

Delinquent payments on loans:

	<u>Delinquencies</u>	<u>Percentage of beginning of year total loans</u>	<u>Percentage of Repayments for year</u>
12-31-79	\$ 66,838	3.0	19.5
12-31-78	71,289	3.2	20.8
12-31-77	68,530	3.1	21.2
12-31-76	65,084	2.9	18.9
12-31-75	95,255	4.2	31.9
12-31-74	74,069	3.2	22.6
12-31-73	74,685	3.3	24.0

## REPORT 11

## TRANSLATION AND EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

The Synod of 1979 established an umbrella-type organization which it called the Translation and Educational Assistance Committee (TEAC). It assigned to it as subcommittees the existing Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad (CEACA) and the Spanish Literature Committee (SLC).

Synod also approved a composition for TEAC which included:

1. One representative each from Calvin College and Seminary, CRWM, CRWRC, The Back to God Hour, the Board of Publications, the Board of Home Missions, and CEACA.

2. One member-at-large to represent agencies engaged in publication and distribution of Reformed literature abroad.

3. One member-at-large to represent educational institutions, such as Dordt College, The Institute for Christian Studies, King's College, the Reformed Bible College, and Trinity College.

The Christian Reformed World Mission Board was instructed to establish TEAC. It did so in the latter part of 1979 by calling together officially appointed representatives of the agencies listed under 1 above.

## I. REPORT OF TEAC

At our initial, organizing meeting on December 4, 1979, we elected temporary officers and made nominations to the Synodical Interim Committee for the two members-at-large. Election of regular officers was completed on March 11, the first full meeting of the committee.

We carried out an intensive study of the synodical mandate given us and especially of the task of TEAC and the composition and task of its subcommittees. After consultation with the subcommittees on this matter, a proposed mandate and task description for TEAC and proposed composition and task for its subcommittees were adopted. We now recommend this to synod for its consideration:

A. *The Mandate*

The mandate of TEAC is to be responsible to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church for:

1. Providing for the translation and publication of needed Reformed literature in the major languages of the world. This will involve:

- a. Determining the need for Reformed literature within the various major world language groups.

- b. Developing plans to meet these needs.

- c. Receiving the present Spanish Literature Committee as a subcommittee.

- d. Organizing other subcommittees to develop and carry out specific programs.
  - e. Coordinating these efforts with other denominational and church-related agencies working in literature translation and publication.
2. Providing for educational assistance to churches abroad. This will involve:
- a. Providing the arrangement and financial support of academic training and ecclesiastical internships for qualified and duly endorsed theological students, professors, pastors, and lay leaders for Reformed churches abroad.
  - b. Providing library assistance for Christian education institutions abroad.
  - c. Receiving the present CEACA as a subcommittee.
  - d. Coordinating the work of CEACA with other agencies and institutions of the Christian Reformed Church.

### B. *The Task*

The task of TEAC will be to ascertain needs among churches that use major world languages for the translation and publication of Reformed literature and to identify needs for educational assistance among churches abroad, to determine which of these needs the Christian Reformed Church is able to meet, and to develop ways in which this ministry may be carried out through TEAC's subcommittees. To carry out this task TEAC will be responsible for:

1. Central Administration
  - a. Electing new members for existing subcommittees from nominations by the particular subcommittee.
  - b. Setting up new committees for translation and publication of Reformed literature in major world languages and select initial members for these committees.
  - c. Preparing a coordinated report for synod.
  - d. Providing requested secretarial services.
2. Coordination of the efforts of its subcommittees
  - a. Informing subcommittees of each other's activities in areas of mutual interest.
  - b. Providing possible workshops or conferences on needs of churches using major world languages and/or churches abroad in the areas of education and translation.
  - c. Periodically surveying the churches we assist in these areas to determine continuing or developing needs and informing the proper subcommittees of such findings.
3. Fiscal planning, bookkeeping, and accounting
  - a. Planning an overall budget based on requests from subcommittees and projected new programs.
  - b. Receiving financial reports from subcommittees, providing central auditing, and consolidating these reports for synod.

c. Requesting synod for quota funds and for permission to solicit offerings from the churches.

d. Receiving quota income and providing disbursements according to the requests of subcommittee treasurers.

4. Fund raising and promotion:

a. Raising money needed above quota funds to meet the approved budgets of subcommittees.

b. Preparing, in consultation with subcommittees, appropriate promotional materials and arranging for their distribution.

B. *Composition of Subcommittees*

The composition of TEAC subcommittees will be:

1. The members of each subcommittee should be persons with special competence in the particular areas in which the subcommittee functions.

a. For the educational assistance subcommittee (CEACA) special knowledge of educational institutions and/or special knowledge of the cultures from which the students come is desirable.

b. For translation subcommittees competence in the particular language involved is desirable.

2. Members of TEAC may serve on subcommittees.

3. Subcommittee members will ordinarily be members of the Christian Reformed Church; however, when subcommittees or parts of subcommittees will be functioning in countries other than those in North America, members of Reformed/Presbyterian churches in those countries may be asked to serve.

4. When new subcommittees are formed, TEAC will appoint the members.

5. Replacement or additional members will be selected by TEAC from nominations prepared by each existing subcommittee.

6. Each subcommittee will select its own officers.

7. Terms of members, and terms and functions of officers, will be determined by a general policy drawn up by TEAC.

E. *Task of Subcommittees*

The task of TEAC subcommittees will be to:

1. Determine the needs for ministry within their particular area of responsibility.

2. Develop programs that will meet these needs and carry them out within the approved budget.

3. Prepare and propose an annual budget for inclusion in the overall TEAC budget.

4. Direct and monitor the disbursement of funds.

5. Keep TEAC informed of their activities through the submission of minutes and reports.

6. Prepare an annual report on program and finance for inclusion in the TEAC report to synod.
7. Encourage the cooperation of denominational and church-related agencies in approved projects.
8. Designate one of its members to assist TEAC in promotion and fund raising.

#### F. *Language Priorities*

We decided to adopt the world language priorities which were recommended by the earlier study committee and to use these priorities in establishing language subcommittees. The order of priorities are:

Priority One: Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, and Hausa.

Priority Two: Portuguese, Italian, French, Swahili, Indonesian, and Third World English.

Priority Three: Russian, Japanese, Tamil, and Hindi.

We also began a study of the possible organization of a Chinese-language subcommittee. The report on this matter from the Revs. Isaac Jen and Edward Van Baak has not yet been completed.

It was decided to request synod for a quota for 1981 of 15 cents per family for administrative expenses and 50 cents per family for the development of other world-language committees.

It was also decided to request that our pro tem chairman, Dr. H. Smit, be recognized as our representative at synod and be given the privilege of meeting with the appropriate advisory committee and speaking at synod when matters concerning TEAC and its subcommittees are being considered.

#### Translation and Education Committee

H. Smit, chairman pro tem

W. Van Tol, secretary pro tem

P. Borgdorff

M. Bruinooge

J. Heerema

I. Jen

R. Recker

## II. REPORT OF CEACA

Acting on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church CEACA is grateful to have been privileged to represent the concerns of our denomination to sponsor students from Reformed churches abroad in order to provide them the necessary training to serve their churches in pastoral, administrative, and teaching positions. In conformity with synodical guidelines, such assistance is provided qualified students only upon the request of their home churches, a commitment to return to their homeland to fill a specific position in their church, and supplemental to whatever financial assistance these churches are able to provide. In recent years the length of their stay in the United States has been limited to

a single degree program and the sponsored student is expected to have secured the most advanced training possible in his homeland before being accepted by CEACA for study abroad.

The year 1979 confronted the committee with a number of perplexing problems. We have found it necessary to define our policies very carefully so that both the students and their home churches have a clear understanding of our mutual responsibilities. We have had difficulties in such areas as unanticipated medical expenses, the support of wives and families, emergencies in families of the students—to name a few. Increasing costs for travel, the poverty of the home churches (most of our students come from churches which can only make the minimal pledge of support for the student's family), increasing pressures to support their families or to bring them to the United States often require the wisdom of a Solomon!

At the same time we wish to maximize the positive contributions these students make to our church and seminary. At the present time all students sponsored through CEACA are enrolled at Calvin Seminary, although this has not always been so. The richness of their traditions, insights, and cultures are shared in the classroom as well as informally with faculty and students. These daily contacts and interchange have enlarged the vision of our students to the world community of Reformed churches and is playing a significant role in the expanding interest in world mission that is evident in our seminary this year. Our committee periodically sponsors Sunday evening fellowships with our students and committee members and their spouses. These occasions are real highlights in our experience. We are convinced that the students will continue to demonstrate competence as pastors, leaders, and teachers in their home churches upon their return to their home countries.

During the year 1979 (as in previous years) we have again continued to receive more requests for assistance than we can meet. Although the Synod of 1979 provided additional assistance by way of a small quota, we have and do continue to have very great difficulty meeting our monthly obligations. We appreciate the assistance received from some churches by way of offerings, faith promise pledges, and sponsorship of specific students. Unfortunately, our letter appeals to all of our congregations and diaconates have not generated the kind of response that our commitment as a church requires of us, even though many churches give generously to similar scholarship programs in various other schools and Bible institutes. Our funds are too limited to engage in extensive and expensive promotional efforts, and to do so would hinder us from ministering to the maximum number of students. We continue to appeal to the churches to participate in this ministry. Perhaps the following survey of study programs supported and completed in 1979 will give the churches a glimpse into how important and challenging this assistance is.

#### *A. Programs Supported and Completed in 1979*

The following survey of student programs and support is provided so that synod and the churches may receive some insight into what our ministry is doing. The support of these students generally requires pay-

ment of passage to and from their homeland, a monthly living allowance, tuition, book allowance, and student medical insurance. An average of about \$8,500 per student per year is required to do this.

1. EMMANUEL ADE (Nigeria) will complete his two-year program leading to the M.T.S. degree at Calvin Seminary in May, 1980. He is committed to return to teach at TCNN. A special contribution from a member of the CRC enabled Emmanuel Ade and David Bura (see E below) to return home to be with their families during the summer vacation of 1979.

2. AMOS ADDI (Nigeria) returned home in September, 1979 after an extended stay. He has received the Th.M. degree from Calvin Seminary.

3. MARIANO AVILA (Mexico) is the first graduate of Juan Calvino Seminary, Coyacan, Mexico, to attend Calvin Seminary. Personal contributions from a missionary family have made it possible for his wife to be here with him. Mr. Avila's two-year program leading to the Th.M. degree will be completed in May, 1980.

4. WALDIR BERNDT (Brazil) completed a stay of eleven months on January 12, 1980, and has returned to his homeland. In cooperation with the World Mission Board, which provided generous assistance for Mr. Berndt and his family, CEACA sponsored him for a period of research and study at Calvin Seminary. We thank the diaconate of the Boston Square CRC for their generous assistance to our committee and the Berndt family.

5. DAVID BURA (Nigeria) contracted malaria while on home leave this past summer and required hospitalization. His program will also be completed in June, 1980 and he with Emmanuel Ade is scheduled to return to Nigeria to become part of the teaching staff of TCNN. He is in a two-year program leading to the M.T.S. degree at Calvin Seminary.

6. MANO and SHIRIN DANIEL (South India). This husband and wife team have studied at RBC, Calvin College, and Calvin Seminary. Mrs. Daniel has discontinued her studies. Mr. Daniel will complete his work for the MCE degree at Calvin Seminary in May, 1980, after which the committee anticipates their return to South India.

7. PETER FOMUSOH (Cameroon) arrived August 11, 1979, to begin a two-year program at Calvin Seminary leading to the M.C.E. degree. Mr. Fomusoh is a pastor in his home church.

8. HANDWELL HARA (Malawi) arrived May 26, 1979. His wife was able to join him in late 1979 under the auspices of the Westminster Presbyterian Church of Grand Rapids which is providing her full support. Mr. Hara's program is for one year with additional time for work in the biblical languages anticipated.

9. CELSINO GAMA (Brazil) will complete his work at Calvin Seminary the summer of 1980. In cooperation with the Back to God Hour, CEACA has sponsored him in the Th.M. program at Calvin Seminary.

10. YASUNORI ICHIKAWA (Japan) returned to Japan June 19, 1979, after completing the Th.M. program at Calvin Seminary. He contemplates appointment to Kobe Seminary.

11. BENJAMIN MBENENGE (South Africa) required an extension of his stay beyond November, 1979 because of the contemplated birth of a baby. His support and that of his wife was partially provided through the All Nations CRC, Halifax. Professional medical services were generously supplied by one of our local doctors, Dr. E. Postma. The death of Benjamin's mother necessitated a brief return to South Africa. The question of our committee's assistance for return to the homeland in such cases of emergency travel received considerable discussion on the part of the committee. The Mbenenges returned to South Africa with their newborn son on January 29, 1980.

Additionally we should mention that, jointly with the Back to God Hour, CEACA also provided assistance to Mr. Junus Atmarameksa (Indonesia) for a brief study program at Calvin Seminary. He has now returned to Indonesia and to his work with the Back to God Hour there.

#### *B. Projected Sponsorships*

A very heavy burden of travel expense faces our committee in June, 1980 because of the return to their homeland of those students whose programs will be completed and sponsorship terminated. Because we together with the seminary encourage and promote enrollment in line with the full school year, we periodically face such shortages. In response to long-standing requests new students will be sponsored beginning in September, 1980 from South Africa, Rhodesia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia.

At the present writing we await the arrival of Mr. Siphon Hlakanyana from South Africa. A scholarship is being arranged for him with the joint cooperation of SCORR and the All Nations CRC, Halifax. Discussions continue between CEACA, SCORR, Calvin Seminary, and the All Nations CRC with respect to a continuing scholarship for South African students. (See Section IX.)

#### *C. Library Assistance*

CEACA welcomes the contribution of books for the libraries of seminaries and Bible institutes abroad. Lists of books are sent periodically to about twenty institutions desiring to obtain such books but unable to afford them. Mr. Peter De Klerk, theological librarian and a member of our committee, has charge of this phase of our work. A total of 685 volumes were distributed in 1979. Books designated for this purpose may be sent or brought to Calvin Seminary, c/o Mr. Peter De Klerk.

#### *D. Promotion*

Present and future commitments and opportunities require continued appeals to the churches. The committee encourages local congregations to accept specific students for sponsorship and to invite such students for personal visits and preaching. Letters to congregations and Banner articles constitute our main efforts, although consideration is being given to more extensive promotional efforts.



### *E. Housing*

Housing remains a major concern. Single students have been able to live in a cooperative arrangement in a home in Grand Rapids since seminary students are not eligible for occupancy of Calvin College housing and the seminary has no such facilities available. We feel deeply appreciative to those who have managed the cooperative house on Sigsbee Street, Grand Rapids. The lease of a home on Oakhill Street, Grand Rapids, for student occupancy has not worked out in the ways we had contemplated. A more permanent facility for our students is still a hope of the committee.

### *F. The Synod of 1979: Relationship of CEACA and TEAC*

In spite of concerted efforts on the part of CEACA to clarify for the Synod of 1979 and its advisory committee the developments which led to the proposal to relate CEACA to a new umbrella-like committee, TEAC, we feel keenly disappointed with the decisions and direction the Synod of 1979 adopted. The plan adopted by synod regarding the relationship of our ministry of educational assistance to the production and distribution of literature in major world languages was a far cry from the initial discussions on this matter. However, our committee through its appointed representative on TEAC has participated fully and cooperatively in discussions and meetings since the Synod of 1979. However, the meetings have been inconclusive in regard to our committee's assignment and the relationship this has to world literature. Not desiring to have our work thwarted, or subsumed under other structures so that it becomes only a sideline, and not wishing to be loaded with additional burdensome, unnecessary administrative details, we are open to continued consultation with TEAC. However, we feel that the delineation and definition of our respective tasks is sufficiently clear to warrant the continued, separate existence of CEACA apart from the concerns of world literature.

Synod is able to see from the above that CEACA's concerns revolve around a number of matters: (1) the relationship of CEACA's synodical mandate to that of TEAC; (2) the provision of financial resources for carrying out the various and separate programs of the agencies presently involved in TEAC according to synodical decision; (3) CEACA is committed to working in cooperation with TEAC as established by the Synod of 1979, but looks to this year as a year of testing the feasibility of this relationship. This latter concern arises from the indefiniteness of the mandate of synod and the uncomfortableness we experience when discussing this matter with representatives of TEAC. We wish to reserve the privilege of addressing this matter to Synod of 1981 should we feel that after a year's trial relationship our mandate as well as the relationship to TEAC does not best serve the cause we represent for the Christian Reformed Church.

### *G. Committee Membership*

We thank synod for approving the enlargement of our committee to nine members. This has helped ease and distribute the demands on the

time and efforts of our members. At present Rev. J. Heerema serves as chairman, Mr. W. Medendorp as treasurer, and Dr. R. De Ridder as secretary. Terms of membership will expire according to the following schedule:

1980: Edna Greenway, Wayne Medendorp, Edward Van Baak

1981: Peter De Klerk, Aldrich Evenhouse, Jacob Heerema

1982: Ruth Hoekema, Richard De Ridder, Mark Muller

The following nominations are presented for three-year terms ending in 1983: (All incumbents are eligible for reelection.)

\* Edna Greenway and Frances Dekker

\* Wayne Medendorp and David Radius

\* Rev. Edward Van Baak and Rev. Jacob Hasper

\*Denotes incumbent

CEACA is concerned to keep committee membership as representative as possible of various denominational agencies, foreign experience, and special competencies as these are required by the nature of our assignment. We would request synod to consider amending its rule regarding the necessity of a dual nomination for a second term of three years whenever the individual whose first three-year term expires is willing to continue the allowable second three-year term and the committee concerned is desirous of retaining that person's services. It is understood that the first appointment will continue to be from a dual nomination and that the committee will be prepared to submit a dual nomination at any time synod so requests. We believe this is an honest and forthright way of dealing with the matter of nominations, especially when the continued service of incumbents is desirable.

#### H. *Financial Report*

##### 1. The 1979 Financial Report

This report is attached as an appendix to this report. CEACA seeks in all ways to cooperate with the Denominational Financial Coordinator and in accordance with synodical regulations and good accounting procedures. We report this year for the first time on an accrual basis as required. Our financial records are audited by an independent CPA firm as synod provides.

##### 2. Cash flow

Repeated shortages in available cash to meet our current obligations continues to constitute a real problem for CEACA. Because our monthly support to students requires considerable outlay of funds, we have on several occasions had to defer payment of certain obligations temporarily. We have no cash balance to fall back upon in emergencies. Therefore, we are again not promoting our program among the poorer Reformed churches in the RES this year because we will be unable to accept any additional requests.

We therefore request synod to continue to place our committee on the approved list of causes for one or more offerings.

##### 3. Budget 1981

A budget for 1981 is attached. Synod will note that if we are to answer affirmatively the minimum number of requests for assistance and to in-

crease even minimally the monthly level of support to sponsored students (this support has remained constant for several years in spite of inflation), we will need the full cooperation of our churches in offerings and faith promise pledges. The drastic increase in travel costs (especially air fares) places a very heavy burden on our committee since the churches requesting our assistance are frequently unable to provide support for travel.

#### 4. Quota Request

We are deeply grateful for the action of the Synod of 1979 in providing a per family quota for 1980 of fifty cents per family. This, in addition to the offerings received, has made possible the sponsorship of a number of the students whose churches have requested assistance. We have not been able to meet all requests, however, and project a total of eight students as a high priority for 1981. Although we had contemplated that we would not require this assistance for another year, it now appears that this is vital to the continuation of our ministry and request synod to grant a quota of fifty cents per family for 1981.

#### I. *Scholarship for Student from South Africa*

This year, through the generous assistance of SCORR and in cooperation with the All Nations CRC, Halifax, the Rev. Siphon Hlakanyana is attending Calvin Seminary. Mr. Hlakanyana is a pastor in one of the black Reformed churches of that country.

Representatives of CEACA, SCORR, Calvin Seminary, and the All Nations CRC have consulted together concerning the needs for training pastors and leaders of the black churches of South Africa and how we as a Christian Reformed Church can respond to the continuing requests from these churches for that purpose. All are agreed that it is important that some form of continuing scholarship be made available on an annual basis to meet these requests. Details of such a plan are under consideration at the present time. We are convinced that our denomination's relationships and obligations to the Black Reformed community in South Africa require affirmative expression by granting such continuing assistance. Against the background of our CRC being regarded by many as "Dutch Reformed" and hence by association related to the racist policies of the white churches, we believe that the future credibility and integrity of the Reformed faith among South African Blacks require some form of affirmative action as well as investment in the preparation of leaders and pastors for these churches. We also believe that the CRC is of a mind to encourage us in this.

It is our intention in cooperation with other denominational agencies and interested persons and churches to continue to sponsor a Black leader from South Africa each year, depending obviously upon the priorities that exist on the basis of all requests received and the availability of qualified candidates for such assistance.

#### J. *Items Requiring Synodical Action*

##### 1. Representation at Synod

We request that our treasurer Mr. Wayne Medendorp, and Mr. Aldrich Evenhouse be recognized as our representatives at synod and

that they be given the privilege of meeting with the appropriate advisory committees of synod and of speaking at synod when its report is under consideration.

2. Approval

We request synod to express its approval of the work of the committee.

3. Financial support

a. We request synod to continue to place CEACA on the list of denominational agencies to receive one or more offerings and to recommend this to the churches.

b. We request synod to grant CEACA a 50¢ quota for 1981 in order to make possible the support of eight students for that year.

4. Committee membership

a. We request synod to approve the nominations for committee membership and elect three persons to serve three-year terms.

b. We request synod to amend the rule for nominations to a second three-year term as proposed in our report, Section VII.

Committee for Educational Assistance to Churches Abroad

Jacob Heerema, chairman  
 Richard R. De Ridder, secretary  
 Wayne Medendorp, treasurer  
 Peter De Klerk  
 Aldrich Evenhouse  
 Edna Greenway  
 Ruth Hoekema  
 Mark Muller  
 Edward Van Baak

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES ABROAD

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements

For Year Ended December 31, 1979

RECEIPTS

Voluntary Contributions	\$ 9,502.00	
Church Collections & Donations	18,967.65	
Special Contributions:		
Denomination Agency Grants	18,750.20	
Foundation Grant	<u>1,000.00</u>	
Total Nonquota Receipts		\$48,219.85
Other Receipts		<u>742.82</u>
Total Support and Other Receipts		48,962.67
Less: Canadian Exchange Losses		<u>630.38</u>
Net Support and Other Receipts		\$ 48,332.29

## EXPENDITURES

Program Services:			
Student Support Program	\$59,723.83		
Library Assistance Program	540.99		
Total Program Services		<u>\$60,264.82</u>	
Supportive Services:			
Management, General	1,145.28		
Fund Raising	115.37		
Total Supportive Services		<u>1,260.65</u>	
Total Expenditures			<u>\$61,525.47</u>

## EXPENDITURES OVER RECEIPTS

\$(13,193.18)

## COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES ABROAD

## Balance Sheet

December 31, 1979

ASSETS

## CURRENT ASSETS

Cash in Bank	\$ 1,099.49		
Prepaid Student Subsistence	650.00		
Rent Receivable	59.76		
Total Current Assets		<u>\$ 1,809.16</u>	
TOTAL ASSETS			<u>\$ 1,809.16</u>

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY

## CURRENT LIABILITIES

Deferred Income			\$ 7,419.87
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## FUND EQUITY

Fund Equity, January 1, 1979	\$ 7,582.47		
Expenditures Over Receipts for 1979	(13,193.18)		
Fund Equity, December 31, 1979			<u>(5,610.71)</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUND EQUITY			<u>\$ 1,809.16</u>

## III. REPORT OF SLC

The Spanish Literature Committee was established by synod and has been supported by quotas in order to provide solid biblical Reformed literature for the Spanish-speaking people. The committee has experienced both blessings and difficulties in reaching its goals this past year.

The difficulties are the same as those experienced by many other agencies in these days. Inflation, especially in the Spanish-speaking world, has created problems and hardships. Inflation has also been heavy in the paper and printing areas. We have noted some slowness in the sale of literature and collection of accounts, which reflects the critical economic situation in Latin American countries.

Our goals for 1979 were not fully met. We trust that with the more modern methods now available to us, it will be possible to meet our publishing goals in the year to come.

At the same time we are grateful to God for the advances that have been made in the publication of Reformed material in the past year. The major project of the Spanish Literature Committee at this time is the translation and publication of William Hendriksen's *Commentary on the New Testament*. This is a large and expensive project. It should provide much-needed help in biblical interpretation to the Spanish world for many years to come. The first volumes, *I & II Timothy and Titus* and *I & II Thessalonians*, are now available and other volumes are in various stages of translation and publication.

Everett Harrison's *Introduction to the New Testament* is in the final stages of production. The committee has now a total of forty-three titles which it has translated and published in Spanish. These books are a testimony of faith which can bear much fruit in the future. They are being distributed in cooperation with The Evangelical Literature League (TELL) and we are grateful for that organization's help. Together the Spanish Literature Committee and TELL are encouraging increased book sales.

Many kinds of books are now available in Spanish, which reflects the increased literacy of the population. This is also true in the field of religious literature. Much of this literature is written from an experiential and Pentecostal point of view. It is highly desirable and necessary to provide books of sound biblical character for searching believers in their own language.

The heavy increase in costs, the continued great need in the Spanish-speaking church world for Reformed literature, and the future publication plans of your committee dictate the need to request a budget increase. The Spanish Literature Committee does not solicit funds from any other source and depends wholly on quota funds.

The Spanish Literature Committee, therefore, respectfully requests that it be granted a quota for 1981 of \$1.50 which is a fifty-cent increase over last year.

The committee is grateful to God for the privilege of being useful in this capacity.

The Spanish Literature Committee  
Bernard Dokter, Coordinator  
Herman Baker  
Juan Boonstra  
Peter Borgdorff  
Roger Greenway  
William Hendriks

## SPANISH LITERATURE COMMITTEE

## Financial Report

December 31, 1979

## JANUARY 1 BALANCES

Checking Account	\$ 3,288.60	
Savings Account	29,513.57	
Beginning Balance		\$32,802.17

## INCOME

Quota	53,965.93	
Interest	1,846.00	
Gifts	1,143.74	
Wolf—on account	198.00	
Sales	9,314.98	
Total Income		<u>66,468.65</u>

## TOTAL INCOME AND BEGINNING BALANCE

\$99,270.82

## DISBURSEMENTS

Administrative		
Secretary	\$ 4,680.98	
Accounting	800.00	
Auditing	1,600.00	
Chair and stand	151.20	
Telephone installed	234.61	
Travel	314.20	
Total Administrative		<u>\$7,780.99</u>

## General

Supplies/Books, etc.	1,872.87	
TELL (La Aurora Bookstore)	1,000.00	
Insurance on Inventory	501.98	
Rosa Avila—Retroactive Pay	495.00	
Total General		<u>\$3,869.85</u>

## Production

General Editing		2,606.08
140 - <i>Introduction to the New Testament</i>		
Translation	\$ 787.50	
Proofreading	376.75	
		<u>1,164.25</u>
141 - <i>I &amp; II Timothy/Titus</i>		
Proofreading		131.00
142 - <i>I &amp; II Thessalonians</i>		
Translation	105.00	
Proofreading	35.00	
		<u>140.00</u>
143 - <i>Partnership</i>		
Proofreading	9.65	
Printing (2976 copies)	3,750.00	
		<u>3,759.65</u>
144 - <i>Glorious Body of Christ</i>		
Editing/Typing		504.50
150 - <i>Teaching Bible Doctrine</i>		
Proofreading	11.35	
Printing (3109 copies)	3,750.00	
		<u>3,761.35</u>

152 - <i>Promise and Deliverance</i>			
Translation			\$3,784.00
159 - <i>John</i>			
Proofreading			4,284.00
160 - <i>Philippians</i>			
Purchase of Manuscript			2,000.00
161 - <i>Matthew</i>			
Translation	\$3,020.00		
Editing	90.00		
			<u>3,110.00</u>
162 - <i>Colossians</i>			
Translation	712.00		
Editing	345.00		
			<u>1,057.00</u>
163 - <i>Ephesians</i>			
Translation			1,556.00
164 - <i>Galatians</i>			
Translation			1,708.00
165 - <i>Apostles to the City</i>			
Editing/Typing			507.00
166 - <i>Mark</i>			
Translation			336.00
Total Production			<u>\$27,802.75</u>
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS			\$42,059.67
December 31, Checking Account Balance			10,851.58
December 31, Savings Account Balance			<u>46,359.57</u>
			<u>57,211.15</u>
			<u>\$99,270.82</u>

Note: The existing balance is committed for future publications, books already in process.

#### IV. SUMMARY OF MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ATTENTION

##### A. Approval of representation

1. For TEAC: H. Smit
2. For CEACA: W. Medendorp and A. Evenhouse
3. For SLC: B. Dokter

B. Approval of mandate and task for TEAC and composition and task for subcommittees.

C. Approval of the work of the committees

D. Committee membership on CEACA

1. Election of three persons from nominees
2. Amending of rule for second-year nominations

E. Approval of quota requests

1. For TEAC: 15¢ for administration  
50¢ for other world language committees



2. For CEACA: 50¢ for student support  
 3. For SLC: \$1.50 for Spanish literature  
 F. Approval of CEACA request to be continued on the list of denominational agencies recommended to the churches for one or more offerings.

Translation and Education Committee  
 William Van Tol, secretary

## TRANSLATION AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## PROPOSED BUDGET

1981

## Administration of TEAC

## INCOME

Balance, January 1, 1981	\$ 00.00	
Quota Income	<u>8,000.00</u>	
Total Income		\$8,000.00

## EXPENDITURES

General Administrative Expense	3,000.00	
Financial services to subcommittees	<u>5,000.00</u>	
Total Expenditures		8,000.00

## Other World Language Committees

## INCOME

Balance, January 1, 1981	00.00	
Quota Income	<u>27,000.00</u>	
Total Income		27,000.00

## EXPENDITURE

Administrative Expense	5,000.00	
General Expense	3,000.00	
Production	<u>19,000.00</u>	
Total Expenditures		27,000.00

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE TO CHURCHES ABROAD  
 PROPOSED BUDGET

1981

EXPENDITURES

Program Expenditures			
Student Support Program (8 students)	\$66,530		
Library Assistance Program	\$ 700		
Total Program Expense		\$67,230	
Support Expenditures			
General Administrative Expense	700		
Promotion Expense	620		
Total Support Expense		1,320	
Total Expenditures			<u>\$68,550</u>

REVENUE

Quota Receipts		33,550	
Nonquota Receipts			
Gifts and Offerings	25,000		
Special Support	10,000		
Total Nonquota Receipts		35,000	
Total Revenue			<u>\$68,550</u>

## REPORT 12

## FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES

## I. ORGANIZATION

In keeping with the decision of the Synod of 1958, the committee is composed of three laymen and two ministers. The present membership of the committee is as follows: president—Mr. John R. Swierenga of Elmhurst, Illinois (1981); vice-president and comptroller—Mr. George Vande Werken of Westchester, Illinois (1980); secretary—the Rev. John Vander Lugt of Palos Heights, Illinois (1981); treasurer—Mr. H. Ray Schaafsma of Elmhurst, Illinois (1982); vicar—the Rev. George Holwerda of Highland, Indiana (1980).

The terms of Mr. Vande Werken and Mr. Holwerda will expire this year. Both are eligible for another term. The committee will present second nominees for each position.

## II. THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE

*FNC Statistics for 1979*

Applications processed—155  
 Assistance granted—155  
 Children's allowances—300  
 Years of service allowance—1377 (8.88 average)  
 Average size of church—36.32 Families  
 New churches—24  
 Churches no longer applying—8

## III. RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BOARD OF HOME MISSIONS

Synod of 1979 urged "FNC and BHM to seek to resolve their differences as indicated in FNC Report 12, IV, D, a and e as compared to Home Missions Board 4a, by the time of the September 27, 1979, SIC meeting."

Following a preliminary meeting, the FNC and HMB staffs have had two very fruitful meetings. As a result of these meetings, the FNC and HMB staffs will meet every year in late November or early December in order to discuss the churches receiving Grants in Aid and also funds from the Fund for Needy Churches. At this meeting HMB will also discuss with the FNC those churches which are working toward stage IV (at this point they normally leave the supervision of HMB and come under FNC).

A further outcome of the meetings between FNC and HMB was the consideration of the advisability of using Mission Analysis Projection (MAP) (in its present form or modified for our circumstances) as a means

for evaluating the potential of FNC churches and also stimulating a growth awareness in these churches. The FNC committee will act as the agent for FNC churches in arranging to have a MAP of their church.

Finally, a way of maintaining effective communication and cooperation between FNC and HMB was discussed. The HMB will be asked to appoint a staff member as liaison between HMB and FNC. This person will receive a copy of all minutes and be informed of future meetings.

#### IV. FINANCIAL MATTERS

As Synod of 1979 was informed the FNC expected to run out of funds before the end of 1979. We will finish the year 1979 having borrowed \$55,000. Furthermore, the quota which synod granted for 1980 is not sufficient to meet our needs for 1980. We anticipate an additional shortage of \$145,000 (based on receiving 90 percent of the quotas as we did this year). Therefore, by the end of 1980 we will have a deficit of \$200,000 at 12 percent interest. A supplemental quota of \$3.50 will be needed to erase the deficit and its interest.

We feel that as a committee we have tried to deal responsibly with the requests we have received. We are attempting to move the FNC churches to make plans to reduce their dependency upon FNC and to become more responsible in setting their priorities. Our efforts have met varied responses; some are outraged, some are acquiescent, some are challenged. We will have to continue to pursue these avenues if the total demands on FNC are not to continue to skyrocket.

#### V. MATTERS REQUIRING SYNODICAL ACTION

##### A. *Representation at Synod*

We request that our secretary and treasurer be consulted on matters pertaining to the FNC when considered by synod or its advisory committee and that they be given the privilege of the floor. In the absence of the secretary or treasurer, we request that the same privilege be given to other members of the committee.

##### B. *Recommendations—Financial Matters*

1. That the minimum salary for ministers serving churches which receive assistance from the FNC be set at \$14,000 for 1981 (1980—\$13,000)

2. That a service increment of \$100 per year for up to twenty years service be granted.

3. That a child allowance of \$500 continue to be granted for every child up to twenty-two (22) years of age, excluding those who have reached the age of nineteen (19) and who are no longer enrolled in an educational institution.

4. That a car allowance of \$2,000 be granted. (FNC to pay \$1,000).

5. That the per-family contribution toward the minister's salary in congregations receiving aid from the FNC in 1981 be not less (and if possible more) than \$235 (\$200—1980) in both the United States and in Canada.

6. That the quota for FNC for 1981 be set at \$21.00 per family (\$18.00 for 1980). Grounds: The increase will be needed to avoid a continuing deficit.

7. That a supplemental quota of \$3.50 be granted for 1981 to pay off the deficit and its interest.

*C. Recommendation—Committee Membership*

That synod elect two members to the committee from the following nominations:

George Vande Werken\* and Martin Kuipers  
Rev. George Holwerda\* and Rev. Harry Arnold

\* Denotes incumbent

Fund for Needy Churches Committee  
John Vander Lugt, secretary

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.

United States Accounts

Statement of Cash Receipts and Disbursements

February 1, 1979 to January 31, 1980

(In U. S. Dollars)

UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE, FEBRUARY 1, 1979		\$216,885.66
<u>RECEIPTS:</u>		
Quota payments	\$633,784.52	
Interest on investments	6,484.74	
Refunds and gifts	5,272.76	
Loan from Christian Reformed Church of North America	<u>55,000.00</u>	
Total Receipts		<u>700,542.02</u>
Total Funds to be Accounted For		<u>\$917,427.68</u>
<u>DISBURSEMENTS:</u>		
Salary Subsidy payments	\$584,702.80	
Child allowance payments	122,810.91	
Pastors service increment	54,932.58	
Automobile allowance payments	101,812.19	
Moving expense	8,639.41	
Transfer to Canadian account	36,000.00	
Honorariums	3,000.00	
Auditing expense	230.00	
Committee expense	1,127.80	
Postage	137.70	
Printing-Stationery Supplies	91.19	
Secretary help	314.08	
Phone	<u>221.89</u>	
Total Disbursements		<u>\$914,020.55</u>
UNITED STATES FUND BALANCE 1/31/80		\$ <u>3,407.13</u>
<u>CASH ACCOUNTS:</u>		
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Checking Account	\$ 2,468.51	
First National Bank of Evergreen Park, Savings Account	<u>938.62</u>	
		\$ <u>3,407.13</u>
<u>Note Payable</u>		
Christian Reformed Church of North America		\$ <u>55,000.00</u>

FUND FOR NEEDY CHURCHES, INC.

Canadian Account

(In Canadian Dollars)

CANADIAN FUND BALANCE, FEBRUARY 1, 1979 \$ 66,079.56

RECEIPTS:

Quota payments	\$166,177.83	
Transfers from United States account	36,000.00	
Exchange premiums	2,340.00	
Refunds and gifts	<u>427.43</u>	
Total Receipts		\$204,945.26
Total Funds to be Accounted For		\$271,024.82

DISBURSEMENTS:

Salary subsidy payments	\$181,424.10	
Child allowance payments	41,020.83	
Pastors service increment	12,504.17	
Automobile allowance payments	32,508.11	
Moving expense	<u>2,925.68</u>	
Total Disbursements		\$270,382.89

CANADIAN FUND BALANCE 1/31/80 \$ 641.93

CASH ACCOUNT:

Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce \$ 641.93

Schedule B  
Subsidy payments for year ending January 31, 1980

<u>Classis</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Salary Subsidy</u>	<u>Child Allowance</u>	<u>Increment For Years Of Service</u>	<u>Car Allowance</u>	<u>Moving</u>
<u>Alberta North</u>						
Barrhead-Westlock	\$1574.99	\$458.33	\$583.33	\$75.00	\$458.33	
Edmonton-Glad Tidings	9190.00	5740.00	2000.00	450.00	1000.00	
Edson & Peers	9600.00	7100.00	1500.00	-	1000.00	
Grand Prairie-La Glace	7910.00	5910.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
Leduc	7756.67	6590.00	166.67	-	1000.00	
<u>Alberta South</u>						
Brooks	9065.09	4794.16	1375.00	150.00	1000.00	1745.93
High River	8550.00	6400.00	1000.00	150.00	1000.00	
Regina	9340.00	6590.00	1500.00	250.00	1000.00	
Vauxhall	6086.67	5253.34	-	-	833.33	
<u>Atlantic Northeast</u>						
Binghamton Valley	5900.00	2000.00	2000.00	900.00	1000.00	
Framingham	7050.00	5000.00	1000.00	50.00	1000.00	
Wappengers Falls	5602.50	4665.00	750.00	187.50	-	
Webster	8102.50	4890.00	1812.50	400.00	1000.00	

	Total	Salary Subsidy	Child Allowance	Increment For Years Of Service	Car Allowance	Moving
<b>British Columbia</b>						
Agassiz	8110.00	5060.00	2000.00	50.00	1000.00	
Coquitlan	6370.00	4720.00	500.00	150.00	1000.00	
Houston	6500.00	4550.00	500.00	450.00	1000.00	
Kelowna	8040.00	5740.00	1000.00	300.00	1000.00	
Penticton	9600.00	7000.00	1500.00	100.00	1000.00	
Port Alberni	4550.00	1500.00	1500.00	550.00	1000.00	
Prince George	8150.00	6650.00	500.00	-	1000.00	
Salmon Arms	2449.98	1183.33	666.66	266.67	333.32	
Telkwa	10705.00	7205.00	1500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Terrace	4975.00	2300.00	1375.00	300.00	1000.00	
<b>Cadillac</b>						
Atwood	8900.00	6250.00	1500.00	150.00	1000.00	
Lake City	5175.00	3075.00	1125.00	225.00	750.00	
Rudyard	4700.00	2700.00	1000.00	-	1000.00	
<b>California South</b>						
Chula Vista	10800.00	7200.00	2000.00	600.00	1000.00	
Fountain Valley	11260.00	6760.00	2500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Central California</b>						
Hayward	7870.00	4820.00	1500.00	550.00	1000.00	
Palo Alto	2130.00	1392.50	375.00	112.50	250.00	
Sacramento	6030.00	3530.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Chatham</b>						
Blenheim	7120.00	5570.00	500.00	50.00	1000.00	
Dresden	3708.89	3188.26	312.50	-	208.13	
Poreat	8575.00	6075.00	1500.00	-	1000.00	
Tillsonburg	6512.50	5200.00	375.00	187.50	750.00	
Wallaceburg	375.00	-	375.00	-	-	
<b>Chicago South</b>						
Burbank	7990.00	4040.00	2500.00	450.00	1000.00	
Chicago-Archer Ave.	7320.00	5070.00	1000.00	250.00	1000.00	
Richton Park	9920.00	6420.00	1500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Columbia</b>						
Conrad	7000.00	4700.00	500.00	800.00	1000.00	
Gallatin Gateway	6510.00	4210.00	1000.00	300.00	1000.00	
Portland-Oak Hills	9300.00	7000.00	1000.00	300.00	1000.00	
Quincy	5070.00	4320.00	-	750.00	-	
Spokane	9757.00	7757.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
Vancouver	6905.06	5005.08	1000.00	233.34	666.64	
<b>Eastern Canada</b>						
Athens	4500.00	2700.00	-	800.00	1000.00	
Cornwall	11503.34	6570.00	3166.67	700.00	1466.67	
Halifax	12250.00	8800.00	2000.00	450.00	1000.00	
Kempville	8760.00	6760.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
Pembroke	4002.25	1260.00	750.00	437.50	375.00	1179.75
Renfrew	787.50	566.67	125.00	12.50	83.33	
Truro	8950.00	6050.00	1500.00	400.00	1000.00	
<b>Florida</b>						
Boca Raton	10176.91	7726.92	1413.46	94.23	942.30	
Miami	9450.00	7100.00	1000.00	350.00	1000.00	
Orlando	6710.00	4210.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Pinellas Park	4000.00	2000.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Grand Rapids East</b>						
Alto	4551.35	1906.67	812.50	262.50	541.65	1028.03
Grand Rapids-Grace	5650.00	1150.00	2500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Grand Rapids-Wadison Square	9250.00	7100.00	1000.00	150.00	1000.00	
Lowell	7020.00	3020.00	2000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Middleville	8210.00	5060.00	1500.00	650.00	1000.00	
Portland	10350.00	6150.00	2500.00	700.00	1000.00	
<b>Grand Rapids North</b>						
Cedar Springs	9910.00	5910.00	2000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Comstock Park	6650.00	4000.00	1500.00	150.00	1000.00	
Grand Rapids-Bristolwood	10050.00	7950.00	500.00	600.00	1000.00	
Sparta	2492.96	1307.50	250.00	50.00	250.00	635.46
<b>Grand Rapids South</b>						
Wayland	7010.00	2510.00	2500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Grandville</b>						
Wyoming-West 44th St.	8433.37	5300.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	633.37

REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Salary Subsidy</u>	<u>Child Allowance</u>	<u>Increment For Years Of Service</u>	<u>Car Allowance</u>	<u>Moving</u>
<u>Hackensack</u>						
Broomal	11042.50	5942.50	2500.00	800.00	1800.00	
North Haledon	4480.00	2680.00	500.00	300.00	1000.00	
Paterson-Madison Ave.	10110.00	6760.00	2000.00	350.00	1000.00	
Paterson-North Side	9990.00	6590.00	1500.00	900.00	1000.00	
Silver Springs	5270.00	2220.00	1250.00	800.00	1000.00	
Terra Ceia	5500.00	3000.00	1000.00	500.00	1000.00	
Washington	8330.00	5230.00	1500.00	600.00	1000.00	
<u>Hamilton</u>						
Welland	5650.00	2850.00	1500.00	300.00	1000.00	
<u>Holland</u>						
St. Joseph	5750.00	2000.00	2000.00	750.00	1000.00	
<u>Hudson</u>						
Franklin Lakes	4160.00	4160.00	-	-	-	
Jamaica	11100.00	8600.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Monsey	11740.00	9140.00	1000.00	200.00	1000.00	
New York City	6945.83	5629.17	583.33	150.00	583.33	
Pompton Plains	4700.00	1200.00	1500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<u>Huron</u>						
Collingwood	3780.00	3030.00	750.00	-	-	
Goderich	4995.01	3420.01	1500.00	75.00	-	
Kincardine	780.00	780.00	-	-	-	
<u>Illiana</u>						
Crown Point	5197.23	2575.98	1355.80	361.60	903.85	
Gary	9440.00	6440.00	1500.00	500.00	1000.00	
Indianapolis	11510.00	7610.00	2000.00	900.00	1000.00	
<u>Kalamazoo</u>						
Decatur	10950.00	6800.00	2500.00	650.00	1000.00	
Eastern Hills	9600.00	6750.00	1500.00	350.00	1000.00	
Northern Heights	4500.00	1400.00	1500.00	600.00	1000.00	
Plainwell	7031.67	5573.34	458.33	-	1000.00	
South Bend	4000.00	1000.00	1500.00	500.00	1000.00	
<u>Lake Erie</u>						
Akron	8890.00	6590.00	1000.00	300.00	1000.00	
Cleveland-Maple Heights	875.00	162.50	375.00	87.50	250.00	
Columbus	10440.00	7440.00	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Farmington	6100.00	4600.00	1000.00	500.00	-	
Flint	12680.00	8630.00	2000.00	450.00	1000.00	
Roseville	10500.00	7600.00	1500.00	400.00	1000.00	
Saginaw	6810.00	5060.00	500.00	250.00	1000.00	
Toledo	7050.00	5000.00	1000.00	50.00	1000.00	
<u>Minnesota North</u>						
Dejou	750.00	-	-	-	750.00	
Brandon	9170.00	4720.00	2500.00	950.00	1000.00	
Brooten	6299.13	4482.50	750.00	150.00	916.63	
Emo	9580.00	6080.00	1500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Hancock	7740.00	5740.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
Inver Grove Heights	5520.00	3970.00	500.00	50.00	1000.00	
Ogilvie	6210.00	4210.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
<u>Minnesota South</u>						
Bemis	7680.00	6080.00	500.00	100.00	1000.00	
Bigelow	11850.00	8950.00	1500.00	400.00	1000.00	
Holland	3446.66	3446.66	-	-	-	
Holland Center	1750.00	1750.00	-	-	-	
Hull	7500.00	5000.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Mountain Lake	8271.70	6967.56	-	637.50	666.64	
<u>Muskegon</u>						
Fruitport	8060.00	5060.00	2000.00	-	1000.00	
Grace	8750.00	6250.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<u>North Central Iowa</u>						
Ackley	8580.00	5380.00	2000.00	200.00	1000.00	
Britt	10075.00	8400.00	625.00	50.00	1000.00	
Cedar Falls	5286.65	4353.33	666.66	266.66	-	
Holland	5305.00	4205.00	-	100.00	1000.00	
Iowa Falls	9540.00	6690.00	1500.00	350.00	1000.00	
<u>Northern Illinois</u>						
Chicago-Garfield	11360.00	9160.00	1000.00	200.00	1000.00	
Chicago-Korean	10200.00	7700.00	1000.00	500.00	1000.00	
Winfield	4850.00	2000.00	1500.00	350.00	1000.00	
<u>Orange City</u>						
Hartley	10160.00	7960.00	1000.00	200.00	1000.00	
Le Mars	6062.50	3700.00	1312.50	50.00	1000.00	
Omaha	9550.00	7100.00	1000.00	450.00	1000.00	
Sioux City	6460.00	4860.00	500.00	100.00	1000.00	



## REPORTS OF BOARDS AND STANDING COMMITTEES

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Salary Subsidy</u>	<u>Child Allowance</u>	<u>Increment Per Years Of Service</u>	<u>Car Allowance</u>	<u>Moving</u>
<b>Pacific Northwest</b>						
BelleVue	8390.00	4890.00	1500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Lynden-Mountain View	4977.98	2520.00	1291.66	458.00	708.32	
Lynnwood	10200.00	7950.00	1000.00	250.00	1000.00	
Seattle-Calvary	8194.52	4575.00	416.67	150.00	1000.00	2052.85
<b>Pella</b>						
Tracy	8220.00	5720.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Quinte</b>						
Lindsay	5000.00	2500.00	1500.00	-	1000.00	
Port Perry	7400.00	5400.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>Rocky Mountain</b>						
Albuquerque-Chelwood	9860.00	7610.00	1000.00	250.00	1000.00	
Boulder	9200.00	6100.00	1500.00	600.00	1000.00	
Denver-Center of Hope	8200.00	4200.00	2000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Denver-Trinity	6700.00	3700.00	1000.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Port Collins	5690.00	3190.00	1000.00	500.00	1000.00	
Greeley	9700.00	6250.00	1500.00	950.00	1000.00	
Longmont	10820.00	8120.00	1500.00	200.00	1000.00	
Salt Lake City-First	7962.06	4590.42	937.50	575.00	1000.00	859.14
Tucson-Bethel	7600.00	5000.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
Tucson-Elim In The Desert	5295.00	3295.00	1000.00	500.00	500.00	
<b>Sioux Center</b>						
Freeman	10590.00	7440.00	2000.00	150.00	1000.00	
Harrison	7050.00	4550.00	500.00	1000.00	1000.00	
Lake View	10550.00	8800.00	750.00	-	1000.00	
Marion	9801.00	8378.36	125.00	250.00	-	1047.64
Menne	6069.69	3043.33	1375.00	275.00	916.67	459.69
Rapid City	5271.12	3521.48	625.00	56.25	416.16	652.23
Sioux Falls-Shalom	7871.00	5325.00	375.00	150.00	750.00	1271.00
<b>Toronto</b>						
Toronto-Fellowship	8460.00	5160.00	2000.00	300.00	1000.00	
<b>Wisconsin</b>						
Beaver Dam	9130.00	6930.00	1000.00	200.00	1000.00	
Wisconsin Rapids	8000.00	6000.00	-	1000.00	1000.00	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1,143,280.78</b>	<b>766,126.90</b>	<b>163,831.74</b>	<b>67,686.75</b>	<b>134,070.30</b>	<b>11,565.09</b>

Schedule C1979 Quota Payment

<u>Families</u>	<u>Classis</u>	<u>1979 Quota</u>	<u>Payments Received as of 1-31-80</u>
1718	Alberta North	\$23,193.00	\$22,556.07
1152	Alberta South	15,552.00	16,435.78
793	Atlantic Northeast	10,705.50	9,339.21
2322	British Columbia	31,347.00	29,781.15
729	Cadillac	9,841.50	9,305.97
2207	California South	29,794.50	28,346.74
1307	Central California	17,644.50	17,836.84
2337	Chatham	31,549.50	11,523.29
1394	Chicago South	18,819.00	17,338.02
618	Columbia	12,393.00	12,499.20
1046	Eastern Canada	14,121.00	14,028.27
598	Florida	8,073.00	7,558.40
3750	Grand Rapids East	50,625.00	50,142.65
2264	Grand Rapids North	30,564.00	30,972.36
2418	Grand Rapids South	32,643.00	32,733.74
3355	Grandville	45,292.50	32,472.27
1027	Hackensack	13,864.50	18,216.19
2751	Hamilton	37,138.50	28,209.44
2964	Holland	40,014.00	39,846.06
1073	Hudson	14,485.50	21,420.00
1484	Huron	20,034.00	14,270.44
2481	Illiana	33,493.50	33,083.11
1887	Kalamazoo	25,474.50	25,328.00
1136	Lake Erie	15,336.00	17,469.05
1793	Minnesota North	24,205.50	17,112.35
1116	Minnesota South	15,066.00	14,684.15
1845	Muskegon	28,907.50	12,691.96
766	Northern Iowa	10,341.00	6,499.87
1333	Northern Illinois	17,995.50	17,259.42
1628	Orange City	21,978.00	21,496.16
1816	Pacific Northwest	24,516.00	23,499.97
1766	Pella	23,841.00	23,427.03
1436	Quinte	19,386.00	7,073.62
1732	Rocky Mountain	23,382.00	15,613.26
1901	Sioux Center	25,663.50	24,494.48
1913	Toronto	25,825.50	17,684.19
1278	Wisconsin	17,253.00	15,758.03
3045	Zealand	41,107.50	41,931.61
66,479	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$897,466.50</b>	<b>\$799,962.35</b>

## REPORT 13

## DENOMINATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMITTEE

While the activities of our committee have been the rather normal and routine, there are aspects and developments about which it is a pleasure to report to synod. We do so by reporting on various areas of effort and concern.

## I. PERSONNEL

Our committee continues to function well as presently constituted. We are not a large committee but congenial and effective, we believe, as instruments for doing our assigned work. During the late months of 1979, we missed the leadership of our chairman, Dr. Lubbertus Oostendorp, while he was teaching, briefly, in the Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City. We continue to enjoy and benefit from the advice and close cooperation of Dr. Herbert J. Brinks, archivist; and Mr. E. R. Post, field agent.

## II. MICROFILMING ACTIVITIES

During the last few years, much attention has been given to the accumulation of materials such as minutes of consistories and committees. These materials have, in the main, been microfilmed and stored away for their anticipated future value. With reference to the minutes of consistories, this type of material appears to have reached its present limit, since almost 86 percent of our churches have submitted materials. Records of some congregations that have disbanded are in our possession in the vault in actual and original form. Many of the consistories that have not submitted materials appear to consider (mistakenly, we believe) that their churches being "young" and small, holding materials for microfilming is not "worthwhile" at present. Minutes of denominational committees and related records are being collected and filed. So our files become the archivist's depository as intended by synod.

## III. TRANSLATION WORK

Through the labors of a number of retired individuals, a growing collection of materials is becoming available for use in "free-form" English. It is felt to be desirable to translate more documents now existing only in the Dutch language, although we are actively seeking to establish some measure of priority as it concerns those which ought to receive more urgent attention. Drs. J. H. Kromminga and Henry Zwaanstra have given attention to this matter. We welcome the help of interested individuals who have the time and inclination to assist in this work, the importance of which can only increase with the passing of time.

#### IV. REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Since we as a committee cannot possibly know about the many documents and related memorabilia extant throughout the denomination, we are seeking to determine whether or not historical committees exist in various classes or geographical areas of our denomination, and, in addition, whether we can gain cooperation of such in the continuing and relentless search for our heritage in more tangible form. We have been in touch with all stated clerks of classes, and responses are coming in at this writing, though not in sufficient quantity either to reflect a pattern or to suggest a concrete course of action or policy. We hope synod will sense the value that rests in such regional representatives, especially if they can become part of our "team."

#### V. EX-CRC MINISTERS

For want of a better term, we have chosen this appellation to designate those men who have served in the ministry of our denomination, but who have left by reasons other than the usual retirement and death. Through the efforts of John Leugs, your committee is seeking to reconstruct the records of service of the nearly 160 such individuals in the course of our history. We are convinced that these men who have also served ought not be forgotten, and information concerning them must be preserved for the sake of the historical value it has for the future. Interest in preserving this study has been expressed by the Stated Clerk of synod and by the seminary librarian. It is anticipated that the completed dossiers (and photos!) can be deposited in their holdings and files in time.

#### VI. FIELD AGENT REPLACEMENT

Heeding the recurrent reminder of our field agent, Mr. E. R. Post, that efforts at finding a replacement for our "hauler of heritage" be advanced, your committee has given more serious attention to the request during the past year. In the course of deliberations, we have sought to reevaluate our needs and goals, noting that the aspect of gathering materials is not as urgent nor demanding as formerly, but that organization of materials and publicity have become more pressing needs. We feel that our academic community to be sure, but also our membership at large, ought to be informed of what is happening in Heritage Hall. Our committee is concerned to effect the orderly transfer of duties according to the wishes and "pace" of Mr. Post, with whom we want most sincerely to maintain good faith. Hopefully, this transfer can take place under the encouragement of his experienced hand.

Our attention has tended to focus increasingly on Dr. Henry Ippel of our committee. He has a long-standing and intimate grasp of what is required and desirable, and has expressed his keen interest in the task. Believing him to possess the desired qualifications, we are currently seeking for him a measure of release from teaching duties in the History Department of Calvin College, thus allowing him gradually to assume the responsibilities of the position. If all develops as we hope, we can serve to help Dr. Ippel fill his approaching retirement in a positive and useful way.

### VII. COPY MACHINE

While our microfilming work is being "farmed out" at very favorable rates, the need for a copying machine is being studied. Existing copy machines in the library are kept quite busy satisfying the demands made upon them by the student bodies and library personnel. Your committee is impressed with the increasing desirability of providing for the duplication of materials for shorter-term usefulness, and believes that a copying machine may be warranted. No final decision has been taken, but we continue to study the matter.

### VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. That synod approve the committee's continuing progress;
- B. That synod allocate \$10,000 to help defray costs incurred in the acquisition, administration, preservation, and cataloging of materials of historical value in the denominational archives, thereby helping further to subsidize the preservation of our denominational heritage.

Denominational Historical Committee  
L. Oostendorp, chairman  
J. Leugs, secretary  
H. Ippel

## REPORT 14

## INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The committee met monthly during the past year with the Rev. Clarence Boomsma serving as president, Prof. John Stek as vice-president, and Dr. John Bratt as secretary. New members joining the committee by decision of the Synod of 1979 are the Rev. Arnold Brink, who brings with him the experience of having served on a previous occasion, and Mr. Marlin Van Elderen. The work of the committee is allocated to four subcommittees who bring recommendations to the full committee.

Keeping in mind our Lord's injunction in his high-priestly prayer that "they [his followers] may be one" (John 17) and Paul's words in Ephesians 4 that "there is one body," we have sought to deepen and broaden our ecumenical contacts in order to express the unity of the church of Jesus Christ in all possible ways.\*

Our principal domestic contacts have been with the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) churches and the Reformed Church in America (RCA) although we are keeping in our purview the wider context and are receptive to insights from others while seeking to make some contribution through the theological commissions of such organizations as the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the National Council of Churches in America. Abroad, we have requested some of our missionaries to represent us and keep us apprised of developments within Reformed churches throughout the world. They have served us well and have provided us with valuable insights and reflections. Our principal face-to-face contacts have been with fraternal delegates from the Netherlands and from South Africa to the Synod of 1979 and these personal contacts have been particularly helpful in our discussion with them about the theological and sociopolitical problems that vex our communions. In so doing we are continuing to project the ideal expressed by John Calvin that churches of Jesus Christ "mutually communicate their advantages to one another."

*A. Fraternal Delegations to Other Assemblies*

## 1. Churches Abroad

Missionary Dick Kwantes represented us at the Synod of the Reformed Church in Japan and Missionary L. Van Essen did the same for us at the Church of Christ in the Sudan (TIV) Synod in Nigeria. The Rev. Jacob Uitvlugt, on tour of Africa, was our fraternal delegate at the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in Nigeria. Dr. Marten Woudstra,

\*Some of these contacts and inter changes will also be evident in reports of denominational boards and agencies.

who was teaching at Geelong College while on leave from Calvin Seminary, brought our greetings to the Synod of the Reformed Church of Eastern Australia and also made some contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. Missionary Richard D. Sytsma represented us at the Hapdong General Assembly and the Kosen (formerly known as the Koryu-pa) Assembly in Korea.

## 2. Churches at Home

Members of our committee served as fraternal delegates to assemblies and synods of the following churches: the Rev. Clarence Boomsma to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church meeting at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania; the Rev. J. Kuntz to the third General Assembly of the Korean American Presbyterian Church meeting in Toronto, Ontario; and Prof. John Stek to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church meeting at Bonclarken, North Carolina. Mr. Albert Bel and the Rev. Jacob Eppinga represented us at the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America meeting in Holland, Michigan. In addition, we asked the following neighboring ministers to serve as our fraternal delegates: the Rev. William Ribbens to the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod meeting at Greenville, North Carolina; the Rev. F. MacLeod to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina; and the Rev. Ben Becksvoort to the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America meeting at its headquarters in Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania.

## B. Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship

Denominations now affiliated with us as Churches in Ecclesiastical Fellowship include:

1. Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARP) (1977)
2. Christian Church of Sumba (Indonesia) (1974)
3. Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (1974)
4. Dutch Reformed Church in Afrika (NGKA) (1978)
5. Dutch Reformed Church of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) (1974)
6. Evangelical Reformed Church of Brazil (1974)
7. Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika (1974)
8. Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (1974)
9. Korean American Presbyterian Church (1978)
10. Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) (1975)
11. Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) (1975)
12. Reformed Church in America (RCA) (1976)
13. Reformed Church in Argentina (1974)
14. Reformed Church in Japan (1974)
15. Reformed Churches in Australia (1974)
16. Reformed Churches in New Zealand (1974)
17. Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) (1978)
18. TIV Church of Christ (1974)

Note: Dates affixed to the names indicate the year in which the relationship was established.

*C. The North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)*

The fifth annual meeting of the council was held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on October 26-27, 1979. The Rev. Leroy Oliver (OPC) was elected president, Dr. Morton H. Smith (PCA) was reelected secretary, and Mr. Albert Bel was reelected treasurer. It was decided to add the office of vice-president (and the bylaws were amended accordingly) with the understanding that the vice-president automatically succeeds to the presidency at the next meeting, thus assuring a measure of continuity. Dr. Jack White (RPCNA) was elected to that office. Albert Bel, Wm. P. Brink, John Stek, and John Bratt represented the CRC at this meeting. The meeting was characterized by a sense of oneness in Christ, a spirit of love, a desire for cooperation in all possible areas, and an appreciation for each other's ministries in their efforts to advance the cause of Christ in the world. Note was taken of the tragic passing of the first secretary of the council, Dr. J. Barton Payne, who lost his life in a mountain-climbing accident in Japan.

The goal of more intimate union was evident in some of the official decisions of member denominations. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), for instance, at its 1979 Assembly voted to continue discussions with the PCA and the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod (RPCES) "with a plan of merger in view" and to approach the RPCNA "with a view to possible merger." The RPCNA responded positively to the overture but the PCA decided that it would be preferable to appoint an *ad interim* study committee to ascertain the areas of agreement and disagreement between the PCA, OPC, RPCES, and the RPCNA. The last-named denomination also decided to begin exploratory discussions towards union based on doctrinal standards with the Free Church of Scotland in Canada. In addition, the OPC established ecclesiastical contact with the Canadian Reformed churches and once again urged the PCA and the RPCES to affiliate with the RES.

Note was taken of joint meetings of home mission agencies, mission executives, and diaconal ministries that had been held within the past year. It also decided to name a Hermeneutical Exploration Committee. Two men from each denomination are to be named to this committee which will seek to identify and describe the hermeneutics now operating within the NAPARC churches. This committee is mandated to report to the 1982 council meeting at which time it will be determined whether further study is desirable. Drs. David Holwerda and Gordon Spykman have been asked to represent the CRC on this committee.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Presbyterian Church Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America have signified their desire to hold their annual synodical/assembly meetings concurrently with our synod in the time span of June 7-19, 1982. The Presbyterian Church in America will make a final decision on this matter at its 1980 assembly meeting.

We continue to experience warm cordiality and unity of spirit with the interchurch representatives of these churches. In its five-year history NAPARC has served to bring the member communions closer together and we anticipate that it will continue to serve that noble purpose.

#### D. *The National Council of the Churches of Christ (NCC)*

In the '60s and early '70s critics of the NCC pointed out that the council was ready to make all kinds of social and political pronouncements without due regard for the theological underpinnings. In recent years, however, much more attention has been paid to theology and when in 1977, our denomination was invited to name a representative to the Faith and Order Commission of the council we accepted the invitation and appointed Dr. Richard Mouw, member of the Philosophy Department of Calvin College, to represent us on the commission. He is now in his third year. Not only has he been welcomed as a full participant in the work of the commission, he has come to the fore as a recognized leader. His position paper on *Jesus and the Poor*, which already is being used in some seminars and in some courses at theological schools in the United States, will be studied in depth by the fifteen-member Faith and Order Commission during the coming year. We appreciate deeply the work of our gifted colleague. The National Council plans to host a panel on eucharist, baptism, and ministry on May 19-23, 1980, and we have asked Dr. Mouw and a member of our committee to attend that meeting.

#### E. *World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC)*

Dr. Fred Klooster continues to serve and represent us on the theological commission of the North American and Caribbean area of the alliance. The program of study on the subject of the covenant is now under way. It is now in the first stage of study, that of identifying the context. Later stages will include: rethinking the traditions with biblical and historical research, exploring the central area, and formulating a theology of covenant. Dr. Klooster is preparing a paper on covenant, church, and kingdom which will be the subject of further study. We are deeply appreciative of his services.

#### F. *The Reformed Church in America (RCA)*

In harmony with the 1976 synodical decision entering into closer ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Church in America, your committee has been exploring avenues for closer fellowship and mutual service to Christ.

Five members of the committee serve on the RCA/CRC subcommittee. They are William D. Buursma, John Bratt, Arnold Brink, William P. Brink, and Marlin Van Elderen.

The joint RCA/CRC committee sponsored a seminar, which was held on March 9 and 10, 1979, on the subject of a parsonage vs. housing allowance and an analysis of annuity plans in the RCA/CRC. This seminar was held at Calvin College and was very well attended.

A position statement on the nettlesome problem of transfer of church membership was formulated. Your committee recommends that synod adopt the following statement as its own re transfer of membership.

Recognizing that there is often some question about sending statements/transfers of membership of members who are under discipline or have spiritual problems, and that there is need for



mutual freedom and openness on the part of churches, we recommend:

1. That the practice of discipline and pastoral concern, as it is presently outlined in the church orders of the two denominations (CRC and RCA), be honored and respected.
2. That pertinent information and concerns about the member(s) in question be shared by the pastors and/or elders of both the sending and the receiving churches.
3. That such members not be received officially and publicly until proper consideration be given to their circumstances, status of discipline, or condition of the problem.

A joint conference of RCA/CRC executives was held in Grand Rapids on March 16, 1979. The results were encouraging and contacts were made with promise for future cooperation.

The classical clerks of both denominations were approached regarding the "grass roots" level of cooperation between the two denominations. The replies indicate a great range in the level of interchurch cooperation. Some classes make arrangements for regular pulpit exchanges, exchange of fraternal delegates, social fellowship among pastors, and enthusiastic mutual support of kingdom projects. Others report no meaningful contact with their counterparts in the RCA.

Your committee inserted the following notice in the *Church Herald* and the *Banner* in the issues appearing before Reformation Day.

This Sunday (October 28) many RCA and CRC pastors in the United States and Canada will be exchanging pulpits. May this cooperative venture be blessed by our Lord in bringing us to a deeper awareness of our common faith and heritage.

Since both denominations are in the process of revising or preparing official hymnals to be used in worship services, this committee alerted our Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee to the challenge to cooperate and consult with those entrusted with a similar mandate by the RCA.

#### *G. The South African Reformed Churches*

In view of the fact that one or more of those who have recently served on the Interchurch Relations Committee (IRC) will be in South Africa during the summer of this year, the IRC is seeking to take advantage of this opportunity to utilize their services in pursuit of certain interests we have with respect to our relations with the churches in South Africa. Specifically, it is attempting to arrange that one of them serve as fraternal delegate from the CRC to the General Synod of South Africa (involving the Dopfer family of churches) meeting in August of this year. In addition, the IRC wishes to inquire whether or not the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (coloured) in South Africa has any interest in establishing direct relations with the CRC.

Concerning the action of the 1978 quadrennial General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (White) to act favorably on the invitation of the CRC to discuss the matter of becoming a church in ecclesiastical fellowship (extended in 1974, but subsequent to their 1974 synod—formerly the NGKA was a "corresponding church") the IRC is

pursuing discussions with the representatives of that church with a view to clarifying (1) the present status of the 1974 declaration of the General Synod of the NGKA on "Human Relations and the South African Scene in the Light of Scripture" (a declaration in which the governmental policy of apartheid—"autogenous development"—is defended), and (2) whether the general synod's acceptance of the provision for "fellowship at the table of the Lord" as part of our ecclesiastical fellowship with them means that any member of the CRC, regardless of race, would be accepted at the Lord's table.

Concerning the matter alleged by Classis Eastern Canada in Overture 43, 1979, Dr. J. Postma, fraternal delegate from the Reformed Church in South Africa (Dopper) to our Synod of 1979, assured the IRC that the general synod of that church has no rule or policy to exclude anyone from the table of the Lord on the basis of race. However, the guarding of the table is a matter left to the local consistories. The IRC will continue to monitor the practices of the Reformed Church in South Africa in this matter as closely as it can.

In view of the complexities, sensitivity, and urgency of the matter of race relations in South Africa, the role of the Reformed community in shaping social attitudes and governmental policy in that land, and the unique relationship that the CRC has with the Reformed churches there, the IRC decided at its February meeting to establish a special advisory committee of three from outside the IRC which the IRC can consult on matters concerning the developing situation in South Africa. It hopes to obtain the services of members of the CRC who have made a special study of race relations in South Africa. At the time this report is written the advisory committee has not yet been constituted.

#### H. *The Netherlands Reformed Churches*

##### 1. De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland

Mr. M. H. L. Westrate was the fraternal delegate from this sister denomination to our synod in 1979 and brought the greetings from his church. Our committee met with him informally. We had no other official contact with this denomination. Our delegates who will represent the CRC at the Synod of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken meeting at Amersfoort in the fall of this year also plan to attend some of the sessions of the current Synod of De Gereformeerde Kerken.

##### 2. De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken

In 1977 the Synod of De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken decided "in principle" to enter into the relationship of "churches in ecclesiastical fellowship" with the Christian Reformed Church of North America with a view to final ratification at their synod in 1980. It is our sincere hope that the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken will take that final step this year and that the objection voiced by their sister church on this continent (the Free Reformed Churches) to this ecclesiastical fellowship with the CRC will not delay that decision.

Our committee intends to send a delegation to the Synod of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken in September of this year to represent

the CRC, convey our greetings, and (if necessary) clarify and explain our understanding of ecclesiastical fellowship. De Gereformeerde Kerken (*onderhoudende* Art. 31—*Buitenverband*) has been cooperating with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken and our delegation will be mandated to seek informal and informative contact with this group.

### 3. The Canadian Reformed Churches

The CRC Synod of 1979 expressed its appreciation for the willingness of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada to "launch efforts to contact the Canadian Reformed churches." In response to that expression the council decided in November of 1979 to instruct its Interchurch Relations Committee "to attempt to establish fruitful contact with our brothers and sisters in the Canadian Reformed churches" and our committee will monitor and encourage the progress of this contact.

#### I. *The South Pacific*

As noted earlier, Dr. Marten Woudstra served as fraternal delegate of the CRC to the 1979 General Synod of the Reformed Church of Australia and made some contact with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. Although that was the extent of his representations on behalf of the IRC, it is well to note here that he extended the informal contact between the CRC and the Reformed Church of Australia by teaching for six months in the Reformed Theological College of Geelong, and preaching in some of the Reformed churches. Later in 1979, Dr. Anthony Hoekema also taught (two months) at Geelong and had contact with the ministers of the Reformed Church in the provinces of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland and also on the island of Tasmania. Dr. Hoekema's travels took him to Taiwan, Japan, and the Philippines as well. In Japan he delivered a series of three lectures at Kobe Theological Seminary and gave a lecture to the ministers of the Eastern Presbytery of the Reformed Church in Japan. Such contacts have helped to strengthen ties between the CRC and churches abroad with which we are in ecclesiastical fellowship. Rev. Paul Stadt, who has been loaned to the Reformed Church of New Zealand, will serve as fraternal delegate to the general synod of that church which meets in May, 1980.

#### J. *The Reformed Ecumenical Synod*

Synod is reminded that the churches of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod will meet in assembly in Nimes, France, July 14-25, 1980. The Synod of 1979 appointed the following to serve as the voting delegates representing the CRC: Professor of Theology, Dr. A. Hoekema (alt., Dr. J. Bratt); Minister, Dr. J. Timmer (alt., Rev. C. Boomsma); Elder, Dr. J. Vanden Berg (alt., Mr. A. J. Bakker). As in the past, the meeting of the RES will be preceded by a missions conference and a theological conference, both under the auspices of the RES. Accordingly, synod designated those delegated by the Board of Home Missions, the Board of World Missions, and the Back to God Hour to the missions conference to serve as the three nonvoting delegates of the CRC to the RES. Those

designated by these agencies are: Rev. J. Van Ryn, Rev. E. Rubingh, and Rev. B. Madany.

No matters for the agenda of the RES assembly have been forthcoming from the CRC. One major item on the RES agenda is a report entitled "The Church and Its Social Calling," a study commissioned by the Cape Town [RES] Synod of 1976. A number of CRC members contributed to the preparation of this report. (Those wishing to obtain a copy of the report can order it from the office of the general secretary of the RES; \$2.50.) The agenda of the assembly also contains an extensive report from the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands on the issues involved in concurrent membership in both the WCC and the RES.

#### K. *Latin America*

Two matters may here be briefly noted. The Rev. Jack Huttinga has been requested to serve as fraternal delegate from the CRC to the Reformed Church of Argentina meeting in October, 1980. Since the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico has now become organized into a general synod, the IRC is considering the advisability of extending to that church an invitation to enter into the relationship of "churches in ecclesiastical fellowship" with the CRC.

#### L. *The Korean Presbyterian Churches*

Rev. Richard D. Sytsma, our fraternal delegate to the 1979 General Assemblies of the Hapdong and Kosen (formerly Koryu-pa) Presbyterian churches, has submitted an informative report on the state of these churches and their interchurch relations. Both of these churches are flourishing, although not without some internal tensions. At the present time the Hapdong Church numbers well over a million members; the Kosen Church is approaching 170,000 members. The latter communion has developed close ties with the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (*Vrijgemaakt, binnenverbond*) and is now receiving missionaries and financial assistance from this Dutch church. The Hapdong Church has some one hundred congregations in the United States and Canada, organized into presbyteries, and soon, perhaps, to be organized into a particular synod. Neither the Hapdong Church nor the Kosen Church, both of which at one time were "corresponding churches" with the CRC, have acted on the invitation of the CRC to become "churches in ecclesiastical fellowship." Apparently the invitation to do so was not well understood by the respective interchurch relations committees.

In view of our past relations with these churches, and especially because of our increasing contacts with them through immigrant congregations in the United States and Canada, the IRC is seeking to pursue our contacts with them in order to clarify and regularize our synodical relationship with them.

#### M. *Membership on the Interchurch Relations Committee*

The terms of three of our committee members, the Revs. William Buursma, Jacob Kuntz, and Clarence Boomsma expire at this time. Mr. J. Kuntz has served for six years and is not eligible for reelection and we

suggest that synod thank him for his valuable service on the committee. The other two men, W. Buursma and C. Boomsma, are eligible for reelection. We present the following nominations:

Rev. C. Boomsma\* and Rev. W. Witte  
 Rev. W. Buursma\* and Rev. J. Roeda  
 Rev. C. Tuyl and Mr. Keith Knight

\*Denotes incumbent

#### N. *Representation at Synod*

The president and secretary of the committee will be available for meeting with synod and we respectfully request that they be given the privilege of the floor and access to the advisory committee when matters pertaining to the report of this committee are being considered.

#### O. *Hospitality Committee*

In accord with our custom we have named a Hospitality Committee to care for the proper reception of fraternal delegates to synod and to be attentive to their needs. This committee as heretofore will work closely with synod's Reception Committee. We request that the members of this committee be given meal privileges while on duty at synod.

#### P. *Summary of Items for Synodical Action*

1. Committee representation at synod—Section N
2. Election of committee members—Section M
3. Official invitation to NAPARC churches to hold their synod/assembly on the Calvin Campus in June of 1982—Section C

#### Interchurch Relations Committee

Clarence Boomsma, president  
 John Stek, vice-president  
 John Bratt, secretary  
 Wm. Buursma  
 Jacob Kuntz  
 Paul Han  
 Arnold Brink  
 Marlin Van Elderen  
 William P. Brink, *ex officio*

REPORT 15  
LITURGICAL COMMITTEE

The Liturgical Committee met three times since our last report to synod: May 30 and 31, 1979; October 4 and 5, 1979; and January 2, 3, and 4, 1980. We continue to function under the mandate given to the Liturgical Committee in 1964:

"a. to review all our liturgical literature in the light of its history, its theological content, and the contemporary needs of the churches; and to recommend such revisions or substitutions as the results of this review might recommend.

"b. to study liturgical usages and practices in our churches in the light of Reformed liturgical principles and past synodical decisions, and to advise synod as to the guidance and supervision it ought to provide local congregations in all liturgical matters" (Acts of Synod 1964, p. 60).

In terms of membership, this year was crucial for us. Three of our members retired. Collectively they had thirty-eight years of experience on this committee. When we sat down together at our October meeting, we were aware that together we brought only seventeen years of experience with us. For the first time we had no link to the committee as originally constituted in 1965. We therefore spent some time reviewing past activity and assessing where we should move in the future.

We continued work begun earlier and undertook work required by synodical action. As a result, we present the following items for synodical action:

- I. A NEW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS,
- II. A NEW FORM FOR READMISSION,
- III. ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS VARIATIONS OF THE NEW FORM FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER,
- IV. NOMINATIONS TO FILL EXPIRED TERMS.

We continue to work on prayers other than those being submitted now. Hopefully the collection will be complete by the time Synod of 1981 meets.

We are beginning work on a new form for the ordination and installation of ministers, following guidelines attached to the 1973 Report on Ecclesiastical Office and Ordination and Church Order Articles 11-13. This study was assigned to us by the 1978 Synod (having been recommended to the synod by the committee appointed to study Church Order Article 13a—Acts of Synod 1978, p. 48).

Another item on our agenda is the prayer for the new marriage form. The Synod of 1979 rejected the prayer originally submitted with the form and instructed us to provide a suitable alternative. We have looked at two prayers, both of which need further scrutiny. We hope to submit a

substitute prayer in 1981. Finally, next year we intend to submit variations of the new form for the Lord's Supper, adapted for use at Lent, Easter, and Pentecost; these will complement the two submitted this year and satisfy the expectation of the Synod of 1978 (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 60).

In 1978, synod adopted our committee's recommendation, asking the Board of Publications to do a feasibility study on a loose-leaf service book, in order to provide easy access to new liturgical materials in Christian Reformed pews. The 1979 Synod authorized the Board of Publications to proceed with this, contingent on a market test. Since that synod, our committee has been in contact with the board on this. We continue to maintain an interest in such aspects as the format, arrangement, and contents of such a service book.

#### I. A NEW COLLECTION OF PRAYERS

The Synod of 1975 encouraged our committee to prepare a new collection of prayers on the grounds that there is a need for such a collection, particularly in vacant churches, and this task is within our mandate. The following types of prayers were stipulated in our report that year: confession, offertory, illumination, pastoral, for ecclesiastical assemblies, for sacraments, for special days.

We began our work with a review of the present collection and the formulation of criteria for the new collection. The present collection is very dated in style, seldom used, and includes prayers for nonworship settings. We decided to concentrate on prayers used in worship. The Rev. Clifford Bajema wrote a series of articles in the Banner outlining the project and asking for contributions. Response was encouraging, although not overwhelming, and the following collection contains prayers submitted by nonmembers of the committee.

Because liturgical style and tastes are diverse in the denomination, we decided that in the major category, "Prayers Commonly Used in Worship," we would try to include three kinds of prayer under each rubric: an historic prayer, a contemporary prayer done in rather traditional style, and a contemporary prayer in a nontraditional style. In rubrics calling for shorter prayers we have in some instances included more than three selections. The second category, "Prayers for Special Occasions," is restricted to collects or prayers of introduction for days in the liturgical year. Prayers for ecclesiastical assemblies and for the sacraments will be submitted with still others as a third category next year.

### SECTION ONE

## PRAYERS COMMONLY USED IN WORSHIP

### OPENING (1)

O God, the light of every heart that sees thee, the life of every soul that loves thee, the strength of every mind that seeks thee, grant me ever to continue steadfast in thy holy love. Be thou the joy of my heart, take it

all to thyself, and therein abide. The house of my soul is, I confess, too narrow for thee; do thou enlarge it, that thou mayest enter in. Amen.

St. Augustine  
*A Pulpit Manual*

#### OPENING (2)

Great art thou, O Lord, and greatly to be praised; great is thy power, and thy wisdom is infinite. Thee would we praise without ceasing. Thou callest us to delight in thy praise, for thou hast made us for thyself, and our hearts find no rest until we rest in thee; to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit all glory, praise and honor be ascribed, both now and forevermore. Amen.

St. Augustine  
*A Pulpit Manual*

#### OPENING (3)

As on a first day you began the work of creating us;  
As on a first day you raised your Son from the dead;  
So on this first day, good Lord, freshen and remake us;  
And as the week is new, let our lives begin again  
Because of Jesus who shows us your loving power. Amen.

Caryl Micklem, ed.  
*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

#### CONFESSION (1)

O Lord, Thou art our Father,  
and we are but earth and mire;  
Thou art our Creator,  
And we are the work of thy hands;  
Thou art our Shepherd,  
We are thy flock;  
Thou art our Redeemer,  
We are the people thou hast bought back;  
Thou art our God,  
We are thine inheritance.  
Therefore, be not angry against us,  
To correct us in thy wrath.  
Recall not our iniquity,  
To punish it;  
But chastise us gently  
In thy kindness.  
Because of our demerits,  
Thine anger is enflamed.  
But be mindful  
That thy name is called upon among us  
And that we bear thy mark and badge.



Undertake rather the work  
 Thou hast already begun in us  
 By thy grace,  
 In order that the whole earth may recognize  
 That thou art our God and our Savior.  
 Amen.

(*The Piety of John Calvin*, by Ford Lewis  
 Battles, lines 552-577, p. 126)

### CONFESSION (2)

We are not worthy, Lord and Master, that you should come under the roof of our souls; nevertheless, since you desire, O Lover of Mankind, to dwell with us, we make bold to draw near. You bid us open the door which you alone have made, that entering therein, you may bring light into our darkened minds. We do believe that you will do so. For you did not cast out the harlot when she came to you with tears, neither did you reject the publican when he repented, nor cast out the robber when he confessed your kingdom; but you reckoned all who came to you in penitence among the number of your friends, O Lord, who alone is blessed now and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer of Confession from *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, as used by Eastern Orthodox Catholic Church in America, 1966 (adapted)

### CONFESSION (3)

We confess to you, Lord, what we are:  
 we are not the people we like others to think we are;  
 we are afraid to admit even to ourselves what lies in the depths of  
 our souls.  
 But we do not want to hide our true selves from you.  
 We believe that you know us as we are, and yet you love us.  
 Help us not to shrink from self-knowledge;  
 teach us to respect ourselves for your sake;  
 give us the courage to put our trust in your guiding and power. . . .  
 Raise us out of the paralysis of guilt into the freedom and energy of  
 forgiven people.  
 And for those who through long habit find forgiveness hard to accept,  
 we ask you to break their bondage and set them free.  
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
 Amen.

Caryl Micklem, ed.  
*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

### CONFESSION (4)

O eternal God and merciful Father,  
 we drop to our knees

in the presence of your majesty,  
to confess our innumerable wrongs  
and our spiritual bankruptcy.

We know that your merciful arms  
are infinite,  
reaching out to hold  
whoever comes.

And so we are encouraged,  
deeply moved to call for your help,  
because we trust in Jesus Christ,  
our Mediator and Sacrifice Lamb,  
who takes away the sin of the world.

Please, Lord,  
forgive us all our sins for Christ's sake;  
look with compassion upon our enfeeblements;  
and wash us  
in the pure fountain of Jesus' blood.

Then cover us with the robe  
of Christ's innocence and righteousness.

And as we take a fresh start,  
give us new minds  
and eager, submissive hearts.

We ask all this  
in the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

### CONFESSION (5)

Lord, please forgive our sins  
and set us free from them.

We confess to the sin of *pride*:  
we have been sure of our own goodness and importance  
and have looked down on others.

Help us to appreciate the true worth of other people.

We confess to the sin of *envy*:  
we have been displeased when others have been more  
successful or sought after than we have been.

Help us to be glad when others prosper.

We confess to the sin of *anger*:  
we have lost our tempers  
and nursed grievances.

Help us to be patient and understanding with everyone.

We confess to the sin of *self-indulgence*:  
we have had enough and to spare,  
yet have neglected the needs of others.

Help us to deny ourselves  
so that others may not be in want.

We confess to the sin of *unchastity*:  
in one way or another we have used sex wrongly.

Help us to create and uphold right relations between men and women, inside marriage and outside it.

We confess to the sin of *anxiety*:  
we have worried about many things.

Help us to trust you to see us through.

We confess to the sin of *laziness*:  
we have been lukewarm Christians.

Make us eager to do your will.

Amen.

Caryl Micklem, ed.

*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

### CONFESSION (6)

Father,  
teach us  
not to sin with such abandon.

We do it all so easily:

pretend, lie,  
envy, lust,  
criticize, brood,  
ignore, deny,  
consume, hoard,  
defame, distort,  
make excuses,

and then expect an easy forgiveness for the asking.

God, forgive us for our negligence of your holy character.

Let us not misinterpret your patience with our sin  
as though it were permissiveness.

When you see us sinning, brashly,  
rise up before us as an imposing breaker of the sea.

Let us know that what we hear and see and feel around us  
is your veritable presence,

a presence at once as powerful and punishing  
as it can be gentle and refreshing.

Loving Father,  
astonish us with a wholesome, godly fear  
which will not drive us to despair,  
but cause us instead to number our days  
and get us hearts of wisdom.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

## CONFESSION (7)

Dear Father,

We are thankful that your mercy is  
higher than the heavens,  
wider than our wanderings,  
deeper than all our sin.

Forgive our frivolous attitude toward life,  
our callousness toward suffering,  
our envy of those who have more than we have,  
our obsession with creating a life of constant pleasure,  
our indifference to the treasures of heaven,  
our neglect of your wise and gracious law.

Help us change our way of life  
so that we may desire what is good,  
love what you love,  
and do what you command.

Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Alvin Hoksbergen

## OFFERTORY (1)

Would you teach us, Father,  
to be more content,  
to be more thankful,  
and to live with a little less?

Would you teach us to think less  
of those who have more,  
and to think more  
of those who have less?

In Jesus' name.  
Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

## OFFERTORY (2)

Father, accept our offering. . . .

Not ours but yours, this money, this purchasing-power,  
earned by the skill of hand and brain,  
lest we forget that we are not our own  
and refuse to serve you with the strength you have given.

Living God, give us bread that will satisfy our hunger  
and nourish the life of mankind. . . .

Use our money to buy the imperishable goods  
of love and mercy and peace.

And take our hands to do your work,  
 our work to serve you in the world.  
 Through Jesus Christ, our Lord.  
 Amen.

Caryl Micklem, ed.  
*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

#### OFFERTORY (3)

Lord God, with these gifts we offer you our lives  
 to do your work in the world.

Father, take our bodies and our minds:

In the name of Jesus Christ

*All:* We bring them to you.

Father, take our family life,  
 our friendships,

our relationships with other people:

In the name of Jesus Christ

*All:* We bring them to you.

Father, take our work and our leisure:

In the name of Jesus Christ

*All:* We bring them to you.

Father, take our conversations with other people  
 and our conversations about other people:

In the name of Jesus Christ

*All:* We bring them to you.

Father, take our ambitions and our plans for the future:

In the name of Jesus Christ

*All:* We bring them to you. Amen.

Caryl Micklem, ed.  
*Contemporary Prayers for Public Worship*

#### OFFERTORY (4)

Can it be said enough, Father,  
 how blessed we are by your hands?  
 Blessed today,  
 and blessed immensely!

In the light of that immense blessing,  
 we must ask:

What is the true measure of our wealth?

What is prosperity?

What is pleasure?

What is it to be rich?

Prosperity is to know you.

Pleasure is to please you.

To be rich

is to be bought by the blood of him

who became poor  
that by his poverty we might become wealthy  
beyond measure.

So we gladly share today, Father.  
And we thank you for the privilege.  
In Jesus' name.  
Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

OFFERTORY (5)

Jesus,  
how much  
can we love?  
How much  
can we give?  
Some people possess  
so much;  
Some give possessions  
away.  
We want to do both.  
But if we start to give but a touch  
of what's really needed,  
what will we have left to give?  
To give we must possess,  
but to keep possessing,  
we cannot give.  
How can we give away  
so much  
and still have very much left to  
give?

Is there somewhere a bread  
which multiplies  
only if the multitudes are fed?  
Is there somewhere a loan  
which brings so much more return  
than interest rates can ever earn?  
Is there somewhere a love  
which can die on a cross  
and walk this earth  
more loving than ever?

Jesus, come,  
come and give yourself to us,  
that we may lose  
so much  
and die  
so much  
as to live a life  
so much,  
so much  
more loving.  
Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

ILLUMINATION (1)

O Lord God, most faithful lover, when you come into our hearts, all our inward parts rejoice. You are the glory of our lives and the joy of our hearts, our hope and whole refuge in all our troubles. But inasmuch as we are still feeble in love and imperfect in virtue, we have need of more comfort and help from you. Would you then, oftentimes, visit and instruct us with your holy teachings? Deliver us from all evil passions, and heal our sick hearts from all inordinate affections, that we may be inwardly healed and purged from all vices, and be made apt and able to love you, strong to suffer for you, and stable to persevere in you. Amen.

Thomas á Kempis  
*The Imitation of Christ*  
(adapted)

## ILLUMINATION (2)

Lord, teach us to listen.  
 The times are noisy and our ears are weary  
 with the thousand raucous sounds which continuously assault them.  
 Give us the spirit of the boy Samuel when he said to thee,  
 "Speak, for thy servant heareth."  
 Let us hear thee speaking in our hearts.  
 Let us get used to the sound of thy voice,  
 that its tones may be familiar  
 when the sounds of earth die away  
 and the only sound will be the music of thy speaking voice.  
 Amen.

A. W. Tozer  
*The Pursuit of God*  
 (adapted)

## ILLUMINATION (3)

O great and glorious God,  
 have the last word again today.  
 We defer to your wisdom.  
 Your counsels are eternally consistent.  
 Your thoughts do not assume a new drift  
 with each passing Sunday  
 or with each passing generation.  
 Set the agenda for your preached word,  
 and control the lips of your servant.  
 In Jesus' name.  
 Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

## ILLUMINATION (4)

We lay aside our strivings  
 and rest at your feet,  
 loving Father.  
 We look up  
 with the hopeful eyes of a child,  
 and trust that whatever you say  
 is good because you say it,  
 and we can trust it to be true.  
 We trust that whatever your hand offers  
 is good,  
 because you know our needs  
 more precisely  
 than we ourselves can ever know.  
 We put before you our fears, our doubts,  
 our questions.

What is your will  
 in this twentieth century of time—  
 For our jobs?  
 For our families?  
 For our church?  
 Teach us now through your Word.  
 In Jesus' name.  
 Amen.

Clifford E. Bajema

### DEDICATION (1)

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.  
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
 where there is injury, pardon;  
 where there is doubt, faith;  
 where there is despair, hope;  
 where there is darkness, light;  
 where sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
 Grant that I may not so much seek  
 to be consoled as to console;  
 to be understood as to understand;  
 to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;  
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.  
 Amen.

St. Francis of Assisi  
*A Pulpit Manual*

### DEDICATION (2)

Almighty God,  
 Thou showest thy glory  
 For us to see,  
 Not only in heaven and earth  
 But also in the law, the prophets, and the gospel;  
 And hast so intimately revealed thyself  
 In thine only begotten Son  
 That we cannot excuse ourselves  
 Out of ignorance.  
 Grant that we may advance in this teaching,  
 Wherewith thou so kindly investest us to thyself,  
 And may thus steadfastly cleave to thee  
 That no errors of the world  
 May lead us astray;  
 But may stand firmly fixed



In thy Word,  
 Which cannot deceive us:  
 At last reaching heavenly blessedness,  
 Where we may enjoy  
 Thy glory face to face,  
 Conformed completely to thee  
 In Christ Jesus, our Lord.  
 Amen.

(John Calvin, *Piety* . . . , p. 134)

### DEDICATION (3)

O God,  
 I have tasted thy goodness,  
 and it has both satisfied me  
 and made me thirsty for more.  
 I am painfully conscious of my need of further grace.  
 I am ashamed of my lack of desire.  
 O God, the triune God,  
 I want to want thee;  
 I long to be filled with longing;  
 I thirst to be made more thirsty still.  
 Show me thy glory, I pray thee,  
 that so I may know thee indeed.  
 Begin in mercy a new work of love within me . . . .  
 In Jesus' name, Amen.

A. W. Tozer  
*The Pursuit of God*  
 (adapted)

### PASTORAL (1)

Our loving Father in heaven, we pause to praise you for your majesty as  
 Lord of the universe.  
 We remember with awe, Lord, how you voiced the heavens into being,  
 and how you shaped the formless universe by the breath of your  
 brooding Spirit.  
 Yet, mighty God that you are, you choose, with affectionate tenderness,  
 to know each person by name.  
 You come, with intimate nearness, to give power to the faint.  
 You take us into your arms; you bend down to nourish us.  
 We reach up to receive your love.  
 We truly find our desires satisfied in you.  
 Praise be to you, O God!  
 Hallowed be your wonderful name, that name of presence, power, and  
 authority whereby people are healed, demons are cast out, and believ-  
 ers are baptized.

As we stand now in awe of your holy name, renew within us a humble spirit of repentance.

Give us a holy discontent with our spiritual apathy and our sometimes ritualistic faith whereby we take your name in vain.

Anoint us anew with your living Spirit, O risen Christ.

Inspire within us a fresh spark of evangelistic fervor.

Fill us with a holy passion for lost souls, a constraint to witness to the power of your name, a compulsion to love, an overwhelming desire to put our faith into action.

May your kingdom come, Lord.

May it come quickly!

Come, Lord Jesus, to destroy completely that Satanic kingdom built by violent force, by ruthless competition, by retaliation, by elimination of the weak.

Come, Lord Jesus, to bring about your kingdom of peace built by the shedding of your blood once for all, by the force of love and non-violence, by self-denial, and by defense of the weak in your name.

Move us to be part of the building of that kingdom.

Your will be done, Father, as in heaven, so on earth.

We make our plans, but you guide our steps.

Show us where you would have us live, and at what occupations you would have us labor.

Teach us to what degree you would permit us to seek profit, and for what ends you would have us exercise the stewardship of restraint and the higher righteousness of giving away.

May your will be done in the homes represented here today: where there is distress and division, Lord Jesus, sow your peace and bring reconciliation.

Bless, Lord, the ministry of the schools and protect our children from the pervasive secularism of our day.

Direct the affairs of those who serve in government, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives, godly and respectful in every way.

Give us this day our daily bread, Father.

The blessings of this good land have made us rich beyond expression.

And we do thank you deeply!

But we remember our brothers and sisters here and abroad who suffer the indignities poverty can bring.

Bless the unemployed who are the victims of economic depression or job discrimination.

Bless the poor barely surviving on minimum incomes.

Bless the aged who must sometimes live out their last days in circumstances of absolute dependency.

Bless the hundreds of millions of people in our world today who suffer from acute hunger and from the oppression of the rich.

O God, let our abundance at this time supply their want.

As Jesus had compassion on the multitudes, so let our hearts be broken—and opened—and emptied—and may your love be multiplied.

Forgive us, Lord, our debts, as we fully desire to overlook the chasm of hurts which have stood between us and our debtors.

Forgive us the irreverence of our many idolatries.

Forgive our obsessions with food, alcohol, drugs, sex, money, or other things.

Forgive our anxieties about circumstances of the moment.

Forgive our enslavement to work, our over-devotion to leisure.

Forgive our participation in the violent temper of our times.

Forgive our artfully concealed prejudices.

Forgive our impatience with sickness or pain.

Forgive our lack of trust.

Even as you have promised, Lord, let no temptations overtake us but such as are common to all people, for we know you are gracious and will provide us a way of escape that we may be able to persevere.

Grant us, we pray, deliverance from the evil one.

Bring peace to the striving nations, unity to a divided church, deliverance to a host of oppressed peoples, and salvation to the unsaved masses of this world.

For truly, Lord, yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever!

Amen!

Clifford E. Bajema

### PASTORAL (2)

Glory be to you, our Father in Christ.

With reverent joy we adore you,  
and revel in your love and grace.

You are Eternal Creator, Gracious Redeemer, Comforting Spirit,  
worthy of all honor in heaven and on earth.

All we ever hoped a God might be we see in you,  
and things beyond our hoping you have given us to see.

For you are infinite, and far exceed the gropings  
of our finite minds.

For each perfect gift of yours:

for food and clothing,  
for shelter and daily work,  
for love and friendship,

we thank you, Father.

Above all, we praise you for the incomparable gift of Jesus,  
your only begotten Son.

We thank and praise your holy name

for his manger birth,  
his life of love,  
his sacrificial death,

his glorious resurrection,  
his triumphant ascension,  
his pentecostal outpouring,  
and his sure return.

Since yours is the kingdom, Lord,  
and since with you is all power and wisdom, we pray that  
all world governments,  
and industries,  
and education,  
and the courts,  
and the military  
may come to recognize your kingdom  
and confess your rule.

We have seen the power of evil,  
but we believe in your sovereign control.

Rejoicing in such hope, we pray that  
your holy name be ever hallowed,  
your perfect will be ever done,  
and your glorious coming be surely hastened.

We ask special guidance for our own government  
and national leaders.

Endow them with wisdom.

May they acknowledge Christ as their Master  
and your Word as their standard.

For your holy church, also, we pray.

Bless

the ministry of the Word and sacraments,  
the ministry of mercy,  
and the fellowship of your people.

Keep close company, Lord,  
with the youth and the aged,  
children and parents,  
recent converts and longtime saints.

Hear the crying of your children under persecution,  
and deliver those in tribulations.

Prosper the great work of missions everywhere.  
May the gospel be your power unto salvation  
from every pulpit,  
through all media,  
and in all the schools

where your truth is taught as it is in Jesus.

We pray for the constant work of the Holy Spirit:  
convicting people of sin,  
converting the Christless,  
regenerating and comforting,  
perfecting in the faith,  
and leading us into all the truth.

We bring to you the concerns of our homes.  
 Endow our family relationships with love and harmony.  
 Reconcile the estranged, comfort the offended, forgive  
 the offender.

May we live in the joy of covenant with you,  
 both as parents and children.

We implore your mercy, likewise, upon the world.  
 Deliver mankind from greed, lust, and hate,  
 and may there be peace on earth.

Spare us from calamities in nature.

We thank you for the wealth of minerals and food  
 with which you have blessed the world.

Now we pray for a just distribution to all peoples.

You nurture grass and sparrows;

O provide especially for all mankind.

And if disease should ravage,

and the nations suffer famine,

and wars and rumors of war come,

then, O Lord God, use even these means to draw to your Son  
 many nations and peoples.

Out of our own innermost hearts we also bring our  
 personal needs before you.

In those hours when doubts assail and temptations strike,  
 deliver us from pride, lust, selfishness, hate, or dishonesty;  
 and give us power to stand firm in Christ, our Lord.

Whenever we fall into any sin,

accept our repentance and hear our confession.

With the tenderness of a Father, happily forgive us, your  
 penitent children, for Christ's sake.

May we so walk in Christ that we are delivered from evil.

Let us be too near infinite love

ever to want to hate;

too near Christ's purity

ever to wish to lust or be unclean;

too near the light of the Word

ever to live again in the darkness of sin.

May we know the full joy of standing before you  
 in the righteousness of Christ.

In his holiness may we be beautiful.

In his joy may we know happiness.

In his peace may we have tranquility.

May others take note that we have been with Jesus.

As you continuously strengthen us in Christ,

make us your instruments in this world:

to love where there is hate,

to comfort where there is sorrow,

to minister where there is loneliness, addiction,  
 crime, and injustice,

to bring the Word of life to those in the bonds of sin,  
and to praise in all we say and do.

We ask all this for your glory.

And, Lord Jesus, come quickly.

We know there must come evil days, persecution, and  
tribulation.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

Haste the day when every knee shall bow,  
and every tongue confess that you are Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Hear us your children, our Father.

We pray in faith and hope and love.

We know you will answer,

for you are neither impoverished by giving, nor enriched  
by withholding anything we ask in Jesus' name.

Yours be the kingdom, power, and glory, world without end.

Through Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

William F. VanderHoven

### PASTORAL (3)

Here we are, Lord,  
we've struck the pose.

Our knees are where they belong:  
down.

Now to get our hearts there.

What we can never understand is that you  
should be so ready,

and eager,  
and willing

to listen to the likes of us;

when we are so slow,

and reluctant,  
and indifferent

about speaking to one so wonderful as you.

We call you by the name we love most  
of all the names by which we know you:  
Father.

Our Father who art in heaven,  
we adore you.

Hallowed be thy name.

We suppose there is no weather in heaven;  
but, Father, this is earth.

And we pray for sunshine,  
for rain too,

and we pray for dew

and for full moons,  
and for fertility in the world's fields.  
For, Father, there are so many hungry people.  
We confess our selfishness and greed  
and indifference to suffering humanity.  
And we confess that we have wasted more  
than we need,  
depriving others  
from what we can't even use.  
Forgive us this day our (hoarded) bread.  
We pray for our brothers and sisters  
in the factories  
and mines  
and in the semis and in the fishing dories.  
Bless their strained bodies,  
their calloused hands.  
See their tired eyes.  
Bless our shops,  
and our seacoast,  
and our highways.  
Lord, you ransack land and sea  
to give us bread and fish.  
Bless those who work to bring your gifts  
to our tables.  
And when we eat, Father,  
let our table become an altar  
for our thank offering.  
So others may eat as well as we.

And, Father,  
you see how we board ourselves up  
in our little places,  
and build our walls  
so high  
that we're not discomfited  
by having to see the suffering  
outside our enclosure  
in streets of broken glass,  
nor frightened by having  
their angry eyes look through  
our palisades  
to see our garden.  
Forgive the moat around our castle.  
Keep reminding us  
you are *our* Father.  
We pray for all those hurt people  
with their accusing eyes.  
And we see the eyes of little children  
and deserted mothers  
and prisoners

and people in what we daintily call  
"institutions."

Also we pray for the kings and queens,  
and for the presidents and governors,  
and for the generals and admirals,  
and for the police and lawyers,  
and for missionaries and doctors,  
preachers and editors,  
and for the judges and professors,  
who guard and teach the world.

Teach them that *you* are

Judge,  
Teacher,  
Ruler.

And that they are  
only because you were first.  
And when they think they're self-made men,  
show them into your workshop,  
so they may see what they looked like  
while you were forming them  
on your bench.

And keep your chisels sharp,  
ready to gouge out the pride,  
and the greed,  
the lust,  
the mammonism,  
that sometimes come with the crown,  
and the gavel,  
and the robe.

What we especially pray for  
is that they may come to know you.

We pray for conversion  
and new life for millions this day.

And empower us to live as nations  
that aspire to know you.

Cover the whole earth  
with the aroma of truth,  
and love,

found exclusively  
in your Son Jesus.

Draw together all the nations  
who for lack of a common mind  
fail to understand each other.

And, Father,  
we pray for your church and her mission.

Forgive our apathy,  
and our obsession with safety,  
and our neglect of our high calling.

And reveal to us



(for we have not seen it yet)  
that we are not here  
to be kept sheltered by all means  
but to be used up by all means.  
And we pray for Christian educators:  
for teachers,  
board members,  
and administrators,  
and for parents  
in the crucible of the home.  
Bless the thousands studying  
for service in your kingdom.  
Our Father who art in heaven,  
thy kingdom come.

We confess our sin.  
Forgive us our trespasses. . . .  
(Forgive us if we make that sound  
cheap.)

As we forgive our debtors. . . .  
(Forgive us if we don't.)  
And lead us not into temptation. . . .  
Forgive us most of all when we lead  
ourselves into it.  
And deliver us from evil. . . .  
Whether we want it or not.  
Thank you for rescuing us  
the thousands of times  
we've played with the rattlesnake.  
And, Lord Jesus,  
we pass you the crown.  
It never did fit us.  
Even if we had one of our own  
we'd still want to lay it at your feet.  
Yours is the kingdom and the power  
and the glory forever.  
Be to us all that you are  
as Savior  
and Lord of our lives  
and death and life after death.  
Our Father who art in heaven,  
thank you for hearing us;  
thank you for giving Jesus  
and the Comforter.  
And thank you  
for being our triune God.  
We adore you.  
Amen.

William F. VanderHoven

SECTION TWO  
OPENING PRAYERS FOR CHURCH USE  
ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS

ADVENT

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as we look forward to Christmas, help us to remember the cry of John the Baptist: repent and prepare the way of the Lord. Help us to be dissatisfied with our limited and weak devotion to you and to your kingdom. Kindle within us a renewed spirit, so that the crooked and rough places of our lives may be made a straight highway for the gospel of your love. As we anticipate the anniversary of your incarnation, give us open hearts to receive the precious gift of your Son, in whose name we pray. Amen.

CHRISTMAS

O God, who in times past spoke to us through the prophets, we praise your name and give you unending thanks that you now speak to us through your Son, whose birth we celebrate today. Help us to go in spirit to Bethlehem, and to hear again the proclamation of the angels: that unto us is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Help us to receive him, that our broken and crippled lives may be made whole, that we may live to serve him both now and through eternity. In the name of Jesus, the infant Prince of Peace, we pray. Amen.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

O Lord our God, we ask that you forgive us for having repeatedly fallen short of our calling to serve you. In the year now past we followed too much our own desires and too little your leading. Help us to put the failures and shortcomings of the past behind us, so that with renewed spirit our prayer for the new year might echo the words of your servant:

Day by day,

Dear Lord, of you three things we pray:

To see you more clearly,

Love you more dearly,

Follow you more nearly,

Day by day.

In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Almighty God, creator of the world, sustainer of all life, we pray that you would infuse us with your presence as we begin a new year. Grant that by the power of your Spirit, the coming year may be for us the year of our Lord. So direct our hearts and minds that all aspects of our lives in this year may be our response to your revelation in Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

**ASH WEDNESDAY** (The Beginning of Lent)

O God, whose mercy is everlasting, kindle within us a vivid recollection of the trials of your Son during his sojourn in the wilderness. Give us a sense of the enormity of the task for which he went to prepare himself. Give us also a renewed devotion and discipline for the tasks to which you have called us. Remove from our lives the worldly impediments which too often frustrate our desires truly to be your faithful sons and daughters. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who walked alone in the wilderness for us. Amen.

**LENT** (Days of Fasting)

O God, who sent your Son to fast forty days and nights for our sake, give us your grace at this season. Help us to realize that we are unable to subdue our spirits unless we also subdue our bodies. Give us your Spirit that we may, recalling Christ's sacrifice for us, deny ourselves and follow you, and present our bodies as a living sacrifice to you. This we pray in the name of Jesus, who was faithful even unto the cross. Amen.

**PALM SUNDAY**

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we raise our voices in prayer and praise, joining the children who sing "Hosanna!" As Christ rides on in majesty, we know that he rides on to die, and our joy is tempered with the knowledge that he must die for us. Help us to look to that day when all people will acknowledge him as he is, the Lord of lords. In his name we pray. Amen.

**MAUNDY THURSDAY** (The Evening of the Upper Room)

Heavenly Father, Almighty God, help us to enter the upper room and go to the garden in recollection of the night in which our Lord Jesus was betrayed. We give thanks that on this night of betrayal, treachery, and injustice you gave us the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We praise you that we may always enjoy your grace by receiving in faith his precious body and blood. In his name we pray, with thanksgiving. Amen.

**GOOD FRIDAY**

Almighty and merciful God, in our knowledge that you do not desire the death of sinners but that they turn to live in you, help us to remember why we call this day "good." We tremble at the sight of the crucifixion of Jesus. Give us strength and peace so that we might not be overcome by the anguish we feel; give us vision to behold the true glory of this sublime, unique, and matchless gift of your love. This we pray in the name of the worthy Lamb who was slain, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

**EASTER**

O God, who gives us hope for life because of the resurrection, we join your faithful saints in every age in proclaiming: "Hallelujah, Christ is

risen; he is risen indeed!" We who were dead in sin are now made alive unto God, and for this we give you unending praise and thanks. We, your sons and daughters for whom death is no more, raise our voices with the psalmist: "Great is your name and greatly to be praised!" This we pray in the name of our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. Amen.

### ASCENSION DAY

Our Father in heaven, we rejoice this day in the return of your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, to his rightful place in glory with you. We give you thanks and praise for the person and work of Jesus, who promised to prepare a place for us in heaven. Give us the grace to see our lives on earth as worthy tributes to the good news; we dedicate our lives to the One who now intercedes for us at your right hand, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### PENTECOST

O God, who is ever with us, we thank you for the ministry of your holy and life-giving Spirit. We thank you for sending your Spirit to comfort and guide us, to encourage and lead us. We thank you for your Spirit living in the church, giving gifts to us, your sons and daughters, that we may fully praise and serve you. This we pray, with thanksgiving, in Jesus' name. Amen.

### THANKSGIVING DAY

O Lord, our creator God, we give you heartfelt thanks that you have blessed the labors of farmers and workers and that your bounty is plenty for your people. We pray that you will continue to bless our labors in farm, factory, office, home, and school that our land may yield its increase, to your glory and to our well-being. Give us compassion for those of your children who are hungry; give us understanding of the causes of their hunger; give us wisdom to share the bounty of your earth with all your children. In continual thanksgiving for your goodness, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

### ANNUAL DAY OF PRAYER

O Lord, whose glory is in all the earth, we laud and magnify your holy name for all your goodness to us and all mankind. We thank you that your mercy endures forever, and we will sing to you as long as we live. On this special day of prayer, we thank you for wanting to hear us more than we are willing to pray to you. Grant our petitions and accept our praise, in Jesus' name. Amen.

The "Opening Prayers" were written by Ronald Wells. The "servant" quoted in the New Year's Eve prayer is Richard of Chichester.

## II. PROPOSED PROVISIONAL FORM FOR READMISSION

Last year, synod adopted for three years' provisional use a form containing announcements and declaration of excommunication. This year we present a form containing announcement and declaration of readmission. We request that synod approve this form for provisional use for two years so that, hopefully, final approval to this form and the form for excommunication can be given at the same time, in 1982.

### ANNOUNCEMENT AND DECLARATION OF READMISSION

#### *Announcement*

Some time ago \_\_\_\_\_ was excommunicated from the church of the Lord because of his/her persistence in a serious and offensive sin without any token of genuine repentance. At that time the hope was expressed that God would use this excommunication as the extreme remedy unto conversion. We may now rejoice in the blessed results of Christian discipline and thankfully announce that our brother/sister has mended his/her ways and expressed his/her desire to be restored into the covenantal relationship with the Lord and his people. If there are no lawful objections, this readmission will be celebrated on \_\_\_\_\_. Meanwhile, let everyone of us praise the Lord for this glorious manifestation of the power of his grace and ask him to keep our brother/sister in the grip of his hand during the days of preparation.

#### *Form for Readmission*

It is known to you that \_\_\_\_\_, who was excommunicated, has requested to be readmitted to the covenantal communion of Christ and his church. Since no one has presented any valid reason that this restoration should not take place, we now proceed with gladness to receive our brother/sister again into the church of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord declares in his Word that he takes no pleasure in the death of the sinner but rather that he/she should return from his/her ways and live (Ezek. 18 and Luke 15). Our Lord also declares that the communion with him and his church is wide open to all who show sincere repentance and contrition. Again he declares, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven," and "Whatever you loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven" (John 20:23 and Matt. 16:19).

\_\_\_\_\_, in order that the church may receive you again into its fellowship, you are asked to stand and to answer the following questions:

1. Do you acknowledge before God and his people that you are truly sorry for your sin and believe that the Lord has forgiven you?
2. Do you reaffirm your union with Christ and desire to be readmitted to the covenant family of God?
3. Do you promise to do all you can, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to strengthen your love and commitment to Christ by sharing faithfully in the life of the church, honoring its authority, and do you join with the people of God in doing the work of the Lord everywhere?

*Answer:* I do, God helping me.

*Declaration*

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, this congregation through its officers restores you to full fellowship with Christ and his church. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Reception*

*(The minister asks the congregation to rise.)*

*Minister:*

Brother/sister \_\_\_\_\_, we heartily and gladly welcome you back to all the privileges of full communion. We welcome you to full participation in the life of the church. We welcome you to its responsibilities, its joys, and its sufferings. May God by his Holy Spirit graciously enable you to continue steadfast in faith and godliness unto the end, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

And you, beloved Christians, receive this brother/sister with all your love. Count him/her no longer as a stranger, but as a fellow member with the saints and of the household of God. Let us together thank and praise the Lord!

*Congregation:*

Thanks be to God! We promise you our love, encouragement, and prayers.

*Minister:*

Let us say what we believe: I believe in God, the Father Almighty. . . .

*Prayer*

## III. ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS VARIATIONS—NEW FORM FOR THE LORD'S SUPPER

The 1968 Liturgical Committee Report included a Model Service of the Word and Sacrament. With the adoption and circulation of this report, synod sanctioned provisional use of the liturgical components in the report. Synod 1968 did not attach a time frame to usage of this material, however. Consequently, our committee asked that Synod of 1978 do so. For reasons of consistency with Church Order, this material was presented and adopted as a "New Form for the Lord's Supper." What was presented in 1968 as a Model Service of the Word and Sacrament became in 1978 a fourth Form for the Lord's Supper. The committee further suggested that this model or form was highly adaptable for use at communion services at different times in the church year. It proposed that liturgical flexibility within a framework of continuity could be achieved by recognizing both fixed and variable components to this "new form." Synod liked the notion and took note of our committee's intention to present Advent, Christmas, Lenten, Easter, and Pentecost variations of this new form. We hereby present the first two of these variations.

## ADVENT

*The four weeks which immediately precede Christmas are known as Advent, the Latin word for "coming." Advent depicts the long-awaited*

coming of Christ as the just judge of the world, as the fulfillment of ancient prophecies, and at the same time as a peaceful Messiah on a humble donkey. The spirit of Advent can be summed up in the words of a plain-song dating from the time of the Crusades:

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 And ransom captive Israel,  
 That mourns in lonely exile here,  
 Until the Son of God appear.  
 Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
 Shall come to thee, O Israel.

### \*THE OPENING

Minister: The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight; behold, he is coming (Mal. 3:1).

People: Our king is coming,  
 triumphant and victorious.  
 He shall speak peace unto the nations (cf. Zech. 9:9-10).

Minister: The day shall dawn upon us from on high,  
 to give light to those who sit in darkness  
 and in the shadow of death,  
 to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke 1:78-79).

People: Amen

Minister: *(optional)*  
 And now as our Lord gives to us his peace, so let us pass the peace to each other, saying, "The peace of the Lord be always with you."

*(Here the people express their unity by greeting each other with the above words.)*

All: *(Hymn)*

(\*Indicates congregation stands.)

### CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

#### *The Call to Confession*

Minister: Come to him, all who labor and are heavy laden,  
 and he will give you rest.  
 Take his yoke upon you, and learn from him;  
 for he is gentle and lowly in heart:  
 and you will find rest for your souls (cf. Matt. 11:28-29).  
 Draw near with faith,  
 and make your humble confession to almighty God,  
 that you may be reconciled to him anew  
 through our Lord Jesus Christ.

*The Confession*

All: O Lord, our God, we bring before you ourselves, in the full knowledge that you know how far short we have fallen in our meager attempts to follow you. Forgive us our sins in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whose coming we look. Amen.

All sing: Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us;  
Let us find our rest in thee.

*The Declaration of Pardon*

Minister: Surely he has born our griefs and carried our sorrows.  
He was wounded for our transgression,  
he was bruised for our iniquities.  
Upon him was the chastisement that makes us whole,  
and with his stripes we are healed (Isa. 53:4-5).

*The Response*

All sing: All glory be to thee, Most High,  
To thee all adoration;  
In grace and truth thou drawest nigh  
To offer us salvation;  
Thou showest thy good will to men,  
And peace shall reign on earth again;  
We praise thy name forever.

*The Dedication*

Minister: Now let us dedicate ourselves to live in obedience to the will of God.

*(Here follows the Decalogue or other Scripture passage.)*

\*All: *(Hymn)*

## THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Minister: Let us pray.

All: Almighty God, grant us your Spirit  
that we may rightly understand and truly obey your Word  
of Truth.

Open our hearts that we may love what you command and desire what you promise.

Set us free from private distractions that we may hear,  
and from selfish pride that we may receive the promise of  
your grace.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reader: *(Scripture Readings)*

Minister: *(Sermon)*

Minister or other Member: *(Prayer for blessing on the Word)*



## THE RESPONSE

\*All: (*Hymn*)

\**The Creed*

Minister: Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in all places:

All: (*Say or sing the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.*)

*The Intercessory Prayer*

(*Prayers led by the minister or by some other member*)

*The Offertory*

Minister: Let us present our gifts to God.

(*Here the offerings are received.*)

All sing: Praise God from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly hosts;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

Minister: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the gospels tell us that on the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples in the place where they were gathered and was made known to them in the breaking of bread. Come then to the joyful feast of our Lord.

(*If the communion elements are not already on the table, they may be brought forward at this point.*)

\**The Thanksgiving*

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right of us to give thanks,  
It is our joy and our peace,  
At all times and in all places  
To give thanks to you,  
Holy Father,  
Almighty, everlasting God,  
through Christ, our Lord.

Minister: For he is the Savior, whom in your mercy and faithfulness you promised to man after his fall, that his truth might come to instruct the ignorant, his righteousness to purify sinners, his strength to sustain the weak.

Since the time is at hand when the one you send shall come, since the day of our deliverance has begun to dawn, with full confidence in your promises we live in joy.

Therefore with the whole company of saints in heaven and on earth we worship and glorify you, God most holy, and we sing with joy:

All sing: Praise to God the Father sing,  
Praise to God the Son, our king,  
Praise to God the Spirit be  
Ever and eternally.  
*(or another appropriate hymn)*

### *The Institution*

Minister: We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered, gave us this memorial of his sacrifice, until his coming again. For the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

### *The Memorial*

People: We shall do as our Lord commands.  
We proclaim that our Lord Jesus was sent by the Father into the world,  
that he took upon himself our flesh and blood,  
and bore the wrath of God on the cross for us.  
We confess that he was condemned to die that we might be pardoned,  
and suffered death that we might live.  
We proclaim that he is risen to make us right with God,  
and that he shall come again in glory of his new creation.  
This we do now,  
and until he comes again.

### *Prayer of Consecration*

Minister: Father, as the coming of your son sets your people free, help us to become new persons in your creation. In the mystery of faith, take this bread and wine, and make it for us a remembrance and assurance that you have come.

People: Our father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be . . .

### *Preparation of the Elements*

*(as the minister breaks the bread and pours the cup)*

Minister: The bread which we break  
is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People: We who are many are one body,  
for we all share in the same loaf.

Minister: The cup for which we give thanks  
is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

People: The cup which we drink  
is our participation in the blood of Christ.

### *The Invitation*

Minister: Congregation in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him for their salvation. All who are truly sorry for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him, are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord. Come, then, for all is ready.

### *The Dedication*

People: We praise you, Lord,  
with these your gifts of bread and wine.  
We offer you ourselves  
as your people in your service.

Minister: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: We will receive the bread of heaven,  
We will drink the cup of salvation.

Minister: The gifts of God for the people of God.

### *The Communion*

*(when the people are ready to eat the bread)*

Minister: Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for a complete remission of all our sins.

*(when the people are ready to drink the cup)*

Minister: Take, drink, remember and believe that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for a complete remission of all our sins.

### *The Thanksgiving*

Minister: Congregation in Christ, since the Lord has fed us at his table, let us rise and and praise his holy name with thanksgiving.

All sing: My soul doth magnify the Lord;  
In him my spirit doth rejoice,  
For he beheld my low estate,  
And in his love made me his choice.

All generations from henceforth  
Shall now my blessedness proclaim,  
For he has done great things to me;  
Mighty and holy is his name.

His mercy shall abide on them  
That fear the Lord from age to age;

He has revealed his mighty arm,  
Routing the haughty in their rage.

He has abased the mighty ones,  
Exalted those of low degree;  
He filled the hungry souls with good,  
And smote the rich with poverty.

He helped his servant Israel,  
In honor of his mercy sure;  
E'en as he spake to Abraham  
And to his seed forevermore.

### *The Dismissal*

Minister: May our Lord Jesus Christ and God our Father, who has shown us such love, and in his grace has given us such unfailing encouragement and bright hope, strengthen us in every good word and deed.

People: Lord, let your servant now depart in peace,  
according to your word.  
For my eyes have seen your salvation  
which you prepared before the face of all people,  
to be a light for the Gentiles,  
and the glory of your people Israel (Luke 2:29-32).

Minister: Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

All: (*Hymn—optional*)

## CHRISTMAS

*Christmas marks the culmination of the Advent season. The time of waiting is past, and God's people celebrate the arrival of their Messiah, who has visited and redeemed his people.*

### \*THE OPENING

Minister: Glory to God in highest heaven.  
And on earth peace for those on whom his favor rests.

People: In the tender compassion of our God,  
The morning sun has risen upon us who lived in darkness.

Minister: The Word has become flesh, has come to dwell among us,  
And we have seen his glory.

People: Glory as of the only Son from the Father,  
Full of grace and truth.

Minister: To us a child is born, to us a son is given.  
Alleluia.

People: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.  
Alleluia.

People: (*Hymn*)

## CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE

### *The Call to Confession*

Minister: Brothers and sisters in Christ, draw near to God and he will draw near to you; humble yourself before him and he will lift you up. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit. The Lord will not despise a broken and contrite heart.

### *The Confession*

All: Almighty God and Father in heaven  
 who also makes his home with those  
 of a humble and contrite spirit:  
 Before you and our Lord Jesus Christ  
 we confess the sin  
 of ignoring your presence in the Spirit.  
 of failing to look for the return of our Savior and Judge.  
 We also confess our blindness to your coming  
 in those who are lonely, hungry, cold, poor, and sick.  
 In your great goodness,  
 put away our offenses  
 and cleanse us from our sins,  
 for Jesus' sake. Amen.

### *Declaration of Pardon*

Minister: The saying is true and worthy of full acceptance that Jesus Christ came into our world to save sinners.  
 For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

### *The Response*

All sing: Rejoice, ye heavens; thou earth, reply;  
 With praise, ye sinners, fill the sky,  
 For this his incarnation,  
 Incarnate God, put forth thy power,  
 Ride on, ride on, Great Conqueror,  
 Till all know thy salvation.  
 Amen, Amen!  
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah!  
 Praise be given  
 Evermore by earth and heaven.

### *The Dedication*

Minister: Now let us dedicate ourselves to live in obedience to the will of God.

*(Here follows the Decalogue or Philippians 2:1-8.)*

\* All: *(Hymn)*

## THE PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Minister: Let us pray.

All: O God, whose glory fills the skies,  
 O Christ, the true and only Light,  
 Shine on us with your light and truth  
 Through the Word that gives light to all people.  
 Empower us by your Spirit to walk  
 In that light and to reflect your glory. Amen.

Reader: (*Scripture reading*)

Minister: (*Sermon*)

Minister or other member: (*Prayer for blessing on the Word*)

## THE RESPONSE

All: (*Hymn*)

*\*The Creed*

Minister: Let us together confess the faith of the church at all times and in all places:

All: (*Say or sing the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed.*)

*The Intercessory Prayer*

(*prayers led by the minister or by some other member*)

(\*Indicates congregation stands.)

*The Offertory*

Minister: Let us present our gifts to God.  
 (*Here the offerings are received.*)

All Sing: Vainly we offer each ample oblation.  
 Vainly with gifts would his favor secure;  
 Richer by far is the heart's adoration,  
 Dearer to God are the prayers of the poor.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER

Minister: Brothers and sisters in Christ, the Gospels tell us that on the first day of the week, the day on which our Lord rose from the dead, he appeared to his disciples in the place where they were gathered and was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Come, then, to the joyful feast of the Lord.  
 (*If the communion elements are not already on the table, they can be brought forward at this point.*)

*The Thanksgiving*

Minister: The Lord be with you.

People: And with you also.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up unto the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right for us to give thanks.  
It is our joy and our salvation  
at all times and in all places  
to give thanks to you,  
O Lord, Holy Father,  
Almighty, everlasting God,  
through Christ, our Lord:

Minister: Because the light of your glory  
has shone with splendor in our world.  
For you gave Jesus Christ, your only Son,  
to be born for us of Mary  
that we might have power to become your sons through him:  
Who existed before the world was called into being,  
but came down to save us  
by being born of a humble virgin,  
lying in a crib,  
walking on earth as a man:  
Who became poor that by his poverty  
we might become rich;  
who was humbled that we might be exalted;  
who gave us peace and joy  
when we were without hope and without God.  
Therefore with the whole company of saints in heaven and  
on earth  
we proclaim and celebrate the birth of our Savior  
and we sing with joy:

All sing: Break forth, O beauteous heavenly light,  
And usher in the morning;  
Ye shepherds, shrink not with affright,  
But hear the angel's warning.  
This Child, now weak in infancy,  
Our confidence and joy shall be:  
The power of Satan breaking,  
Our peace eternal making.

#### *The Institution*

Minister: We give thanks to God the Father that our Savior, Jesus Christ, before he suffered, gave us this memorial of his sacrifice, until his coming again. For on the night of his arrest he took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said, "This is my body which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." In the same way, he took the cup after supper and said, "This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do this in remembrance of me."

#### *The Memorial*

All: His death, O God, we proclaim.  
His resurrection we declare.

His coming we await.  
Glory be to you, O Lord.

*Prayer of Consecration*

Minister: Heavenly Father, be present with your life-giving Word and Holy Spirit, that we may be nourished and strengthened through this supper.

Grant that all who share the communion of the body and blood of your Son may be united in him. And may we remain faithful in love and hope until we feast joyfully with him in his eternal kingdom. Now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we pray:

All: Our Father who art in heaven  
Hallowed be. . . .

*Preparation of the Elements*

*(as the minister breaks the bread and pours the cup)*

Minister: The bread which we break  
is a sharing in the body of Christ.

People: We who are many are one body  
for we all share in the same loaf.

Minister: The cup for which we give thanks  
is a sharing in the blood of Christ.

People: The cup which we drink  
is our participation in the blood of Christ.

*The Invitation*

Minister: "Ho, every one who thirsts, come to  
the waters;  
and he who has no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for  
that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does  
not satisfy?  
Hearken diligently to me, and eat  
what is good,  
and delight yourselves in fatness" (Isa. 55:1-2).

*The Dedication*

People: We praise you, Lord,  
with these your gifts of bread and wine.  
We offer you ourselves  
as your people in your service.

Minister: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



People: We will receive the bread of heaven.  
We will drink the cup of salvation.

Minister: The gifts of God for the people of God.

*The Communion*

*(when the people are ready to eat the bread)*

Minister: Take, eat, remember and believe that the body of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for a complete remission of all our sins.

*(when the people are ready to drink the cup)*

Minister: Take, drink, remember and believe that the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was shed for a complete remission of all our sins.

*\*The Thanksgiving*

Minister: Congregation in Christ, since the Lord has fed us at his table, let us praise his holy name with thanksgiving.

People sing:

At the Name of Jesus  
Every knee shall bow,  
Every tongue confess him  
King of Glory now.

'Tis the Father's pleasure  
We should call him Lord,  
Who from the beginning  
Was the mighty Word.

In your hearts enthrone him,  
There let him subdue  
All that is not holy,  
All that is not true.

Look to him, your Captain,  
In temptation's hour,  
Let his will enfold you  
In its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus  
Shall return again  
With his Father's glory,  
With his angel-train;  
For all wreaths of empire  
Meet upon his brow,  
And our hearts confess Him  
King of Glory now.

*\*The Dismissal*

Minister: May the God of hope fill you with all joy  
and peace in believing, so that by the power  
of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Rom. 15:13).

People: Amen.

All: *(Hymn—optional)*

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. *Representation at synod.* We request that our chairman, Dr. James A. De Jong, and our secretary, the Rev. Dirk J. Hart, be given the privilege of the floor when the report of the Liturgical Committee is considered.

2. *We recommend* that synod adopt the first two categories of the new collection of prayers to replace the present collection now in the Psalter Hymnal, with the understanding that the third of three parts will be submitted for separate adoption next year.

3. *We recommend* that synod adopt for two years' trial use the new form for readmission, and that synod ask the churches and individuals to submit their reactions to our committee secretary by September 1, 1981.

4. *We recommend* that synod adopt the Advent and Christmas variations of the new form for the Lord's Supper for trial use by the churches.

5. *We recommend* that synod remind the churches of the following deadlines for reaction to liturgical materials now before them: new form for the Lord's Supper, September 1, 1980; new form for ordination of elders and deacons, September 1, 1981; new form for ordination of evangelists, September 1, 1981; new form for excommunication, September 1, 1981.

6. *Nominations.* Rev. Clifford Bajema has completed six years, two terms, of solid service on the committee; we note with appreciation his many fine contributions and observe to synod that he is not eligible for reelection. Dr. Ronald Wells has served most ably for one term, and is eligible for reelection. We present to synod the following nominations from which two persons should be elected, each to serve three years:

\*Dr. Ronald Wells—Miss Betty DeVries  
Rev. Norman Meyer—Rev. William VanderHoven

\*Denotes incumbent

Liturgical Committee  
J. DeJong, chairman  
D. Hart, secretary  
C. Bajema  
H. Boonstra  
R. Kooistra  
N. Vander Ark  
S. VanZanten  
R. Wells

## REPORT 16

## MINISTERIAL INFORMATION SERVICE

## I. PERSONNEL AND NOMINATIONS

A. *Committee Members*

The committee members are Mr. George Groen, chairman; Mr. Lawrence Van Noord, secretary; the Rev. Harold Hiemstra; the Rev. Gareth Kok; the Rev. Bernard Niemeyer; and Mr. John Verhoeven.

B. *Appointment*

The committee appointed Carl Vander Brug to perform the duties of records secretary and to attend all committee meetings.

C. *Nominations*

## Position 1

Harold Hiemstra\* pastor at Bethany Christian Reformed Church, Bellflower, California. (H. Hiemstra is filling the remaining term [8 months] of D. Negen, who moved to Illinois.)

L. Van Essen, pastor of the Christian Reformed Church of Riverside, California.

## Position 2

William De Groot, insurance and real estate agent residing in Upland, California. Served on councils, Christian school board, Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, synodical delegate. Currently on Reformed Bible College Board. Member of Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Chino, California.

Hubert Slegers, dairyman residing in Chino, California. Served on councils, Christian school board, synodical delegate. Member of Calvary Christian Reformed Church, Chino, California.

\*Denotes incumbent

## II. STATISTICS

During the year 1979 we mailed a total of 2,441 ministers' profiles to 169 vacant churches. These figures break down as follows:

Suggested names and profiles—1,879

Requested names and profiles— 562

We also received requests for 159 profiles of ministers who have not filed their profile with the Ministerial Information Service Committee. Minister's profile forms have been sent to 315 ministers to file an initial profile or to update previously filed profiles. Church profile forms have been mailed to 77 churches for filing with us. We have worked with one

exchange possibility through the first step. Further action was canceled by partial resolution of conditions. We request that synod authorize the extension of the pastoral exchange concept approved by the Synod of 1976.

### III. PASTORAL CONCERN

Our committee continues to see the need of pastoral concern for our ministers and churches. We are grateful that the Healing Ministries Committee is functioning with a concern for both the prevention and cure of problems. We are anticipating some initial recommendations to synod from the committee which will be helpful to all of our ministers and churches

### IV. SERVICES

The committee continues to provide services of information in two areas. The first is the mailing of profiles of ministers to churches requesting information on specific ministers in whom they are interested. The other area of service is to suggest names of ministers and mail corresponding profiles to vacant churches who request our help. High priority is given to those ministers who desire a call. We are studying the concept of computerizing the committee information for cooperative use by Home Missions and World Missions committees. We urge ministers to update their profiles when changes occur.

### V. FINANCES

The operating expense for the year 1979 totaled \$930.62. An audited financial report will be submitted under separate cover.

### VI. REPRESENTATION AT SYNOD

The committee will not have a representative at synod this year. However, we stand ready to discuss matters with you by phone or to send a representative in person if you so desire. Please contact the secretary at 213-867-8323 or the records secretary at 213-869-6017.

### VII. PRAYER REQUESTS

We are conscious of our dependence upon the Holy Spirit to guide the committee, the churches, and the ministers in making responsible decisions. Therefore we covet your prayers.

Ministerial Information Service  
L. R. Van Noord, secretary

## REPORT 17

## MINISTERS' PENSION FUND

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Ministers' Pension Fund was established by synod to provide honorably for the support of our retired ministers and their dependents. Retired ministers are those who are emeritated because of retirement age or disability. Ministers' dependents are their widows and orphans as defined in the plan.

Synod of 1969 established the present plan to be effective January 1, 1970. Subsequent synods have adopted certain modifications and clarifications. These were all incorporated into one format adopted by the Synod of 1978. Subsequently a booklet was prepared by the committee. This booklet contains the exact wording of the plan adopted by synod. It is entitled "Christian Reformed Church in North America—Ministers' Pension Plan—Effective January 1, 1970 with revisions through July 1, 1978." Additionally, the committee prepared a "layman's" version of the plan with examples. This booklet is entitled "A Summary Plan Description of the Retirement Plan for Ministers of the Christian Reformed Church in North America—Effective January 1, 1970, with Revisions through July 1, 1978." Third, the committee prepared a "paper" dated December 15, 1978. The "paper" is divided into the following topics:

1. Cash Control and Accounting
2. Sources of Income
  - a. The Per-family Quota
  - b. Contributions (Assessments)
  - c. Income on Investments
3. Disbursements of Income
  - a. Pensions
  - b. Funding
  - c. Expenses

All of these documents have been sent to all the ministers, clerks, and treasurers of the churches as well as to all retired ministers and widows. Anyone interested in receiving copies of these documents may address their request to the Ministers' Pension Office, 2850 Kalamazoo Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49560.

Each spring, the Administrator addresses the up-coming graduates of Calvin Seminary to acquaint them with the principal features of the plan. Enrollment forms are distributed as well as copies of the above-described documents. Graduates of the seminary become eligible to membership in the plan after they have been ordained as ministers in the Christian Reformed Church, provided their membership is paid for. This will be by

way of the per-family quota where the minister serves as the principal pastor of an organized congregation. Annual contributions (or assessments) need to be paid when an organized congregation has a second or third pastor and when a minister is serving in a synodically or classically approved position. Last, contributions need also to be paid for ministers serving in unorganized Christian Reformed churches. Without payment of such contributions, the minister is not covered in three ways:

1. He fails to earn years of credited service towards his pension, and
2. He fails to qualify for disability benefits, and
3. His widow or orphans will not receive benefits under the provisions set forth in the plan.

II. THE QUOTA

It is necessary to stress that the Ministers' Pension Fund quota is "per family." This denominational method enables the larger congregations to help pay the way for smaller congregations. It is a helpful way of Christian sharing in providing honorable pensions for all our ministers whether they serve large or small churches.

III. CENSUS

A. Pensioned Personnel

As of December 31, 1979, our census of those receiving pensions was as follows:

Retired Ministers.....	172
Disabled Ministers.....	6
Widows.....	92
Orphans.....	2
Total	272

Thus, of the total participants in the Ministers' Pension Plan, 272 or 22.7 percent were receiving pensions, 66 or 5.5 percent were vested participants who had withdrawn from the plan, and 859 or 71.8 percent were active ministers.

B. Deaths in 1979

Mrs. Ella Zwaanstra.....	January 2, 1979
Rev. John Geels.....	January 25, 1979
Mrs. Effie Kok.....	March 31, 1979
Rev. Peter De Boer.....	May 21, 1979
Dr. Jacob Hoogstra.....	June 14, 1979
Mrs. Cornelia Haveman.....	June 9, 1979
Rev. Wesley Prince.....	July 25, 1979
Rev. Jacob Van Dyk.....	September 11, 1979
Mrs. Jennie Meeter.....	October 9, 1979

### C. Emeritations in 1979

- Dr. James Daane, because of age  
 Classis California South, effective June 1, 1979
- Dr. Lubbertus Oostendorp, because of age  
 Classis Grand Rapids East, effective July 1, 1979
- Rev. John Olthoff, because of age  
 Classis Wisconsin, effective September 30, 1979
- Rev. John Blankespoor, because of age  
 Classis Holland, effective September 30, 1979
- Rev. Gerrit Polman, because of age  
 Classis Alberta South, effective October 1, 1979
- Rev. William Vander Haak, because of age  
 Classis Holland, effective September 15, 1979
- Rev. Lawrence Veltkamp, because of age  
 Classis Holland, effective September 30, 1979
- Rev. Otto De Groot, because of age  
 Classis Zeeland, effective November 1, 1979

### IV. AUDITORS

Again, the committee appointed Seidman and Seidman, Public Accountants, to audit the books for the twelve months ended December 31, 1979. The audited report will be available before the time synod meets.

### V. THE PENSION COMMITTEE

The plan provides that synod appoint a Pension Committee of seven (7) members, no more than three (3) of whom may be ministers. The term of each member is three (3) years and no member shall serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms.

The Synod of 1979, decided that when there is a separate Canadian Pension Plan, that then the administration be handled through one pension committee consisting of ten members; five of whom are members of the Christian Reformed churches in the United States; and five of whom are members of Christian Reformed churches in Canada. The committee will be divided into two subcommittees; one consisting of the Canadian members and one consisting of the United States members. The Canadian subcommittee will supervise administration of the Canadian plan and the United States subcommittee will supervise administration of the United States plan. Day-to-day administration and accounting for both plans will initially be handled at the denominational building. Investment decisions and legal matters, including registration, will be handled by each subcommittee for the plan it supervises. The entire pension committee would meet at least once per year and present one report to synod.

Since a separate Canadian Pension Plan is not ready to present to Synod of 1980, the committee requests Synod of 1980 to elect two committee members to serve until such time as there is a separate Canadian Pension Plan but not longer than three years. Mr. Hendrik Kreeft and Mr. Gordon Dornbush have each served one three-year term and are therefore each eligible to be one of the two nominees for these two vacan-

cies. The remaining committee members and the Administrator express their sincere thanks for the work done by Mr. Kreeft and Mr. Dornbush the past three years.

#### VI. THE SUBCOMMITTEE TO DEVELOP A SEPARATE CANADIAN PENSION PLAN

Synod of 1979 instructed the pension committee to appoint a subcommittee consisting of church member residents in Canada to work with the pension committee in development of the Canadian plan and other preparation to implement the separation. Accordingly, the committee appointed the following to this important subcommittee:

John T. Ebberts, chairman, Richmond, British Columbia  
Albert J. Bakker, Q.C., secretary, St. Catharines, Ontario  
Rev. Henry R. De Bolster, M.Th., St. Catharines, Ontario  
Cornelis W. Hartog, F.S.A., E.G.I.A., Willowdale, Ontario  
Hendrik Kreeft, C.A., Sarnia, Ontario

and to serve as resource person, Garrett C. Van de Riet, Administrator of the CRC Ministers' Pension Plan.

The subcommittee and the Administrator have already convened for full-day sessions in Toronto on September 6 and November 9 of 1979 and January 3 and February 6 of 1980. Substantial work was brought to each session and considerable progress has been made. Since the material for the Agenda for Synod 1980 is required to be in the possession of the Stated Clerk on February 15, 1980, the subcommittee deemed it prudent to request an extension of time so that all aspects of the assignment could be thoroughly executed.

The pension committee expresses sincere appreciation for the time and effort being expended by the members of this subcommittee.

#### VII. FUNDING

Synod of 1969 provided that the CRC Ministers' Pension Plan (effective January 1, 1970) should be a funded plan (Acts of Synod 1969, p. 47, par. 3). Synod of 1979 reaffirmed its decision of 1969 that "the Ministers' Pension Plan is by synodical decision formulated in terms of an advanced funding concept." It gave two grounds as follows:

a. A sound pension plan to provide for our ministers upon retirement from the ministry is based on the principle that the cost of providing retirement benefits, which we believe to be mandated by Scripture and our Church Order, for a minister is incurred while he is in active service. Therefore, an amount must be set aside, as deferred compensation, each year during his career so that at retirement, based on age or otherwise, there will be sufficient moneys to pay retirement benefits as needed to sustain him and his family for the remaining years of his life.

b. Our actuarial report for the year ended 1978 indicates from figures shown under its "Vested Liabilities" section that the value of benefits which have been accrued by ministers who have met the plan's requirements for vesting as of December 31, 1978, is in the total amount of \$20,747,363 plus interest, of which \$7,490,039 plus interest



is the market value of assets representing the participants' vested interest entitlement. Should we cease funding now, this balance, which represents the total assets of the fund, could be exposed to the demands of participants for payment of their vested shares and possible legal action to obtain collection thereof.

(Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, p. 105)

It should be pointed out that if the denomination had provided for a funded pension plan many years prior to January 1, 1970, that then the assets plus interest would likely have been equal to the accrued liabilities plus interest. Since this was not the case, the denomination, on January 1, 1970, incurred an instant \$23,409,539 liability payable for active and retired ministers' years of service up to that point in time (referred to as liability for past services already rendered). As of January 1, 1970, the \$23,409,539 is reduced to a "present value" of \$16,532,758 because of the interest earnings expected to be added during the forthcoming years.

In ground b. above, synod used the amounts relative to ministers who were vested in the plan. (It takes five years of active participation in the plan for the minister to have a vesting percentage.)

In a broader sense, we may count the years beginning with the first year of participation on the grounds that the minister will vest. The amounts below then show the ten-year progress (or lack of progress) towards funding the plan:

JAN. 1	PRESENT VALUE OF ACCRUED LIABILITIES	"ACTUARY'S" BOOK VALUE OF ASSETS	UNFUNDED LIABILITIES
1970	\$16,532,758	\$ 491,693	\$16,041,065
1971	17,174,199	838,541	16,335,658
1972	17,858,331	1,124,746	16,733,585
1973	18,557,580	1,666,112	16,891,468
1974	19,290,270	2,239,818	17,050,452
*1975	17,946,985	3,189,423	14,757,562
1976	19,650,469	3,932,862	15,717,607
1977	20,487,429	5,043,516	15,443,913
1978	22,409,457	6,234,674	16,174,783
1979	24,098,273	7,536,107	16,562,166

\*The significant reduction in 1975 was because the actuary increased the assumed interest earnings rate from 5 percent to 6 percent.

*Note:* In the above table the accrued liabilities keep going up at about the same pace as the assets, thus leaving the unfunded liabilities relatively unchanged. The reason for this is that pension benefits have increased from \$3,620 in 1969 to \$5,040 for 1979 and this increases the accrued liability for both active and retired ministers and for widows.

Occasionally, questions arise regarding the need to build assets. The pension committee responds to such questions as follows:

1. The Synod of 1969 set up a funded pension plan, that is, building a fund of assets for past services rendered. The Synod of 1979 reaffirmed that decision as stated above.

2. Pensions are a form of "deferred compensation" and all pension plans should be funded for past services rendered.

3. By January 1, 1983, it is expected that the United States Plan will come under Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). This will mandate funding.

Approximately one-half of the fund's receipts are paid out as benefits and the other half is designated for funding.

VIII. INVESTMENTS

On February 15, 1980, by which time this report must be submitted, the audited financial statements for the year ended December 31, 1979, were not yet completed. (These 1979 reports will be available well before synod convenes.) In view of this, we present investment data as of December 31, 1978.

Approximately \$65,000 of the fund's assets were in the form of operating cash on December 31, 1978. Additionally, about \$660,000 represented receivables which were collected during the first quarter of 1979. Actual investments then on December 31, 1978, amounted to \$6,771,321. These were held by financial institutions which invested them as follows:

	<u>United States</u>	<u>Canada</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Fixed income securities</u>			
U.S. & Canadian government obligations	\$2,604,519	475,181	\$3,079,700
Corporate bonds	1,858,090	—	1,858,909
Term & Certificates of Deposit (in Canadian \$'s)		505,516	505,516
Investment contract	437,381	—	437,381
Canadian currency exchange	—	(79,113)	(79,113)
Total fixed income	<u>\$4,900,809</u>	<u>\$901,584</u>	<u>\$5,802,393</u>
<u>Equity investments</u>	<u>968,928</u>	<u>—</u>	<u>968,928</u>
Total carrying value	<u><u>\$5,869,737</u></u>	<u><u>\$901,584</u></u>	<u><u>\$6,771,321</u></u>

Investments as of December 31, 1977, amounted to \$5,663,142. As of December 31, 1978, \$233,464 was transferred from the Chaplains' Deposit Fund to the Ministers' Pension Fund. Investment income amounted to \$426,442 for 1978 which represents a return of 7.5 percent on the beginning balance of \$5,663,142. This yield improved in 1979 as new funds could be invested in higher-yielding securities and older bonds of lower interest rate matured and were replaced with higher-yielding bonds.

IX. INFLATION

Periodically synod has increased pensions to recognize, in part, the constant increase in the cost of living. Retired ministers and widows also experience the continuing decrease in the purchasing power of the dollar. The dilemma for the pension committee is to recommend to synod some increase and yet it recognizes that in doing so the unfunded liability of the plan is increased despite increased quotas and investment income. Each pension increase means a recalculation of the accrued liability for past services rendered for each active and each retired minister as well as

for each widow. Thus, the committee, after careful deliberation, arrives at a recommended increase in pension of 6 percent for 1981, from \$5,400 (maximum) to \$5,724 per year (maximum). The committee believes this is a fair and prudent recommendation to present to synod.

## X. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

### A. *Privilege of Floor*

The committee respectfully requests synod to grant the privilege of the floor to members of the committee, the Administrator, and to Counselor Donald Oosterhouse when matters pertaining to the Ministers' Pension Fund are discussed.

### B. *New Members*

The committee requests synod to elect two committee members (one Canadian and one from the United States) for three years or less (See V above) from the following:

<u>Canadian Nominees</u>	<u>United States Nominees</u>
*Mr. Hendrik Kreeft	*Mr. Gordon Dornbush
Mr. Cornelis W. Hartog	Mr. Ray Vander Weele

\*Denotes incumbent

### C. *Separate United States and Canadian Pension Plans*

The committee requests synod to grant a one-year extension in the preparation of the separate plans.

#### *Ground:*

Synod of 1979 had set a tentative date of January 1, 1981 for beginning the separations and the separate plans. Despite the considerable work already accomplished, the committee could not be ready by February 15, 1980, to present the plans to the Synod of 1980. Therefore, the committee will now try to have everything ready by February 15, 1981, for the Synod of 1981 so that the separate plans become effective January 1, 1982.

### D. *Housing Allowance*

The committee requests synod to designate \$3,000 of the ministers' pension as a reasonable housing allowance for United States income tax purposes (IRS Revenue Ruling 1.107 - 1).

### E. *Early Retirement*

In cooperation with the Synodical Interim Committee the Ministers' Pension Committee recommends "that synod be advised to grant ministers the option of retiring at the age of 62, with the approval of the classes involved, under the reduced pension scale adopted by the Synod of 1978" (Acts of Synod pp. 376ff.).

### F. *Supplemental Fund Quota*

The committee requests synod to continue for 1981 a quota of 75 cents per family for the Supplemental Fund of which two-thirds is estimated to

be required to meet extraordinary "necessity of life" needs of retired or disabled ministers, widows, and orphans, and one-third of which is estimated to be required to pay "once in a lifetime" moves (as defined) of the retired ministers, or, if the minister has not been paid such an allowance, then of his widow.

*Ground:*

Since there is insufficient experience under the 1979 quota of 75 cents per family, the amount of the request for 1981 is held at 75 cents per family.

*G. Benefits, Quotas, and Contributions*

The Pension Committee, desiring to meet some of the needs of retirees and widows arising from inflation (see IX above) and at the same time trying to keep the quota increase reasonable, recommends to synod the following for 1981:

Resolved, that this committee recommends to synod that Part 5, subpart 2-B II of the RETIREMENT PLAN for Ministers of the Christian Reformed Church be amended, effective January 1, 1981, to read as follows:

II. One-twelfth of \$5,724

provided that synod increases the per-family quota from \$32.00 to \$34.00 for 1981 and that synod increases Contributions-Other from \$1,400 to \$1,485 for 1981.

Ministers' Pension Committee  
Julius F. Mellema, chairman  
Rev. Henry R. De Bolster  
Gordon Dornbush  
Rev. Marinus Goote  
Gerald Knol  
Hendrik Kreeft  
Kenneth E. Olthoff  
Administrator:  
Garrett C. Van de Riet

## REPORT 18

## SERMONS FOR READING SERVICES

The publishing of Volume 24 (1979) of the *Living Word* sermon series went very well. Our subscription list shows a net increase of thirteen subscribers and the fees enabled us to be completely self-financing. We continue to enjoy a good relationship with our printers, K. Knight Publishing Company of St. Catharines. The printer looks after both the printing and the mailing of the sermons. The interest of this company in issuing these sermons regularly and in an easily read format helps us considerably.

Our subscription support continues to come mainly from our Canadian churches as the following summary indicates:

	English	English and Dutch
Alberta	27	4
British Columbia	12	5
Eastern Canada	6	
Saskatchewan & Manitoba	4	
Ontario	56	22
United States	13	1
Individual subscribers	11	
Foreign subscribers	6	
	135	32
		Total: 167 subscribers

The committee sent a questionnaire to the subscribers to determine the frequency and the manner in which our published sermons are used. Very happily, more than two-thirds of the questionnaires were returned. This in itself indicates that the sermons are being read before use in the churches. The responses further indicated that the sermons continue to be used mainly in vacant churches when no pulpit supplies are available; some congregations also distribute the sermons to those unable to attend church services; and some unorganized groups use the sermons for their worship services. A number of respondents observed that the sermons tended to be too short, but at least two or three others observed they were too long. One may conclude that sermon readers must take care not to read too rapidly and, perhaps, singing should play a greater role in our worship. The responses also indicated that the churches could be served equally well with fewer sermons and especially fewer "special occasion" messages.

The committee has, therefore, decided to publish thirty instead of forty English sermons in 1980. We will again publish a booklet of five Dutch sermons. This will provide sufficient selectivity for the churches and

enable us to keep the subscription rate at its present level of \$30.00 for the English sermons and \$35.00 for the English and Dutch sermons. Publishing these sermons in five booklets of six sermons each will also give us adequate time to edit the submitted manuscripts. Pastors whose sermons are published will continue to receive a token honorarium of \$20.00.

Some confusion continues to exist because of the misinformation in the 1979 Yearbook. This should be corrected in the next issue. All correspondence should be sent to the secretary-treasurer of the committee,\* not to our printers. We hope more space will be allotted to our committee in the pages of the Banner to better inform our churches of the availability of the sermons.

The Rev. M. Lise has replaced the Rev. H. D. Praamsma on the committee. We will propose a duo to fill the now-vacant spot of alternate to the committee.

#### Recommendations

1. That synod approve the publication of the *Living Word* sermon series from January 1, 1981 to December 31, 1981;
2. That synod commend the use of this sermon series to our churches;
3. That synod inform the churches, by way of this report, to send all correspondence regarding the publication and subscriptions to the Secretary-Treasurer;
4. That synod fill the vacancy for an alternate member of the committee from the duo of the Rev. J. De Jong (Georgetown) and the Rev. S. VanderMeer (New Market);
5. That synod continue the *Living Word*—Sermons for Reading Services Committee.

#### Sermons for Reading Services Committee

M. N. Greidanus, chairman  
P. Nicolai, secretary-treasurer  
M. Contant  
M. Lise

\*Address of Committee, P. Nicolai, secretary-treasurer, *Living Word*, 27 Dittmer Crescent, Rexdale, ON M9W 4P7

## REPORT 19

## SYNODICAL COMMITTEE ON RACE RELATIONS

## I. COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

SCORR Members, with their terms of office, are as follows:

Dr. Richard Mouw, chairman; Grand Rapids, MI (1980)  
 Mr. Steven Rhodes, vice-chairman; Chicago, IL (1980)  
 Rev. Jason Chen, secretary; Iowa City, IA (1982)  
 Mr. Gary Avalos; San Diego, CA (1982)  
 Ms. Sylvia Clahchischilli; Fort Wingate, NM (1981)  
 Mr. Calvin Hulst; Holland, MI (1980)  
 Ms. Carol Kramer; Ireton, IA (1980)  
 Dr. John Kromminga; Grand Rapids, MI (1982)  
 Mr. Lyle Longclaws; Winnipeg, MB (1981)  
 Dr. John Orkar; Halifax, NS (1980)  
 Rev. Gerry Postema; Big Rapids, MI (1981)  
 Ms. Jeannie Rodriguez; Denver, CO (1981)  
 Mr. Ted Taylor; Washington, D.C. (1982)  
 Mr. Herb Van Denend; Hawthorne, NJ (1982)  
 Rev. John Van Ryn; Grand Rapids, MI (1981)

## II. INTRODUCTION

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. . . ." (II Cor. 5:18).

"The old has passed away," says Paul, "and the new has come." He was talking about people who have become new in Christ. The newness which is the result of God's gracious work is apparent in the Christian Reformed Church as well as in individual lives; it is apparent in race relations in the denomination; it is exciting and the members of SCORR praise God for it. Thriving multiracial ministries, congregations with multiracial staffs and a wide variety of gifts among the members, renewed commitments from agencies in the CRC to bend fresh effort to the task of serving people of all colors, Christian schools with multiracial staffs and multiracial classrooms, congregations that experience racial change in their neighborhood and decide to stay and minister—all these are signs of God's renewing work of reconciliation. All this is from God.

We estimate that there are two thousand minority adults affiliated with the CRC, or about one percent of the denomination. These members are concentrated in about sixty congregations. Of these two thousand adults, almost half are Native American; about one-fourth are Black. The next smallest group is Hispanic, and the smallest group is Asian.

In addition to the sixty congregations which we mentioned, there are another forty or more congregations carrying out their ministries in

neighborhoods that have changed or are changing racially. The ministry of racial reconciliation is an immediate challenge to these one-hundred-odd congregations, and they in turn are the focal point for the denomination's ministry of racial reconciliation.

Against this background, it is perhaps easier to understand the significance of synod's decisions last year with regard to SCORR. And it is important to understand those decisions, for last year was a watershed for SCORR in three important areas.

The first was in the committee itself. The guidelines for SCORR membership were changed so that the committee is more representative both of the various minority groups in the church and of the agencies with which SCORR works.

The second major change was the creation of an advisory council made up of the heads of staff of the agencies working with SCORR on developing minority leadership. This council provides a forum for developing minority leadership with SCORR, and for advising on more effective ways to develop that leadership.

The third major change was the approval by synod of a new staff position to work at developing minority leadership in the CRC. The task that needs to be done is a major one—to know the needs and aspirations of the variety of minority persons seeking to be served by CRC agencies and institutions, and to assist the efforts of the agencies to meet those needs effectively. When this specific need was identified by the agencies, it became clear that SCORR would need a very unusual person—a person who combined insight into a wide range of minority situations, the ability to communicate with diverse people, and the ability to design programs within highly structured settings. That the search process turned up a person whose gifts and experience fitted him so well for this task is another reason for SCORR and the CRC to praise God. Later in this report SCORR's nominee to the synod for this new position will be introduced.

In addition to these developments, SCORR is also focusing on congregations in transitional settings. These congregations face peculiar needs and peculiar challenges. They form what is at once the most frustrating and the most promising dimension of racial reconciliation. Culturally, historically, and sociologically they appear to be trapped in their homogeneity; patterns of North American race relations and church life seem to show that these churches have no real future. But by God's grace things are being made new. Congregations are staying to minister; here and there Christians move back into neighborhoods long thought unlivable; congregations catch a vision of the excitement and challenge of racial reconciliation in their own back yard; and then begins the halting journey toward living in faithful obedience, a journey of learning by tedious trial and error how to do effective ministry across the barriers of class and culture and race, and deep distrust. The churches that choose that journey need resources and support; and they need both for the long haul. SCORR is making assistance to such congregations a priority; we are providing them with a specialist as a resource. This is the primary task of SCORR's other staff position.



### III. PROGRAMS

#### A. *Scholarships*

During 1979 SCORR provided assistance to twenty-two students at Calvin, Dordt, RBC, Trinity, and Calvin Seminary. These minority young people, from CRC ministries all over the country, seek a Christian education to prepare them for kingdom service. After the college has accepted them, determined their financial needs, and put together an aid package for them, the college may request additional assistance from SCORR if there is still unmet need.

This program, begun by synod in 1971, is important in developing minority leadership. As SCORR develops the resources for covenant nurture of minority young people, this program must be an ever stronger part of the circle of covenant nurture.

#### B. *Dawntreader Christian School*

Another part of the circle of covenant nurture is the Christian grade school, and Dawntreader helps to make the circle for minority congregations in the Paterson area. A multiracial school with a multiracial staff, Dawntreader provides Christian education in an urban setting. Last year we reported that they had five teachers and 87 students; this year they have seven staff persons and 116 students.

In 1979 SCORR made it possible for Dawntreader to add a full-time person whose specific task is to strengthen the ties between home, school, and church.

#### C. *Chicago West Side Christian School*

Another urban Christian school, this one associated with the ministries of Lawndale and Garfield churches in Chicago, is Chicago West Side. This school, located in the Lawndale church building, has fifty-seven students and four full-time teachers plus part-time staff. Last year SCORR provided the school with a general grant for operations, as part of our continuing assistance to them. This school is bursting its seams and will very soon face the challenge of finding other facilities.

#### D. *Roseland Christian Ministry Center*

The development and growth of RCMC over the past four years has been one of the most exciting events in CRC urban ministry. Located in what used to be the Back to God Hour building, RCMC is the result of the work and prayers and dreams of the three Chicagoland classes. In addition to classical support, SCORR joins CRWRC and Home Missions in providing financial assistance to RCMC.

In addition to a worshiping congregation, RCMC provides family night, sports, tutoring, Bible studies, a thrift shop, and help for senior citizens.

The three dimensions of the RCMC program can be described in three words: service, worship, and training. The training dimension is of special importance to SCORR. Seminarian interns are trained for urban ministry; CRC volunteers learn new skills in urban mission and racial

reconciliation; minority young people with leadership skills are provided apprenticeship opportunities under the tutelage of skilled multiracial staff.

#### *E. Baxter Community Center*

Last year we reported a turnaround at Baxter Community Center. SCORR discontinued its grant support to Baxter, but has continued to provide consultation to them as they renew their Christian commitments and find their role for the 1980s. Under the directorship of Mr. Gene Proctor, a Black member of the CRC, Baxter has been reestablished on a sound financial base and has recovered its Christian identity. Baxter provides services to a community that is both minority and poor, offering its community child care, tutoring, recreation, counseling, and assistance with emergency food and home repair needs. SCORR has worked closely with Baxter for four years, and has seen the realization of its Christian ministry of racial reconciliation. A revitalized Baxter is a valuable training resource for Christian Reformed churches in transition in its neighborhood, as well as an important ministry opportunity for those churches.

#### *F. Inner City Christian Foundation*

A group of Christians dedicated to rebuilding old neighborhoods, ICCF has incorporated and is rehabilitating abandoned housing. ICCF also has a training component to provide on-the-job training for minority young people under the direction of a Black Christian trainer. SCORR's grant to ICCF helps hire this trainer. ICCF is a ministry in the neighborhoods surrounding several Christian Reformed congregations located where racial change has occurred.

#### *G. Congregations in Racially Changed and Changing Neighborhoods*

As was noted before, congregations in transition provide a special opportunity and challenge in racial reconciliation. SCORR provides assistance to these churches as they carry out their neighborhood ministry. Consultation, sometimes in cooperation with the Home Missions Mission Analysis and Projection (MAP) process, brings them support and encouragement, advice and planning.

#### *H. Minority Leadership Development*

To see what SCORR's new staff person will do, one must look at two basic areas: minority congregations, and agencies of the denomination. Within each of these areas a set of needs can be identified. For example, in minority and multiracial congregations:

How can potential or already existing minority leaders be identified, and their gifts developed for the kingdom?

What can parents, pastors, consistories, congregations contribute to the development of those gifts?

What kind of training is needed to develop those gifts?

How do minority members of the CRC perceive the available resources of the denomination, and what do they perceive their own needs to be?

How can pastors and teachers and local leaders be more effective in nurturing leadership gifts?

And similarly, there are needs in the agencies:

How can existing programs be made more effective for the minority members of the CRC?

In what ways can agencies cooperate to increase each other's effectiveness in serving minorities?

What new programs need to be initiated in order to meet unmet needs for developing the gifts of leadership?

SCORR is assigning to its new staff person the task of *analyzing* what the situation is now among the agencies and congregations, *identifying* what needs to be done, and *coordinating* the efforts in congregations and agencies to accomplish the goal of developing minority leadership.

For this task SCORR has appointed the Rev. William Ipema whose gifts and experience suit him in a remarkable way for this position. In addition to six years of experience in the business world, the Rev. Mr. Ipema has had nine years of experience in the multiracial ministry, including ministry to street gangs in Chicago, development of urban training for urban ministers, design and administration of a degree program for urban ministries, administration of a new urban community that is multiracial and multiclass in makeup, and the design of a cooperative program for seminaries which provides a year of urban education to their students. We rejoice that God has led the Rev. Mr. Ipema to accept this task of minority leadership development and commend him to synod for this position.

In building minority leadership, one concept that appears to hold much promise is that of internships with CRC agencies. This would involve significant costs which are not in our budget for this year or next. SCORR wishes to alert the synod that this concept is under consideration, and to note that if SCORR does move in this direction, we would commit ourselves to raising the necessary money in addition to our present budget proposals.

#### IV. SALARY POLICY

SCORR presents the following information regarding staff salaries: SCORR has adopted the synodical guidelines for Executive Level II in setting full-time staff salaries for 1980. Salaries for 1980 are set between the low- and the midpoint for this level. In addition SCORR provides hospitalization, pension plan, life insurance, workmen's compensation, social security taxes (employer's share, where applicable), and four weeks paid vacation. Each of the two staff persons has a part-time secretary. Totals for wages and fringes are presented in the financial information in the Agenda for Synod 1980, Financial and Business Supplement.

## V. SCORR MANDATE

In 1977 synod reviewed SCORR's mandate for three years. In 1979 the scope of the work was enlarged, a new staff position authorized, and the committee itself was reorganized. This is the first year of operation under the new provisions. It appears to be the way of wisdom to continue under the same mandate for the immediate future. We will present a recommendation to that effect.

## VI. MATTERS FOR SYNODICAL ACTION

1. That synod approve the appointment of the Rev. William Ipema to an initial term of two years to fill the SCORR position created by the Synod of 1979 for the development of minority leadership in the CRC.
2. That synod appoint new SCORR members to replace retiring members from the list of nominees SCORR presents to synod.
3. That synod approve a three-year extension of SCORR's mandate as originally given in 1971 and as enlarged by the Synod of 1979.
4. That synod approve a quota for SCORR for 1981 of \$2.40.
5. That synod approve the reappointment of Karl Westerhof for a three-year term.

Synodical Committee on Race Relations  
Karl J. Westerhof, Executive Secretary

## REPORT 20

**SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA  
CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH SYNOD TRUSTEES**

The Synodical Interim Committee, meeting corporately as the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees, met in September, February, and May to carry out the mandates assigned by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. This report is a summary of activities we have carried on in behalf of synod during the interim between the synods of 1979 and 1980.

### I. ORGANIZATION

Synod elected the following persons representing various regions to serve as SIC members and trustees of synod:

Rev. P. Van Egmond (Western Canada); Rev. J. Klomps, Mr. W. Posthumus (Eastern Canada); Mr. J. Van Andel, Rev. L. J. Dykstra (Far West United States); Mr. F. Velzen, Rev. J. Kok (Mississippi River to Rocky Mountains); Rev. D. Wisse (Eastern United States); Mr. M. Ozinga, Mr. I. Slagter, Rev. L. Hofman, Rev. A. J. Vander Griend, Mr. G. Raterink, and Mr. A. Van Tuinen (Central United States). The Stated Clerk, Denominational Financial Coordinator, and Synodical Treasurer serve as *ex officio* members of SIC and the Board of Trustees.

The Synodical Interim Committee elected the following officers for the current year: president, Leonard J. Hofman; vice-president, Ira R. Slagter; and recording secretary, Alvin J. Vander Griend.

The Trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees, respectively, elected the following corporation officers: president, Leonard J. Hofman; vice-president, Ira R. Slagter; secretary, William P. Brink; assistant secretary, Alvin J. Vander Griend; treasurer, Lester Ippel; and assistant treasurer, Jack A. Peterson.

The Synodical Interim Committee elected the Rev. Alvin J. Vander Griend to serve as the Alternate Stated Clerk for the year 1979 to 1980.

The following subcommittees function for the Synodical Interim Committee:

*Church Polity and Program Committee*—L. Hofman, I. Slagter, A. Vander Griend, J. Klomps, M. Ozinga, W. Spoelhof, and *ex officio* members, A. Vroon and W. P. Brink.

*Finance Committee*—C. Ackerman, M. Ozinga, G. Raterink, H. Rempe, A. Van Tuinen, M. Veltkamp, and *ex officio* members, A. Vroon, J. Peterson, and W. P. Brink.

The Synodical Interim Committee meets three times each year and its subcommittees meet each month, with additional meetings when necessary.

II. NOMINATIONS FOR SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Members and trustees whose terms expire in 1980 are the following:

District	Member	Alternate
Western Canada	Rev. P. Van Egmond	Rev. N. B. Knoppers
Eastern Canada	Mr. W. Posthumus	Mr. S. Harkema
Mississippi River to Rocky Mountains	Rev. J. Kok	Rev. H. Peterson
Central United States	Mr. M. Ozinga Mr. I. Slagter Rev. L. Hofman	Mr. C. Ackerman Dr. W. Spoelhof Rev. J. De Kruyter

All members and alternates above are eligible for reelection except the Revs. P. Van Egmond and H. Peterson.

The SIC has consulted with the classes of the various districts and received suggestions for nominations. Some classes still to meet will send their profiles in March. The nominations will be finalized at the May meetings of the SIC and forwarded to synod in supplementary Report 20-A.

III. INTERIM APPOINTMENTS

During the past year the Synodical Interim Committee has approved the following appointments to boards and committees where vacancies have occurred.

A. Board Appointments

Board or Committee	Classis	Member	Alternate	Term
Synodical Deputies	Alta. N.	Rev. J. Wessling	Rev. A. Venema	1981
	Minn. N.		Rev. G. Vanden Berg	1980
	Zeeland		Rev. H. Vander Well	1982
Calvin College Board of Trustees	Atlantic NE.		Rev. B. Van Antwerpen	1982
	Brit. Col.		Rev. G. Vink	1982
	Columbia		Dr. J. Vander Beek	1981
	Minn. N.		Rev. A. Groen	1980
CR World Missions	Alta. N.	Rev. J. B. Vos	Rev. C. Vriend	1980
	Brit. Col.		Rev. S. Heslinga	1980
	Toronto			1982
CR Home Missions	Alta. N.	Rev. H. Numan, Jr. Rev. R. Walter	Rev. P. Boodt	1981
	Brit. Col.		Rev. P. Sluys	1982
	Cadillac			1982
	Calif. S.	Mr. Hans Lappinga	1981	
	Minn. N.	Rev. B. DeJong	Dr. W. Stienstra	1982
Wis.		Mr. A. Van Dyken	1982	
Board of Publications	Atlantic NE		Mr. H. Lane	1982
	Alta. S.		Rev. P. Meyer	1980
	Calif. S.		Rev. C. VanderPlate	Rev. M. Zylstra
CRWRC	Calif. S.		Mr. S. Cole	1980

## B. *Committee Appointments*

1. Committee on Synodical Studies re Women in Office and Decisions Pertaining to the Office of Deacon—Three of the members appointed to the above committee by the Synod of 1979 resigned from the committee: Dr. A. Bandstra, Dr. H. Ten Harmsel, and the Rev. J. B. Vos. Using the list supplied by the Synodical Advisory Committee, the Synodical Interim Committee made several appointments for these vacancies, some of which were declined. The Synodical Interim Committee filled the vacancies with the appointment of Miss Nola Oppewall, the Rev. Peter Jonker, and Dr. Carl Kromminga.

### 2. Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts

a. At the request of the above committee the Synodical Interim Committee approved the appointment of a subcommittee of coordinating persons consisting of Mr. Louis Van Ess, Mr. Ralph Vunderink, Mr. James Hoekenga, and Mrs. Vonnie Poortenga.

b. The SIC also appointed additional regular members in accord with a mandate of synod. These additional members were Mrs. Margaret Kleis, the Rev. John Kerssies, and as alternate, the Rev. Ed Meyer.

3. Contemporary Testimony Committee—Dr. Stanley Wiersma requested that he be removed from the committee. The SIC appointed Dr. Larry Den Besten to replace him as a member of the committee.

4. Ministerial Information Service—In view of the fact that the Rev. Donald Negen accepted a call and moved from the area, at the request of the Ministerial Information Service, the SIC appointed the Rev. Harold Hiemstra to fill the unexpired term of Mr. Negen.

5. Translation and Educational Assistance Committee—In accord with the mandate of synod (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 86), it was necessary to appoint to this committee one member-at-large to represent educational institutions and one member-at-large to represent agencies engaged in publication and distribution of Reformed literature abroad. The TEAC members requested the SIC to choose these two members-at-large from a nomination they submitted. The following members of TEAC were appointed by the SIC:

a. Dr. Edwin Roels, member, and Mr. John Brondsema, alternate, representing agencies in publication and distribution of Reformed literature abroad.

b. Dr. Robert Vander Vennen, member, and Dr. Sidney Greidanus, alternate, representing educational institutions.

6. Committee on Christian Care for Retarded Persons—In view of a vacancy, the Synodical Interim Committee appointed Dr. Tom Hoeksema to serve on the Committee on Christian Care for Retarded Persons.

#### IV. DENOMINATIONAL PROGRAM COORDINATION

##### A. *Coordination Planning and Studies*

In accord with the mandate of synod and the rules for the Synodical Interim Committee, the SIC promoted planning, coordinating, and the setting of priorities of programs by the synodical agencies individually and together, in keeping with synodical guidelines.

During the church year the Stated Clerk, the Denominational Financial Coordinator, and the Synodical Interim Committee, as well as its Polity and Finance subcommittees, have held many conferences and consultations with executive staff members and board, or committee representatives of our denominational agencies. Our denominational agencies are seeking to realize the oneness of the mission of the church and hold consultations with the SIC and with each other. The SIC staff and its subcommittees have been very happy to serve the agencies with advice when requested and to assist in the total coordination of our efforts.

Again this year meetings of the Interagency Advisory Council, made up of the executives of denominational agencies, were held regularly for discussion of mutual objectives. These meetings afford opportunity for understanding the programs of our agencies and of sharing the responsibilities of leadership.

During the past year the Missions Coordination Council, comprised of the heads of staff of the Back to God Hour, the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions, the Christian Reformed Board for World Missions, and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee, along with the president of the SIC and the Stated Clerk, has met for the sharing of pertinent board actions and information and discussion of projected plans and goals of our agencies.

One of the projects approved by the Missions Coordination Council was the publication of a joint periodical, *The Mission Courier*. This periodical has served a useful purpose in reaching our people with information about our denominational mission agencies. The MCC decided to continue publication of the *Courier* for another year.

During this past year the Missions Coordination Council adopted a statement of objectives. These objectives include the exchange of information, joint communication projects, joint formation of work to be undertaken with respect to new ventures or major expansion, and a position taken to aid in the resolution of interagency difficulties. Furthermore, each agency shall review its current ventures during the next year and determine whether their programs could involve participation by other agencies. The MCC will advise the agencies with respect to joint involvement.

All of the agencies have submitted to the Synodical Interim Committee revisions with respect to their programming and have presented revisions to be incorporated in the denominational employee charts.

Interviews were held with all of our major agencies at the February meetings of the Synodical Interim Committee. At these interviews each board and agency presented a comprehensive picture of its program and new activities projected for the coming year.



The Synodical Interim Committee expresses gratitude to God for the programs being carried on by the boards and committees of the Christian Reformed Church. God has richly blessed our boards, our staffs, and all who are serving our denomination at home and abroad.

#### *B. Ministers' Pension Committee—Option for Early Retirement*

The Synodical Interim Committee has taken note of the fact that synod in 1975 and again in 1978 approved a retirement plan for ministers of the Christian Reformed Church which included an option for early retirement. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1975, pp. 364ff; 1978, pp. 375ff., and p. 90.)

While synod adopted the Ministers' Pension Committee schedule which permits the retirement of ministers at the age of sixty-two with reduced pension benefits, an item which has been overlooked is the fact that retirement must be consistent with decisions re retirement adopted by synod.

Article 18a of the Church Order provides that "a minister who has reached retirement age, or who because of physical or mental disability is incapable of performing the duties of his office, is eligible for retirement. Retirement shall take place with the approval of the consistory and classis in accordance with the synodical regulations."

It should be noted that Article 18a specifies two valid reasons for retirement of a minister: (1) retirement age and (2) physical or mental disability.

With respect to retirement age, the Synod of 1956 decided that "ministers have the privilege of retiring at the age of 65 years" (Acts of Synod 1956, p. 19). At this particular point in time, there is no synodical rule by which classes are permitted to approve the retirement of a minister at the age of sixty-two with reduced pension benefits.

In view of the fact that synod has adopted a plan proposed by the Ministers' Pension Committee allowing for the option of retirement at the age of sixty-two with reduced pension benefits, the Synodical Interim Committee, along with the Ministers' Pension Committee, recommends to the Synod of 1980 the adoption of a rule which states, "Ministers of the Word shall be granted the privilege of retiring at the age of sixty-two, with the approval of the classes involved, under the reduced pension scale adopted by the Synod of 1978."

#### *C. SCORR—Second Staff Position*

The Synod of 1979 established "a second staff position for SCORR for the task of recruiting and developing minority leadership with the CRC, for an initial term of two years, to be filled from a nomination(s) presented by SCORR" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 29).

At the request of the Synodical Committee on Race Relations, the Synodical Interim Committee concurred in their judgment that, should the search process turn up the right person to serve SCORR in a second staff position, such a person might be placed in the position on a temporary basis as soon as possible, and that this person's name may be recommended for appointment to the Synod of 1980.

SCORR followed the procedure above and, after carefully screening many applicants, appointed the Rev. William Ipema as the second staff person in accord with the provisions above.

*D. Resolution of Differences Between the FNC and the Board of Home Missions*

The Synod of 1979 urged the FNC and the Board of Home Missions to seek to resolve differences indicated in the FNC report and the report of the Home Missions Board by the time of the September 27, 1979, SIC meeting. The SIC was authorized to make interim decisions if these differences were not resolved by this time. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, p. 101, Item 4.)

A report was received by the SIC indicating the resolution of the specified differences between the FNC and the Board of Home Missions. In view of this report, further action on the part of the SIC was not necessary.

V. SYNODICALLY APPROVED AGENCIES

The Synodical Interim Committee is conducting its annual review of the various programs of the agencies accredited by synod for financial support. An analysis of the program of each agency is made and the program charts are maintained and updated for each accredited agency. All changes of programs are studied and noted.

In accord with synodical mandates, all agencies seeking accreditation present their program materials to the SIC for thorough review by its Church Polity and Program Committee before they are forwarded to the Finance Committee for study of the financial structure of the agency.

When reviews have been completed and presented to the May meeting of the Synodical Interim Committee, further recommendations will be presented to synod in the SIC supplementary report.

VI. SYNODICAL MANDATE RE HEALING MINISTRIES

The Synod of 1978 mandated that the Synodical Interim Committee continue research into the matter of a healing ministry for ministers, consistories, and congregations in situations of stress, utilizing in the study the assistance and expertise of leaders in our denominational agencies and others who have indicated their willingness to serve, and that the SIC be requested to report its findings and recommendations to synod. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 27f.)

The Synodical Interim Committee presented a progress report in 1979 (Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 413f.). Synod received this progress report and referred a communication with suggestions for a broadened mandate to the SIC and its Healing Ministries Committee.

The Synodical Interim Committee herewith presents the report of its Healing Ministries subcommittee. Synod is requested to receive this report as information. Both the Synodical Interim Committee and its subcommittee will appreciate suggestions that our members and consistories may have with respect to the mandate with which they are dealing. Your prayers for the committee will also be greatly appreciated.

REPORT OF THE HEALING MINISTRIES COMMITTEE  
TO THE SYNODICAL INTERIM COMMITTEE

February 11, 1980

The committee began its work on April 10, 1979, and has held a total of six all-day meetings since that time. Mrs. Gladys Hasper, who was appointed as an alternate member of the committee, has served in place of Mrs. Jacoba Hofman for the last several months.

THE ACTIVITIES of the committee include the following:

1. The study and appraisal through discussion of a number of resource materials which we have collected, or which have been referred to us.

2. Consultation with resource persons who met with the committee on its invitation and who gave generously of their time and shared their expertise and insights with us. These consultants included a pastor, a psychiatrist, and a representative of the Ministerial Information Service. Representatives of our committee have also met with a special committee of the Reformed Church in America whose concerns closely parallel those of our committee. Liaison with the RCA will continue in the future. Representatives of our committee also met with a special committee of NAPARC for the purpose of analyzing the computerized results of a questionnaire sent to alumni of five seminaries closely affiliated with NAPARC. Updated printouts and the results will be shared with our committee in the future.

3. A questionnaire was sent to all consistories and pastors of the CRC and also to selected denominational agencies. To date we have received 345 responses. These responses are presently being analyzed by a special subcommittee consisting of the Rev. and Mrs. Jacob Hasper and the Rev. and Mrs. Leonard Hofman. The collation of opinions and judgments will be sent to the SIC as soon as possible.

AREAS REQUIRING STUDY, REFLECTION, AND RECOMMENDATION have been identified in several ways by our committee: from the committee's study and reflection on the resource materials, the mandate of the committee, the contributions of resource persons, and the questionnaire responses. Preliminary position papers for committee discussion have been written on a number of these areas and have been useful for defining ways in which *preventive* as well as *corrective* measures can be developed and identified with respect to areas of crisis and difficulty.

We have been giving preliminary attention to a number of items, most of which are closely interrelated. A summary of these items, not listed in order of priority, follows:

1. The calling procedures of our CRC. The committee believes that there are a number of improvements that need to be made in the method of calling as well as in processes of calling which are not being fully utilized among us and to which attention should be given. We hope to prepare specific guidelines for the churches with respect to these matters.

2. There is need to clarify the meaning of a "call" to the ministry. How certain commonly held attitudes and understandings of this "call"

ought to be corrected or modified is of concern to us and will be given further study.

3. Closely related to the above items is the question of the tenure of a pastor who has accepted a call to a local congregation. At the present time one-third of our ministers in active service serve in positions for which specified terms of appointments have been defined. Our committee is exploring whether such an option might be implemented by our congregations which would then call a pastor for a specified number of years. After this period, the relationship could be mutually terminated or the call and assignment renegotiated by the pastor and the calling church.

4. There is urgent need to provide possible procedures and to make available necessary resources to consistories, congregations, and pastors when difficulties in their relationship arise. The value of "pastoral teams" and a "pastor of pastors" have been suggested by several respondents to the questionnaire and will be further explored by us.

5. The need for the revision of Church Order Article 17a is also an urgent matter. We believe that some procedures must be defined which will make possible the dissolution of the relationship of a pastor to his congregation before matters reach the state of an "intolerable situation." The very term *intolerable situation* does not reflect the relationship that ought to obtain between fellow Christians.

6. The need for some form of healing ministry for pastors, consistories, and congregations after the pastoral relationship has been dissolved is also an urgent matter. How can such healing ministries be implemented and what sort of assistance do churches and pastors need in such situations?

7. Leaves of absence are sometimes given when crisis situations are beginning to arise. We believe that this is an inconsistent and illegitimate application of the Church Order provisions regarding the purpose of such leaves. Attention will continue to be given to this concern.

8. Methods and procedures defining how pastors, consistories, and congregations can institute and benefit from periodic mutual evaluations is closely related to a number of the above concerns.

9. We have also discussed the present procedures in certifying persons for candidacy. At present the major responsibility is laid on the seminary faculty in this process. Should the church itself be more closely and directly involved in the supervision and certification of our students and others for candidacy? And how can this best be accomplished?

10. The need for training of elders and deacons in the privileges and duties of their offices is also related to the above concerns.

11. We are also seeking to determine why persons leave the ministry, either temporarily or permanently, and what relationship these factors may have to some of the crisis situations that develop between pastors and congregations.

12. We are also seeking data as to the causes of failure in the ministry. This we have found is not an easy matter to determine and seems related very closely to such things as how one regards his call to ministry, how the church conceives of this, what the pastor's and the congregation's expectations for ministry are, and so forth.

As we continue our study, we ask your continued prayerful support for this important work. We wish to do full justice in our proposals to the tradition in which we stand and to the contemporary situations in church and society which influence the shape which the principles in that tradition must take in our day.

Leonard Hofman, chairman	Jacoba Hofman
Richard De Ridder, secretary	Fred Hollebeek
Harold Bode	Jim Kok
William P. Brink	Ira Slagter
Joanna De Jong	David Vander Ploeg
Gladys Hasper	

## VII. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

### A. Background

The Synod of 1977 adopted the following recommendations (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 33):

1. That synod advise the consistories, under normal circumstances, to grant transfer of membership rather than a certificate of dismission to members seeking to affiliate with a church in ecclesiastical fellowship.
2. That synod mandate the SIC to propose to the 1978 Synod a more appropriate method of sharing membership information when members move within or out of the denomination.

In 1979 the SIC provided synod with a proposed statement of membership, explaining its format and usage. This was referred once more to the SIC for further refinement.

Accordingly, the Synodical Interim Committee recommends that synod approve the use of one simple form providing more adequate membership information to be used in the transfer of baptized membership, communicant members, single members, and families.

For more efficient usage the form to be used will be printed in a standard size (8½ x 11) and be made with an attached duplicate copy to be removed and retained by the sending church in its archives. Along with the original copy a receipt form will also be attached to be returned by the receiving church to the sending church as an official acknowledgment.

The transfer form will include the information in Appendix 1.

### B. Recommendations

1. That synod adopt the proposed statement of membership for use in transferring members within the denomination and to churches in ecclesiastical fellowship.
2. That it be understood that when members choose to affiliate with a church not in ecclesiastical fellowship, the sending consistory should provide an appropriate statement of membership for that specific situation.

## VIII. SUPERVISION OF MEMBERSHIP IN EMERGING CHURCHES

A. *Mandate*

The Synod of 1979 made the following decision: "That synod take note of the inconsistency of requiring membership in emerging churches to be held by the calling consistories and by requiring home missionaries to hold memberships in their persons, and refer this matter to the SIC" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 68).

B. *Synodical Decisions Involved in Mandate*

1. With respect to the supervision of the membership of persons in emerging churches, the regulations of the Christian Reformed Church are found in Article 38a of the Church Order: "Groups of believers among whom no consistory can as yet be constituted shall be under the care of a neighboring consistory, designated by classis."

In the above article of the Church Order it is indicated that groups of believers, even when they are too small to be fully organized, do constitute the church and are entitled to the love and care of the church through the ministrations of a neighboring consistory. The article prescribes that classes shall designate the consistory which is to care for such groups of believers. Such a designation takes into account the proximity of the emerging church to the churches of the classis in which it is located.

The care of the unorganized church involves the holding of memberships, supervision of worship services, the administration of the sacraments, and Christian discipline.

2. The synodical mandate refers also to a rule "requiring home missionaries to hold memberships in their persons." We know of no place where synod has ever made a rule requiring home missionaries to hold membership in their persons.

It would appear that the rule to which reference is made is that which provides that "membership papers shall be deposited with the missionary as the duly appointed office-bearer of the church which he represents" (Acts of Synod 1959, pp. 77, 207).

C. *Analysis*

It should be observed that both Article 38 and the rule providing for the care of congregations by a home missionary, adopted in 1979, place the holding of memberships not in a person but in a duly constituted consistory.

The normal procedure *when an emerging church is within or near the confines of a classis* is that the classis shall designate a neighboring consistory to take the emerging church under its care, one of the aspects of such care being the holding and supervision of membership.

In the regulation pertaining to home missions, synod is dealing with a rule for *churches* which may be *far removed from the calling church*. In such cases the responsibility for assigning a church of the classis which is "a neighboring church" is not possible as a general rule.

Furthermore, synod recognizes that the credentials of the home missionary are often in a church that is somewhat removed from the church in which he works. Even though the church may be at some distance, membership papers are deposited with the missionary "as the duly appointed office-bearer of the church which he represents."

The home missionary, therefore, does not hold membership in his person, but he holds memberships as one who represents his calling church and the synod of the Christian Reformed Church through the assignments of the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions. The home missionary reports regularly both to the Board of Home Missions and to his calling church with respect to the memberships and the supervision of the memberships in the church which he is serving.

When the regulations of Article 38 of the Church Order and the regulations pertaining to the care given to a mission group through a home missionary as a representative of his calling church are properly understood, there does not appear to be any inconsistency. The church is looking out for the care of all members in emerging churches: in some circumstances through a classically designated consistory; and in other circumstances through a calling consistory (and the Board of Home Missions) represented by its home missionary.

#### *D. Recommendation*

The Synodical Interim Committee recommends that the Synod of 1980 declare that when properly understood, the holding of memberships in an emerging church by a neighboring consistory designated by classis and the holding of memberships by a home missionary as the representative and duly appointed office-bearer of his calling church do not constitute an inconsistency in the care of emerging churches.

#### IX. RULES WITH RESPECT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON APPOINTMENTS (Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 14f.; Rules for Synodical Procedure, p. 11.)

The Synod of 1979 adopted recommendations of the Synodical Interim Committee with respect to the rules for appointments to boards and committees. These rules were put into effect at the Synod of 1979 and have now been inserted into the Rules for Synodical Procedure.

At the Synod of 1979, the rules adopted by synod were helpful. However, in one instance confusion was caused by the fact that there was no clear delineation as to the presentation of nominations for study committees.

Section VI, B, rule 4a of the Rules for Synodical Procedure (p. 11) now reads as follows: "All study committees shall be appointed by synod from a nomination made by the advisory committee which drafted the mandate with the advice of the officers of synod."

The Synodical Interim Committee recommends to the Synod of 1980 that the following additional sentence be added to rule 4a above: The reporter of the advisory committee shall present the nominations on the floor of synod.

The Synodical Interim Committee recommends that the above recommendation be acted upon at an early session of the Synod of 1980.

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## X. COMMON ADDRESS, OFFICE, AND INCORPORATION IN CANADA

### A. *Mandate*

The Synod of 1979 adopted a threefold mandate with respect to a Canadian office, address, and incorporation:

1. That synod authorize the establishment of a common address and office for our denominational agencies and their registration under Canadian tax laws.
2. That synod authorize the creation of a Canadian corporation under the name of the Christian Reformed Church in North America to serve its boards, agencies, and committees.
3. That synod authorize the Synodical Interim Committee to call a meeting of representatives of the agencies and the Executive Secretary of the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada to work out the details involved in the actions above. (Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, p. 117.)

During this synodical year meetings have been held with the agencies as well as with the Rev. Arie Van Eek, representing the Council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada. Common agreement has been reached on several items:

1. The need for a Canadian office and address springs from the agencies. The purpose of the office is to carry out the programs and functions of these agencies. Since the program functions are clearly under the direction of synod itself through its boards and committees, one of the primary needs of the office is that of supporting services for the agencies.
2. It is recommended that we seek a person capable of handling the general management of the Canadian office, such as a general manager to work under the supervision of the business directors of our agencies. Personnel needed to operate the office shall be determined as the needs are specified by agency directors.
3. The consensus of the agencies is that the preferable location for a Canadian office would likely be in the area of London or Hamilton, Ontario.

A committee has been appointed to study and report on a recommended site for the office and address of our denomination in Canada. Further progress will be presented in supplementary Report 20-A.

### B. *Canadian Incorporation*

In order to process the decision re a Canadian incorporation, the Synodical Interim Committee has appointed a committee and has obtained the legal services of Mr. Albert J. Bakker of Ontario.

A committee consisting of the Stated Clerk, the Denominational Financial Coordinator, the Rev. John Klomps, and the Rev. Arie Van Eek have been appointed and are working on the refining of a proposal along with legal assistance from Mr. Albert Bakker and Mr. Berton Sevensma.

A further report on both the matter of a Canadian office and address and Canadian incorporation will be presented to synod through a supplementary report of the Synodical Interim Committee.



## XI. CONGREGATIONAL ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION

The Synod of 1963 decided that certain basic articles should be included in a complete form of incorporation of congregations proper for their local state or province (Acts of Synod 1963, pp. 51ff.).

In furtherance of this objective, the Synod of 1970 adopted a form of incorporation, including the basic elements which should appear in the incorporation of each congregation. This form was adopted to be used by each consistory with the understanding that an attorney employed by the consistory would draft these items in a form necessary to meet the requirements of the state or province in which the particular congregation is located.

Subsequent to the adoption in 1970 of the model form for incorporation of congregations, the denomination itself has been incorporated: the articles of incorporation and the bylaws of the Christian Reformed Church in North America were adopted by the Synod of 1974. (See Acts of Synod 1974, pp. 407-410; 1977, pp. 124-125.)

The Synodical Interim Committee and Attorney Berton Sevensma, legal consultant for the trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, decided that it would be helpful to update the articles of incorporation to be used as a guide for our congregations in drafting their articles of incorporation.

The revised articles of incorporation are presented to the Synod of 1980 as Appendix II of this report with the recommendation that synod adopt these model articles for use by our United States churches.

The Synodical Interim Committee also reports that Mr. Albert Bakker has been requested to work on a model of incorporation to be used by our Canadian churches. When the Canadian version has been prepared, it also will be presented to synod for approval.

## XII. PUBLICATIONS AND SERVICES

### A. *Acts and Agenda for Synod*

One of the annual responsibilities of the office of the Stated Clerk is the preparation of the Agenda for Synod and the Acts of Synod. The Rules for Synodical Procedure mark February 15 as the deadline for reports from standing and study committees for the printed agenda.

Synod has set March 15 as the latest date for materials to be received from classes, consistories, and individuals. The schedule calls for the printing of the Agenda for Synod to be completed by April 10 of each year.

### B. *The Yearbook*

The Yearbook of 1980 was published under the editorial direction of the Stated Clerk. The services of Mrs. Mary Braat and Miss Kathy Vander Stel of the Synodical Office staff were loaned to the Board of Publications for work on the Yearbook.

We are grateful for the assistance of all of our clerks, ministers, and others who sent in materials for the Yearbook and to Dr. Richard De

Ridder, who once again has written an annual review of the work of the denomination.

### C. *Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church*

During the past church year, the Synodical Interim Committee has again sent to all of our consistories updated materials for the Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church, "Your Church in Action," a looseleaf notebook provided for each consistory. Once again this year several consistories ordered a new notebook because the old one had been lost, misplaced, or had never been used. This large blue notebook should be kept available in every consistory room.

The Handbook of the Christian Reformed Church contains the following sections:

1. *Quotas and Offerings*—This section of the booklet contains financial data and a description of the programs carried on by all of our boards and agencies as well as by accredited agencies. Suggestions are made to assist in the scheduling of special offerings, and suggested announcements are offered for use when such offerings are received.

2. *Denominational Insights*—After a brief statement of some of the principles of Christian Reformed church government, suggestions are given for a well-organized consistory, its agenda, and rules for procedure.

3. *Ministers' Compensation Survey*—By mandate of synod the Synodical Interim Committee has presented each year since 1974 a compensation guide for ministers of the Word. This compensation guide is updated and approved by synod each year. It is sent to our congregations with the urging of synod that it be used in computing a fair salary for ministers of our denomination.

Work sheets are included for the use of the Finance Committee of each congregation in computing the minister's salary. A worksheet is also sent to each of our ministers for an annual review of compensation in the Christian Reformed denomination. All of our ministers are urged to assist the Denominational Financial Coordinator in the compilation of this material.

4. *Sight-Sound Programs*—Every congregation should avail itself, when looking for interesting program materials or information, of the wealth of artistic and effective presentations of the work of our Lord being carried on by our denomination through its agencies. The handbook for the consistory contains a complete directory of sight-sound programs available from our denominational agencies for showing in our congregations.

5. *Doctrinal and Ethical Decisions*—This section is indispensable for all who wish to know the stand of the Christian Reformed Church on various matters of doctrine and ethics.

6. *Your Church in Action: a slide/cassette program*—Each year since 1974 the Synodical Interim Committee has published a slide/cassette

program to go with the handbook. These programs are used at congregational meetings and in other meetings of the church. They help our members to become more completely informed about the work being carried out by our denomination and the blessings of the Lord upon this work.

We are very grateful that a very large percentage of our congregations this year sent in a very favorable response as to the helpfulness of our slide/cassette program. The current and past sets of the visual programs are also being used in many churches in their educational program.

#### *D. Index for Synodical Decisions*

The last edition of the Index for Synodical Decisions was published in October of 1976. The contents of this index are regularly revised and updated. A new edition should be ready for our churches in the fall of 1980.

#### *E. Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government*

The Manual of Christian Reformed Church Government, written by the Stated Clerk and Dr. Richard De Ridder, was published by the Education Department of the Christian Reformed Board of Publications in 1979. By agreement with the Board of Publications the materials will be revised and updated annually.

#### *F. Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure*

Each consistory and synodical delegate of the Christian Reformed Church is provided with a looseleaf notebook containing the Church Order and Rules for Synodical Procedure. During the past year once again updated pages of this looseleaf edition were supplied to every consistory. A complete updated edition will also be supplied to each delegate to the Synod of 1980.

Consistories are urged to keep this looseleaf edition as well as the Handbook for Christian Reformed Churches in a handy place in the consistory room.

#### *G. Agenda for Synod 1980 Financial and Business Directory*

For the past two synods the Denominational Financial Coordinator has compiled for the Finance Committee and for the synod an agenda of financial and business information. This year the Financial and Business Directory will be sent to every delegate of the Synod of 1980 and will be available upon request to all of our consistories.

### XIII. THE STATED CLERK

The Stated Clerk is an *ex officio* member of the Synodical Interim Committee as well as its secretary. He also serves as the general secretary of the denomination's corporate entities, the Christian Reformed Church in North America and the Christian Reformed Church synod trustees.

All official publications authorized by synod and/or the Synodical Interim Committee are edited by the Stated Clerk. His office has also processed all correspondence, surveys, questionnaires, reports, minutes, and materials produced by and for synod. He is responsible for the filing and preservation of all synodical materials.

The Stated Clerk is responsible for the correspondence of the denomination. Such correspondence includes inquiries from persons who wish to know more about the Christian Reformed Church, with individuals both within and outside of the churches, and with all of the committees appointed by synod. In addition to correspondence, telephone calls from individuals and organizations throughout our denomination and elsewhere are handled by the office of the Stated Clerk.

To the best of his ability, the Stated Clerk gives advice and information to all who write or call with respect to the provisions of the Church Order and the decisions of synod.

During the course of the year the Stated Clerk receives progress reports and/or minutes from all of the committees that have been appointed by synod. He also provides these committees with help or information when requested.

Conferences with representatives of our boards and agencies are handled by the Stated Clerk and callers are received regularly for consultation or information. The Stated Clerk also provides advice to our classes, consistories, committees, and to all the members of our denomination asking his assistance.

Reports and minutes of our classes are sent to the office of the Stated Clerk by the stated clerks of the classes. These are surveyed and the Synodical Interim Committee is kept abreast of various decisions, activities, and problems of the denomination.

The Stated Clerk has many opportunities to represent the Christian Reformed Church in contact with other denominations as well as with the general public. He serves as an *ex officio* member of the Interchurch Relations Committee and represents our church at various interchurch gatherings.

Contacts with national, state, and local government leaders and agencies are maintained by the Stated Clerk as occasion indicates or permits.

As time and circumstances have allowed, the Stated Clerk has preached in many of our churches, conducted conferences, and upon invitation has delivered addresses to congregations and organizations both within and beyond our denomination.

#### XIV. DENOMINATIONAL FINANCIAL COORDINATOR

##### A. *Denominational Building*

1. The denominational building houses the following denominational agencies:

- Christian Reformed Church Home Missions
- Christian Reformed Church in North America Offices
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Ministers' Pension Fund
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Coordinated Services
- Christian Reformed Church Publications Offices
- Christian Reformed Church World Missions
- Christian Reformed Church World Relief
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, Chaplain Committee
- Christian Reformed Church in North America, SCORR

During the year 1979 the cost of operation of the building exclusive of the printing plant amounted to \$157,752.80 or \$3.94 per square foot.

2. First mortgage bond indebtedness has been reduced to \$471,700 as of year end 1979. Payments of principal are in compliance with or in excess of amortization terms. Interest payments are current.

3. With regard to our real estate tax appeal vs. the City of Grand Rapids, the Michigan Tax Tribunal has entered its opinion and judgment in our favor as of December 14, 1979. Attorney B. Sevensma informs us that the City of Grand Rapids has decided to appeal the decision of the tribunal before the Michigan Court of Appeals. The court's decision should probably be forthcoming sometime during 1980.

4. The Finance Committee of the SIC, which also acts as its Building Committee, is mandated to look immediately into building expansion plans and to engage architects to provide for the necessary space needs of CRWRC, particularly as required to carry out the Synod of 1979's mandate on World Hunger and other relief programs, plus short-term needs of other agencies. A report and cost analysis will be presented to the SIC at its meeting in May, with recommendations as to the source of funding for payment of the expansion.

#### *B. Coordinated Services*

The Coordinated Services Department of our denominational agencies performed services for our agencies aggregating \$336,206 for the year 1979. We continue to enjoy close cooperation with our agencies to the benefit of all concerned.

#### *C. Denominational Financial Policy Manual*

Mr. Arthur Van Tuinen (chairman of the Finance Committee of the SIC, also chairman of a Special Committee consisting of business heads of our agencies directed by 1979 Synod to complete preparation of a financial policy manual for presentation to the Synod of 1980 for approval) reports that a proposed manual is still under review by the Special Committee whose recommendation for approval is expected by March 15, 1980. The proposed manual will be presented to the May meeting of the SIC for presentation to the Synod of 1980 in supplementary Report 20-A.

#### *D. Agenda for Synod 1980, Financial and Business Supplement*

Detailed financial disclosure and proposed budget reports with quota requests similar to those presented to synod's advisory committees of 1978 and 1979 will be prepared on all denominational agencies and forwarded to all delegates on or about May 1, 1980. Also notices will be placed in the Banner that this information is available to all those who request it.

Summary financial data on all accredited agencies will be included in the supplement.

E. *Uniform Salary Policy—Schedule of Salary Midpoints and Ranges for Budget Year 1981*

The schedule of overall "Salary Midpoint and Ranges" as recommended by the SIC for synod's approval will be presented to all delegates of synod in the Agenda for Synod 1980 Financial and Business Supplement. The salary midpoint and ranges developed by each denominational agency will be included as part of its budget presentation.

Note: This action is in line with the procedure as to reports on salary disclosure schedules and employee benefit schedules approved by the Synod of 1979. (See Acts of Synod 1979, Report 20-A, Denominational Agencies Uniform Salary Policy Reports on Salary Schedules, Section IV, and Article 92, V, 2, pp. 442ff. and 106.)

F. *Church Help Committee Study* (Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 99f.)

Research and review of the Church Help Committee's mandate from synod has been completed and prepared in booklet form for the special committee's guidance. The special committee, consisting of two members each from the Church Help Committee, the Board of Home Missions, and the SIC, including the DFC, will meet in the near future. The committee's report and decisions will be forwarded to the SIC for its recommendation to the Synod of 1980 in Report 20-A.

G. *Fund for Needy Churches Study* (Cf. Acts of Synod 1979, Item 3, p. 101.)

Data needed for this study is being assembled and, upon completion in the near future, will be presented to the special study committee for its guidance in the study. A report by the special committee, consisting of two members of FNC, two of BHM, and two members of the SIC, including the DFC, will be formulated in the near future. The committee's reports and recommendations will be presented to the SIC for its recommendation to the Synod of 1980 in Report 20-A.

XV. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

A. *One Hundred Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Christian Reformed Church*

The Synodical Interim Committee calls synod's attention to the fact that in 1982 the Christian Reformed Church will celebrate its 125th anniversary. The Synodical Interim Committee requests the Synod of 1980 to appoint a committee to plan for the 125th anniversary celebration. Further recommendations with respect to this anniversary will be forwarded to synod in supplementary Report 20-A.

B. *SIC Review Committee*

The Synodical Interim Committee calls the attention of synod to the fact that the Synod of 1976, having approved a report of a committee reviewing the effectiveness and functioning of the SIC, adopted the fol-

lowing recommendation: "That the effectiveness of the functioning and mandate of the SIC be reviewed after five years by a committee to be appointed by the Synod of 1980 and to report in 1981.

"*Ground*: An important part of the SIC's mandate, that of promoting the program planning, coordination, and the setting of priorities, is just now being undertaken. Therefore the fruitfulness of the SIC's work in this area cannot now adequately be determined" (Acts of Synod 1976, p. 52).

The Synod of 1980 should take appropriate action with respect to the decision of the Synod of 1976.

C. *Retirement of Mr. Anthony Vroon—Denominational Financial Coordinator*

Mr. Anthony Vroon was appointed by synod to be the first Denominational Financial Coordinator of the denomination by the Synod of 1973. He began his work in this office on January 1, 1974. After seven years of service to our denomination in this important office, Mr. Vroon will retire at the close of 1980.

The Synodical Interim Committee requests the Synod of 1980 to express its gratitude to Mr. Vroon for his faithful service and to arrange for a fitting recognition of his retirement.

D. *Appointment of Denominational Financial Coordinator*

The Synodical Interim Committee, taking note of the retirement of Mr. Anthony Vroon, appointed a special DFC Search Committee to seek a replacement for Mr. Vroon. In 1979 the committee placed ads in the Banner and sent letters to all of our consistories, classes, and agencies inviting applications or recommendations. We are grateful for the responses both to the ads and to the letters.

The nomination process is in its final stages and the SIC will present its nomination to the Synod of 1980.

## XVI. RECOMMENDATIONS

A. That synod honor the request of the SIC that the Rev. Leonard J. Hoffman, its president; the Rev. William P. Brink, Stated Clerk; and the Denominational Financial Coordinator, Mr. Anthony Vroon; represent the committee before synod and its advisory committees when matters pertaining to its report are discussed; and that Finance Committee representatives also represent the committee when matters of finance are discussed.

B. That synod approve the SIC interim appointments to various boards and committees (see III).

C. That synod take note of the efforts of the SIC and the denominational agencies to effect coordination of programming, planning, and setting of priorities (see IV, A).

D. That synod adopt the rule recommended by the Ministers' Pension Committee and the SIC pertaining to retirement of ministers of the Word (see IV, B).

- E. That synod take note of the resolution of differences between the FNC Committee and the Board of Home Missions (see IV, D).
- F. That synod take note of the progress report of the Healing Ministries Committee and encourage our members and consistories to submit any suggestions they may have to the committee (see VI).
- G. That synod adopt the SIC recommendations with respect to membership transfers as contained in Section VII, B, and Appendix I.
- H. That synod adopt the SIC recommendation clarifying the nature of ecclesiastical responsibility and care for members of emerging churches (see VIII).
- I. That synod adopt the proposed additional sentence to the Rules for Synodical Procedure, Section VI, B, 4, a, page 11 (see IX).
- J. That synod approve the updated model of Articles of Incorporation for the use of our congregations in the United States (see XI and Appendix 2).
- K. That synod provide for the celebration of the 125th anniversary of our denomination (see XV, A).
- L. That synod take appropriate action with respect to the decision of the Synod of 1976 to appoint a committee to review the effectiveness of the functioning and mandate of SIC (see XV, B).
- M. That synod express its gratitude to our Denominational Financial Coordinator, Mr. Anthony Vroon, for his services and arrange for a fitting recognition of his retirement (see XV, C).

Synodical Interim Committee  
Christian Reformed Church in North America  
Christian Reformed Church Synod Trustees  
William P. Brink, Secretary and Stated Clerk



**Appendix I**  
**STATEMENT OF MEMBERSHIP**

The Consistory of the \_\_\_\_\_ Christian Reformed Church of \_\_\_\_\_ at the request of our member(s) listed below, presents this statement of membership to you, the \_\_\_\_\_ Church of \_\_\_\_\_. We commend them to your Christian fellowship and request your consistory to receive them with Christian love and provide them with appropriate pastoral care and counsel.

**MEMBERSHIP RECORD**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Given Names	Date of Birth	Date of Baptism	Date of Profession*	Prior Membership
Single				
Husband				
Wife				
Children				

\*To be filled in only for professing members

**Additional Information:**  
(Involvement in church functions, special gifts or abilities, special needs, etc.)

Done in Consistory \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ President  
\_\_\_\_\_ Clerk

**APPENDIX II**  
**ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION**  
 (Ecclesiastical Corporation)

We, the undersigned, desiring to become incorporated under the provisions of \*Act \_\_\_\_\_ of the Public Acts of the State of \_\_\_\_\_ for the year \_\_\_\_\_, as amended, hereby make, execute, and adopt the following Articles of Association, namely:

**Article 1**

The name assumed by this corporation and by which it shall be known in law is \_\_\_\_\_ Christian Reformed Church.

**Article II**

The location of said church shall be in the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, County of \_\_\_\_\_, and State of \_\_\_\_\_.

The mailing address of the first registered office of said ecclesiastical corporation shall be \_\_\_\_\_

(Street Address)      (City)      (State)      (Zip Code)

The name of the first resident agent is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 The address of its registered office and the address of the business office of its resident agent are identical.

**Article III**

We recognize the following as the fundamental principles of our church in doctrine and government: (1) The Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God and our only rule for faith and life, and (2) the formulas of unity of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, namely: The Belgic Confession, The Heidelberg Catechism, and The Canons of Dort, and any amendments or additions thereto as may hereafter be adopted by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church.

**Article IV**

The time for which this corporation shall be created shall be in perpetuity.

**Article V**

The ecclesiastical government of this church shall be conducted in accordance with the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in North America as adopted or revised by the synod.

**Article VI**

The consistory (council) of this church shall constitute the Board of

\*For Michigan corporations the reference would be as follows: Act 148 of the Public Acts of the State of Michigan for the year 1901, as amended.

Trustees of this corporation and as such shall have all powers over the temporalities of this church prescribed by civil law and the Church Order of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

#### Article VII

The ownership of all property, real or personal, acquired by this church shall be vested exclusively in this corporation, and title to the same shall be taken in its name alone.

This corporation shall have exclusive control over all of its temporalities, nor shall the exercise of its council and/or congregation be subject to revision by the classis of which this church is a member or the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

In the event of schism in this church, as defined by Article 153, Acts of Synod 1970, if a division of its property becomes necessary, this shall be done according to the scriptural injunction of I Corinthians 6. Every effort shall be made to achieve a just and fair division of property. To this end, counsel, assistance, and advice shall be sought first from the classis and synod; provided that if these ecclesiastical methods do not resolve the controversy, the church may seek the counsel, assistance, and advice of nonecclesiastical advisors and sources.

#### Article VIII

Any person elected to the office of elder or deacon in said church, according to the Church Order and usages of the Christian Reformed Church in North America, and the pastor(s), if there be one or more, 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 vacating of the ecclesiastical office, but a vacancy in the office of the pastor(s) shall in no way affect such Board of Trustees.

#### Article IX

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 or 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.

#### Article X

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 purchases, sale or conveyance, mortgage, lease, or fixing of salaries shall be made unless the affirmative vote of a majori-

ty 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, device, or bequest, which would be inconsistent with the express terms of plain intent of the grant, donation, gift, conveyance, device, or bequest.

Article XI

The said trustees may at any time hereafter, by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the trustees, amend these Articles of Association in any manner not inconsistent with the provisions of Articles III, V, VI, and VII hereof:

Provided that before such amendments shall become operative, a vote in favor thereof of 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 X hereof, and the requirements of the statutes of this state shall be fully complied with, pursuant to Act \_\_\_\_\_ of the Public Acts of \_\_\_\_\_ for the year \_\_\_\_\_\*, as amended.

Article XII

In the event of termination, dissolution, or winding up of this corporation in any manner or for any reason whatsoever, its remaining assets, if any, after the payment of its debts and expenses, shall be conveyed or distributed to, and only to, one or more organizations which qualify as exempt organizations under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954 (or the corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law) as may be determined by the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church in North America.

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

(Names)

(Addresses)

STATE OF \_\_\_\_\_ )  
 ) ss.  
 COUNTY OF \_\_\_\_\_ )

\*Michigan corporations would use the following language: pursuant to Act 148 of the Public Acts of Michigan for the year 1901, as amended.

On this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D., 19\_\_\_\_, before me, a Notary Public in and for said county, personally appeared \_\_\_\_\_ (Names of \_\_\_\_\_ to me known to be the persons described in said persons listed above) instrument, and who executed the same as their free act and deed.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public, \_\_\_\_\_ County, \_\_\_\_\_ (State)

My commission expires: \_\_\_\_\_

## REPORT 21

## UNORDAINED EMPLOYEES' PENSION FUND

Your committee continues to supervise the administration of the Unordained Employees' Pension Fund which services eligible employees of all of the denominational boards and agencies, employees of Christian Laymen's League, some Classical Home Mission committees, and several churches. The Relief Fund administered by your committee continues to provide support for former employees or their dependents in cases where there is no pension or a pension is inadequate.

Pursuant to the system of rotating representation of the agencies on the committee, the term of a Back to God Hour representative will expire September 1, 1980, and is to be replaced by a CRWRC representative.

The committee approved amendment 12 to the plan, which is a minor technical amendment, designed to convert the plan from an investment unit basis to a cash basis.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY SYNOD

1. Your committee requests that any member of the committee be accorded the privilege of the floor when the recommendations for action are considered by synod.

2. Your committee recommends that Mr. Merle Grevengoed be appointed to the committee for a three-year term, as representative of CRWRC.

Unordained Employees' Pension  
Fund Committee

Gerard J. Borst, chairman

Lawrence D. Bos

Lynwood Vanden Bosch

Harry Vander Meer

Donald Zwier

## **Reports of Denominationally Related Agencies**

### REPORT 22

#### **ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP**

The mission of this association is to work in partnership with the church in bringing the power of the gospel to bear on scholarship and higher education. The church must certainly bring the gospel to the patterns of thought and to the people in university-level work. The church itself does not generally work in areas of advanced scientific research, as it does not have the resources to extend much beyond a pastoral ministry to the campus. The AACCS and its Institute for Christian Studies have therefore moved to meet this need, supplementing the undergraduate residential study provided by our Christian colleges. To carry out this work the AACCS in turn needs the church as the fellowship of believers which makes the work possible.

#### **CAMPUS WITNESS**

Our partnership with the church is most clearly seen in our shared work on secular campuses. At the request of the Board of Home Missions we are now sending to all university campus chaplains the resource materials we generate to help develop Christian perspective in academic study. Much of this resource material is in the form of unpublished papers written by staff members of the Institute for Christian Studies or by others whose work parallels ours.

During 1979 an increasing number of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship groups were calling on us for resource assistance. Where the distances are large, we supply materials by mail or by an occasional speaker on tour. On campuses in and near Toronto we work regularly with InterVarsity, often on a weekly basis. We are able to provide for them an academic grounding for campus witness that many of them are finding a valuable way to reach students.

#### **DOCTORAL STUDY PROGRAM**

One of the missing parts of our Christian educational system for many years has been the lack of opportunity for students to work for the Ph.D. degree in North America at an institution which holds a Reformed Christian viewpoint. The Institute for Christian Studies took a major step in 1979 to meet this need. A cooperative arrangement has been worked out with the Free University of Amsterdam by which a student will be able to take all the course work for the Ph.D. in various philosophical fields by means of study in Toronto at the Institute. After the student has received the Master of Philosophy degree at the Institute (or its equivalent), the student engages in a structured two-year program of courses in Toronto which leads to a comprehensive examination in three philosophical areas

of the student's choice. Then the student applies to the Central Interfaculty (Philosophy Department) of the Free University for exemption from its *doctoraal examen*, and then is able to take the prescribed steps for the writing of the dissertation, jointly supervised by the Institute and the Free University. The degree is awarded by the Free University, and therefore is fully accredited. The student does not need to know the Dutch language since no course work is needed at the Free University.

This new program opens the way for more people to obtain Ph.D. study from a distinctively Christian viewpoint, since it is offered in North America and since the student does not necessarily need to learn Dutch. We are receiving many inquiries about the program from Christians who are not of Dutch Reformed background, and we are happy to serve them, too.

#### PUBLICATIONS

The year 1979 gave a rich harvest of new books to feed a Reformed Christian conception of society and scholarship. Several of these were produced or substantially assisted by us, mostly in cooperation with our publishing associate, Wedge Publishing Foundation. These include *Capitalism and Progress* by Dr. B. Goudzwaard of the Free University, which arose out of lectures he gave at the Institute. There is also *Roots of Western Culture* by Dr. H. Dooyeweerd, now issued in English. *Labour of Love* is a collection of essays giving distinctive Christian insights on work and the workplace, mostly arising from talks at an AACCS conference and from lectures given at the Institute. *Hearing and Doing* is a collection of essays written as a tribute to Dr. H. E. Runner by several of his former students at Calvin College; it includes contributions by six faculty members of the Institute.

#### RESEARCH AND TEACHING

The research program continues to be appreciated by teachers at our Christian colleges, who in turn make contributions in various ways, including summer seminars and winter interim courses. The Institute's teaching program continues to be well received by our students (who are graduates of colleges and universities), who benefit from small classes and much individual attention. Students come from the United States, Canada, and several overseas countries.

#### WITNESS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Research and teaching in higher education are like a motor driving society in directions of its choosing. Most higher education is directed by spirits at odds with the Bible and the lordship of Christ. We wish to confront those spirits of our age with a biblical and scholarly witness. We are happy to be partners of the church, to serve the church, and to be supported by the church. We ask for your continued prayers together with your moral and financial support.

Association for the Advancement of  
Christian Scholarship  
Robert E. VanderVennen,  
executive director



## REPORT 23

## DORDT COLLEGE

We at Dordt College are again privileged to report to the Synod of 1980 concerning the progress and developments of this institution in the past year. As we look back, we rejoice in the blessings the Lord has seen fit to bestow upon Dordt College. We are especially reminded of our Lord's faithfulness and the support of his people as we celebrate Dordt's twenty-fifth anniversary year. A commemorative film has been produced in honor of this festive occasion. This film will not be merely a reminiscence of Dordt's years; rather it will trace the training and education of the covenant child as God has instructed. An anniversary celebration is to take place on May 3 in the Dordt Chapel. During the next year, the college plans to sponsor twenty-fifth anniversary programs throughout the denomination which will allow the constituency of the college to join in the celebration of thanksgiving for Dordt's first twenty-five years. All supporters and friends of Dordt are cordially invited to attend the program in their area.

This past year has seen the completion of many campus construction projects. Now in use are the five new East Campus apartment buildings and the additions to the library and to the science building. The gymnasium has also been expanded with the result of more available facilities and greater ease in handling the large crowds at athletic events. The Dordt Chapel is also being used biweekly for student chapel services. The size of the auditorium enables the entire student body to worship together, and it also accommodates the recitals and musical organizations of Dordt and also of various guest performances.

New this year on campus is the Counseling Center. Staff members include the coordinator, Quentin Van Essen, and Jay Van Groningen and Karen Helder, directors of resident life on campus. Their job is to provide academic counseling for students and to conduct workshops on personal growth topics as well. Van Essen has the additional job of assisting students with job placement. This year is the first in which a full-scale placement effort for non-teacher education students has been attempted.

The new Dordt College Lectureship Institute began functioning this year. The purpose of this center is to aid Dordt College in providing Christian education by in-depth studies, and to share with the broader Christian community the results of its research. The center consists of scholars who occupy designated chairs for research and writing in assigned areas. Members of the Lectureship Center also meet regularly as a body to study important issues and questions facing the Christian community. The director of the Lectureship Center is the Rev. J. B. Hulst, who occupies the Perspectives Chair. Occupying the Abraham Kuyper Chair is McKendree Langley, who is currently writing a dissertation

about the formation of Kuyper's Anti-Revolutionary Party in the Netherlands from 1872-1880. In the Visiting Lecturer Chair is Rockne McCarthy. He is teaching courses half-time and is also preparing articles for publication as well as performing research in conjunction with such agencies as the Association for Public Justice and the Christian Farmers' Organization.

Dordt is also developing a new engineering program which will become a four-year degree program over the next two years, subject to review by the Dordt Board of Trustees. Dordt presently offers a pre-Engineering program. Charles Adams teaches physical science and engineering in this program.

In another important development, Dordt has decided to expand its agriculture and agriculture-business majors. Food and the production of food for a hungry world is a matter which should be of real concern to the Christian community. It is appropriate and timely that Dordt College should provide leadership and training in this area. The college has purchased land near Sioux Center which will be developed into an experimental farm for use by the Agriculture Department and as a source of part-time job opportunities for students.

The Third Annual International Christian Political Conference held August 24-27 had for its theme "Justice for all: The Right of Political Participation." It was sponsored once again by Dordt College and the Association for Public Justice, an organization which has aggressively sought Christian perspectives and action concerning the political issues confronting today's society. The featured speaker was Chief Minister Gatsha Buthelezi, leader of the Zulu people in South Africa. Also speaking at the conference were Tom Skinner, a black evangelical Christian; H. Evan Runner, Professor of Philosophy at Calvin College; Bob Goudwaard, Professor of Economics, Free University, Amsterdam; and John Perkins, Voice of Calvary Ministries, Jackson, Mississippi.

The Dordt College community was saddened by the tragic loss in a plane crash of three members of the 1979-80 freshman class. The student body held a memorial service at which the Rev. John Hulst spoke on the topic "Why Do the Nations Say, 'Where Is Their God?'" using Psalm 115 as his text.

Having concluded twenty-five years of service to Christ's kingdom, Dordt College would like to take this opportunity to give thanks. First, we offer a prayer of thanksgiving to God for his rich blessings and mercies during those twenty-five years. We can only stand in awe as we reflect upon his providential guidance. Second, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to the Christian Reformed churches for their encouragement, support, and prayers over the years. It has made us deeply aware of the fact that God works through his people to serve his divine purposes. It is our prayer and solemn commitment that Dordt will do all in its power to remain an academic community which provides a thoroughly biblical, Reformed, Calvinistic perspective and a wholesome Christian environment for the young people of our denomination.

Dordt College

B. J. Haan, president

## REPORT 24

## REFORMED BIBLE COLLEGE

Reformed Bible College celebrated its fortieth anniversary during the 1979-80 academic year, with a record enrollment of 240 credit students being registered in January, 1980. The anniversary was celebrated in a special way at the fortieth anniversary dinner in the George Welsh Civic Auditorium in Grand Rapids on Friday, March 7. Five members of the Board of Trustees which opened Reformed Bible Institute in 1940 spoke at the dinner program: Dr. Oren Holtrop, of Midland Park, New Jersey; the Rev. William Van Peurseem, Redlands, California; and the Rev. Cornelius Schoolland, the Rev. John H. Schaal, and Mr. Pat J. Zondervan, all of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Further, representatives of the thirty-eight graduating classes brought greetings to about fifteen hundred guests. The spirit of thanksgiving to God for forty years of blessing also was communicated to a wider audience through the March 7 issue of the Banner, which devoted a number of its pages to RBC's ministry.

About six hundred persons were served directly by Reformed Bible College during the 1979-80 academic year: They registered for one or more of the following programs: fall semester, Middle East Training Session (METS), winter semester, spring session, Mexico Summer Training Session, August Institute, or evening extension courses on our Grand Rapids campus or in Zeeland, Michigan. Dr. Lubbertus Oostendorp retired from active service with the faculty in 1979, but the teaching staff was enlarged through the appointment of four new faculty members—the Rev. Fred Diemer, Miss Joy Kreeft, the Rev. William Shell, and Dr. Dudley Woodberry.

RBC curriculum and facilities also continue to experience growth. Meeting in annual session on March 6-7, the Board of Trustees authorized the submission of a proposal to the Board of Education, State of Michigan, for a graduate program leading to the Master of Religious Education (MRE) degree. The new program may be initiated in the near future, thereby providing opportunity for graduate professional education in the areas of Bible and theology, evangelism and missions, and church education. Plans also were brought to completion for the erection of a multipurpose building on campus, to serve as assembly hall and physical education building, the total cost of which is to be covered through gifts from the Lord's people.

During the year, many Christian Reformed congregations, people, and pastors continued to participate in the work of RBC through their prayers, interest, and gifts. Graduates found ready acceptance at theological seminaries and graduate schools, while others have a wide choice of opportunities for service on the mission field (at home or abroad) or with Christian institutions. A growing number of graduates

found employment as church education staff members with congregations of several denominations.

RBC covets the prayers of the Lord's people so that it may be of increasing service to Christ's church in its life and mission. Information concerning the college, its courses of study, and its training programs will be sent to anyone upon request. Visitors as well as inquiries are welcome at any time.

Reformed Bible College exists, serves, and grows today as a living tribute to the love and faithfulness of our covenant God.

Reformed Bible College

Dick L. Van Halsema, president

## REPORT 25

## TRINITY CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

We are grateful for the opportunity to report to the Synod of 1980 concerning the Lord's work in Christian higher education as it comes to expression at Trinity Christian College. While synod represents the institutional church and we—Christian education, our common commitment to the Reformed faith binds us together in a unity of service for the Lord. While it is the church's task to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom, it is our calling to bring the reality of God's rule to concrete expression in the sphere of higher learning. To the extent that the church is faithful in its proclamation of God's rule, we can expect God's people to catch the kingdom vision in other areas of human life.

Trinity's twenty-first year of institutional existence is proving to be a year of blessings beyond our expectations. With a deep sense of gratitude to the Lord, we report an enrollment increase for the present academic year of 9 percent for full-time students and 3 percent for part-time students. Financial support from the churches and individuals has exceeded that of all previous years, resulting in a very strong current financial condition. We are thankful indeed.

Increasing popularity of our courses of study in the health science field necessitated expansion of chemistry lab facilities. These, together with a modern biology lab completed some years earlier, provide for the growing demand in the premedical, pre dental, and medical technology programs. Additional expansion of facilities in this area is already under study by the board in anticipation of state accreditation for a Bachelor of Science Degree in Nursing. Our Director of Nursing Studies is working with hospitals, state agencies, and professional nursing associations with a view toward the implementation of a nursing studies program soon.

The departure of Dennis Hoekstra from the position of president left us with a significant vacancy. During his six years as president, Dr. Hoekstra was particularly effective in developing programs in urban studies, business, and the Semester in Spain. His leadership in fiscal matters, particularly debt reduction, has provided a strong financial condition as we plan for our Christian educational mission for the 1980s. The Board of Trustees has appointed Dr. Gerard Van Groningen, Professor of Old Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, to succeed Dr. Hoekstra. Our new president will assume his office beginning August 1, 1980.

We thank God for the privilege of providing education which is captive to the rule of Christ and which investigates all discipline areas in the illuminating light of the Scriptures. We are thankful for a growing company of Reformed Christians whose support makes possible college education which convinces young people that this is our Father's world—all of it.

Trinity Christian College

Derke P. Bergsma, acting president

## REPORT 26

## UNITED CALVINIST YOUTH

## CALVINETTES

The Lord has blessed Calvinettes again this past year with numerical growth and a growing sense of commitment and enthusiasm on the part of leaders. We now number 680 clubs in North America. In addition, we have Calvinette organizations in Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea.

We have been blessed with the dedication of over forty-two hundred Christian women sharing their talents and their time to serve seventeen thousand Calvinettes. Many of these girls are not members of the church family, as our counselors reach out into the community, bringing the message of God's plan of salvation.

Last summer we held our largest counselors' convention in history. Over six hundred women attended the three-day opportunity for fellowship, sharing, inspiration, and training. In July of this year we plan to convene in Seattle, Washington.

*Touch* magazine continues to receive wide acceptance among our membership, with circulation figures reflecting our membership growth. *Cable*, a newsletter for counselors, is published bimonthly with suggestions for conducting Bible lessons and ideas for club meetings. *In Touch with Calvinettes* continues to inform our supporters of events and work throughout the organization.

With Cadets we were able to sponsor an urban ministries conference. The conference was held in Grand Rapids, and it was enthusiastically received by counselors throughout the Midwest.

Our program revision is proceeding according to schedule. By September, 1981, we expect to have materials ready for use by girls and counselors. As we continue this revision, our goal is to provide girls and counselors with updated material for the '80s, and a program that will meet the changing needs of our young people in this decade.

We thank God constantly for his goodness to us. We are always grateful for the interest and concern the Christian Reformed churches have shown in youth ministry. We ask your continued prayers that we may be effective in sharing Christ's love with girls of your church and your community.

Joanne Ilbrink, executive director

## CALVINIST CADET CORPS

God continues to bless the ministries of the Calvinist Cadet Corps. Today there are some 13,500 boys being ministered to by 3,000 Christian

men in 560 clubs throughout North America, Australia, and New Zealand.

Counselor education throughout our organization continues to receive a large block of attention. Our "Counselor Education" film strip series has expanded to seventeen titles. The number of programing aides available to the counselor continues to increase in number and circulation. Annual conventions for counselors are being supplemented by regional weekend conferences and retreats.

Throughout the past decade, the programs for boys nine to fourteen have been completely overhauled and expanded. During this current year we will be putting the finishing touches on a new program for boys seven to eight years old. It is our plan to pilot this program during the 1980-1981 season and make it available to our membership in the fall of 1981.

Over the past few years, some positive signs of effective urban youth ministry have been witnessed. Our "Youth Ministry in the Urban Church" conference (which was cosponsored by Calvinettes this year) continues to increase in popularity. Over eighty counselors from urban churches throughout the Midwest met in Grand Rapids for a day of inspiration, education, and interaction. For the first time our office will begin producing program materials with a specific orientation toward the nonwhite urban child.

The award-winning *Crusader* magazine continues to help boys discover how God is at work in their lives and in the world around them. The *Clarion*, newsletter for counselors, has expanded into an eight-page journal. *Cadeting Today* continues to keep our supporting community informed of events happening throughout the organization.

As an organization we thank the Christian Reformed Church for the support we have felt throughout our twenty-seven-year history. Our prayer is that God will continue to allow us to assist you as you share Christ's love with the boys from your church community.

David J. Koetje, executive director

### *The Young Calvinist Federation*

The young people of the member youth groups of the Young Calvinist Federation continue to have available to them voluntary arenas of opportunity for spiritual growth in the church in addition to the official ecclesiastical pedagogy of the church school curriculum.

With gratitude to God and sincere appreciation to the hundreds of volunteer youth leaders and youth officers who do their best in almost seven hundred youth groups and in the forty-nine leagues, we can report that the ministries of the federation provided significant and blessed experiences for thousands of young people again this year.

For example, the Volunteer Services arena (SWIM, the Pine Rest program, etc.) remains a good opportunity for those who desire to learn more about the work of the church. This past year about 335 Young Calvinists participated.

The annual convention held last August in Oregon drew over twenty-four hundred young people and leaders. We struggled with the theme,

"Bread or Stones," in keeping with the CRC's current interest in world hunger. The young people drew up interesting and valuable resolutions. Enclosed is a copy of these resolutions as they appeared in the January issue of *Insight* and synod is invited to peruse them and make such use of them as may seem proper. The August, 1980 convention will be held in Holland, Michigan, under the theme, "Anchor Life in Christ." The 1981 convention will be in Wolfville, Nova Scotia.

YCF continues to provide publications for personal and group use (*Insight*, *Input*, publications in the "Good Things for Youth Leaders" series, a Young Adult Ministry quarterly, Servicemen's Ministry materials, etc.).

It has been my privilege since 1962 to serve as director-editor of YCF. As I reported to synod last year, it is my intention to terminate this phase of my ministry after the 1980 YCF board meeting. The increasing administrative demands of the federation organization resulted in my being less and less available for the pastoral- and Word-related aspects of my calling, to which I am committed.

The past eighteen years have been marked by turbulent change and challenging leadership demands. Our society has moved from the idealism of the Kennedy years through the bitterness and frustration of the Vietnam period and the youth revolution into a kind of self-centered anxiety, the outcome of which is not yet clear. It is remarkable that due to our faithful God and the dedicated involvement of thousands of co-workers during these years a strong youth organization has continued. We have been able to bring Calvinettes, Cadets, and YCF together into United Calvinist Youth (formed in 1966). I can leave thankful that each of the three divisions is working well and that YCF, which was my original responsibility and which I have served exclusively again since 1976 (after ten years as both coordinating director of UCY and YCF director), is well staffed and prepared to serve the needs of our young people in the '80s. I trust that the CRC's support of YCF and its leadership will continue in the years to come.

The Young Calvinist Federation  
James C. Lont, director



## Reports of Study Committees

### REPORT 27

#### PSALTER HYMNAL REVISION

The Synod of 1977 appointed our committee "to revise and improve the Centennial Edition of the Psalter Hymnal." Five grounds were given and two specific instructions ("... to report... the principles of music in the church and procedures to be used in the revision" and to address ourselves "to the varied needs of the congregations caused by ethnic and cultural differences...").

The Synod of 1978 received our outline of procedures, and the Synod of 1979 approved our proposed reaffirmation of the statement of principle for music in the church. This year we report our work on guidelines and education and our progress on the psalms and hymns.

The members of the committee testify to the love of God as we come to know each other better and to the grace of God as we come to experience the richness of his gifts of word and song. May the Christ whose work we seek to sing continue to bless the churches that so faithfully support our efforts.

#### I. GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH MUSIC

Our study of previous efforts to state guidelines for church music has continued this year. We have drafted and revised our lists several times. Each committee consideration of these is a helpful step toward learning each other's opinions and toward producing an even stronger statement to help the churches. We have been assisted in that also by the conferees at last summer's Conference on Liturgy and Music. We presented a draft of guidelines for discussion and reaction. The comments continue to arrive.

We are working on another revision of these guidelines. We hope to invite similar comments and reactions from the churches. We believe that the best possible product will come if we take several years to work on these, since we are able to carry on our other work at the same time. New insights are not lost in that way; and old ones come to even better expression.

#### II. EDUCATION IN CHURCH MUSIC

It becomes increasingly clear, both from the discussions at previous synods and from the public consideration of musical matters in the churches that mere statements of principle and carefully stated guidelines will not alone accomplish the educational task facing the churches. We are gratified to note that public discussion of church music has increased

markedly in the past year. This can only be good for the work of our committee, and more broadly for all the churches.

There has been good response to the Conference on Liturgy and Music held last July. About 120 persons attended a public discussion on singing the whole book of Psalms, which we hosted in connection with our January meeting and a second poets workshop. Two of our committee members have written articles used in the Banner: Calvin Seerveld on the singing of imprecatory psalms (January 4, 1980) and John Hamersma on the procedures and progress of our committee (February 8, 1980). We are also soliciting from ministers any lists they have kept of use of songs, scriptural and topical material, or gaps they have noted.

We hope that all such efforts will clarify the need to be reforming the music of the church in a continuing way far beyond the production of the next edition of the Psalter Hymnal.

### III. PSALMS

Much committee time and energy this year has gone into the work on the psalms. We completed a preliminary evaluation of the 310 settings in the present edition. The poets at a second workshop continued with the versification of psalms to be used with Genevan tunes. Another subcommittee began to search all the sources for metrical settings of the psalms in order to recommend substitutes or additions for the psalms to be sung in metrical versions.

This work, along with the existing collection, will give us biblically accurate and poetically satisfying psalms for singing. It will also focus our needs for tunes, either existing ones or new compositions.

### IV. HYMNS

At the present time most major denominational hymnals and standard sources have been carefully studied in small subcommittees. This is time-consuming work. When it is complete, including investigation into other sources, we will begin reviewing the subcommittee work to find the "new" songs that will meet specific needs in the collection and that will broaden the collection of hymns.

In order to facilitate the review of songs proposed for addition, another subcommittee has begun drafting a structure for the hymnal that shows both what types of songs we already have and what are needed. We hope to begin work on these after completing the current emphasis on psalms.

### V. A MATTER OF PROCEDURE

Of course we hope that in addition to the psalms and hymns for which we search from existing sources, there will also be some totally new songs, new versifications of words of Scripture, new hymns, new tunes, new contributions from within our Christian community for the singing of God's people. We are gratified that already we receive letters and materials from individuals in the churches. We are also most grateful for

the workshops of poets. These gifted persons are contributing to the new book and the song of the church in significant ways.

A problem we face in that connection, however, is the difficulty in depending upon volunteer and "goodwill" efforts. Some valuable contributions have not yet been secured because of time and work commitments that make volunteering impossible for some. Just as we may need to hire professional editors in the final stages of our work, we believe it is necessary at these earlier stages to hire writers and composers for various tasks. Some of the writing and revising can very well be accomplished by the literary members of our committee, along with the goodwill efforts of those attracted to our workshops. But some may need to be commissioned. Similarly, we shall be able within our committee to accomplish a great deal of the musical revising and editing; and there will be other composers who will respond to our invitations to set texts to new tunes. Nevertheless, we are certain that some musical work will have to be commissioned.

To that end, we are asking synod for permission to contract for services when they are necessary at certain stages in our work.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first four sections of this report are presented as progress reports for information. Section V contains a matter requiring synodical action. We present the following, therefore, for synod's action:

1. That the chairman and reporter of our committee be given the privilege of the floor when matters pertaining to this report are discussed.

2. That the committee be authorized to contract for specific literary and musical services at appropriate points in its work.

Psalter Hymnal Revision Committee  
Jack Van Laar, chairman  
Jack Reiffer, reporter  
Emily Brink, recording secretary  
Shirley Boomsma  
Dale Grotenhuis  
John Hamersma  
Anthony Hoekema  
Bert Polman  
Marie Post  
Verlyn Schultz  
Calvin Seerveld  
Dale Topp

## REPORT 28

## DANCE AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

## I. HISTORY

A. *Immediate Impetus*

Our present study of dance and the Christian life originated in a decision made by Calvin College's Board of Trustees during its session of May 23, 1977. In response to a situation in which dancing had been permitted in residence-hall recreation rooms for students who lived on campus, the board decided to "allow for social dancing as an acceptable and wholesome, on-campus, recreational activity for Calvin students and staff." This policy was not to be implemented until the fall of 1978 in order to give the constituency and the churches opportunity to express their minds on the board's decision.

Upon receipt of denominational responses, the board reaffirmed its position in February, 1978. That position had been chosen on the basis of guidelines given in Acts of Synod 1966 and 1971, and the board requested the Synod of 1978 to support its decision or else to clarify the 1966/71 guidelines.

If the Board of Trustees' interpretation of 1966/71 (Acts of Synod, 1971, p. 139, art. 163, V, C) is correct, we would expect the synod to support the board in its effort to implement the board's decision re social dancing at Calvin College. If there is a basic uncertainty as to the meaning of the 1966/71 decisions and their application to social dancing, we recommend that synod take steps to clarify its position while the Board of Trustees withholds implementation of its decision until the results of synod's study are available.

(Acts of Synod 1978, p. 171, III)

Synod responded by appointing a committee whose mandate it was to study the matter of the dance in the light of the Scripture, including the question whether and in what way the dance is a cultural area which is to be brought under the lordship of Christ, making use, where appropriate, of the decisions of 1928 and 1951 on Worldly Amusements, of the Film Arts Report of 1966, and of Overture 1 of Classis Hamilton to the Synod of 1971; and to submit guidelines and recommendations to the Synod of 1980.

(Acts of Synod 1978, p. 107, Art. 84, I, C)

B. *Reports of Previous Synods (1928, 1951, 1966, 1971)*

The first significant statement on dance within our circles came in 1928, in the Report on Worldly Amusements. It is noteworthy that synod took it to be the primary task of the *church* to set forth principles whereby amusements are to be judged, while the responsibility to pro-

vide recreation in the light of such principles is the task of *parents*. Synod affirmed four major principles: the honor of God, the welfare of man, Christian separation from the world, and Christian liberty. In view of these principles, synod issued an urgent warning against participation in worldly amusements (especially movies, card playing, and dancing) and called for spiritual growth and activities on the part of our members:

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 prayers, the earnest searching of the Scriptures, and through engaging in practical works, which are the best antidote against worldliness.

(Acts of Synod 1928, p. 88, art. 96, III)

Twenty-three years later synod dealt with the matter again. Reports placed before the Synod of 1951 make it clear that participation in worldly amusements had become an increasing concern; hence synod was asked to clarify and amplify the decisions of 1928. About the Synod of 1928 the Synod of 1951 said

That although synod did not pass judgment as to whether or not theater attendance, card playing, and dancing are always sinful in themselves, it did urgently warn, in no uncertain terms, against theater attendance, card playing and dancing, and did not condone participation in them.

(Acts of Synod 1951, p. 65, art. 128, B3)

And much like 1928, the Synod of 1951 emphasized the importance of a finely honed spirituality.

Without this life, without the enlightened mind, the sensitive conscience, and the dedicated will that grows, under the Holy Spirit's leading, out of the regenerated heart, no moral problem can be solved.

(Acts of Synod 1951, p. 66, art. 128, B,b,2)

In 1971 Classis Hamilton presented an extensive report which sketched in some detail the involvement of many of its young people in various types of dancing. That classis placed before synod the following overture:

Classis Hamilton overtures synod to request certain departments of our Christian colleges and seminary to study the matter of dancing and to examine the feasibility of developing acceptable ways for Christians to express their joy in rhythmical movements to musical accompaniment, and to prepare an evaluation of the music and the lyrics of the modern songs.

(Acts of Synod 1971, p. 609)

This request not only alerted the church to a problem that refused to disappear, but it presented, by way of background, pertinent biblical data, an evaluation of some contemporary dances, a review of responses to a questionnaire, a critique of modern music, biblical perspectives on sexuality, and, finally, suggested guidelines to govern a Christian's participation in dance.

Synod did not adopt that overture. Instead it referred the churches to the conclusions of the Church and Film Arts Study of 1966 and declared "the conclusions... particularly 'With Respect to the Relation of the Christian to the World' and 'With Respect to the Exercise of Christian

Liberty,' to be a guide for the churches with the matter of dancing." In addition, synod resolved to "urge Christian writers to serve the church with articles regarding the matter of dancing in the light of these conclusions" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 139, art. 163, V).

On the strength of that answer to the overture of Classis Hamilton, Calvin College understood that social dancing on campus—when sensitive to the guidelines indicated in the 1966 report—was permissible. Curiously, the principles referred to, although more detailed than those of 1928, do not substantially differ. And on the strength of those same principles previous synods refused to condone participation in dance!

Precisely what had changed by 1971? However tempting, it would be unfair to overemphasize the negative attitude of earlier synods. Earlier synods warned against itemizing lists of particular sins. Nor did they high-handedly assume responsibility for the believer's own conscience. And although they in no uncertain language said No to those who wished to dance, these synods stopped short of calling social dancing sinful in itself.

The 1971 decision with its referral to 1966 did interject a new note into the discussion. In 1928 and 1951, dance was classified as "worldly amusement." The Synod of 1971 took another tack and asked whether within that which had become "worldly" there was not some valid and necessary part of God's creation waiting for sensitive Christian action. Hence, with its referral to the report on the Film Arts of 1966, the Synod of 1971 suggested that we approach dancing much as that report had viewed the film arts, namely, from the perspective of the scriptural mandate to redeem every area of human talent and culture in the name of Christ.

Hence the present mandate: without neglecting previous guidelines and decisions, determine whether and in what way dance is a cultural area to be brought under the lordship of Christ. In 1966 synod said among other things, "All Christians, according to the talents God has given them, must work positively and constructively to fulfill the cultural mandate (Eccles. 9:7-10)." And in view of all that is available to us today, it stressed that "the Christian must make discriminate use of the products of culture, in harmony with the scriptural principle of Christian liberty" (Acts of Synod 1966, p. 34, art. 61, II, A, 9, 10).

The question which shapes the mandate comes to us framed in that sound perspective. But it raises questions not answered in the 1966 report. What, if anything at all, do the Scriptures say about dance as we know it today? What is dance? What is its place within the Christian life? And if dance is to be brought under the lordship of Christ, how can that be done discriminately and in harmony with the scriptural principle of Christian liberty? Does some form of dance deserve a place not only in a social and recreational setting such as at weddings, high school, and college socials, but also perhaps in the worship service? What about the sexually aggressive and narcissistic dances in vogue in our hedonistic society? What about the folk and country dances which even the strict Puritans enjoyed? Can we use the music and lyrics of our day? These are some of the practical questions we inevitably face. Answers, not merely

in terms of a set of synodical guidelines but in terms of a sharply focused Christian life, constitute a formidable challenge to the people of God.

## II. BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO DANCE

By far the majority of references to dance occur in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament at least four different words describe Israel's dance.

Occasionally *raqad* is used, meaning "to skip" or "to dance." According to Ecclesiastes 3:4, God provides for us, amidst the jumble of events, "a time to mourn, and a time to dance." The same word is used in Job 21:11, where that troubled soul struggles with the fact that the wicked enjoy prosperity and "their children dance." First Chronicles 15:29 reports that David danced (skipped) before the ark of the Lord. Other, stronger, words are used to describe David's dance in parallel accounts; *raqad* suggests the motion of exhilaration and joy.

It is very much in keeping with the Old Testament that not only people dance like that. All nature does. "Lebanon skips like a calf and Sirion like a young wild ox" (Ps. 29:6), and mountains skip like rams and gambol like lambs (Ps. 114:4, 6). In the praises of God's people floods clap hands, hills sing for joy, mountains skip, ancient cedar ranges gambol, and the whole earth quakes at the awesome, majestic, judging, and saving presence of the Lord.

That same vigor comes to expression in Israel's worship of the Lord. *Karar* means "to whirl about." It is used in II Samuel 6:14, 16 and again in I Chronicles 15:29, passages reporting David's exuberance as he danced before the Lord with all his might. *Pazaz* (to leap and show agility) describes his movements in II Samuel 6:16, again in that triumphant procession of the ark toward Jerusalem.

The Hebrew word used most often is *chul*, which means "to dance," "writhe," or "whirl." *Chul* frequently refers to dancing which occurred at religious festivals. One such festival is mentioned in Judges 21:19-23—the yearly feast of the Lord at which the daughters of Shiloh danced. Here, as on many other occasions, the dance was engaged in exclusively by women.

There are numerous references to the dance as a feature of corporate worship. The psalmist exhorts God's people to "praise his name with dancing" (Ps. 149:3), and to "praise him with timbrel and dance" (Ps. 150:4), while singers and dancers celebrated the glory of Zion, the city of God, with the confession that "all my springs are in you" (Ps. 87:7). Israel's praise was vigorous. Along with singing, a variety of musical instruments accompanied the dancing—hand-drums, castanets, various kinds of pipes, harps, lutes, lyres, cymbals, and the large rams' horns.

Major events in the life of Israel called for dancing. Following God's mighty deliverance of his people at the Red Sea, "Miriam . . . took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and dancing" (Exod. 15:20). Another such celebration, already referred to, marked the return of the ark. Similarly, when Jephthah gained his victory, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrel and dance (Judg. 11:34), and when Saul and David routed the Philistines the women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing (I Sam. 18:16). Military

victories, experienced as gifts of God, called forth spontaneous and exuberant dance.

In Psalm 30 the author records his change from mourning rites and clothing to dancing and festal garments: "Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing; thou hast loosed my sackcloth and girded me with gladness." Dancing stands in sharp contrast to mourning; dancing means joy. "The joy of our hearts has ceased; our dancing has been turned to mourning" (Lam. 5:15). When the promise is given in Jeremiah 31:13 that Israel's fortunes would be reversed, it is said, "Then shall the maidens rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry." *Chul* is exhilarating dance celebrating profound joy. God is in the midst of his people as Lord and Savior—whose feet can be still?

Nevertheless there are also biblical instances when dance was not in praise to God but served degenerate goals. One such occasion is Israel's idolatrous dance before the golden calf (Exod. 32:19); another is that of the limping dance of the priests of Baal whom Elijah challenged on Mount Carmel.

In summary, then, it may be said that although it could be used for degenerate purposes, the dance in Israel served a spontaneous celebration of joy on the part of a people who lived before the face of the Lord.

New Testament references to dancing are rare. Matthew 14:6 and Mark 6:22 use the word *orcheomai* for the dance of Herodias' daughter. The nature of her dance is not further described. It appears to have been motivated by a calculated desire for revenge.

Jesus also used the word *orcheomai* in his parable of the children at play: "We piped to you and you did not dance" (Matt. 11:17). Apparently Jesus recognized this dance as a customary expression for social celebration. More significant, perhaps, is that in his parable about the rejoicing over the return of the prodigal son, Jesus mentions that there was dancing (*choros*); in Jesus' story such an event called for this kind of merriment (Luke 15:25).

This brief survey of biblical references permits us to draw the following conclusions:

1. Dance was an integral part of Israel's corporate worship.
2. Israel regarded dance as a natural and valid expression of gratitude to God and a festive way to celebrate a joyful event.
3. Depending on motivation and intent, dancing could be either an appropriately exuberant response to God's grace or else an occasion for degenerate revelry.
4. The forms of dance found in the Bible are difficult to identify with current forms of dancing.

### III. CHURCH AND DANCE: HISTORICAL EXCURSUS

The early Christian community lived in a world in which a wide variety of tribal dances had been developed and formalized by the Greeks. Imperial Rome borrowed and debased this tradition, turning the dance into a highly commercial spectator event which the early church fathers had good reason to denounce for its unbridled licentiousness.



The early church did not just oppose the Roman way of life with its excesses—it also developed an ascetic, otherworldly mentality which quickly lost sight of the claims of Christ on the creation and instead focused its attention on the release of the soul from the prison of the body and on the life to come. Bishops time and again appealed to their charges to abstain from the “accustomed” dances current in their day, and with the coming of the first Christian emperors the whole world of drama and dance was held in contempt, and persons connected with the circus or pantomime were refused the sacrament of baptism.

Yet dance continued to be performed, and even flourished, in the context of the church. Given a sacred theme, and brought within the confines of the worship of the church, a variety of dances were approved and applauded, particularly a ring dance which, under the influence of Gnostic thought, turned into an attempt to rise above and beyond the body in order to experience fusion with the divine and participation with the angels who were popularly held to be dancing the ring dance in praise to God in heaven. In those early centuries, bishops never tired of holding up David's dance before the Lord as a model of what Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 369) called “the swift course of revolution manifold ordained by God.” Gregory denounced the emperor Julian for reviving “the dissolute dances of Herodias and the pagans” and challenged him to “dance to the honor of God,” as an exercise “worthy of an emperor and a Christian.”

Until about the twelfth century, dancing existed as a formal, if disputed, part of the church's worship. The sacred dance, however, had not renewed a host of “accustomed” (i.e., social) dances which continued to exist, and the sacred dance itself was eventually banned when successive councils had to legislate against wanton behavior associated with saints' festivals and processions, the festival of fools which lampooned the higher clergy, and especially the “death dances” which often took place in graveyards at night. Nor did the church's traditional endorsement of the sacred dance manage to curtail the dancing fever which swept over Europe during the late Middle Ages. And although the church had condemned dance as entertainment at a very early point, it had not quashed a continuing tradition of dancers who performed in castles and chateaux of feudal lords—so that as the church's control eroded, social dance began to come into its own by the fourteenth century. The worldly minded spirit of the renaissance broke with the asceticism of the Middle Ages, and the stage was set, not only for the Reformation, but also for the development of drama, music, and dance within a decidedly secular frame of mind.

The Reformation brought renewal to many things, but not to dance. Among the reformers, Martin Luther did allow a place for dancing. He argued that children dance without sinning; hence, if you wish to dance, become childlike and it will do you no harm. John Knox, the Scottish reformer, conceded that dance could be permitted provided that one had the time for it, and—in a lightly disguised reference to Queen Mary's participation in a dance right after a massacre of Protestants—if one did not dance to celebrate the sorrows of God's people. John Calvin, however, declared himself foursquare against dance. He believed that dancing

aroused passion and invited promiscuous relationships. To anyone who denied being bothered by such passions Calvin would reply, "You are mocking God!" Despite Calvin's great vision for renewal of commerce and education, in his Geneva dance and drama were stricken from the Christian cultural life. The later Puritans, much maligned for narrow-mindedness, were more generous on this score. They maintained their folk or country dances.

The reformers' essentially negative approach was carried forward into the emerging, exploration-bound world that opened up in the following centuries. Those who embraced the Reformation brought along to the new world their accustomed country dances. Many abstained from even those. Society at large, meanwhile, continued to develop a vast range of social dances. Styles ranged from the very formal (as on Southern plantations) to the very crude and simple (as on the early West Coast). The dance scene in North America was influenced by a number of traditions, not the least of which was that of the Black community whose fox trot and Charleston provided a livelier counterpart to the formal technique.

Dance styles continued to change with the fashions and trends. The 1960s brought individualized dancing, while the seventies introduced the highly patterned disco technique accompanied by the unmistakable sound of the electronic age.

Up until the last few decades, the Christian Reformed community maintained its negative assessment of dance as an amusement of the "world." Its worldly character was no doubt accentuated by the "dive" and dance-hall climate in which much of America's social dancing took place. The Christian community wisely opted for better places for boys and girls to meet. Christians saw that social dance in the twentieth century had little in common with the joyful dance of the people of God in Old Testament times. The secularization of life had seemed, to them, to put dance, liturgical and social, both off limits for and beyond redemption by the Reformed community.

During recent decades, however, there was an increasing restlessness with that stance. Many of our teenagers began to take a keen interest in dances learned at public schools. Our own high schools and colleges began in some instances to permit closely supervised country dances. When the issue surfaced at Calvin College, our community also faced the question whether all dance is always worldly, and whether it might not lie within its mandate to recapture, as part of its culture, at least some kinds of dance, to the glory of God.

#### IV. THE UNDERLYING QUESTIONS

Contemporary social dances can hardly be equated with Israel's dance before the Lord, and the church's history with dance, however illuminating, is hardly determinative. We therefore need to turn our attention to a couple of basic questions that underlie a relevant discussion of dancing in our setting today. The first of these is simply, what is dance? The second question, what is the Christian life? When these have been answered, we can hope to enunciate some guidelines to some of the other questions that surround our mandate.

### A. *What Is Dance?*

The word *dance* can mean many different things in our language. A child happily skipping along the way to a birthday party is dancing. The artistic movements of ballet are dance. The rain dance and the war dance of Indian tribes are dancing. Throughout history religious rituals have included a form of dancing. Most ethnic cultures have developed folk and country dances. Then there are other forms such as ballroom and disco dancing. All of these bring certain human capabilities to expression, but each of them reflects distinct uses of these abilities.

It is the social dances—ranging from country, to ballroom, and to current disco—which are the primary focus of our present study. In order to bring Christian perspectives to bear on that form of dance, we need to understand what happens, in terms of both expression and motivation, when people are dancing. We need to sort out (1) what there is about dance that goes back to creation and thus reflects a gift of God, (2) what the impact of our fallen condition is on dancing, and (3) if and how Christians may seek to redeem this area of life. Unless we keep these questions in mind we continually run the risk of condemning the legitimate in our zeal to reject evil, or of embracing the corrupt in our desire to do justice to the good. We are always in danger of rejecting the creational in the name of the fall, and of accepting the fallen in the name of creation. We will consider the three questions in turn.

#### 1. What is there about dance that goes back to creation?

In the most basic sense the ability to dance is rooted in creation, in the way God made us. God created us as people who have much to celebrate in our appreciation of him and his gifts, and he created us with the physical and emotional ability to express that celebration with enthusiastic bodily movements. In the most basic sense the capacity for dance is a gift of God to express our delight in the God who made us and the life he has given us.

Physical movement has a rightful part in human celebration. God did not make us simply mental and verbal beings who express ourselves only in thoughts and words. He made us with bodies, instruments of sense and movement, capable of moving in relation to music and rhythm. Again, from this point of view we must say without hesitation that our ability to dance is from God, not from the devil.

Finally, that dance should take place in a specifically social setting should not surprise us either. Social contexts are rightfully part of that creational gift. God did not make us mere individuals, nor did he expect us to celebrate and live in loneliness. He made us social creatures for whom celebration in all of its forms is naturally social, whether it be cheering, applauding, parading, singing praises, or dancing. So there is nothing inherently wrong with a social context in dance. That, too, is from God; not from the devil.

#### 2. What impact did the fall have on dance?

There is, however, no human activity that is unaffected by the fall, and its impact on dance must be taken seriously. No one simply exercises the capacities God has given. Humanity is prone to take God-given

abilities and redirect them to purposes other than those for which he gave them. In our fallen world celebration easily becomes an end in itself. It may become a celebration of human arrogance, or the acclaiming of some victory that ought not to receive acclaim. In some of the social dances the ability to dance is redirected so that it becomes a mere tool for sexual arousal or sexual aggression.

We need to underscore the fact that the problem does not lie in the existence of the sexual element itself. When God made us, he also made us sexual beings. We neither can nor should leave behind our sexual nature in dance, anymore than we can leave it behind when we sing or speak. The problem arises when a God-given capacity to celebrate the life he has given us is distorted into a means of mere sexual arousal or sexual foreplay.

We also need to recognize that even in a fallen and sin-ridden world God's gifts are not always or uniformly misused, and human motivations are not always completely corrupt. Even in a fallen and sinful world it may be possible to find some creational ingredients of healthy celebration and a wholesome use of the God-given capacity of the human body to relate to music and rhythm.

The real issue is whether such legitimate creational elements are able to survive and come to reasonably wholesome expression in the social dance forms of our current culture—dance forms which range all the way from the very informal partner-dancing that occurs at weddings, the *klompendans*, the square dance, the polka, the stylized ballroom dance, to the contemporary disco dance. We need to inquire whether these elements are too strongly distorted by the dance form, music, and environment to be acceptable to sensitive Christian use.

### 3. How may Christians seek to redeem this area of life?

If our perspective on dance must include a recognition of both creation and fall, it must also take the call to redemption seriously. In this fallen and sin-ridden world, our task as Christians is to return to our Father's house. In the use of our gifts we are to restore them to the healthy purposes for which they have been given.

What does this mean in the area of dance? We may be led to conclude that we must choose from these three positions: (1) reject all contemporary dance forms because there is nothing that can be redeemed in them, (2) clean up and redirect contemporary dance forms so as to create an acceptable version for Christian use, and (3) create our own Christian forms of social dancing as an alternative to those presently available.

#### B. *What Is the Christian Life?*

If we recognize that dance is rooted in legitimate creational gifts which we are to restore to the healthy purposes for which they have been given, we are agreed that social dance is indeed an area of human culture which must be brought under the lordship of Christ. If we also recognize the three options mentioned, we are on the way to answering the question: in what way? Before we can proceed with that answer, however, we need to remind ourselves that this area of human life, as all the others, is a battlefield between good and evil where it takes Christian maturity and

discipline for Christians to enjoy whatever things are true, honorable, just, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8), and to reject and shun all evil. A wholehearted commitment to the Christian life compels us to confront the question whether we are ready to accept the spiritual maturity such choices require in this area. Christian freedom, redeeming the time, sexuality, our use of leisure time, and the nature of music and lyrics accompanying social dancing are the main issues surrounding the debate about dance in the Christian life.

### 1. Christian Freedom

Our present discussions have once again raised the issue of Christian liberty. In the days of the apostle Paul, Christians were divided over the propriety of eating meat that had been offered to idols. Some Christians found it impossible to dissociate eating this "tainted" meat from idolatrous practices; while to others, of whom Paul was one, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it" (I Cor. 10:25-26). Similarly, to some dance is so indissolubly associated with the "world" that the prospect of participating in it creates a conflict of conscience for themselves and a judgment of faithlessness on the part of others. Similarly, too, those who feel free to take part in dancing may be prone to label the scrupulous person as a narrow-minded soul who threatens the other's freedom in Christ. Both sides need to remember that mutual respect is demanded by the scriptural injunction that we owe no man anything but to love one another (Rom. 13:8).

The 1966 report, "The Church and the Film Arts," includes a fairly detailed and complete set of guidelines regarding Christian liberty. The conclusions adopted by the Synod of 1966 remain relevant to our present discussion. We cite them here because they summarize the range of freedom the Christian life affords us without neglecting to point each of us to our mutual responsibilities:

### B. WITH RESPECT TO THE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

1. In all moral issues concerning which the Scriptures make known the will of God, the Christian bows voluntarily and without reservation in faithful obedience (Matt. 6:10; Rom. 12:2; I John 2:17).

2. The Christian is free from every ordinance other than that which God demands in Holy Scripture, which is the only rule for faith and conduct (Gal. 18:18; Rev. 22:18-19; Belgic Confession, Art. 7).

3. In the use of things temporal, the Christian shall be guided by an enlightened conscience, in prayerful submission to the Word of God, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, always maintaining an appreciative consideration of the pastoral guidance of the office-bearers of the church and of the mind of his fellow Christian (Ps. 119:19; II Cor. 3:17; I John 2:20, 27; Eph. 3:16-19).

4. The Christian honors human authority in the home, the church, the school, the state, and in all other spheres of society only for the sake of Christ who is our eternal king. No human authority may lay down laws of its own for Christian conduct. Those in authority do have the right to require submission to the law of Christ. They may

and often must lay down regulations to maintain good order, but such regulations shall bind the conscience only insofar as they are in harmony with the Word of God (Matt. 28:18; Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 104; Belgic Confession, Art. 32).

5. The exercise of the Christian's freedom of conscience should be restrained, not by the dictates of his fellowmen, but by his own love and faith, his concern for his own spiritual welfare and that of others, and by his desire to do the works of faith according to God's law and to his glory (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 91).

6. Although Christian liberty is in principle a gift to all believers, it can be fully exercised only by those who are mature. The youth of the church are in a position analogous to that of Israel in the old covenant, being "under guardians and stewards" (Gal. 4:2). This places upon the parents the duty of guiding their children into a responsible exercise of Christian liberty; and places upon the church the duty of coming to an understanding of all the complexities of the life of contemporary youth, and in that light the duty of instructing them so they may properly discern the will of God for their lives.

While Christians are free to pick up the challenge to redeem God-given capacities to dance, accepting that challenge means taking on the responsibilities noted in sections 5 and 6 above.

## 2. Redeeming the Time

Redeeming the time is not only a gospel imperative, it is a Christian freedom. Christians who enjoy their freedom in Christ are sensitive to the need for a strategic Christian lifestyle. The apostle Paul possessed that mindset: although "all things are lawful for me, not all things are profitable" (I Cor. 10:31). The goal of all our decisions is to be "useful," not in a narrowly individualistic or self-serving fashion, but in terms of working out our salvation, God's design for our lives in this world: "Do all to the glory of God." Each individual is called to build up the church by giving himself in acts of service to others, an attitude that translates into a distinctly and recognizably Christian life (I Cor. 5:12-13; Col. 4:5; I Thess. 4:12). Christian freedom is freedom to promote the honor of Christ and the welfare of the neighbor. By the mercies of God we are enabled to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1).

Redeeming the time in this focused fashion may at times force the Christian community to turn its energies to things other than celebration and the arts. Hard times and persecution have often compelled the church to be content with the barest necessities of life. And in better times Christians may feel so pressed to expend their energies on a particular front—in the battle for Christian education, for example, or to minister to the poor in our communities or the world—that it chooses, in full freedom, to forgo opportunities to develop gifts of celebration and art.

A decision of that sort could be very much in keeping with I Corinthians 7:29-31, where the apostle reminds us that "the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as if they had none, and those who mourn as if they were not mourning, and those

who rejoice as if they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who dealt with the world as though they had no dealings with it."

This passage does not suggest that it is wrong to marry, mourn, rejoice, buy, or sell. It intends to point us to our priorities. We are participants in a new age, in which none but Christ is Lord. That reality sheds light on all our activities, and it turns all our opportunities to develop a culture into a question of wisdom; what shall we do and what shall we forgo in order to meet the need of the mission of the Lord in our society? Christians are not advised to write off things like buying or selling, mourning, rejoicing, and marrying as wrong in themselves. But to engage in these things in a way that hinders the coming of the kingdom is wrong. Marriage is not wrong, bartering with goods and money is not wrong, and to set apart times for mourning and merriment is not wrong. Sensualism is wrong, materialism is wrong, and so is the preoccupation with the limited horizons of our personal sorrows and joys. Christians are not called to sacrifice themselves by giving up their celebration of life, but in our celebrations of God and his gifts we must remember that we are still the church in battle dress. Hence if we choose to engage in dance, let us dance to redeem the time to the glory of God.

### 3. Sexuality

Dance serves as an outlet for a multitude of feelings—exuberance, joy, love, and even hate—and it also brings into play, subtly or otherwise, the sexual dimension of our lives. For that reason we cannot ignore the question in what ways and to what extent some of our contemporary dances at least tend to inflame the already erotically charged atmosphere of our culture today. Those who ask the question rightly call attention to the fact that the musical rhythms, suggestive lyrics, and provocative body movements in a number of dances in vogue today are illy at home in a biblically sensitive life. We need only to remember John Calvin's reaction to dance to know that it was especially the abuse of sexuality that made our Calvinistic tradition suspicious of most kinds of dance.

We do well to remember, however, that it is not our sexuality *per se* that debases dance. As pointed out earlier, God made us sexual beings, and we neither can nor ought to leave our sexuality behind when we are singing or dancing. Far from being embarrassed about it, we must accept our sexuality as God's gift to us and channel its potential along the ways God has designed for it. We live today in a culture aptly described as a sexual wilderness. But in that wilderness the heralds of the Lord have called his children home. His redemptive presence affects our whole person in every way. The heart that issued every kind of evil (Mark 7:21) becomes by God's grace a heart that is sensitive to his will. We can use our sexuality to turn any movement or gesture into something provocative and vulgar; but we can also use it to celebrate in wholesome ways our joy in being what we are by God's grace. What we make of our sexuality depends on our sensitivity to the fact that we have been bought at a price, and that we live before the face of God. The power of sexuality is something we must be aware of, on the dance floor as much as

anywhere else. But our sexuality is not the enemy that must keep us from redeeming the creational gifts of God to celebrate the joys of life.

#### 4. Christian Use of Leisure Time

If only in passing, we do want to touch on the topic of a Christian use of leisure time. The question we raise is how certain dances measure up in terms of a biblically attuned use of time for recreation.

North Americans tend to use their leisure time in extremely passive, and, to Christians, disturbing ways. Despite the many exhortations to get involved in physically stimulating activities, most of us spend the bulk of our leisure time riding in cars, going to movies or ball games, reading magazines or newspapers, and more than anything else, watching television. More than 90 percent of North American homes are equipped with television sets, and statistics indicate that those sets are turned on for an average of just over six hours every day. Those are hours in which the viewer is treated to a mind-numbing parade of cartoons, sit-coms, talk shows, quiz shows, and a remarkable variety of westerns, detective and horror films, and, in all fairness, a sprinkling of good and delightful—even educational—programming, but little that is pitched at a level beyond the twelve year old.

In television, sports, and the movies the same pattern obtains: rather than becoming involved as a total person, the viewer watches a number of actors at work. He is merely a spectator.

Any Christian definition of recreation should include the norm of activity and creativity. In the standard fare offered by the film media these qualities are seldom drawn into focus. If we adopt the position that a Christian style of leisure should restore mind and body through the active use of muscle as well as mind, the Christian community ought to take a hard look at the passivity that dominates not only our culture but our own lives as well. There is a need to call for a truly recreative use of leisure, one which replaces degrading diversions with the kind of play that restores joy and vitality by involving the whole person, with all his wit, muscle, deftness, and rhythm.

#### 5. Music and Lyrics

From Plato to Augustine to Calvin to the present day, great thinkers—Christian and non-Christian alike—have recognized the power which music has. To quote John Calvin, who himself had an interest in it,

... there is hardly anything in the world with more power [than music] to turn or bend, this way and that, the morals of men. . . .

We find by experience that it has a secret and almost indescribable power to move our hearts in one way or another.

While there is room for personal tastes in music, most popular music today has characteristics which call for careful scrutiny. In an earlier era the entertainment industry perhaps merely reflected prevailing attitudes. Today, popular music not only gives expression to our changing culture, but it also in turn influences and shapes it. With their pervasive and instant communication, the mass media of radio, records, and tapes may be the leading edge, the "high priests" of our culture. Christians must test



the spirits of their age. An uncritical acceptance of popular music is an open invitation to the world to press us into its mold.

Our age indulges the physical senses. Popular music tends to encourage a self-centered, sensate view of life. To listeners already in this mindset, the music reinforces it; to those who are not, the music promotes it. Such music is often aggressive, strongly rhythmic, full of repetition. Its inner construction is calculated to excite and indulge the emotions. Sometimes emotion is heightened by excessive attention to the individual performer, or the physical environment of the performance. Sometimes the volume of this music is used to heighten its irrational, emotional nature. All these characteristics tend to take people on a "trip," almost hypnotically removing them from reality. There are exceptions, and Christian groups are experimenting with their own approaches to the medium, but their contributions do not alter the fact that much of our popular music is manipulative.

It is hard to separate music and lyrics. Lyrics usually reinforce the music. Christians may want to suggest that they can "ignore" or just "not hear" the lyrics or that they are "just listening to the music." The fact is, popular music lyrics cannot be ignored. They are listened to, and they must be analyzed in terms of a Christian faith commitment. Regrettably, the less a person analyzes lyrics, the more he is likely to be subtly influenced and shaped by them.

If anywhere, here is an area where Christians need to become aware of what the market offers. Christian young people may quickly recognize the obvious offenders—the groups who for the sake of money advocate cheap sex, abuse of the family, and the use of drugs. But they may not avoid the more subtle traps—lyrics that advocate a self-centered view of life, a narcissism that makes the individual the center of all reality, or a mood that makes one's own feelings and emotions the measure of life. It takes Christian maturity to listen to such music, to realize what it says, and to deal with it without being trapped by it. Again, one of the greatest challenges that faces the Christian community lies in the interpretation of popular music and the creation of lyrics and music that suit a Christian experience of the value of life.

## V. SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS

In view of these considerations, is it realistic to approach social dance "as a legitimate area of human culture, to be brought under the lordship of Jesus Christ"? and if so, how is the Christian community to implement that decision? These were the two key questions we were mandated to answer. We can summarize our answer by way of the following five points:

A. The question whether dance is an area of human life to be brought under the lordship of Christ must, in principle at least, be answered affirmatively. The capacity for dance, as a celebration of God and the life he has given us, is rooted in creation and constitutes a gift of God. In our fallen world sinful human beings are prone to abuse these God-given

talents and to redirect them to purposes other than those for which he gave them. A Christian perspective, which takes not only the creation and fall but also redemption seriously, recognizes the freedom of the Christian community to restore and develop God's creational gifts to the healthy purposes for which they were intended.

B. An attempt to bring this area under the lordship of Christ confronts us with the question whether such legitimate creational gifts come to a reasonably wholesome expression or else are too strongly distorted in current dance forms, music, and environment to be acceptable to sensitive Christian use. Discriminating Christians will find that they must choose from all three of the following options: (1) reject those contemporary dance forms in which there is nothing that can be redeemed, (2) clean up and redirect a number of contemporary dances so as to create an acceptable version for Christian use, and (3) create their own Christian forms of social dancing as an alternative to those presently available.

C. While the Christian community tends to ask synod to define for it to what extent participation in matters like dance is *permissible*, it is the task of that community itself to develop a discriminating maturity which enables it to answer the *redemptive* question: not whether or not we may, but can this dance be redeemed, and what, in our own attitudes, milieu, and lifestyles, must happen in order to incorporate dance in a focused Christian life?

With regard to the *environment* in which social dance takes place, the Christian community will insist that it be a place in which Christians can feel free to be joyfully together, a milieu in which no alcohol, drugs, or intoxicating music are used to stimulate the senses.

With regard to *attitudes*, the Christian community will insist on the constant renewal of the heart, for so long as the motivation is faulty or impure, even the most neutral gesture is debased.

Finally, the Christian community will discriminate between *dance styles* and *music*, taking note that the dominant patterns in both steps and music are provocatively sensual, aggressively sexual, and narcissistic in character. Other dances, though they have a sexual dimension, are neither sexually aggressive nor so exclusively the domain of the "performer" that they inhibit the amateur and detract from the social nature of dance.

D. Although our immediate mandate did not envision the liturgical dance, the Christian community may well find its corporate services of celebration a fitting context within which to begin to redeem dance as an expression of his people's delight in God and his gifts.

E. The Christian community needs the help of qualified persons to reach maturity in this area, not only with regard to the selection and evaluation of dance steps and music, but also with regard to the development of our own Christian dances. The Christian community must encourage these qualified persons, within our colleges and beyond, to provide guidance, evaluation, and critique.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That synod grant the privilege of the floor to the chairman and reporter of the study committee.
2. That synod reaffirm sections A and B of the conclusions to the report "The Church and the Film Arts" as adopted by the Synod of 1966, as follows:

## A. WITH RESPECT TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHRISTIAN TO THE WORLD

1. God created man in his image and mandated him "to have dominion over all the earth" (Gen. 1:28). This includes the cultural mandate to develop all the potentials of creation and to dedicate them to the glory of God.

2. Because sin entered the world, even the best works of man are defiled with sin (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 62), but sin is being restrained by God's grace.

3. By God's particular grace sinners are, in principle, renewed and are restored in their threefold office as Christians in order that they may acknowledge the kingship of Christ and may serve him in all their activities (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 32).

4. The difference between believers and unbelievers cannot always be detected in the products of their cultural activities, but it becomes evident in their motivation, direction, and purpose (Rom. 12:1-2).

5. Worldliness is the evil of giving the love of the heart to things temporal or sinful instead of giving love to God and seeking to do his will (Rom. 12:2; I John 2:15-17).

6. Every area of human life is a battlefield between good and evil, where the Christian must learn to discern and to do the will of God. Therefore the Christian must accept and enjoy whatever things are true, honorable, just, pure, and lovely (Phil. 4:8), and he must reject and shun all evil.

7. The Christian must lead a life of spiritual separation from the world, even while enjoying those things which are neither commanded nor forbidden by the Word of God (I Cor. 7:31).

8. The Christian must not only abstain from and protest against evil in the world, but he must also call society to the obedience of Christ, thus serving as the *salt* of the earth and the *light* of the world (Matt. 5:13-14).

9. All Christians, according to the talents God has given them, must work positively and constructively to fulfill the cultural mandate (Eccles. 9:7-10).

10. The Christian must make discriminate use of the products of culture, in harmony with the scriptural principle of Christian liberty.

## B. WITH RESPECT TO THE EXERCISE OF CHRISTIAN LIBERTY

1. In all moral issues concerning which the Scriptures make known the will of God, the Christian bows voluntarily and without reservation in faithful obedience (Matt. 6:10; Rom. 12:2; I John 2:17).

2. The Christian is free from every ordinance other than that which God demands in Holy Scripture, which is the only rule for faith and

conduct (Gal. 18:18; Rev. 22:18-19; Belgic Confession, Art. 7).

3. In the use of things temporal, the Christian shall be guided by an enlightened conscience, in prayerful submission to the Word of God, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, always maintaining an appreciative consideration of the pastoral guidance of the office-bearers of the church and of the mind of his fellow Christians (Ps. 119:19; II Cor. 3:17; I John 2:20, 27; Eph. 3:16-19).

4. The Christian honors human authority in the home, the church, the school, the state, and in all other spheres of society only for the sake of Christ who is our eternal king. No human authority may lay down laws of its own for Christian conduct. Those in authority do have the right to require submission to the law of Christ. They may and often must lay down regulations to maintain good order, but such regulations shall bind the conscience only insofar as they are in harmony with the Word of God (Matt. 28:18; Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 104; Belgic Confession, Art. 32).

5. The exercise of the Christian's freedom of conscience should be restrained, not by the dictates of his fellowmen, but by his own love and faith, his concern for his own spiritual welfare and that of others, and by his desire to do the works of faith according to God's law and to his glory (Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 91).

6. Although Christian liberty is in principle a gift to all believers, it can be fully exercised only by those who are mature. The youth of the church are in a position analogous to that of Israel in the old covenant, being "under guardians and stewards" (Gal. 4:2). This places upon the parents the duty of guiding their children into a responsible exercise of Christian liberty; and places upon the church the duty of coming to an understanding of the complexities of the life of contemporary youth, and in that light the duty of instructing them so they may properly discern the will of God for their lives.

3. That synod provisionally adopt the following additional conclusions with reference to *dancing*:

#### C. WITH RESPECT TO DANCE AS A CULTURAL EXPRESSION

1. In the most basic sense, the human capacity to dance roots in creation. God gave us bodies that are instruments of sense and motion and made us capable of responding to musical themes and rhythmical movement. This capacity is rooted in creation, not in the fall.

2. This capacity to dance is a universal human phenomenon, which finds expression in every human culture. It shows itself in various forms, including religious dances, artistic dances, and social dances. Each of these types has legitimate reference points in our creation in God's image, for God made us creatures of faith, artistic sensitivity, and sociability, each of which can find valid expressions in dance forms.

3. Dancing, along with every other created human capacity, suffers from our fallen and sinful condition. This fallenness enters dance in all its forms—religious, artistic, and social—and affects the entire context of dance, including setting, music, and the motivation of participants, as well as the structure of the dance itself.

4. The Christian is not called to a rejection of the human capacity to dance, but is called to redeem this ability to a God-honoring use. The challenge of a redeemed use of dancing includes liturgical, artistic, and social forms of dance, and extends to the entire context of dancing, including motivation, setting, and music, as well as the structure of the dance itself.

#### D. WITH RESPECT TO THE CHRISTIAN EVALUATION OF SPECIFIC DANCE FORMS

1. It is biblical and altogether fitting that God's people use appropriate liturgical dance forms for the expression of their deep feelings of praise to their God. The God who gave us bodies responsive to music and capable of rhythmic movement does not intend that we ignore our bodies in worship or that we praise him only with our minds and voices (Ps. 150:4).

2. Like painting, sculpture, and music, artistic dance forms such as ballet are legitimate avenues of expression for the Christian who pursues them in acknowledgment of Christ's redemptive claims.

3. The folk dances of many ethnic cultures, including various square dances, generally reflect a joyful use of music, rhythm, movement, and social involvement which can be redeemed by a Christian community that makes a sensitive effort to control the ingredients of music, motivation, and context.

4. The ballroom and social dances of our contemporary culture present a far greater challenge to conscientious Christians. While many of these dances present positive potential for the expression of genuine artistic skill as well as healthy social interaction, they also present negative potential. They can be, and often are, deliberately sexually suggestive; they allow partners to make physical contact indiscriminately on a very casual and superficial basis; and the entire context in which such dances are held often reflects the hedonistic values dominant in our culture. Christians will find it difficult to redeem ballroom dancing without monitoring closely their attitudes, the nature of their participation, and the context in which these dances take place. Christians should not participate in them without the exercise of genuine Christian maturity expressed in a determination for a thoroughgoing redesign of these dances.

5. Contemporary dances such as disco present a whole array of features that are sharply in conflict with Christian standards. These features include a blatant sexual suggestiveness, a narcissistic orientation, and a use of musical themes that flout Christian values. Christians will find it difficult to redeem these dances and should firmly reject them as they appear in our culture.

4. That synod urge qualified persons, within our Christian colleges and beyond, to offer the Christian community their guidance, both with respect to evaluation of the constantly shifting patterns of contemporary dance and with respect to the development of new and genuinely Christian dances.

5. That synod refer the report and recommendations of its study committee to the churches for study and evaluation for a period of one year, with the understanding that consistories return their responses to the committee by November 1, 1980.

Synodical Study Committee on Dancing

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## REPORT 29

## MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

*HISTORY AND MANDATE*

The present discussion of marriage guidelines has its roots in an overture sent to the Synod of 1971 by Classis Toronto. The overture requested synod "to appoint a study committee to draw up new guidelines for pastors and consistories in their care of (a) couples contemplating marriage, (b) couples involved in marital difficulties, (c) divorced persons, and (d) those who have been divorced and contemplate remarriage" (Acts of Synod 1971, p. 112).

The study committee appointed in response to this overture reported to the Synod of 1973. Synod did not accept this report, primarily because synod was not convinced of its central thesis that the Greek word *porneia* (unchastity) should be interpreted broadly as referring to any serious rupture in the marital relationship of fidelity. Although the synodical advisory committee had recommended some extensive and drastic revisions of the report, synod thought it more advisable to appoint a new study committee with the following mandate: "to provide guidelines in the light of: a. previous synodical decisions; b. the study committee report (1973); c. the reactions of the synodical advisory committee (Report 4, B, Art. 62, 1973); d. the original overture (Overture 18, 1971)" (Acts of Synod 1973, p. 59).

The Synod of 1975 referred the report of this second study committee to the churches for study. In the light of responses and criticisms received from consistories and individuals, the study committee submitted a revised report (Report 35) to the Synod of 1977. Although the synodical advisory committee agreed that the section of Report 35 devoted to "Biblical Teachings Regarding Marriage" was a helpful presentation of the biblical view of marriage, it disagreed with several major sections of the study committee's report.

The advisory committee to the Synod of 1977 argued that the section of Report 35 devoted to "Biblical Teaching Regarding Divorce" was unsatisfactory. Its treatment of the phrase "except for *porneia*" (Matt. 5:32; 19:9) was considered unsatisfactory because both the traditional position of the Christian Reformed Church and the more restricted position of Report 35 affirm that the phrase in some sense constitutes a biblical ground for divorce. Even though Report 35 spoke of a "possible permissible ground," the advisory committee affirmed that the significance of the exceptive clause does not warrant even such talk about a ground for divorce. The advisory committee disagreed also with the treatment of I Corinthians 7:8-16. Report 35 attempted to use this passage in support of the concept of actions which were equivalent to unrepentant unchas-

tity (*porneia*); whereas, the advisory committee asserted that this passage simply reinforces the teaching of Jesus on the general inadmissibility of divorce and remarriage. Finally, there was disagreement with the section of Report 35 devoted to "Biblical Teaching Regarding Remarriage." The advisory committee affirmed that Scripture never clearly sanctions remarriage after divorce.

The basic position of the synodical advisory committee can be summarized in the following reflections presented in its report:

1. The Bible provides guidelines for marriage, not provisions for divorce and remarriage after divorce.
2. Divorce, or remarriage after divorce, cannot be given general sanction, since the Bible gives no such sanction.
3. Forgiveness and restoration are operative in instances of divorce and remarriage only when such actions are recognized as failure to live up to God's desire for marriage.
4. Forgiveness is operative only *after* instances of sin and confession, not when promised in advance of anticipated sinful activity.

(Acts of Synod 1977, p. 137)

Because of such fundamental disagreements between the report of the study committee (Report 35) and the report of the synodical advisory committee (Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 136-137), synod decided to refer both reports to a new study committee, with the following mandate:

a. to reexamine and set forth the biblical teachings on divorce and remarriage; evaluating critically the traditional exegesis of the relevant passages.

b. to formulate pastoral guidelines with respect to the problems of divorce and remarriage as they appear in our society, specifically taking into account the tension which appears to exist between Christ's teaching and situations of clearly destructive marital disruption.

(Acts of Synod 1977, Art. 76, C, 2)

Thus after almost a decade of study initiated by synodical decision, the third study committee presents its report on marriage guidelines. However, since the section of Report 35 (1977) on "Biblical Teachings Regarding Marriage" was considered a helpful presentation, and since the mandate focused on the biblical teachings concerning divorce and remarriage, the committee did not consider it necessary to present a complete account of all biblical teaching on marriage. Instead, it chose to develop only those perspectives on marriage which it considered useful for developing a biblical perspective on the matters of divorce and remarriage.

## MARRIAGE GUIDELINES

### I. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING MARRIAGE

Implicit in all pastoral advice concerning divorce and remarriage lie hidden assumptions about marriage itself. What is marriage? What is its essence, its purpose, and its obligations?

Scripture gives a clear answer to such questions. Marriage was instituted by God at creation. Declaring that it was not good for the man to



be alone, God created woman as a helper fit for him (Gen. 2:18). Man and woman, created in the image of God, were made for each other to become one flesh in marriage. Thus marriage is not a human invention nor an experiment in social relationships which can be altered or abandoned at will. It is a God-ordained, monogamous structure, requiring faithful commitment on the part of husband and wife. "Therefore, a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

The purpose of marriage is, therefore, for the benefit and enrichment of husband and wife. Although man was created for fellowship with God, according to Genesis 2 man discovered and God confirmed that man had need also for fellowship and support from a fellow human being. Thus woman was created and marriage instituted so that man and woman could exist in community. Under God's blessing this community of husband and wife would be enlarged by the birth of children. Thus marriage and family were instituted at creation to meet human need and to achieve the purposes of God (Gen. 1:28).

God's will for marriage revealed at creation was reaffirmed in the teaching of Jesus. Responding to a situation in which divorce was used to escape the obligation of marriage, Jesus replied, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. 19:6). The apostle Paul affirmed the same when he used marriage to illustrate the nature of life under the law: "A married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress" (Rom. 7:2-3). Marriage is a covenantal relationship sealed by vows. In these vows love is promised and fidelity is pledged. Fidelity involves loyalty, trust, love, devotion, reliability, and responsibility for the other. The breaking of the vow and the betrayal of the trust involves sin against the marriage partner and guilt before God. Marriage is intended to be permanent, to last until death terminates the relationship.

The basic purpose of God for marriage was especially illumined and enriched by the revelation of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul declares that the creational institution of marriage, which affirms that husband and wife become one flesh (Eph. 5:31), contains a mystery (Eph. 5:32). This mystery has now been revealed in the union of Christ and his church, of the Bridegroom and the bride (Eph. 5:23-32). Thus marriage is fully understood and achieves its deepest meaning only when it reflects this spiritual union of Christ and his church. In order to understand this declaration, it is necessary to place Paul's teaching about marriage in the context of the Letter to the Ephesians.

The Letter to the Ephesians is an explication of God's purpose which is summarized in Ephesians 1:9-10: "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." By "mystery" Paul refers to that which was not previously known or fully known but which has now been revealed in Jesus Christ. God's plan of salvation was

revealed in words and deeds in the Old Testament, but its dimensions and the way in which it would be achieved surpassed anything previously revealed and surprised even the apostle himself. What no one had previously known or seen (i.e., the full intention of God's redemptive will, or "the mystery of his will") was now to be seen by faith in Jesus Christ. That which had been revealed in Christ was continuing through the ministry of Paul, i.e., the prime evidence of God's redemptive plan was the unity of Jew and Gentile in Christ (Eph. 2:11-22; 3:4-10).

Thus redemption consists of the reunification of all things in Christ, and that has already begun in the reunification of Jew and Gentile in the church. The church as the unified body of Christ is the visible sign of God's redemptive purpose. In Ephesians 4-6, the apostle calls believers to manifest this unity in every part of their lives. Christian existence is caught up into and must manifest this unity created by Christ. Christian existence is then eschatological existence, i.e., it is to manifest already now what will be when the goal of redemption is finally achieved. Christian life is a call to manifest "ahead of time" what will be in the future and what is already accomplished fact in Jesus Christ.

The apostle Paul's instruction about marriage in Ephesians 5 assumes that background. Marriage is one aspect of Christian life whose meaning and possibility have been revealed in Christ. What has happened in Christ unfolds the meaning of the creational institution of marriage. Thus what Paul perceives in the relationship of Christ and the church determines everything he says in Ephesians 5 concerning the purpose and conduct of Christian marriage.

In Ephesians 5:31, the apostle goes back to the creation account: "For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one" (Gen. 2:24). Earlier God had declared that it was not good for man to be alone, so God created not an isolated individual, but a being-in-community (man/woman), and established marriage as the means for achieving and expressing this community. Because of sin marriage can no longer achieve its full purpose. At best, it achieves this purpose only partially because sin divides and impedes all human relationships and expressions of community, including those in marriage.

In Ephesians 5:32, the apostle Paul moves from the creational institution of marriage to the declaration that this is a great mystery. By "mystery" Paul means that in Genesis 2:24 lies an unknown or not fully known intention of God which is now revealed in the relationship of Christ and his church. What is that intention of God? From the beginning God planned to create a human community. However, prior to the coming of Christ that community had been achieved neither in Israel nor in the Gentile world. Sin had alienated humanity from God and from one another. Sin had erected walls of hostility that destroyed genuine community. But now in Christ God has created a genuine human community, one new man in place of two (Eph. 2:15). This one-new-person-in-community is Christ and his body. Thus in the relationship (or marriage) of Christ to his people, God actually fulfills the basic goal or purpose of the institution of marriage.

This fulfillment of the institution of marriage in Jesus Christ has important implications for the Christian view of marriage and family. They are not the *most* important reality. What is more important is the family of God. Jesus himself indicates that this is so when his mother and brothers ask for him and he replies: "Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother" (Mark 3:35). And again on the cross when he says to his mother and to John: "Woman, behold your son, [son] behold your mother" (John 19:26-27). Our family relationships are taken up into and are superceded or fulfilled by the relationships established in the family of God. Therefore, finally—when the kingdom is fully here—there will no longer be any marriage (Mark 12:25; Luke 20:34-36). There will be only the family of God.

So even now, as Christians await the final coming of the kingdom, the Scripture indicates that marriage is not necessary as a Christian obligation, nor is it necessary for personal fulfillment. All that is necessary for discipleship and fulfillment is membership in the family of God by which one participates in the marriage between Christ and his church. Since the purpose of the marriage institution has been fulfilled in Christ, one may choose or be called not to enter marriage (celibacy is one form of discipleship), or one may choose or be called to be married (marriage is also one form of discipleship). Christian single persons should be able to find in the body of Christ that community of fellowship which every human being needs for effective service and for personal fulfillment. This is a quite different view of the relationship of human sexuality and fulfillment than that which exists in our culture and in the church today.

However, even though the basic goal of marriage is fulfilled in Christ, marriage as an order of creation continues until the new creation fully comes into being. And the good news is that because of the fulfillment in Christ, if people marry in the Lord, marriage can serve its God-ordained purposes. Marriage can participate in and serve God's plan for the unity of all things, for establishing the new community. Thus the highest goal and ultimate purpose of Christian marriage is to serve the establishment and welfare of the family of God, or as expressed in the familiar words of the Form for the Solemnization of Marriage, "the purpose of marriage is . . . the furtherance of the kingdom of God."

Marriage and family are not ends in themselves. When marriage and family become ends in themselves or serve only personal goals, they have become idols. When marriage is used only as a means to personal or sexual fulfillment, when marriage and family are used primarily to establish a clan, build a name, control wealth or relationships, they constitute idolatry. Christian marriage must serve God's basic purpose, i.e., it must both contribute to and find fulfillment in the new community created in Christ Jesus. It must do so, of course, in its own unique way.

Marriage is related to God's plan for the world because in Christ God takes up the institution of marriage to serve his purpose of building the new covenant community. By means of marriage and Christian family life people are shaped and molded for living in the family of God. For it is in the intimate relationships of marriage and family life that we discover who we are, that we experience acceptance and forgiveness and what it

means to give oneself for the sake of another. In marriage and family we learn what community is, what love is, and here in a very direct way we experience the care and concern of God for us through the care and concern of others. Marriage can be a means of grace, for marriage and the family are our first lessons in community in Christ. In this way we are prepared for life in the family of God.

If marriage is to serve God's redemptive purpose, it must reflect the reality of and be patterned after the example of Christ's relationship to his people. Everything that the apostle Paul declares in Ephesians about this new reality in Christ applies also to marriage: e.g., about the walls of hostility Christ has broken down and the community that now exists without walls (Eph. 2); about growing together in unity; about putting away bitterness, wrath, anger, and walking in love as imitators of God and Christ (Eph. 4-5). Love, without which marriage cannot exist, has its source in God and in Christ. Such love gives one the capacity to forgive, to seek the welfare of the other, to love even when love is not returned. Christ is the inspiration and the pattern for love in marriage (Eph. 5:25). For Christ has created the reality of and the possibility for genuine human community, also in marriage. Thus in Christian marriage there is always hope that genuine community can be achieved.

The new covenant community has a pattern of relationships—Christ as head and church as body. Since Paul sees marriage as a sort of mini-version of the covenant community, it requires a similar pattern. Marriage establishes a covenant community which reflects Christ and his body. Just as the body of Christ needs a structure to grow in unity, so Christian marriage must be structured similarly to achieve unity. Thus husband and wife are called to pattern their life together after the pattern of Christ and his church. Christian marriage is not just a natural event, but a call to discipleship. God's will that marriage be permanent and not be dissolved by human action, is a reality to be achieved through a life of active obedience which appropriates the unity that exists in Christ. Christian marriage, so lived, constitutes part of our witness to the world concerning God's purpose in Christ. Thus, through its fulfillment in Christ, Christian marriage discovers its true meaning and purpose.

Understood in the light of Christ, marriage and family have an essential relationship to the church as family of God. Church is more than a place where we are taught to live as Christians in marriage, for the church is itself the family of God which is the goal to which Christian marriage contributes and for which marriage exists. For this reason the church as the fellowship of believers, or the new covenant community, must support, encourage, and assist each Christian marriage and family so that it achieves its God-ordained purpose.

To break this unity in Christ, either by attempting to live the unity of marriage apart from its goal in the family of God or by divorce, is to violate that for which Christ died. Divorce is a failure to fulfill the creational norm and the redemptive purpose for marriage.

The basic biblical teaching concerning marriage which has been developed above can be summarized in the following statements:

1. Marriage is an institution created by God. It is a covenant relationship established by the mutual vows of a man and a woman to be husband and wife to each other and to live together as such.

2. God is party to the covenanted relationship of marriage in such a way that he unites those who give themselves to each other as husband and wife.

3. The covenant of marriage reflects the covenant of grace. Its model, and in fact its fulfillment, is the covenant which unites Christ and the church. Therefore, in marriage each gives oneself to the other without reserve or qualification.

4. The marriage relationship is characterized by (a) exclusivity: forsaking all others, (b) mutuality: to become one flesh, and (c) permanency: till death do us part.

5. The permanency or indissolubility of marriage is both a demand and a gift of God. Love, which is essential for marriage and community, is God's gift in Christ. Permanent unity in marriage is, therefore, possible in Christ and demanded of Christ's disciples. Stability and permanence in marriage result from faithfulness within the covenanted relationship and are the blessings of God upon obedience to his will. Thus, only when both husband and wife are loving, respectful, and faithful to each other will marriage enjoy the blessings of permanence and stability.

6. Hope is essential and possible in all Christian communal relationships, including marriage. Hope is the recognition that Christ can and will through his Spirit make possible the unity that God demands. Renewal and new beginnings are possible. The gospel declares that for failures in faithfulness, there is forgiveness; for alienation, reconciliation; for despair, hope. Christian marriage has been taken up into the redemptive purpose of God, and through the blessing of God obedient discipleship in marriage is possible.

## II. BIBLICAL TEACHING REGARDING DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

Jesus stressed emphatically the permanence of marriage. Marriage is intended to be binding for life (Matt. 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-9). Such is the unambiguously clear teaching of Scripture.

Less clear, however, is the Scripture's teaching on divorce and remarriage. The question is, does Scripture grant that in a broken world the sinful actions of one or both of the marriage partners can so dissolve a marriage relationship established by God that it is no longer binding? That God wills the permanence of marriage and that death dissolves the marriage relationship is clearly taught. But it is not unambiguously clear whether Jesus and Paul teach, or imply, that certain actions of the marriage partners can also dissolve the marriage covenant. The issue centers on Jesus' words in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, and on the apostle Paul's teaching in I Corinthians 7:10-16.

### A. *Matthew 5:32 and 19:9*

#### 1. The Meaning of *Porneia*

One of the problems in interpreting the phrase, "except on the ground of unchastity," is the precise meaning of *porneia* (unchastity). Without

repeating the various interpretations summarized in Report 35, submitted to the Synod of 1977, we agree with the conclusion of that report given in the following summary:

1) *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 does not refer to "spiritual adultery" or "infidelity of any kind," but refers to sexual infidelity; (2) although the meaning of *porneia* is broader than *moicheia*, its primary reference in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 is to adultery; (3) the word *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 should be translated as "unchastity" and be understood to include such sexual infidelity as incest and homosexuality; and (4) because of the association of *porneia* with "harlotry" and "prostitution," the accent appears to fall on persistent and unrepentant unchastity rather than on the single act itself (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 525; for full discussion cf. pp. 520-525).

## 2. The Significance of the Exceptive Clause

The exceptive clause, "except for unchastity," is found only in Matthew. Mark 10:11-12 and Luke 16:18 do not contain it. Since most New Testament scholars accept the priority of Mark, many argue that here Mark represents the original teaching of Jesus and that Matthew's version is a later adaptation. That is possible, but an argument can also be made in the opposite direction (cf. Report 35, Acts of Synod 1977, p. 526). In either case, however, the church must not overlook her confession concerning the canon of Scripture. Even if it is a Matthean adaptation, it continues to be an apostolic word which participates in the authority of Jesus himself. The recorded sayings of Jesus are not simple quotations but are sayings which frequently have been interpreted and applied by the gospel writers. The only access we have to the words and intentions of Jesus is through the words of his apostles. Thus the church confesses that the words of the apostles are for us the words of Jesus.

It may be the case that Matthew, or Jesus, qualified the saying about divorce and remarriage with a view to a Jewish situation. But what that situation was is difficult to prove. Some argue that Jewish law required a husband to divorce a wife guilty of adultery. Therefore, Jesus accommodated his teaching to the Jewish legal requirements. There is some evidence which indicates that a Jewish court would so advise, although whether this was the case already in Jesus' time is impossible to prove. However, there is also evidence that forgiveness on the part of the husband was possible and that the husband was not forced to divorce his adulterous wife. Thus it is difficult to prove precisely what the legal situation was.

Moreover, it is necessary for biblical reasons to exercise caution here. The first occurrence of the exceptive clause is in the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus is demonstrating a righteousness that "exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees" (Matt. 5:20). The second occurrence is in the context of a rejection of the traditional Jewish interpretation of legitimate divorce by Jesus' appeal to the credential mandate for marriage. Thus it does not seem possible that the exceptive clause could be a concession to an existing practice which violates the righteousness

demanding by the creational norm for marriage. The thrust of the Sermon on the Mount and of Jesus' teaching concerning marriage reasserts the creational norm and God's demands for righteousness *against* the understanding of that righteousness contained in traditional Jewish teaching and practice. Would Jesus, or Matthew, have tolerated a "Jewish" practice which violated the demands of that righteousness? That does not seem possible. Thus the exceptive clause, even if it were added for reasons arising from a specific Jewish situation, does not violate the righteousness demanded by God's law for marriage.

What, then, is the significance of the exceptive clause? It has been customary to refer to the exceptive clause as the biblical ground for divorce. If by "ground" it is assumed that the exceptive clause gives biblical warrant for divorce in every case where adultery has occurred, that assumption cannot be maintained. It is better, then, not to speak of a biblical ground for divorce. Scripture never intends to provide persons with justifications for divorce, but rather seeks always to encourage and maintain the permanence of marriage.

If the exceptive clause is removed from the saying of Jesus, what remains is a declaration which intends to affirm the permanence of marriage: "Whoever divorces his wife. . . and marries another, commits adultery" (Matt. 19:9). The declaration in Matthew 5:32 is focused on the effect of divorce upon the wife, but the intention is basically the same: "Everyone who divorces his wife. . . makes her an adulteress; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery." The context in both instances is the Jewish tradition in which divorce was an acceptable remedy for any marital discord. In fact, divorce was permitted even for the sake of desiring to marry another. Jesus' declaration, in effect, labels that practice, which made commonplace the remarriage of divorced persons, adultery. In other words, the law had been so interpreted as to approve conduct which the deepest intention of the law clearly disapproved. What the tradition considered "lawful" conduct was actually adultery. Thus Jesus teaches that the righteousness of the law governing marriage far exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.

However, in the case where divorce occurs because of *porneia*/unchastity, the condemnation upon remarriage does not necessarily apply. Logically, the statement is analogous to the following: All killing, except in the case of provocation, is murder. Sometimes it may not be murder, sometimes it may be. Certainly the statement does not imply that wherever provocation has occurred killing is approved. Before one can apply the exceptive clause to a specific case of killing, other factors must be known and the total situation assessed. So it is the case where adultery occurs prior to divorce. In such a case, without a further assessment of the total situation, one cannot know whether the general condemnation of divorce/remarriage as adultery applies. It may not, but again it may.

What are these additional factors that must be assessed? The texts containing the exceptive clause do not inform us. Hence, these additional factors must be derived from general biblical teaching. Two key factors, according to the report submitted in 1977, are repentance and forgiveness:

Especially if both partners in a marriage are Christian and the partner who is guilty of physical infidelity confesses his/her sin in genuine repentance then the other marriage partner should accept that confession and, recognizing his/her own weaknesses, seek restoration and healing in the marriage. Such confession and forgiveness is in harmony with our Lord's teaching on the importance of (confession and) forgiveness (Matt. 6:14,15; Matt. 18:21-35; cf. also Col. 3:23 and Eph. 4:32) (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 527).

That report suggested also that the use of *porneia* instead of the more common word for adultery, *moicheia*, may indicate, because of its association with harlotry, persistent and unrepentant adultery instead of a single act of marital unfaithfulness. Therefore, the report concluded that only where there was lack of repentance for persistent sinful conduct could one suggest that divorce was not to be condemned. Although it is impossible to prove that in the exceptive clause *porneia* must have the connotation of persistent and unrepentant adultery, the biblical teaching on the permanence of marriage and on the importance of repentance and forgiveness would point in that direction.

Repentance and forgiveness are fundamental realities in Christian living. Unless there is a willingness to confess sin, to forgive or to accept forgiveness, there can be no genuine Christian community within either marriage, the family, or the church. Every form of Christian community has been created by the forgiving love of God, and the members of that community exist under the obligation to extend that forgiveness to each other, as the apostle Paul exhorts in Ephesians 4:32, "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." God pursued Israel, his bride, in love, even when she was unfaithful (cf. Hosea), and Christ "loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Eph. 5:25). Similarly, when we are sinned against in marriage, or in any other relationship, we stand under the obligation to love and forgive as we have been loved and forgiven by God.

There must always be the willingness to forgive, but what happens when forgiveness is not accepted? What happens when there is no "godly grief" leading to repentance (cf. II Cor. 7:9-11), so that there exists no acknowledgment of sin committed nor any willingness to be forgiven? Without genuine repentance and the acceptance of forgiveness, genuine community cannot exist. Under those circumstances Israel's fellowship with God was broken. So it would seem that there can be circumstances in marriage, namely, *porneia*/unchastity together with a lack of repentance and the acceptance of forgiveness or a refusal to forgive, by which the basis for fellowship is broken, the avenue toward restoration is refused, and divorce possibly not to be condemned. It is not possible, however, to define precisely the circumstances of each particular case, nor the time frame within which a patient waiting for repentance ought to be exercised. Clearly, no sin has the power to destroy *automatically* the community of marriage, family, or church which God has established. God's forgiving love, which we share, is the greater power which heals and restores our broken relationships. Nevertheless, where sin is not confessed and forgiveness not received, brokenness remains.



This biblical teaching on repentance and forgiveness is not explicitly mentioned in the passages containing the exceptive clause, but it seems likely that Jesus would have such factors in mind. Since confession of sin, forgiveness, and being forgiven are essential to all forms of Christian fellowship and community, including marriage, it seems obvious that at least these factors must be considered in applying the exceptive clause.

Thus, although in the use of the exceptive clause Jesus is not creating a ground for divorce, he does acknowledge the effect of sin in breaking norms established by God. Even though the exceptive clause does not automatically supply a ground for divorce in the case of adultery, it does indicate that it is possible for such persistent sinful conduct to dissolve a marriage established by God. Marriage *should* not be dissolved, for that is contrary to God's will; but by persistent and unrepentant unchastity people *can* put asunder what God has joined together. Where such has happened, Jesus does not apply his condemnation upon the subsequent remarriage of the one who did not commit adultery.

#### B. I Corinthians 7:10-16

Many in the church at Corinth were confused about the relationship between Christian faith and marriage: Should Christians marry? How should they conduct themselves within marriage? May or should married Christians separate or divorce? May a believer continue to be married to an unbeliever? What obligation does the Christian partner have to the unbelieving husband or wife who desires to be divorced? It is difficult to reconstruct with certainty all of the motivations and circumstances which produced such questions. Apparently, a false asceticism concerning sexual matters was part of the situation, as well as a false understanding of Paul's eschatological teaching. Because of the difficulty in reconstructing the situation, interpreters do not agree fully on all matters in I Corinthians 7.

The question of marriage and divorce surfaces in I Corinthians 7:10-16. The apostle Paul addresses, first of all, a situation in which both partners are Christian. There he stresses the permanence of marriage by repeating the essence of the Lord's command that "the wife should not separate from her husband. . . and that the husband should not divorce his wife." Divorce is not an action willed by Jesus because it violates God's will that marriage is for life. But what happens when a separation or divorce occurs? The apostle Paul speaks specifically to the wife—for what reason we do not know—but certainly by implication the same exhortation should apply also to the husband. Paul commands that if the wife does separate from/divorce her husband, she should either remain single or be reconciled to her husband.

Is this command universal, i.e., without any possible exception? Some argue that it is. They assert that both Jesus and Paul teach that all divorce/remarriage is sin (not simply the result of sin). Appeal is then made also to I Corinthians 7:39, "A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If the husband dies, she is freed to be married to whom she wills, only in the Lord." All interpreters agree that Paul teaches that marriage is permanent and that Christians must maintain and regain, if

possible, the marriage union that God wills. But not all agree that Paul's command in I Corinthians 7:10-11 is universal, i.e., without any possible exception. For example, Calvin and others believe that Paul's command is to be interpreted in harmony with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:9. It applies, therefore, only to "unlawful and frivolous" divorces and not to that divorce governed by the exceptive clause. The fact that the apostle Paul does not mention the exceptive clause implies neither logically nor actually that he did not know it or that it violates the intention of his command. The case is simply that the apostle does not mention it. His concern is for the permanence of Christian marriage.

The second case concerning marriage and divorce is one which the Lord himself did not address during his earthly ministry. What happens to a marriage when a partner is an unbeliever? The apostle replies that the fact of unbelief is not in itself a ground for divorce. The unbelieving partner is consecrated through the believing partner and the children of such a marriage are holy, i.e., they belong to the covenant people of God. But what happens when the unbelieving partner refuses to live in the marriage relationship? The apostle declares, "Let it be so, . . . the brother or sister is not bound. For God has called us to peace" (I Cor. 7:15).

What is meant by the term *separate* in the clause, "if the unbelieving partner desires to separate" (I Cor. 7:15)? In verses 10-15, the apostle uses two words which are translated respectively as "separate" and "divorce." Some interpreters have suggested that the first term refers not to divorce but only to unofficial separation. Then verse 15 speaks of such unofficial separation and the freedom granted is only the freedom not to live together. The linguistic basis for this approach is not compelling. It is true that both words can refer to various kinds of separation, abandonment, or dismissal, and that neither term is exclusively a technical, juridical term for divorce. However, it is also the case that both are found in contexts, and even in marriage contracts, where they do refer to legal divorce. Thus the Report of 1957 judged the matter correctly when it suggested that Paul's use of these two terms may be only a "rhetorical device to introduce variety," and consequently that report assumed that in verse 15 Paul is speaking of divorce (Acts of Synod 1957, p. 342). In addition, it should be noted that the word for "separate" is the term Jesus uses in Matthew 19:6, ". . . let no man put asunder." Thus the dissolution of marriage is the point of reference.

A second difficulty in I Corinthians 7:15 concerns the phrase, "is not bound." The term can be translated "is not enslaved." Some believe that Paul is thereby affirming only that the believer is not absolutely enslaved in a marriage relationship, i.e., the believer is not required to live with the unbelieving partner. However, the marriage tie continues and the situation is the same as in I Corinthians 7:11, ". . . let her remain single or else be reconciled to her husband." The freedom granted is only the freedom not to live together. Such was the position adopted by the Synod of 1957. However, others believe that the phrase "not enslaved" is a synonymous expression for the "not bound" of Romans 7:1-4. In that case, according to this interpretation, the situation is not the same as in

verse 11 because in that verse the assumption is that the wife is bound and must remain single or be reconciled. In verse 15, however, the freedom granted would then be freedom from the law of marriage which binds husband and wife together. Essentially, this latter position was held by Calvin and is contained in the Westminster Confession.

The final difficulty concerns the nature of the case to which the apostle Paul responds. Is the case restricted to a situation arising from religious incompatibility? If it is, then whatever the freedom is that Paul grants, it applies only where those conditions precisely recur. Such has been the position of the Christian Reformed Church, except during the years 1894-1896. For example, the Synod of 1957 asserted that I Corinthians 7:15 "pertains only to Christians whose *unbelieving* marriage partners 'depart' for deeply seated *religious* reasons" (Acts of Synod 1957, p. 106). Others observe, however, that the unbelief of the partner is not the basis for the freedom granted to the believer. It is rather the refusal of the unbeliever to live with the believer. This refusal may be due to "deeply seated religious differences," but it may also be for any other reason. The reason is not mentioned; the refusal to live in marriage is mentioned. Historically, the stress on the refusal of the unbeliever has led to the affirmation of willful desertion as an act that dissolves marriage. The particular case mentioned in I Corinthians 7:12-16 is interpreted then as an *example* of willful desertion, of a refusal to acknowledge God's will for marriage, and a refusal to accept the gifts of grace available for maintaining and restoring the marriage covenant.

What is at stake in these differences of interpretation? The central issue can be highlighted by means of this question: Can sinful human conduct put asunder what God has joined together? Some believe that it cannot and, therefore, every remarriage after divorce is an act of adultery. This has been the traditional Roman Catholic position. Most others, however, believe that persistent unchastity contains the potential for destroying the marriage bond and that divorce/remarriage in such a case is not adultery. Thus at least one kind of sinful conduct can lead to the dissolution of a marriage. If one accepts the interpretation that I Corinthians 7:15 suggests freedom from the law of marriage, then there is an additional type of sinful conduct which can dissolve a marriage. It should be noted that the apostle Paul does not explicitly address the matter of remarriage after a divorce caused by the refusal of the unbeliever to live in the marriage relationship. Whether implications for remarriage can be derived from his teaching depends on one's interpretation of "not bound." The essential difference between the two traditional interpretations of I Corinthians 7:10-16 can be summarized as follows: one view holds that this passage, although allowing separation, teaches that the Christian obligation is to remain single or to be reconciled. While agreeing that such is the Christian obligation in many instances, the second view holds that in the second case (v. 15) the apostle implies that willful desertion can dissolve the marriage relationship and that remarriage is then a possibility. Obviously, the interpretation of this passage will affect both a "theology" of marriage and the pastoral advice given in situations of divorce and remarriage.

How should the church respond to these differences in the interpretation of I Corinthians 7:10-16? Whenever the church adopts positions affecting the lives of people, it must be certain that the position taken or rule adopted states neither more nor less than the Scripture requires. Since it is not possible to prove conclusively either position on exegetical or theological grounds and thus to state specifically what Scripture requires in this passage, and since these differences of interpretation have a long history in the Reformed tradition and exist also within this committee, the committee decided that it was best not to decide matters by simple majority vote.

Instead, from these difficulties in interpreting this passage which mentions instances of divorce/separation, we should recognize that Scripture speaks more clearly to some cases than to others. It does not adjudicate in advance every case of marital difficulty that the church will encounter. To assume that it does is simply to expect too much. For even in the two cases of I Corinthians 7, the Scripture does not give a fully developed, legal discussion of the matter. In the first instance, the apostle applies a general teaching without mentioning exceptions (cf. Calvin on I Corinthians 7:10), and in both instances specific situations are addressed, the details of which are not completely stated and, consequently, are no longer fully known.

The difficulties encountered in interpreting the above passage, however, do not mean that the church has been left without guidance on matters of divorce and remarriage. For even in I Corinthians 7, the apostle clearly proclaims the will of God for marriage and the possibilities for its redemption. That will of God is clearly stated throughout the Scriptures and those gracious possibilities for redemption and renewal are always available to those who believe. Yet, that same Scripture acknowledges that in a sinful world God's will is not always observed nor are those gifts of grace always claimed. Although the Scripture speaks clearly in terms of principles governing divorce and remarriage, it is neither possible nor wise for the church to attempt to construct a legal code which would cover all cases or all the circumstances that would apply. Instead, in every instance the church must seek pastorally to assist the partners in a marriage to achieve forgiveness, reconciliation, and restoration wherever possible. For such is the will of God.

### III. GUIDELINES FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

The church has a special interest in marriage and the family, for the Christian family is an important witness to the unity Christ creates. The unified Christian family, which is open toward the body of Christ, enriches this body, and contributes to the unity of the family of God. Thus the church must develop a full-orbed ministry to strengthen marriage and family relationships, and to heal the brokenness that destroys the unity Christ gives.

The ministry of the church is a corporate ministry of the entire body. Although the official teaching, preaching, and pastoral ministries of the church are of great importance, the mutual ministry and witness of Christian families and persons to each other is equally important. It is

part of the responsibility we assume for one another. Thus the guidelines for ministry are guidelines for the entire church.

#### *A. The Educative Ministry*

Instruction is especially important in an age when the Christian view of marriage is not understood and often under attack. Therefore, the church must proclaim and teach the biblical doctrine of marriage, including both the creation ordinance and/or the law of marriage, as well as the significance of sin, grace, and redemption for marriage.

To achieve this, the church must:

1. Emphasize the sovereign claim of God on all of life so that also in the marriage relationship the first consideration is to please God by doing his will.
2. Stress the God-willed permanence of marriage and counsel against violation of the marriage bond.
3. Proclaim that Christian marriage is a relationship in which the grace of God in Christ enables one to live within the unity God demands.
4. Teach that both partners in marriage fail in various ways to keep the covenant they make. Such failure is sin and such sin tends to separate those whom God has joined.
5. Teach that in Christ husbands and wives are called to be reconciled to each other. They are to confess their sins, forgive one another, make restitution, and again live faithfully to their vows to love, honor, and cherish.
6. Teach that we do not possess within ourselves the power to keep covenant. No one is able to keep the promise to be a husband or wife to the other and to love, honor, and cherish no matter what the circumstances of life, or what the other does to us or fails to do. Only the powerful grace of God can make each able so to keep covenant. Therefore, husband and wife must seek from God what they need in order to be faithful. The church must teach without ambiguity that God will give what each needs in order to keep covenant.
7. Teach that marriage is not an end in itself but finds its fulfillment and ultimate purpose in the family of God, and, therefore, that Christian marriage must pattern itself after the relationship of Christ and his church.
8. Promote a forgiving, sympathetic, and open church fellowship in which concern, compassion, and help can be freely offered and freely received.
9. Challenge the heresies of our day which destroy marriage, e.g., the heresies of selfism, individualism, and humanistic secularism.

#### *B. The Ministry to Those Whose Marriages Are in Crisis*

Sin disrupts the unity we have in Christ. Therefore, besides teaching and proclaiming the biblical doctrine of marriage, the church has a special ministry to those whose marriages are in crisis and to those who may be contemplating divorce.

For such the church must:

1. *Communicate hope to those who are losing hope.* The ground of such hope is not themselves, but God; not their good intentions nor the willingness or capacity of either to change, but the promise of God that he will bless those who seek him.

Those who would have a well-grounded hope must begin by seeking for themselves the forgiving, restoring, and cleansing power of God. They must seek the grace of God in Christ so that they live in obedience to their vows regardless of the responses of their spouses.

Persons who have experienced the power of the resurrection in their own marriages which once were dead but are now alive, can become powerful witnesses to such hope.

2. *Exercise a ministry of reconciliation.* The church must call the marriage partners to confession, forgiveness, reconciliation, and renewed obedience. To achieve this the church must listen so that she understands the attitudes and behaviors of each spouse toward the other, how these affect the marriage relationship, and what God teaches concerning these attitudes and behaviors.

But the church must not only listen, she must also speak in confrontation and with promise. Where overt sinful conduct is present, the church must address the Word of God in rebuke. Where separation is contemplated, the church must warn concerning the seriousness of such action. God declared to Old Testament Israel that he hated the breaking of the marriage covenant (Mal. 2:14-16). This will of God in favor of the permanence of marriage must be declared, for it is a primary motivation for reconciliation—and the grace of God makes reconciliation attainable.

When one or both spouses refuse reconciliation or refuse to begin to live again in covenant faithfulness, the church must remind them of the sacredness of vows once taken and of the biblical demand for forgiveness and reconciliation. Recognizing, however, the complexities created by the deeply intimate relationships that marriage entails, the church must also encourage both partners to exhibit a patience like that of our Father in heaven. Where children are involved, parents should be encouraged to consider also the needs of the children as members of their family and of the family of God. The church must continue to encourage, sustain, and support so that hope does not die.

3. *Develop a corporate ministry of reconciliation.* Friends, fellow Christians, and family must respond promptly with a ministry of hope and reconciliation to those whose marriage is in crisis. Such ministry may begin with one person but the gifts of many must be exercised. The prompt corporate response of fellow believers is necessary for healing to take place within the body of Christ. To develop such a corporate ministry of reconciliation, the church must encourage those whose marriage is in crisis to seek help and assistance, and the church in response must develop an appropriate ministry of support.

4. *Consider the purpose of discipline:* namely whether formal discipline might not be a helpful or necessary means to achieve the repentance of persons involved in marital crisis, when one or both partners by word

or deed refuse to hear the word of God, refuse the call to repentance and forgiveness, and appear to have closed their hearts to the hope of possible reconciliation.

### *C. The Ministry to Those Who Are Divorced*

Divorce is a traumatic experience and is often the occasion for deep grief with its constituent elements of guilt, anger, loneliness, and feelings of failure. A sense of shame experienced by divorced persons, by others toward them, and by parents or children of the divorced, frequently results in the divorced and their families feeling ostracized from even minimal fellowship. In addition, the many readjustments and the reorganization of many aspects of life contribute to the trauma that is divorce.

Therefore, the church must:

1. Continue to minister with special concern for those involved in this traumatic experience. Divorced persons need to be supported pastorally in a way similar to the manner in which other members involved in other personal difficulties are supported. Even where there is great guilt in divorce with no apparent repentance, the church must continue to minister persistently and patiently.

2. Speak with clarity where sinful conduct is overt and apparent. However, recognizing the limits of human ability to discern the subtlety and intricacy of human motivation, the church must recognize the limits of its ability to assess guilt and blame in the intimate and private turmoil of marital distress.

3. Understand that marital breakdown and divorce requires pastoral attention which emphasizes repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. As long as there is openness to the Word and to the pastoral counsel and admonition of the consistory, participation in the sacraments, which are a means of grace, should not be denied.

4. Exercise formal discipline only when there is disdain for the biblical teachings and when unrepentance is beyond doubt. Marital breakdown and divorce does not by itself mean the loss of church membership.

5. Maintain within the life and work of the church a place of acceptance and appreciation for those who by divorce are living the single life so that they may experience the vital spiritual, moral, and social support they need. The church must take special care to supply what is needed by the children of divorced members so that they may receive what is essential for their development as persons and members of the family of God.

### *D. The Ministry to Those Contemplating Remarriage*

The permanence of the marriage relationship lies at the heart of the biblical teaching on marriage. God wills a lifelong unity of husband and wife in marriage. Consequently, the basic declaration of Scripture is that divorce and remarriage while one's spouse is alive constitutes adultery (cf. Matt. 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; Rom. 7:2-3).

The Bible also indicates that there can be circumstances involving unchastity (*porneia*) where the judgment of adultery does not fall upon a per-

son who remarries after a divorce. However, the exceptive clause by itself does not fully inform us concerning all the relevant circumstances. Thus the two passages containing the exceptive clause (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), when taken in isolation from the rest of Scripture, are not as clear as they may seem to be. Certainly, they provide no simple law by which to regulate divorce and remarriage. In addition, I Corinthians 7:12-16 allows divorce under certain circumstances. However, since it does not explicitly address the matter of remarriage, it is impossible to prove conclusively that remarriage is either forbidden or permitted under the circumstances mentioned.

Thus, on the one hand, Scripture states the principle or law governing marriage with such clarity that no one should be mistaken concerning God's will for the marriage relationship. The church must constantly reaffirm this biblical teaching both as God's will for its corporate life and in its proclamation to a society in which moral anarchy is destroying marriage and family life. However, on the other hand, the Scripture also considers cases where marriage does not attain the biblical norm. Although the cases considered are essentially only two, in those two cases the Scripture acknowledges the necessity of considering certain actions and attitudes which occur in a sinful world, which conflict with God's will for marriage, and which can destroy a marriage relationship.

The church must exercise its pastoral ministry in the midst of this tension which exists between God's will for marriage and the multiplicity of personal factors which surround particular cases of divorce and remarriage. The church should neither issue a clear prohibition of remarriage in those cases where Scripture is unclear, nor should it attempt to list with legal precision the circumstances under which any particular remarriage does not conflict with biblical teaching. This is neither possible nor desirable. For example, even when unchastity has been a factor in the divorce, the legitimacy of the remarriage is not to be taken for granted. Other factors in the biblical teaching must be considered, such as repentance for personal failure in the breakdown of the previous marriage, forgiveness of others, understanding of the divinely intended permanence of marriage, and a renewed dependence on the grace of God for the success of the remarriage.

Hence, the church must apply these biblical principles to concrete situations in the light of its best understanding of what happened in the divorce and what is being planned for the remarriage. The major part of the burden in making this application necessarily rests on the local consistory, for it has the most intimate and accurate knowledge of the situation of divorce and contemplated remarriage.

Therefore, the church must:

1. Reaffirm the general biblical principle that divorce and remarriage constitute adultery.
2. Deal pastorally with those who have failed to keep the biblical principle by
  - a. Refraining from a strictly legal approach to remarriage that tries to provide a basis for judgment that certain categories of remarriage are always compatible or incompatible with the teachings of Scripture.



b. Seeking to bring persons contemplating remarriage to a genuine awareness of what is involved in the covenant of marriage. The teaching of Scripture concerning marriage, grace, love, loyalty, vows, forgiveness, hope, and promise should be openly discussed.

c. Calling persons contemplating remarriage to an examination of their intentions in the light of the biblical teaching concerning reconciliation with the former spouse, the possibility of the single life, and remarriage.

d. Counseling firmly and compassionately against any remarriage that conflicts with the biblical teaching concerning marriage and divorce.

e. Exercising formal discipline when persons in hardness of heart refuse to heed the admonitions of the consistory and do not acknowledge and repent of their sins involved in divorce and remarriage.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Your committee recommends:

1. That synod recognize the Rev. Wilbert Van Dyk (chairman) and Dr. David Holwerda (secretary) as representatives of the committee at synod and that they be given the privilege to speak when this report is under consideration.

2. That synod accept Sections I and II of this report as being basically in accord with the biblical teaching on marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

3. That synod adopt Section III, "Guidelines for the Ministry of the Church," and refer the same to pastors, consistories, and the church for guidance in handling the important matters of marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

#### *Grounds:*

a. The guidelines reflect the demonstrable teaching of Scripture on marriage, divorce, remarriage, repentance, and forgiveness.

b. The guidelines, in harmony with the general provisions of the Church Order, recognize that pastors and consistories, using the gift of wisdom as led by the Spirit, must apply the teaching of Scripture to the specific situations and concrete cases of marital difficulty.

4. That synod declare the committee's mandate fulfilled and, therefore, discharge the committee.

#### Committee on Marriage and Divorce

Wilbert Van Dyk, chairman

David Holwerda, secretary

Robert Baker

Linda Hertel Dykstra

George Gritter

Mel Hugen

James Vander Laan

Thea Van Halsema

Peter Van Katwijk

REPORT 30  
COMMITTEE ON  
DR. HARRY BOER'S CONFESSIONAL-REVISION GRAVAMEN

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Mandate*

The Synod of 1977 appointed a committee with the following mandate: "That synod appoint a committee to receive the reactions of individuals, consistories, and classes, to study the gravamen [the confessional-revision gravamen of Dr. Harry Boer dealing with the doctrine of reprobation as set forth in the Canons of Dort] in the light of Scripture, and to advise the Synod of 1980 as to the cogency of the gravamen and how it should further be dealt with by synod" (Acts of Synod 1977, Art. 75, C, 4, p. 133).

B. *Outline of the Report*

I. Introduction

- A. The Mandate
- B. Outline of the Report
- C. The Gravamen
- D. Correspondence
- E. Other Materials
- F. The Work of the Committee

II. The Teaching of the Canons on Election and Reprobation

- A. The Historical Background of the Synod of Dort
- B. A New Translation of I, 6 and I, 15
- C. Comments about Reprobation Made by the Delegates to the Synod of Dort
- D. An Analysis of the Canons, with Specific Reference to Their Teaching on Reprobation

III. The Gravamen

- A. An Historical Evaluation of the Gravamen
- B. The Meaning of the Expression, "the express testimony of sacred Scripture"
- C. An Analysis of the Gravamen

IV. The Scriptural Basis

- A. Scripture Passages Adduced by the Delegates to the Synod of Dort
- B. An Analysis of the Scripture Passages Dealt With in the Gravamen
- C. Other Scriptural Material Which Is Revelant to the Question at Issue

## V. The Continued Functioning of the Canons in the Church

## A. The Binding Character of the Canons

## B. The Canons and Preaching

## VI. Recommendations

C. *The Gravamen*

The text of the gravamen presented to the Synod of 1977 by Dr. Boer (Acts of Synod 1977, pp. 665-79) reads as follows:

## CONFESSONAL-REVISION GRAVAMEN

SUBMITTED BY DR. HARRY R. BOER

I submit herewith for synodical *examination* and *adjudication* a gravamen against the Reformed doctrine of reprobation as taught notably in the Canons of Dort Chapter I, Article 6 and Chapter I, Article 15. The relevant parts of these articles are:

That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree (Chap. I, Art. 6).

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture that not all, but some only are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God out of his sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure, has decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion. . . (Chap. I, Art. 15).

By the doctrine of reprobation, therefore, I understand that credal confession of the Christian Reformed Church which teaches an unchangeable decree made in eternity by God which has the same irrevocable binding power as God's decree of election and which effects the declaration set forth in Chapter I, Article 15 above.

My gravamen in its broadest lines may be set forth in the following three propositions:

1. The inclusion of any teaching in the official creeds of the church implies that the teaching in question is unambiguously taught in the Scriptures of the Old and/or the New Testament.

2. The "express testimony of sacred Scripture" (Chap. I, Art. 15), which the Canons claim teach the doctrine of reprobation is in fact not to be found in the Scriptures.

3. The doctrine of reprobation ought therefore to be excised from or become a non-binding part of the creeds of the Christian Reformed Church.

Excluded from the gravamen are any objections to the doctrine of election. I stand wholly committed to the scriptural teaching concerning the sovereignty of God in the salvation of men. To save it from the disregard in which it is increasingly being held in the Christian Reformed Church is no small part of my motivation in submitting this gravamen.

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A gravamen in its very nature challenges the *scriptural validity* of a given teaching. It overleaps credal and theological authority and appeals directly to the Bible itself. Gravamina should therefore neither depend on nor be refuted by credal or theological considerations. In a proper gravamen procedure neither creed nor theology has any authority. Insofar as creed and theology agree with the teaching that the gravamen calls into question, to that extent creed and

theology are themselves on trial. A gravamen therefore appeals to Scripture and should be judged by the Scriptures alone.

The specific nature of the appeal to Scripture made by this gravamen should, however, be noted. The gravamen does not adduce scriptural data that contradict the doctrine of reprobation. It rather does this:

1. the gravamen demonstrates that the scriptural data adduced by the Canons in support of the doctrine is not valid, is not relevant to the matter in hand, has no bearing whatever on the teaching in question.

2. the author of the gravamen professes not to know of any data in Scripture that can with any show of validity, relevance, or bearing be adduced in support of the doctrine.

3. the appeal of the gravamen is therefore not to the speaking but to the silence of Scripture.

If this appeal to the silence of Scripture with respect to the credal teaching of reprobation is sustained, then by that fact the doctrine has no right to be a part of the church's creed. For a creed, as understood in the Reformed community, is in its very nature solely and exclusively a witness to the plain, undoubted, and indisputable teaching of the Word of God.

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The scriptural support given for the doctrine of reprobation in the creeds is limited to the Canons of Dort, and in the Canons to the First Head of doctrine. There the following texts are adduced:

1. "*For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18, A.V.)*" (Chap. I, Art. 6).

2. "*Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will (Eph. 1:11)*" (Chap. I, Art. 6).

3. "*Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. 9:20)*" (Chap. I, Art. 18).

4. "*Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? (Matt. 20:15)*" (Chap. I, Art. 18).

5. "*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen. (Rom. 11:33-36)*" (Chap. I, Art. 18).

6. "*He hath mercy on whom he will and whom he will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18)*" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

7. "*Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given (Matt. 13:11)*" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

8. "*I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight (Matt. 11:25, 26)*" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

Before examining these passages it is well to note precisely what it is that they as "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" must establish. The following are the major elements in Chapter I, Article 6 and Chapter I, Article 15 which are said to reflect the testimony in question.

The center of gravity in the decree of reprobation is quite clearly *an act of God*. This act is described both *negatively* and *positively* in the Canons. Negatively, God "leaves the non-elect . . . to their own wickedness and obduracy" (Chap. I, Art. 6). The nonelect are "passed by in the eternal decree," God "permitting them . . . to follow their own ways" (Chap. I, Art. 15).

These negative actions or nonactions of God cannot, however, obscure the fact that in them and behind them there works powerfully a deliberate and positive action on God's part. This the Canons make very clear. That some do not receive the gift of faith "proceeds from God's eternal decree" (Chap. I, Art. 6). God's leaving of the "nonelect" to their own wickedness is done "in his just judgment" (Chap. I, Art. 6, 15). God's leaving the reprobate in the common misery into which they have plunged themselves is the result of the exercise of his "sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and unchangeable good pleasure" (Chap. I, Art. 15). Finally, the negative-positive complex of divine actions is given the status of a distinct decree in the words, "And this is the decree of reprobation. . ." (Chap. I, Art. 15).

Supporting data from Scripture must therefore establish in terms of "express testimony," that is, plainly, unambiguously:

1. the existence of a divine decree
2. which has been made in eternity
3. which condemns a segment of mankind to eternal death as described
4. and which is characterized by distinctly positive as well as negative actions on God's part.

In this gravamen the following paragraphs examine whether the data which the Canons themselves adduce as "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" in support of the doctrine of reprobation do indeed carry the weight of evidence they are alleged to contain.

#### Analysis of Textual Material

1. *"For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world (Acts 15:18, A.V.)."*

This is the only text cited in the Canons that has been taken from the Authorized (or King James) Version (AV), published in 1611. All others are taken from the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, which is based squarely on the monumental British revision of the Authorized Version in 1885. The difference between the AV and the ASV is the difference between a translation based on manuscripts of admittedly inferior value and that of one based on far more reliable manuscript material. The text in the ASV reads: "says the Lord who has made all these things known of old." The words "known unto God" become "the Lord who has made. . . known"; "all his works" become "all these things" and "from the beginning of the world" become "of old."

The quotation is found in the speech of James at the Jerusalem conference of apostles and elders called to determine the attitude of the church to the Gentiles, recorded in Acts 15. There in the ASV we read: "Symeon hath rehearsed how God first visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written, 'After these things I will return, and I will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who maketh these things known from of old'" (vss. 14-18).

It is patent that there is not even a remote connection between the eternal decree of reprobation and the verse adduced in its support by the authors of the Canons. Why then is it used? In adducing this text the Synod of Dort apparently resorted to a principle of biblical interpretation which vitiates the validity not only of the use of this passage, but of others as well, as we shall see. That principle consists of the following two elements:

1. The truth of the doctrine of reprobation is assumed.
2. A general reference to God's action in eternity, or what is construed as eter-

nity, logically includes reprobation since the decree was made in eternity. Applying this principle to the AV text, the words "from the beginning of the world" are understood to imply eternity, since all God's works are known to him at that point. Reprobation is a part of "his works," therefore Acts 15:18 teaches reprobation.

In 1942 the synod of the Christian Reformed Church approved a revision of the English translation of the Canons with the proviso that all quotations from Scripture in the English translations of our standards shall be from the ASV consistently. It was stipulated, however, that when the ASV rendering would not be a faithful translation of the rendering in the original Canons, the translation committee would be allowed to give a literal translation of such a passage. In that event, however, an asterisk should refer to a footnote in which the reading of the ASV shall be indicated. The committee correctly adopted the AV rendering but the 1959 revised Psalter Hymnal does not, in the section containing the creeds, carry the footnote reference to the ASV reading. (See footnote 1.)

2. *"Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will (Eph. 1:11)"* (Chap. I, Art. 6).

In all the writings of the New Testament there is no more elevated praise or more profound revelation of God's redemptive purpose in Christ than is found in Ephesians 1:1-14. There is in it not the slightest whisper concerning, nor the remotest reference to, the dark shadows of an eternal rejection of men from the presence and the life of God. The air is full of light and joy and doxological worship. Nevertheless, the words "the counsel of his will" lend themselves admirably to the application of the principle of biblical interpretation set forth in the preceding paragraphs. The decree of reprobation is assumed and is therefore necessarily contained in "the counsel" of God's will.

3. *"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? (Rom. 9:20)"* (Chap. I, Art. 18).

These words are adduced by Dort against those who "murmur at the free grace of election and the just severity of reprobation." Our interest lies in their reference to reprobation. Here again the decree of reprobation is regarded as a scripturally established fact, and man's silence in the presence of God's decision is therefore requisite. It is a strongly admonitory word that would be in order if the Canons had indeed established the scriptural character of the doctrine.

4. *"Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? (Matt. 20:15)"* (Chap. I, Art. 18).

This question is the application of Jesus' parable of the laborers who had worked various lengths of time in the vineyard and received the same wages. Those who had worked the longest grumbled at not receiving more than the workers who had not borne the burden of the day. To them the landlord replied, "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" If this is intended to illustrate God's right to reward his servants as he wills, no exception can be taken. But that has nothing whatever to do with reprobation. Strangely, Dort did not quote the remaining words of the landlord, "Or do you begrudge my generosity?" That would certainly exclude a reprobation reference. The exclusive reference is to *degrees of reward*, and it is intended to illustrate the nature of the kingdom of heaven (vs. 1). The partial quotation of the landlord's answer and the omission of the key sentence for the understanding of it, leave the impression of God's uncontested right to dispose of "his own" (i.e., humanity) as he wishes. This, however, is not what the parable means or what the quoted partial answer in its context says. It speaks neither about reprobation nor about election, but about God's sovereign right within the community of the redeemed to bestow his goodness as pure grace.

5. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past tracing out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, and through him, and unto him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen (Rom. 11:33-36)" (Chap. I, Art. 18).

6. "He hath mercy on whom he will, and whom he will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18)" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

These two passages are so closely related that they may fitly be discussed together.

Romans 9-11 constitute a unit of thought. At the same time, the three chapters climax the discussion on sin and redemption in chapters 1-8. Paul's doxology in 11:33-36 concludes, therefore, not only the unit of which it is a part but also the whole of the first eleven chapters.

Early in the epistle (chap. 4) Paul had indicated that the gospel is not for Jews only but also for Gentiles. Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. But this blessing he received not after but before he was circumcised. Therefore the gospel is meant for the uncircumcision as well as for the circumcision. In chapters 9-11 the manner in which the Gentiles come to the faith is set forth. Through the trespass of the Jews salvation comes to the non-Jews. This in turn makes Israel jealous and thus gives her occasion to return to the obedience of faith. This has further joyful consequences. If the trespass of Israel means riches for the world, how much more her full inclusion in the fellowship of the covenant.

But let not the Gentiles boast about their position and their privilege. Let them stand by faith. Jewish branches were broken off that Gentile branches might be grafted into the tree of the people of God. When Israel returns to obedience, however, the Jewish branches can be grafted in again. Equally, Gentile branches can because of sinful pride be cut off. Therefore neither may boast, and neither may despair. Both were consigned to disobedience that God might have mercy on all.

In the course of his argument Paul alludes to God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart as an illustration of his sovereign right to harden whom he will as well as to have mercy on whom he will. Not only is election a demonstration of God's sovereign will, but also the hardening of the heart. It is wholly unclear, however, that God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart teaches reprobation. For two reasons. First, a sufficient cause for the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is God's statement to Moses, "I have seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry. . . I know their sufferings. . . and I have seen the oppressions with which the Egyptians oppress them" (Exod. 3:7-9). There is neither occasion nor need to resort to an eternal decree of reprobation to explain God's hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Similarly, there is no more need to posit an eternal decree to explain God's word to Pharaoh, "For this reason I have raised thee up. . ." (Rom. 9:17; Exod. 9:16), than there is to explain the no less momentous word to Habakkuk: "For I am working a work in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation. . ." (Hab. 1:5-6). The occasion is totally patent in the historical situation. Why must there be a decree of reprobation as background for the one case, while in the other we see the exercise of God's chastising providence?

In the second place, Romans 11:7-32 teaches very clearly that in Paul's own time the hardening of all Israel with the exception of the elect is not intended as an ultimate judgment. It does not flow out of an eternal decree of reprobation. Repentance can undo the divinely imposed judgment of a hardened heart. That is precisely the ground for the hope of Israel's inclusion in the family of God (Rom. 11:12). Is the Gentile less privileged than the Jew in the New Testament dispensa-

tion? Or is there perhaps an eternal decree of reprobation that causes the hardening of the heart with respect to the Gentiles but not with respect to the Jews?

It is this powerful interaction of divine initiative, human response whether Jewish or Gentile, and the divine answer to the human response that elicits from Paul his magnificent doxology (Rom. 11:33-36). If the authors of the Canons were taken with his use of "judgments" (which in the plural has a definite historical ring about it), they quite overlooked that God's consigning all men to disobedience fully accounts for the word "judgments." They equally overlooked that God's judgments in history have a redemptive intent. The word can, in fact, be understood without a punitive connotation. Bauer's authoritative *Lexicon of New Testament Greek* as translated and edited by Arndt and Gingrich gives its meaning in Romans 11:33 as "the fixed purpose of divine grace."

By all of which it is not proposed that there are no eternal backgrounds to God's actions in history. In the incarnation of our Lord the eternal enters into time and works mightily there. The salvation of God's people lies anchored in their election from eternity. On these matters Scripture is plain and full to overflowing.

The question with respect to reprobation is rather this: may God's response to the sin and unbelief of men—which response is fully accounted for by the historical situation in the light of law and gospel—have imputed to it an eternal cause for which no warrant is to be found in Scripture? Sin and unbelief are exceedingly dark mysteries on the origin and cause of which Scripture sheds no light. Redemptive revelation with Christ and his work at its center is not concerned with their explanation but with their conquest and elimination from God's world.

All who wish to find backgrounds, occasion, or explanation for unbelief in any other area than that of human responsibility within the dimension of history will forever have their way barred by Jesus' lament over Jerusalem, "How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you would not!" (Matt. 23:37). And what shall we say about God's grieving over the waywardness of Israel written down by Isaiah, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? . . . For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for justice, but, behold, oppression; for righteousness, but, behold, a cry!" (Isa. 5:3-7). If God himself speaks in this way, with what right do we hold the church to believe that the not-receiving of the gift of faith "proceeds from God's eternal decree" and then support this affirmation with quotations from Scripture that are not relevant to the point?

It is a betrayal of our stewardship of the gospel when we burden it with our rationalistic theories which, when we have set them forth in formidable confessional language, we proceed to deny by a silence that is as massive as their theological formulation is awesome and their biblical basis nonexistent.

7. *"Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given* (Matt. 13:11)" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

8. *"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes; yea, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in thy sight* (Matt. 11:25-26)" (Chap. I, Rejection of Errors, Par. 8).

These two passages may also appropriately be treated together. The only way in which Matthew 13:11 can be considered to play an evidential role is to understand that the word "to them it is not given" (to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven) designate "them" as reprobate. We ask: was their inability to understand a permanent condition? Was it the result of an eternal decree of



reprobation? If so, what is the ground for that assertion? Within two years after speaking these words Jesus commanded the disciples to be his "witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria. . ." (Acts 1:8). They were not commanded to speak in parables. They spoke in straightforward language, as Acts makes plain on page after page, presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy. How is this to be squared with the Dortian interpretation of Matthew 13:11? (See footnote 2.)

But more than that. Jesus' words rest squarely on Isaiah 6:9-10, which Matthew quotes in chapter 13:14-15. Did Isaiah have in mind a permanent condition of unbelief in the people of Israel which arose out of an eternal decree of reprobation? Was Isaiah speaking to a different kind of people than those whom Hosea, his contemporary, lashed in the first ten chapters of his book? How would the theologians of Dort then explain God's heartrending cry in chapter 11: "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? . . . My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy" (Hos. 11:8-9). Would the men of Dort deny that the Jewish branches, broken off the covenant tree because of disobedience, can be grafted in again (Rom. 11:17-24)? Can God not remove the veil of a hardened heart when a man turns to the Lord (II Cor. 3:12)? With what right is Isaiah considered to be speaking a different language to Judah than Hosea did to Israel? Was not the sin of the Northern Kingdom hastening it to an earlier and even more severe judgment than that which awaited Judah? And why is Jesus considered to be speaking a different language in his ministry than Paul did in Romans 9-11 and in II Corinthians 3?

Is it not more scriptural to say that Judah's blindness in Isaiah's time and the blindness of the Jews in Jesus' time (and in Paul's) was the self-created judgment on their disobedience than to attribute it to an eternal decree which is nowhere mentioned or implied or hinted at in the respective contexts concerned? And would this not spare us the embarrassing theological contortions we have to resort to in order to conform to the simplicity of the gospel?

As to Matthew 11:25-26, it is true that God hides his wisdom from the wise and understanding and reveals it to babes. It is equally true that the wise and understanding can become babes. And it is blessedly true that the wise and understanding not only can but do become babes in Christ. St. Paul and St. Augustine head a distinguished list. The kingdom of heaven grows continually by rebirth and conversion at all levels and among all conditions of men. In which way does this circumstance point to an eternal decree of reprobation?

Finally, we must take note of Romans 9:11, 12, 13 quoted in Chapter I, Article 10. This passage was not listed with the texts adduced by Dort in support of reprobation because it is used in an article dealing only with election. In the context of the First Head of Doctrine of the Canons, however, our interest in Esau as the object of reprobation is eminently relevant. The passage reads:

*"For the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, . . . it was said unto her [namely to Rebekah], The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated" (Rom. 9:11, 12, 13).*

In the popular Christian mind these verses are often understood to have been quoted by Paul from Genesis. This is in a very important part incorrect. The words, "The elder shall serve the younger," were spoken to Rebecca before the birth of her twin sons (Gen. 25:23). The words, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated," are quoted from the very end of the Old Testament in Malachi 1:1-3. In interpreting these quotations as they are used by Paul, it is most necessary to understand that they are separated by some thirteen hundred years of history. The first quotation was spoken in first order concerning two individual people, Esau and

Jacob. The second was spoken in first order about two nations, Edom and Israel, here referred to after their respective primal fathers, Esau and Jacob.

Malachi's prophecy begins with God's protesting his love for the nation of Israel in the face of Israel's questioning his love (Mal. 1:2). God says to Israel, I have loved you; yet you say, wherein have you loved us? To which the Lord replies, Is not Esau Jacob's brother, yet I loved Jacob, but I hated Esau. (It may here be noted that most authoritative translators read: *Is not* Esau Jacob's brother rather than *Was not*. . . : RSV, New English Bible, *International Critical Commentary*, Keil and Delitzsch, J. Ridderbos in *Korte Verklaring*. The present tense emphasizes Malachi's contemporary situation as between Israel and Edom. The New English Bible even reads: I love Jacob, but I hate Esau.)

It is very clear from Old Testament usage that Esau was a common name for the nation Edom: Genesis 36:1, 8, 19; Jeremiah 49:8, 10; Obadiah 6. Not only is Edom called Esau, it is also called Jacob's brother: Deuteronomy 37:7; Amos 1:11; Obadiah 10, 12. Similarly, Israel is also called Jacob: Isaiah 41:8; 42:24; Jeremiah 30:10, 18; Malachi 2:12.

In the discouragement that postexilic Israel experienced it began to doubt God's love for them. But, God replies, How can you question my love? Look how I have dealt with your enemy Edom. Because of his opposition and cruelty to you I have laid waste his hill country and left his heritage to jackals. If he rebuilds the ruins that I have made, I will tear them down again. Implicit in all this is Israel's understanding of the primal history of the two peoples. Jacob was chosen over Esau to be, with Abraham and Isaac, a father of Israel. Of Jacob replacing Esau who had the right of primogeniture the central thrust is: God dispenses his love not according to merit or prestige or power, but according to his sovereign choice and mercy. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad. . . it is said unto [Rebecca], 'The elder shall serve the younger.'" But even these words have a substantial corporate, in addition to their immediately individual, meaning, for God's word to Rebecca was, "two nations are in your womb. . . two people. . . the elder shall serve the younger." That certainly included that the elder Esau would serve the younger Jacob. But this individual brother-to-brother relationship wholly subserves in the history of redemption the larger context of Israel's and Edom's mutual relationships.

In that history God has shown his love positively by electing Israel to be his people and guiding them with his providence. He had shown it negatively by resisting, defeating, and ultimately eliminating the threat to the life of Israel that Edom posed. God's hatred of Edom has no independent meaning. It subserves and demonstrates God's elective love for Israel. But this divine hatred did not exist when God chose Jacob and replaced Esau from his right of primogeniture. In doing so it was not God's intent to manifest hatred for Esau but to demonstrate his right to bestow his mercy without regard to human rank or merit. God's hatred was real but it was historically occasioned. It arose and grew in response to Esau's attitude to Jacob and to Edom's attitude to Israel.

We note, therefore, that the divine hatred in question has as its primary reference a nation, not a man; that it arose not as an expression of a reprobatory decree in eternity; and that its expression demonstrates God's love for Israel.

Now the question is: When Paul quoted Malachi to demonstrate God's elective grace, did he so decontextualize Malachi's words as to individualize the obviously corporate meaning of "Jacob" and "Esau"? For Dort's conception of predestination which the adducing of this text is intended to buttress is highly individualistic. This is not in itself wrong. There is certainly in God's dealings with men individual election and individual rejection. But that is very definitely not the kind of election and rejection that Malachi is speaking about. The emphasis there is altogether on the corporate. What, then, did Paul mean in quoting Malachi's corporate "Jacob I loved but Esau I hated" in intimate conjunction with

his teaching concerning election? On the answer to this question hinges the validity of the frequent adducing of these words in support of the doctrine of reprobation in Reformed theology, a use which Dort indirectly but very really supports by its quotation.

Having set forth in Romans 1-8 the doctrine of salvation—one might say the structure of salvation—Paul faces in chapters 9-11 an agonizing question. How is it possible that the Jews, his fellow-countrymen, his own flesh and blood, through whom salvation was mediated to the world, should be cut off from the grace of God? Among the Gentiles Christ was widely accepted but the Jews had rejected him. Israel's history having climaxed in the coming of the Messiah, can Israel now reject him? Is that the end of Israel's story? The answer is: No, that is not the end. There is in Israel a remnant of true believers. So deeply, so firmly has God established Israel as his people that it remains the stock onto which all Gentiles who believe will be grafted. There is not a Gentile tree of the covenant alongside the tree of covenant Israel. Salvation is and remains of the Jews. There is only the covenant people born from Abraham and descended through Isaac and Jacob who constitute the basis for the new people of God. This is the teaching of Romans 9-11 and with special explicitness in chapter 11.

It is true that not all are Israel who are of Israel. The elect obtained the promises, the rest were hardened (Rom. 11:7). But those who were hardened can again believe. They can again be grafted into the tree from which they had been cut off. Again, it is true that God has mercy on whom he will and whom he will he hardens (Rom. 9:14-21). But this hardening need not be to the point of eternal death. It is not the hardening that arises out of an eternal decree of reprobation. For if those who are hardened do not persist in their unbelief, they will be grafted in again, for God has the power to do this (Rom. 11:23). So there is a hardening that has come upon a part of Israel, until the full number of the Gentiles shall have come in, and so all Israel shall be saved (Rom. 11:26).

Paul's view of Israel's future is therefore a bright one. God has not cast off his people. On the contrary, they remain the stock that forms the root and trunk of the tree of salvation. It is not the Gentiles who support the root, it is the root that supports them (Rom. 11:18). Being the tree and being branches of the tree is the result of election; being cut off from the tree is always the result of unbelief. According to Romans 9-11, faith arises out of election. But equally, according to Romans 9-11, there is no eternal decree that withholds repentance and faith from anyone. Unbelief is from the beginning to the end of Scripture the fault and responsibility of man himself.

We can now see more clearly what Paul meant by his quotation from Malachi, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Paul meant the same thing that Malachi meant, but now in the more universal framework of the New Testament understanding of salvation. Jacob, the junior twin, was chosen to be a father of Israel over the senior twin in a society in which primogeniture was everything. In this way God demonstrated the sovereign nature of grace in the life of his people in a manner that could not be misunderstood. This electing love God made effective in the history of Israel by his protection of the covenant people against the enmity and aggressiveness of Edom (Esau). As election and God's protection of its fruit were active and effectual in Malachi's day, so they were active and effectual in Paul's day and would remain so till the end. If any might arises against them, as Egypt and Edom did against Israel, whether it be death or life or angels or principalities or things present or things to come or powers or height or depth or any other creature, he shall not permit it to separate his people from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38-39). In that protection Israel's elect remnant is included. It is included in such a way that through faith and obedience the elect remnant can yet branch out to become in due time "all Israel."

But the divine protection in which God's hatred of the enemies of his salvation

comes to expression has nothing to do with either personal or collective reprobation as an eternal decree. It has not more to do with it than do the words, "The elder shall serve the younger." For, after all, Esau could quite conceivably have accepted his rejection from the position of primogeniture and have become an example of submission to God's sovereign dispensation. This did not in fact happen. But the fact that it did not happen by no means makes Malachi's "Esau I have hated" a necessary implication of God's intent in depriving Esau of his right by birth. On the contrary, God's "Esau I have hated" is his response to Esau's rebellion against his intent of demonstrating his sovereign grace. This is especially true of Edom's historic rejection of the covenant people in which they reject the decision of God for the structuring of his salvation. Therefore, and therefore alone, were they hated. And of that rejection they are able to repent and be grafted again into the tree of the covenant as were the Gentiles.

We conclude: from the viewpoint of ultimacy, the source of faith is not a mystery. It is a gift of God. From the viewpoint of ultimacy, the origin of unbelief, like that of sin itself, is a mystery. We cannot penetrate into it. The statement in the Canons, "That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree (Chap. I, Art. 6)," is in its second part untrue and constitutes a denial of the nondisclosure in the Word of God of any cause of unbelief other than the heart of man. The rejection in the Conclusion of the Canons of the charge "that in the same manner (*eodem modo*) in which election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety" is not a credible withdrawing of the clearly contrary teaching of the Canons in Chapter I, Arts. 6 and 15. Rather it must be seen as a drawing back at the brink from the enormity of the consequences of a theological rationalism made by men who, on the one hand, did not have the courage to stand by what they had written and, on the other hand, refused to break with the logical premise that led them to it.

\* \* \*

This concludes the examination of "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" for the doctrine of reprobation as given by the Synod of Dort itself. The analysis that has been made shows that the texts adduced assume throughout rather than establish an eternal decree of reprobation. They fall altogether short of proving the biblical validity of the doctrine in that they do not show

- (a) the existence of a divine decree
- (b) which has been made in eternity
- (c) which condemns a segment of mankind to eternal death as described and
- (d) which is characterized by distinctly positive as well as negative actions on God's part.

I do not consider it my responsibility similarly to analyze the exegesis of texts adduced by Reformed theologians from other parts of Scripture. I am not bound by the exegesis of theologians, however prestigious their names or otherwise meritorious their theologies. I am bound by the confessions of the Christian Reformed Church and by them alone.

I call to the attention of synod the theological and ecclesiastical import of the fact that the texts which have been adduced by Dort are an integral and inseparable part of the Canons themselves and have therefore the full weight and status of confessional statements. According to the Form of Subscription the meanings which Dort attaches to them do therefore "fully agree with the Word of God." It is, therefore, not possible to disagree with Dort's understanding of these texts and still agree with the teachings that are based on them. For the texts in question represent "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" which gives biblical warrant to the teachings in question.

Further, it must be pointed out that the present gravamen has been constructed

with little or no attention given to the doctrine of election. This was done of set purpose. In Reformed theology, election and reprobation are the two inseparable faces on the one coin of predestination. Nevertheless, the doctrine of reprobation is not only altogether distinct from election but stands in antithesis to it. It therefore requires a biblical and theological underpinning corresponding to this distinctiveness.

It is my position that so sinister and doomful a teaching as reprobation, by which a massive segment of mankind, generally considered in Reformed theology to be the great majority of the human race, past, present, and future, is consigned to everlasting damnation before they ever came into being, must, if it is to be confessionally held, be directly, explicitly, and unambiguously taught in Scripture itself. No consensus of theologians, no authority of the church, no weight of history or tradition is entitled to regard or obedience so long as such consensus, authoritative declaration, or weighty tradition are not based squarely and fully on the Word of God written (Belgic Confession. Article VII, notably the words, "Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule"). This is the essence, the heart, the soul, the *sine qua non* of my gravamen.

I say this with the more conviction because I am fully aware of the correlation that has historically been made between election and reprobation to establish the latter as a scriptural teaching. This correlation is that reprobation is a logical consequence of the doctrine of election. It can be found in unblushing statements of Reformed theologians from John Calvin to Louis Berkhof. It is the correlation that obtained in the crucial period before the Synod of Dort. In 1611 a major effort was made by the provincial governments of Holland and West Friesland to resolve the Arminian controversy as between the Remonstrants (who opposed the Reformed doctrine of predestination) and the Contra-Remonstrants (who held the Reformed position). In the resulting conference, participated in by six leading theologians from each side, the Contra-Remonstrants made clear their basic position on reprobation:

When we posit an eternal decree of election of certain particular persons, it is clearly to be understood from this that we also teach an eternal decree of rejection or abandonment of certain particular persons, for there can be no election except there also be rejection or abandonment. When out of a given number some are elected, then therewith the others are rejected, for when one takes all he does not elect. As, for example, when out of the ten thousand Gideon chose three hundred, he thereby rejected all the others. When Moses says of the Jews, "the Lord has chosen you out of all the peoples" (Deut. 7:6), then he understood thereby that he did not elect the other nations, that is, rejected them. (See footnote 3.)

For this teaching they had excellent support in John Calvin who introduces his discussion of reprobation in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* thus:

Many professing a desire to defend the Deity from an invidious charge admit the doctrine of election, but deny that anyone is reprobated. . . . This they do ignorantly and childishly, since there could be no election without its opposite reprobation (Bk. III, Chap. 23, par. 1).

And again: . . . in the person of Abraham, as in a withered stock, one people is specially chosen, while others are rejected (Bk. III, Chap. 21, par. 5).

It is strange indeed to read that in the view of our highly and justly respected theological mentor the nations other than Israel are "rejected." It is a central teaching of Scripture that Israel was chosen in order to be the means of preparing God's salvation for the nations. Abraham was chosen that he might be a blessing and that in him and his descendants all the families of the earth might be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; 49:10). He was called in uncircumcision in order that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised,

and likewise of the circumcised (Rom. 4:9-12). We have learned, however, that reprobation exegesis in the Reformed tradition is an unprincipled, ruthless exercise that bends any desired Scripture to its foreordained meaning.

It is, therefore, for us of the Christian Reformed Church not a matter of self-gratulation that one of our best known theologians has contrived at once the baldest and the most nonchalant formulation of the essence of Reformed reprobation theology:

The doctrine of reprobation follows naturally from the logic of the situation.

The decree of election inevitably implies the decree of reprobation. If the all-wise God, possessed of infinite knowledge, has eternally purposed to save some, then he *ipso facto* also purposed not to save others. If he has chosen or elected some, then he has by that very fact rejected others (L. Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 100).

Some text references follow which are not quoted, let alone exegeted. With such a theology, specific biblical textual foundations are irrelevant.

In view of this very strong deductionistic emphasis in Reformed theology, notably illustrated in the position taken by the Contra-Remonstrants in 1611, it is altogether remarkable that the logical correlation between election and reprobation finds no place in the Canons. Reprobation is not presented there as an implicate or necessary consequence of election. Quite the contrary: reprobation is said to be squarely based on "the express testimony of sacred Scripture."

It would appear that Dort was not willing to give to a theological deduction the standing, weight, authority, and dignity which an official confessional declaration of the church confers on its teachings. Only direct and explicit scriptural statements warrant formulations that may fitly be made credal. The sound instinct which the synod revealed in this respect is to be praised. That its appeal to Scripture in the matter of reprobation was not warranted by the textual data which it adduced does not cancel the principle that led the synod to adduce them.

In the course of his discussion of predestination, Calvin gives a counsel by which he consciously endeavored to govern his theological thought. Regrettably, he did not himself follow it in the very matter to which he directed it. This in no wise deprives it of its value or of the genuine practical meaning which it otherwise had for him. It merits being quoted in full:

... the moment we go beyond the bounds of the Word we are out of the course, in darkness, and must every now and then stumble, go astray and fall. Let it therefore be our first principle that to desire any other knowledge of predestination than that which is expounded by the Word of God, is no less infatuated than to walk where there is no path, or to seek light in darkness. Let us not be ashamed to be ignorant in a matter in which ignorance is learning. Rather let us willingly abstain from the search after knowledge, to which it is both foolish as well as perilous, and even fatal to aspire. If an unrestrained imagination urges us, our proper course is to oppose it with these words, "It is not good to eat much honey; so for men to search their own glory is not glory" (Prov. 25:27). There is good reason to dread a presumption which can only plunge us headlong into ruin (Bk. III, chap. 21, par. 2).

I am a minister of the Word of God. I am not a minister of theological deductions, or of ecclesiastical conclusions, or of religious traditions that have only age and uncritical acceptance to commend them. I do not believe, and I refuse to entertain, that my election "*ipso facto*" requires a corresponding reprobation of others. I do not read in Scripture that the sovereign grace that elected me to be a child of God without regard to any merit on my part has as its logical and necessary opposite a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death without regard to any demerit on their part. As I believe in *sola gratia* for salvation, so do I believe in *sola Scriptura* for my understanding and

proclamation of that salvation, and even more for the church's understanding and proclamation of salvation.

It is my belief that in taking this position I stand on firm Reformed ground. For that reason I submit herewith for synodical *examination* and *adjudication* this gravamen, this confessional-revision gravamen, against what I judge to be a grievously unbiblical, therefore un-Reformed, indeed, un-Christian doctrine.

Harry R. Boer

*Footnotes:*

1. In his published translation of the Canons of Dort, *Calvin Theological Journal*, November, 1968, Dr. A. A. Hoekema observes the synodical requirement. Translating the passage substantially as it is found in the AV, his footnote, page 136, reads: "Translated from the Latin. This rendering, found also, with some modification, in the King James Version, represents a poorly attested Greek text. The Revised Standard Version has here: 'Says the Lord, who has made these things known from of old.'"
2. In his significant study, "The Purpose of the Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study*, 1974, edited by R. N. Longenecker and Merrill C. Tenney, Dr. B. Van Elderen points out that the passage "appears in different forms in the three evangelists," Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10 and that these differences bear measurably on their respective interpretations. The discussion is in part highly technical, but it is invaluable for understanding the Matthew passage in its full scriptural context, not least from the viewpoint of our present concern (especially pp. 188-189).
3. Translated from the article, "De Leer der Verwerping van Eeuwigheid op de Haagse Conferentie van 1611," by A. D. R. Polman (pp. 182-183), in *Ex Auditu Verbi*, 1965, a Festschrift presented to Professor G. C. Berkouwer on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his professorship at the Free University, Amsterdam. The quotation is my translation from the Dutch text of "Schriftelijke Conferentie gehouden in 's-Gravenhaghe in den Jare 1611" etc., as cited by the author.

#### D. Correspondence

Your committee received a substantial number of communications from consistories, classes, and individuals. Following is a list of those who sent communications:

1. The consistory of the CRC of Sanborn, IA (Dec. 7, 1977)
2. The consistory of the Bethel CRC in Lansing, IL (Dec. 27, 1977)
3. The consistory of the CRC of Spring Lake, MI (Feb. 9, 1978)
4. The consistory of the CRC in Bozeman, MT (Mar. 13, 1978)
5. The consistory of the CRC of Baldwin, WI (July 10, 1978)
6. The Rev. J. Tuininga, Lethbridge, AB (July 25, 1978)
7. Mr. Robert Westveer, Campus Chapel, Ann Arbor, MI
8. Mr. D. Baatenburg DeJong, sent from the Netherlands
9. The consistory of the First CRC of Pella, IA (Oct. 12, 1978)
10. The consistory of the CRC of Coquitlam, BC
11. The consistory of the CRC of Pompton Plains, NJ (Nov. 18, 1978)
12. Classis Orange City, meeting on Sept. 27, 1978
13. The consistory of the CRC of Dundas, ON (Nov. 9, 1978)
14. Mr. Alfred Dykema of Grand Rapids, MI
15. The consistory of the First CRC of Jenison, MI (Sept. 11, 1978)
16. Classis Illiana (Jan. 9, 1979)
17. The consistory of the Oakdale Park CRC of Grand Rapids, MI (Dec. 28, 1978)
18. The consistory of the First CRC of Artesia, CA (Jan. 8, 1979)
19. The consistory of the First Randolph CRC, WI (Feb. 28, 1979)
20. The consistory of the Elmhurst CRC, IL (Mar. 5, 1979)
21. The consistory of the Kanawha, IA, CRC (Mar. 7, 1979)
22. The consistory of Grande Prairie—La Glace, AB (Mar. 9, 1979)
23. The consistory of the Lee Street CRC of Grand Rapids, MI (Mar. 12, 1979)
24. The consistory of the Bethel CRC of Waupun, WI
25. Mr. A. P. Van Vliet of White Rock, BC (Dec. 31, 1978)
26. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Van Loo, Longmont, CO (Jan. 12, 1979)
27. The Rev. Norman B. Steen, Parkersburg, IA (Mar. 4, 1979)
28. The consistory of the Bethel CRC of Paterson, NJ (Apr. 3, 1979)
29. The consistory of the Bethel CRC, Zeeland, MI (no date)

30. The consistory of the Bethel CRC of Listowel, ON (no date)
31. The consistory of the Second CRC, Denver, CO (May 3, 1979)
32. The consistory of the Pleasant Street CRC, Whitinsville, MA (May 9, 1979)
33. The consistory of the Alger Park CRC, Grand Rapids, MI (May 19, 1979)
34. The consistory of the Calvin CRC, Wyckoff, NJ (May 21, 1979)
35. The consistory of the First CRC, Hudsonville, MI (May 21, 1979)
36. The consistory of the CRC of Sully, IA (May 21, 1979)
37. The consistory of the First CRC of Waupun, WI (May 21, 1979)
38. The consistory of the CRC of Washington, DC (May 23, 1979)
39. The consistory of the CRC of Lynnwood, WA (May 24, 1979)
40. The Rev. Andrew Cammenga, Sr., Grand Rapids, MI
41. Mr. Awne J. Bajema, Grand Rapids, MI (Apr. 17, 1979)
42. Mr. William J. Rozendaal, Lynnville, IA (Apr. 23, 1979)
43. The Rev. Martin Stegink, Falmouth, MI (May 9, 1979)
44. The Rev. Lambert Doezeema, Kalamazoo, MI (May 22, 1979)
45. Mr. Gordon L. Ritsema, Silver Spring, MD (May 28, 1979)
46. The Winnipeg Reformed Fellowship, H. Minderhoud, chairman, Winnipeg, MB (May, 1979)
47. The Council of the Fellowship at St. Matthew's-in-the-Basement, Toronto: a paper by Mr. Don Sinnema, entitled "An Exposition of Romans 9:1-29 in Light of Its Predestinarian Interpretation in Early Calvinism."
48. Mr. Leonard De Vries, Sully CRC, Sully, IA (Apr. 19, 1979)
49. The consistory of the First CRC, Sioux Center, IA (June 12, 1979)
50. The Rev. Edward Heerema, Cape Coral, FL (June 26, 1979)

#### E. Other Materials

Other materials dealing with the doctrine of reprobation were also given to the members of the committee. These included the following:

1. A selection of important earlier writings by or letters from Dr. Harry Boer.
2. A photocopy of the 1970 synodical decision of the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands on the doctrine of reprobation.
3. Copies of the *Theological Forum* published by the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (Vol. 6, No. 2, June, 1978) dealing with "Reprobation in the Canons of Dort."
4. A twenty-one page document submitted by committee member Remkes Kooistra containing a summary of the gravamen of B. J. Brouwer (questioning the validity of the teaching of the Canons of Dort on reprobation, and submitted to the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken of the Netherlands meeting from May 11, 1965 to September 22, 1966); the reports of various committees which dealt with this gravamen; the report of a synodical committee on this question submitted to the Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken meeting at Sneek from 1969 to 1970; the report of the committee appointed to study the binding character of the confession, submitted to the Synod of 1969-70.

#### F. The Work of the Committee

Your committee met for ten sessions, all but one of which were two-day sessions. At one session the committee had an extensive discussion with Dr. Boer about the meaning and purpose of his gravamen. At another session the committee discussed with Professor John Stek of the Calvin Seminary faculty a number of Old Testament passages relevant to



the doctrine of reprobation. Members of the committee from time to time submitted reports on various aspects of the problem. These reports were extensively discussed and many of them were revised for subsequent sessions. Your committee has attempted to take a comprehensive look at the entire question in the light of all the material received.

## II. THE TEACHING OF THE CANONS ON ELECTION AND REPROBATION

### A. *The Historical Background of the Synod of Dort*

Double predestination, election and reprobation, is deeply rooted in the tradition of the Christian church. Among the fathers of the ancient church Augustine is the most outstanding representative of this teaching. In addition to Gottschalk, the medieval Augustinian, the fourteenth-century theologians, Thomas Bradwardine and Gregory of Rimini, anticipated the predestinarian doctrine of the sixteenth-century Reformers, Zwingli, Luther, and Calvin. Philip Melancthon and other Lutheran Reformers early departed from the doctrine of double predestination affirmed by their spiritual mentor and espoused a doctrine of single predestination, consisting of election alone. It is also possible that Heinrich Bullinger for a time held a doctrine of single predestination. The Second Helvetic Confession, written exclusively by Bullinger, is unique among sixteenth-century Reformed confessions in that it contains an article on election without any reference to reprobation. It is probably also worth noting that the article quotes no texts from Paul's Epistle to the Romans.

### CALVIN

In the definitive edition of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* published in 1559, Calvin treats the doctrine of predestination in Book III, which deals with the way in which men receive the grace of God. In the 1536 edition, predestination was discussed in connection with divine providence under the article in the Apostles' Creed dealing with the church. In the 1559 edition, providence and predestination are formally separated, the former being addressed in Book I (which deals with the knowledge of God the Creator), the latter being discussed in the context of soteriology or the doctrine of salvation. Although these formal changes and distinctions are important, for Calvin both providence and predestination are rooted in God's eternal, secret decree, and both are worked out and become evident in history. Sometimes he even uses the words *providence* and *predestination* interchangeably. Calvin's placement of the doctrine of predestination in the context of salvation is the more noteworthy because subsequent Reformed theologians ordinarily followed Theodore Beza's example, discussing predestination as a part of the doctrine of the divine decrees, under the doctrine of God.

Calvin opens his discussion of predestination by observing the actual and historical fact that "the covenant of life [the gospel] is not preached equally among all men, and among those to whom it is preached, it does not gain the same acceptance either constantly or in equal degree" (*Inst.*,

III, 21, 1). Behind this historical diversity Calvin perceives and affirms God's decree, or the decision of eternal election. By God's bidding, salvation is freely offered to some while others are barred from access to it. Therefore, Calvin says, "at once great and difficult questions spring up, explicable only when reverent minds regard as settled what they may suitably hold concerning election and predestination. . . . We shall never be clearly persuaded as we ought to be, that our salvation flows from the wellspring of God's free mercy until we come to know this eternal election, which illumines God's grace by this contrast: that he does not indiscriminately adopt all into the hope of salvation but gives to some what he denies to others" (III, 21, 1).

After briefly touching on the benefits to be gained from a right understanding of this doctrine (namely, a clear conception of God's free mercy, God's glory, and our true humility), Calvin warns against two dangers, both of which can be avoided by allowing Scripture alone to be our guide. The first danger consists in attempting to penetrate the sacred precincts of divine wisdom in order to satisfy our curiosity (III, 21, 2); the second, in avoiding any mention of predestination. The correct and proper approach, Calvin insists, is for the Christian man to open his mind and ears to every utterance of God directed to him, provided he does so with such restraint that when the Lord closes his holy lips he also shall at once close the way of inquiry (III, 21, 3).

Consistent with the principles laid down, Calvin finds God's eternal decree of predestination attested in redemptive history and special revelation in two stages. The first stage, or general election, is presented in the election of the whole offspring of Abraham. The descendants of Abraham were separated from the other sons of Adam, chosen as God's portion and inheritance, and obliged to pursue holiness as his special people. Calvin says, "The separation is apparent to all men: in the person of Abraham, as in a dry tree trunk, one people is peculiarly chosen, while the others are rejected. . . ." (III, 21, 5). According to Calvin's second stage of predestination, a more limited degree of election, manifesting God's more special grace, is evident when from the same race of Abraham God rejected some but showed that he kept others among his sons by cherishing them in the church. "Ishmael is cut off; then Esau; afterwards a countless multitude, and well-nigh all Israel" (III, 21, 6).

On the basis of the Scripture passages already presented, Calvin believed it was sufficiently clear that God by his secret plan freely chose whom he pleased, rejecting others. Yet, Calvin insisted, God's free election has been only half explained until we come to the election of individual persons, to whom God not only offers salvation but so assigns it that the certainty of its effect is not in suspense or doubt. Although God's generous favor, which he denied to others, was displayed in the adoption of the race of Abraham, in the members of Christ a far more excellent power of grace appears, for, engrafted into Christ their head, they are never cut off from salvation. In so developing and presenting the case, Calvin was convinced that he was following the example of the apostle Paul. He says, "Paul skillfully argues from the passage of Malachi. . .

[Mal. 1:2] that where God has made a covenant of eternal life and calls any people to himself, a special mode of election is employed for a part of them, so that he does not with indiscriminate grace effectually elect all [Rom. 9:13]. The statement 'I have loved Jacob' applies to the whole offspring of the patriarch, whom the prophet there contrasts to the posterity of Esau. Still this does not gainsay the fact that there was set before us in the person of one man an example of election that cannot fail to accomplish its purpose" (III, 21, 7).

On the basis of this initial analysis of Scripture and redemptive history, Calvin concluded "that God once established by his eternal and unchangeable plan those whom he long before determined once for all to receive into salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, he would devote to destruction. . . . With respect to the elect, this plan was founded upon his freely given mercy, without regard to human worth; but by his just and irreprehensible but incomprehensible judgment he has barred the door of life to those whom he has given over to damnation" (III, 21, 7).

In subsequent chapters Calvin further expounds his doctrine of predestination, defending his position against contrary arguments by scriptural exegesis. In these chapters some difficult and harsh things are said regarding reprobation and the reprobate. According to Calvin, it is an indisputable fact that to those whom God pleases not to illumine by his Spirit he transmits his Word in such a way that they may not profit by it except to be cast into greater stupidity (III, 24, 13). Calvin readily grants that men harden their hearts because of their impiety, wickedness, and ungratefulness. Nevertheless, he insists, "The fact that the reprobates do not obey God's Word when it is made known to them will be justly charged against the malice and depravity of their hearts, provided it be added at the same time that they have been given over to this depravity because they have been raised up by a just but inscrutable judgment of God to show forth his glory in their condemnation" (III, 24, 14). For Calvin, God is ultimately incomprehensible in his judgments and decrees. Therefore, God's plan is secret; his decrees, including reprobation, are beyond our comprehension. Calvin's God is also unquestionably merciful and just. His mercy is incomprehensible in election and his justice no less incomprehensible in reprobation.

## BEZA

After Calvin died in 1564, his successor at the Genevan Academy, Theodore Beza, became an influential teacher and leader in Reformed Protestantism. His influence was especially felt in the development of the doctrine of predestination, but also in the general structure and methods used in Reformed theology. Beza made the doctrine of predestination central in his entire theological program, placing it at the beginning of his theological system. Consequently, for Beza predestination was the foundation from which he approached history and all theological teachings. The method Beza employed is probably most evident in the way in which he structured (deduced) virtually the whole system of his theology from the decree of predestination.

Beza's teaching on predestination is presented in his *Sum of All Christianity* (1555) and in his more elaborate *Doctrine of Predestination* (1582). His *Sum of All Christianity* consists of brief paragraphs arranged in eight short chapters. For each paragraph Beza provides a list of proof texts. The treatise on predestination consists of Beza's lectures on Romans 9, taken down by one of his students. Each of the above-named works contains an elaborate introductory table of contents which renders Beza's method of treatment structurally explicit.

Since Beza's doctrine of predestination does not represent an original statement drawn directly from the living source of Holy Scripture, but is rather a careful and detailed restructuring of Calvin's thought, much of what Beza says about predestination does not differ substantively from what Calvin said. There are, however, some noteworthy differences. Beza self-consciously employed Aristotelian logic as an organizing principle for his thought. As an Aristotelian, he is preoccupied with causes, working out with much greater detail and consistency than Calvin had done the connection between primary or decretal causes and secondary or historical causes. Beza clearly distinguished between two parts in the decree of reprobation: first, *preterition*, or God's decision to pass some men by with his saving grace; and, second, *condemnation*, or God's decision to condemn those thus passed by for their sin and unbelief. The sovereign will and good pleasure of God which is the efficient cause of election functions, however, as a deficient cause\* in reprobation understood in the sense of preterition. The secondary, mediating, or historical cause for the execution of the decree of reprobation understood in the sense of condemnation is man's actual sin and unbelief.

Beza was also a self-conscious supralapsarian. For him the foundational decree from which the other decrees logically follow, and from which they are necessarily derived, is the decree of predestination, according to which God has purposed within himself from eternity to manifest his glory in the merciful salvation of some (the elect) and in the just punishment of others (the reprobate). Thus man appears in this decree not as created and fallen, but as certain to be created and to fall. The decree to create those elected and reprobated follows; then comes the decree to permit the fall; and, finally, the decree to justify the elect and to condemn the reprobate. In this decretal theology, Christ is not represented as the foundation of election but rather as the executor of election, or as the means for achieving the salvation of the elect. Beza's doctrine of predestination is evenly balanced and symmetrical; both parts, election and reprobation, are coordinate and parallel.

Representatives of the infralapsarian position had no difficulty with the eternal and unchangeable character of the divine decrees. The real difference between supralapsarians and infralapsarians concerned the (logical) order of the decrees. The infralapsarians insisted that God first decreed to create man and then decreed to permit the fall. Perceiving that mankind would then be in a fallen and corrupt condition, God next

(\*Note: *Deficient causality* occurs when a person who does not *make* a given thing happen could, nonetheless, have prevented it from happening but does not—when, not making a child fall off his bike, I could nevertheless have prevented him from falling off, but do not do so.)

decreed to elect in Christ a certain number of the fallen and justly condemned race to eternal life, and to pass the others by, condemning them to everlasting death for their sins.

### THE ARMINIAN CONTROVERSY

The "Arminian Controversy" which preceded the Synod of Dort originated with Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), a former student of Beza at Geneva. In 1589 Arminius was asked to reply to Dirck Coornhert, a Roman Catholic who had been influenced by Erasmus and had recently attacked Beza's view of predestination. Arminius never completed his assignment. In studying these questions he came to doubt the doctrine of unconditional predestination and to attribute to man a freedom that was unacceptable to other Reformed thinkers. When Arminius became professor of theology at the University of Leiden, a bitter controversy arose between him and his staunch supralapsarian colleague, Franciscus Gomarus, a disciple of Beza. After Arminius died, a party which further developed and defended his view was formed. In 1610 a creed embodying Arminius's teachings, consisting of *Five Articles* and called a Remonstrance, was drawn up and presented to the civil authorities in the Province of Holland and West Friesland. This document was signed by forty-six ministers; the signatories became known as the Remonstrants.

### THE CONFERENCE AT THE HAGUE, 1611

In an effort to reach a settlement in the controversy agitating the churches, the civil magistrates of the Province of Holland and West Friesland called a conference of representatives of the two parties, the Remonstrants and the Contra-Remonstrants, to meet and debate the issues in The Hague. The primary purpose of the conference was to determine the "status of the question," or the basic issue that was disturbing the peace of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands.

The Remonstrants opened the debate with a frontal attack on what they considered to be the Reformed doctrine of reprobation in both its supralapsarian and infralapsarian forms. They asserted that their opponents taught that God made an eternal and unchangeable decree according to which those foreordained to salvation must necessarily and unavoidably be saved and cannot be lost, and those foreordained to condemnation (being by far the greater part) must necessarily and unavoidably be damned and cannot be saved. They said that their opponents further taught that the foreordination of the damned was without any consideration of sin, disobedience, or unbelief. The Remonstrants further declared that these views and their consequences did not conform to God's Word, were not taught in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed churches, and were so immoral and damaging that they could not be presented to "Christian sheep and listeners as good and healthy food."

Immediately after the reading of the Remonstrants' five articles, their Reformed opponents presented a previously prepared Contra-Remonstrance, consisting of seven articles. Already in the introduction the Contra-Remonstrants said that the Remonstrants did not act rightly

and in good faith because they, like other critics of Reformed doctrine, ignored the most important doctrines of the Reformed faith and directed their attack against predestination. Predestination, they said, should be discussed carefully and modestly in accordance with God's Word, solely to defend God's unmerited grace and to reject all human merit and worth. The doctrine of predestination, they affirmed, should be approached in such a way as to contribute to the confirmation and strengthening of the assurance of faith and not in such a way as to cause anyone to stumble.

In Article I the Contra-Remonstrants set forth the doctrine of election as taught in the Confession and Catechism of the Reformed churches. The Contra-Remonstrants did so in a decidedly infralapsarian manner. They affirmed that the entire human race, having fallen in Adam, had become so corrupt that by nature all men are subject to the wrath of God and are so dead in their sins that they are unable of themselves to turn again to God or to believe in Christ. God, however, draws out of this corrupt humanity and redeems a certain number of men whom he has chosen to salvation in Christ out of sheer mercy, according to his eternal and unchangeable counsel, which reflects the good pleasure of his will. The others he passed by in his righteous judgment, leaving them in their sins. Nothing more was said regarding reprobation.

The Contra-Remonstrants were much annoyed by the way in which the Remonstrants caricatured the teaching of the Reformed churches. They accused the Remonstrants of presenting the doctrine of the Reformed churches in a most hateful manner and of imputing to the Contra-Remonstrants things that they never thought nor supported, much less taught. Moreover, they went on to allege, the Remonstrants deduced from the church's teaching a variety of evil consequences and conclusions that did not follow from the doctrine. Again, to refute the false consequences and accusations of the Remonstrants, the Contra-Remonstrants affirmed that God never decreed to condemn anyone except on account of his sins and never moved anyone to sin. They further observed that those dead in their sins, sin voluntarily; therefore no one should stumble at this doctrine.

In the course of the debate, the Contra-Remonstrants successfully resisted the efforts of their opponents to divide their party by highlighting the differences between supralapsarians and infralapsarians. On the fundamental issue that separated them from the Remonstrants, the Contra-Remonstrants insisted, their party was united. That basic issue was the answer to the question: Are faith and perseverance in faith conditions preceding election or are they the fruits of election, following from it? In the judgment of the Contra-Remonstrants, this was the central issue in the dispute, and from it they refused to be distracted. To it they repeatedly attempted to return the discussion.

In an effort to focus the issue on reprobation, the Remonstrants formally raised seven questions regarding predestination which they wanted the Contra-Remonstrants to answer. For the most part the Contra-Remonstrants refused to answer these questions because in their judgment not reprobation but the Remonstrants' view of election was the cause of the unrest in the churches. They did, however, say, "When we

posit an eternal decree of election involving certain particular persons, it is clearly to be understood from this that we also teach an eternal decree of rejection or abandonment of certain particular persons, for there can be no election unless there is also rejection or abandonment. When out of a given number some are elected, therewith the others are rejected, for he who takes all does not elect. As, for example, when out of ten thousand Gideon chose the three hundred who lapped the water with their tongues (Judg. 7:7), he thereby rejected all the others. When Moses says of the Jews, 'The Lord has chosen you out of all the people' (Deut. 7:6), he understands thereby that God did not elect the other nations—that is, he rejected them. Regarding this, God says through the prophet Isaiah (41:9), 'You are my servant, for I choose you and do not reject you.' Now regarding all the questions and explanations that pertain to this matter [reprobation], we consider it unnecessary to go into those high and difficult questions unless one would want to fill the churches with unnecessary disputes and quarrels, with more unrest, offensiveness, and confusion." In conclusion, the Contra-Remonstrants reaffirmed the position previously stated: "God condemns no one, nor has foreordained to condemn anyone, except justly on account of his own sins" (*Schriftelijke Conferentie Gehouden in 's Gravenhage in den Jare 1611*, pp. 41-42).

The Remonstrants were distressed and disappointed that the Contra-Remonstrants refused to say more about reprobation. The Remonstrants argued that the Contra-Remonstrants should have been willing to pursue the matter because Holy Scripture dealt with reprobation as well as election, because the decree of predestination included both, and because the decree of reprobation was as necessary to demonstrate God's justice as the decree of election was necessary to demonstrate his mercy. The Remonstrants insisted on parallelism and symmetry in the decrees. If faith is a fruit of election, so the Remonstrants argued, then the Contra-Remonstrants, to be consistent, should have insisted that unbelief necessarily follows from reprobation, for "they [the decrees of election and reprobation] are two members, equally high, equally low, and stand over against each other on an equal basis" (*ibid.*, p. 414). In their final communication to the government authorities, the Remonstrants said that the Contra-Remonstrants judged the Remonstrants' doctrine of election to be insufficient, but brought no such charges against their doctrine of reprobation. The Remonstrants, for their part, regretted that the Contra-Remonstrants passed reprobation by in silence.

And so the issues were joined. The Contra-Remonstrants persisted in their opinion that faith and perseverance in faith proceed from election as fruits of the same, and that this was the central issue in the dispute. The Remonstrants maintained that reprobation was the cause of the controversy, and that as long as the Contra-Remonstrants refused openly to declare their position on the doctrine of reprobation the real issue could not be addressed.

#### THE SYNOD OF DORT, 1618-1619

The efficiency of the proceedings of the Synod of Dort was considerably hampered by the uncooperativeness of the Remonstrants. The

Remonstrants protested being cast in the role of defendants because they considered themselves equal parties to a common dispute. When presenting their opinions on the Five Articles, they stated them in more negative than positive terms. They also frustrated the efforts of the synod to learn more precisely their views on disputed points of doctrine by refusing to answer questions. And they demanded unqualified freedom to dispute issues without any restrictions or limitations, even of order, imposed upon them by the synod. Most significantly, they insisted that reprobation be treated first. Those were not simply matters of preference or convenience. Unless reprobation were dealt with first, they said, their consciences would not allow them to participate further in the deliberations of the synod. Members of the synod were not generally impressed with the sincerity of the Remonstrants' argument. Some delegates considered it no more than a strategy eventually to get the synod to approve their teaching on election. After a month of haggling had gone by, the synod found that its authority and patience had been sorely tried. Therefore, on January 14, 1619, the Remonstrants were dismissed and the synod proceeded to discuss election without them.

The Remonstrants had said that reprobation should be taken up first because this doctrine was the real cause of all the unrest and controversy in the church. If, therefore, the articles treating this doctrine were properly formulated and defended, the other points of difference would evaporate. The doctrine of election, they affirmed, did not cause the bitterness. Some of the Remonstrants openly testified that they had no scruples against this doctrine. All their doubts centered on the doctrine of reprobation which, unfortunately, from the beginning of the Reformation had caused no small amount of disturbance in the church. The doctrine of reprobation was hated for good reasons. It violated God's honor, wisdom, goodness, and justice. The doctrine did unbelievable damage to godliness and filled men with despair. According to *Episcopius*, the leading spokesman for the Remonstrants at *Dort*, even the authors of the doctrine themselves considered it horrible. He said he could not tolerate a doctrine of an absolute decree that taught that God peremptorily decreed to cast away the greatest part of mankind only because he so desired. This comment evoked strong negative reactions from some of the delegates to the synod. *Gomarus* said that *Episcopius* had falsified the Reformed view of reprobation and that no one taught that God absolutely decreed to cast man away without regard to sin. *Lydius* observed that it had always been the custom of those who favored Pelagianism to trouble the church with the question of reprobation. Others said that for the honor of God and the good of the Reformed churches, the churches should be purified of doctrines such as the following: that God has ordained to eternal destruction the greatest part of men without regard to sin; that he has created man in order that he should fall; that he has ordained sins themselves; that he has decreed that they happen; and that he makes sure that everything good as well as evil necessarily occurs; also that some children of believers who die in infancy are condemned to eternal punishment.

The synod early expressed a preference for dealing with election first and then with the rest of the Five Articles before taking up the question



of reprobation. Election was one of the doctrines in dispute; reprobation was not. Before the Remonstrants were finally dismissed, foreign delegations were asked to render opinions on the procedural issue and on the appeal to conscience. These opinions provide valuable insight into the way these delegates perceived the relationship between election and reprobation. The foreign delegations unanimously opposed the procedure advocated by the Remonstrants, disagreeing also with their supporting arguments. The delegates from Hesse observed that Holy Scripture, when it deals with predestination, either treats election only or deals first with election and later with reprobation, and then only in a sober manner. Those from Geneva said that Scripture sets forth election very frequently and exhaustively, but seldom speaks of reprobation. Somewhat similarly, the delegation from Emden said that the Holy Spirit treats election extensively but deals with reprobation sparingly—and so, they said, should we. And the delegates from the Palatinate said that Scripture often speaks of election without any mention of reprobation. The delegates from Great Britain observed that the doctrine of reprobation cannot be clearly understood unless the doctrine of election has first been set forth. The Genevan theologians also said that the nature of the matter itself demands that one begin with a certain set doctrine of election, because the truth of the same is the measure of the truth of the doctrine of reprobation. And again, the delegates from Hesse further said that the natural order demands that election come first, since reprobation cannot be understood to have happened unless the election of some has gone before. Other arguments were also stated, such as the following; theologians always dealt first with election; and the right order of teaching or pedagogy requires that a matter should first be treated affirmatively and only then negatively.

After the departure of the Remonstrants, the synod proceeded to gather the opinions of the Remonstrants from other sources, and began a public debate on the five points of doctrine. Meanwhile, the various provincial and foreign delegations met to formulate their opinions on the Five Articles. These opinions, together with those drawn up by the professors of theology present, were to provide the basis on which the decisions of the synod would eventually be formulated. The doctrine of election was debated at length and at times heatedly. The chief antagonists were Gomarus and the modest Martinius, an infralapsarian professor of theology from Bremen. According to Gomarus, Christ was simply the executor of the decree of election. Martinius, on the basis of Ephesians 1:4, argued that Christ was the foundation of election and that the elect were chosen in him. At one time Gomarus became so upset with Martinius that he threw down his glove and challenged Martinius to a duel. Such a challenge was not only indicative of the personal character of the men involved and of the general spirit of the age, but also suggests the strength of conviction of the participants in the synodical deliberations and the seriousness with which they held the doctrinal teachings of the Reformed churches.

In comparison with the doctrine of election, the doctrine of reprobation was not extensively debated on the floor of the synod. The records indicate that only one afternoon, January 29, 1619, was devoted to the

subject. Dr. Henricus Altingius, professor of theology at Heidelberg, spoke for an hour and a half on reprobation. His three points were:

- (1) This doctrine does not make God the author of sin.
- (2) That sins, although represented as following reprobation, nevertheless proceed from depraved human nature as their only cause.
- (3) That hardening and blinding are God's righteous judgments for sin and unbelief, and can only on this basis be attributed to God.

John Hales, in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador to the Netherlands, said that Altingius's discourse had been scholarly and learned, but that he wished the doctrine of reprobation had been more thoroughly discussed because of the importance the Remonstrants attached to it.

On February 22, fifty-seven pages of materials dealing with reprobation, collected from Remonstrant books, were read to the synod. The next day another thirty-five pages devoted to the same subject were read. Much of the material consisted of the so-called harsh phrases drawn especially from the works of Calvin, Beza, Zanchius, and Piscator. In a letter to Ambassador Carleton, Walter Balcanqual, a delegate to the synod from Great Britain, said that "unless the synod condemn the harsh opinions of many of our men as well as the opinions of the Remonstrants, I do not see how they can give the world satisfaction touching their indifference. . . ." A short time later Balcanqual indicated that the delegates from Great Britain condemned in the Remonstrants' teaching what could be justly condemned, but also condemned some hard phrases of the Contra-Remonstrants, especially on reprobation. In the same letter Balcanqual indicated that the delegates from the Palatinate appended to their opinion on election a very good and necessary counsel for the sober and wholesome manner of presenting the doctrine of election to the people. The British delegation, he reported, intended to append to their opinions on the fifth article a similar statement that would apply to all of the five articles. When the English delegation had completed its work on the last article, Balcanqual informed the ambassador, they attached an exhortation to the delegates for the defense of the doctrine received in the Reformed churches. The exhortation included a plea for great caution and discretion in presenting predestination, especially reprobation, to the common people. A prayer also was added. This procedure was not followed only by the English. According to Balcanqual every delegation appended such an epilogue and such a prayer.

The opinions submitted by the various delegations and professors on the First Head of Doctrine, much to the amazement of Balcanqual (who expected Gomarus to be more influential than he apparently was), exhibited a large measure of uniformity, both in content and form of expression.

Understandably, election was in most opinions centrally and exhaustively presented; reprobation usually much more briefly, often by way of appendage. The language used to indicate the relationship between election and reprobation varied. Some delegations were inclined to talk about a decree of predestination consisting of two members: election and reprobation. Sometimes the categories "elect" and "non-elect"

were used. Sometimes there were references to the decree of election and reprobation, but at other times there were references to a decree of election and a decree of reprobation. Consistency and uniformity in the use of terms seems to have been lacking. In general, however, election and reprobation were viewed as inseparable correlates or opposites; reprobation was thought to be implicit in election and yet distinguishable from it. Election and reprobation and the relationship between them were presented and supported by appeals to Scripture.

Some of the delegations asserted that reprobation naturally followed from election, but this opinion was never supported by a sustained argument based on the laws of human understanding or reason. Interestingly, many argued from redemptive history and the experience of faith back to the decree. In this regard the opinion of David Pareus, communicated to the synod by letter (because the retired professor of theology from Heidelberg was too old and infirm to attend), is illustrative. In their representations on reprobation the delegations uniformly made a distinction between reprobation understood as preterition and as condemnation. The cause of the former was the good pleasure of the divine will; the cause of the latter was found exclusively in fallen man's sin and unbelief.

An initial effort at the formulation of the Canons by Johannes Bogerman, the president of the synod, together with his assistants, met with strong resistance and downright consternation, especially from the foreign delegates. Bishop Carleton from Great Britain thought his own influence would be greatly undermined by this procedure, thinking that it was below the dignity of a bishop simply to have to subscribe to canons dictated by the president of the synod. The matter was resolved by the appointment of a committee of redaction commissioned to review the opinions of the various delegations, to collate them, and to formulate the articles finally to be adopted by the synod. Both Bogerman and Bishop Carleton served on this committee.

The president and the bishop agreed that the Canons should be formulated in a popular style conducive to the edification of the church rather than in an academic or scholarly style. Difficult scientific questions and those matters that would probably give rise to disputes were to be avoided. In the formulation of the Canons, consideration was also to be given to the decisions of the ancient church in its repudiation of Semi-pelagianism. The Canons were not to be too long or prolix. The articles of the First Head of Doctrine were to begin with the creation of man in the image of God, and were then to deal with the fall.

The committee for the most part followed this plan. The articles gradually approach the predestination of the elect. According to K. Dyk in his study, *De strijd over Infra- en Supra-lapsarisme in de Gereformeerde Kerken van Nederland*, reprobation is not really treated until Article 15, and then only for the purpose of clarifying election. Dyk also says that the Canons "do not give us a strictly scientific definition of predestination which includes election and reprobation; ...but the Canons proceed from the historical fact of the fall and then explain how out of fallen humanity some come to faith" (p. 171).

On April 16, 1619, the doctrinal statements of the First Head of Doctrine were read, further discussed, and, after some amendments had been made, approved by the synod. Two days later, after the other articles had been read and approved, the synod decided to add to the Canons a conclusion or epilogue repudiating the most prominent blasphemies with which the enemies of eternal predestination had assailed this doctrine. The formulation and adoption of such a conclusion proved more difficult than the delegates had anticipated. Differences of opinion on what should be included reached crisis proportions. The delegations from England, Bremen, and Hesse especially wanted included in the epilogue an explicit condemnation of the so-called harsh phrases which could be found in the writings of Reformed teachers and theologians. Other delegations opposed this procedure, arguing that the weaknesses of otherwise faithful servants of the Reformed churches should not be treated in this way, and that the synod had no authority to critique the theological opinions of teachers in Reformed churches outside of the Netherlands. Some delegates objected to taking these harsh phrases out of context and then condemning them. If this were done with harsh phrases found in the Bible, these delegates affirmed, even the Holy Spirit could be condemned. Moreover, this procedure, it was argued, would be interpreted as lending support to the accusations of the Remonstrants. After three sessions of heated debate and after three attempts at formulating an acceptable conclusion, the synod unanimously approved, on April 22, the epilogue that was appended to the Canons. The next day the articles of the First Head of Doctrine were again read in the assembly. Then each delegate indicated agreement by attaching his signature to the articles.

#### *B. A New Translation of I, 6 and I, 15*

Since the gravamen specifically takes exception to two articles of the Canons of Dort, Articles I, 6 and I, 15, the committee decided to provide a new translation of these two articles from the original Latin text. In this new translation an attempt has been made to reproduce the thought of the original text with clarity and freshness. The Dutch translation of the Canons (which has an official standing, since it was adopted by the Dutch delegates to the Synod of Dort meeting separately), has been used as a guide whenever necessary.

The member of the committee who prepared this new translation appended to it ten pages of footnotes which examine the grammar and the vocabulary of the Latin text, compare this new translation with other translations (including the one found in the Psalter Hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church), and give reasons for the renderings adopted. Since these footnotes are quite technical in nature, the committee did not deem it wise to include them in our report. These footnotes will, however, be made available to the members of the advisory committee which will deal with our report, and to any other delegates to synod who may wish to consult them.

We present, now, first, the text of Article I, 6 found in the Psalter Hymnal, and then the new translation of this article. Next we present the

Psalter Hymnal rendering of I, 15, and then the new translation of this article. For those who wish to consult the original, the Latin text of both articles is reproduced after each set of translations.

1. The Psalter Hymnal Translation of I, 6:

That some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree. *For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world* (Acts 15:18, A. V.). *Who worketh all things after the counsel of his will* (Eph. 1:11). According to which decree He graciously softens the hearts of the elect, however obstinate, and inclines them to believe; while He leaves the non-elect in His just judgment to their own wickedness and obduracy. And herein is especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men equally involved in ruin; or that decree of election and reprobation, revealed in the Word of God, which, though men of perverse, impure, and unstable minds wrest it to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation.

2. The New Translation of I, 6:

It is, however, due to God's eternal decision that some are endowed with faith by him within time, and that others are not so endowed. "For he knows all his works from eternity" (Acts 15:18; Eph. 1:11). According to this decision he graciously softens the hearts, hard though they be, of his chosen ones, and inclines them to believe, but by a just judgment leaves those who have not been chosen to their wickedness and hardness. And here especially is disclosed to us God's action—unsearchable, and as merciful as it is just—of distinguishing between men who are equally lost. This is that "Decision of Election and Reprobation" which has been revealed in God's Word. That decision, though the wicked, impure, and unstable distort it to their destruction, provides holy and God-fearing souls with inexpressible comfort.

3. The Latin Text of I, 6:

Quod autem aliqui in tempore fide a Deo donantur, aliqui non donantur, id ab aeterno ipsius decreto provenit; *Omnia enim opera sua novit ab aeterno*, (Act. 15:18; Eph. 1:11); secundum quod decretum electorum corda, quantumvis dura, gratiose emollit, et ad credendum inflectit, non electos autem iusto iudicio suae malitiae et duritiae relinquit. Atque hic potissimum sese nobis aperit profunda, misericors pariter et iusta, hominum aequaliter perditorum discretio; sive Decretum illud *Electionis et Reprobationis* in verbo Dei revelatum. Quod ut perversi, impuri, et parum stabiles in suum detorquent exitium, ita sanctis et religiosis animabus ineffabile praestat solatium.

4. The Psalter Hymnal Translation of I, 15:

What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of His sovereign, most just, irreprehensible, and unchangeable good pleasure, has decreed to leave in the common misery into which they have wilfully plunged themselves, and not to bestow upon them saving faith and the grace of conversion; but, permitting them in His just judgment to follow their own ways, at last, for the declaration of His justice, to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation, which by no means makes God the Author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares Him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous Judge and Avenger thereof.

5. The New Translation of I, 15:

What is more, holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election, and makes us appreciate it, in that it further bears witness that not all men have been chosen, but that some have not been chosen, or have been passed by in God's eternal election—those, that is, concerning whom God made the following decision:

to leave them, out of his entirely free, most just, irreproachable, and unchangeable good pleasure, in the common misery into which, by their own fault, they have plunged themselves,

not to endow them with saving faith and the grace of conversion,

but at long last to condemn and eternally punish them (left as they have been in their own ways and under his just judgment), not only for their unbelief, but also for all their other sins, in order to demonstrate his justice.

And this is the decision of Reprobation, which does not at all make God the author of sin (a blasphemous thought!) but rather its fearful, irreproachable, just judge and avenger.

6. The Latin text of I, 15:

Caeterum aeternam et gratuitam hanc Electionis nostri gratiam eo vel maxime illustrat, nobisque commendat Scriptura sacra, quod porro testatur non omnes homines esse electos, sed quosdam non electos, sive in aeterna Dei Electione praeteritos; quos, scilicet, Deus ex liberrimo, iustissimo, irreprehensibili, et immutabili beneplacito decrevit in communi miseria, in quam se sua culpa praecipitarunt, relinquere, nec salvifica fide et conversionis gratia donare, sed in viis suis et sub iusto iudicio relictos, tandem non tantum propter infidelitatem, sed etiam caetera omnia peccata, ad declarationem iustitiae suae damnare et aeternum punire. Atque hoc est decretum *Reprobationis*, quod Deum neutiquam peccati autorem (quod cogitatu blasphemum est) sed tremendum, irreprehensibilem, et iustum iudicem ac vindicem constituit.

(Note: the Latin text has been taken from the *Acta Synodi Nationalis Dordrechtanae* [Leiden: Elsevier, 1620], pp. 241-42 and 244.)

### C. *Comments about Reprobation Made by the Delegates to the Synod of Dort*

The Acts of the Synod of Dort contain, in addition to the final text of the Canons, reports or judgments (*oordeelen*) from the various delegations, both domestic and foreign, about the heads of doctrine under dispute. It should be understood that these reports preceded and were basic to the final formulation of the text of the Canons. In order to shed light on the thinking which lay behind the statements of the Canons on the doctrine of reprobation, your committee has gleaned from these reports the comments which follow. In each case the name of the delegation (or professor) in whose report the comment is found is given in parentheses.

#### 1. Arguments Used to Support the Doctrine of Reprobation:

a. "Since there is an election of certain people to life, no one who has any intelligence can doubt that there is also a rejection of certain people to death" (Palatinate). Another version of the same argument: "If some are elect, others are necessarily rejected. For without reprobation election is unthinkable" (Groningen).

b. "Since the number of the elect is known to God, there is also known to God a certain and definite number of the reprobate" (Friesland).

c. "If not a sparrow can fall to the ground outside God's law, how much less shall so many most glorious creatures be brought to their end apart from God's counsel and decree?" (Groningen).

d. "Whatever God does in time he has determined to do from eternity" (Hesse, Gelderland).

#### 2. Statements Further Clarifying the Meaning of the Doctrine of Reprobation:

a. Preterition (or the passing by of some in God's election) is based solely on the Father's good pleasure. Condemnation, however, is based on the sins, both original and actual, of those who have not been chosen (found in many reports).

b. "Those whom God did not choose or whom he passed by he found to be enslaved to sin and inclined to evil. God, in other words, has only left them in the condition in which they were through their own fault; he has in no sense made them such as they are through any decree of his" (Gelderland).

c. "Those who are lost are lost through their own fault. It is therefore an ugly slander to accuse the Reformed of teaching that God without any reference to sin has ordained some to condemnation only through a naked and absolute decree" (Walloon Churches).

d. "If impenitence and unbelief should be the cause why God has passed some sinners by with his grace, all men should have been passed by, since all men are by nature impenitent and unbelieving" (Hesse).

e. "Though God wills the salvation of the elect both with approval and with working, he wills the salvation of those who are rejected only with approval but not with working" (Professor Lubbertus).

f. "God's giving certain people up or hardening them is a working of his punitive righteousness, which presupposes man's sin" (Gelderland).

g. "Since the punishment of those who have been rejected varies in severity, God in his precondemnation of them has taken note of their sins" (Zeeland).

### 3. Understandings of Reprobation Which Are Rejected:

a. "That God has determined to leave in their sin and under his wrath only the unrepentant and unbelieving, as those who are estranged from Christ" (Great Britain).

b. "That God has decreed to condemn men without any reference to the sins they have committed" (Gelderland).

c. "That all men are elect and that none are always rejected" (Zeeland).

d. "That reprobation is of many sorts and is changeable. This view is to be rejected because it would imply that God's foreknowledge could fail, or that certain things would be unknown to God, or that God would have to acknowledge the existence of something new, or that something could happen to God against his will" (Utrecht).

(Note: These comments can be found in the *Acta der Nationale Synode te Dordrecht, ten jare 1618-19*. Dutch edition, ed. J. H. Donner & S. A. Van Den Hoorn [Leiden: D. Donner, 1887].)

### 4. The Meaning of the Word *Reprobation*:

It appears that the word *reprobation* (in Latin, *reprobatio*) was not always used by the delegates to the Synod of Dort in the same way. As was noted above, the delegates went to great pains to distinguish clearly between God's *passing by* (*praeteritio*) of fallen man with his grace and God's *condemnation* (*damnatio*) of man on account of his sin. It was made very clear in the reports from the various delegations that no other cause for God's passing by could be found than his good pleasure, whereas the cause for God's condemnation of man was man's sin and unbelief.

In their reports to the synod the delegates often used the word *reprobation* as a synonym for *passing by* (*praeteritio*) or *nonelection* (*nonelectio*), thus explicitly distinguishing it from *condemnation* (*damnatio*). A number of delegates, however, used the word *reprobation* (*reprobatio*) to refer to both *passing by* (*praeteritio*) and *condemnation* (*damnatio*).

This variety of usage, whereby the word *reprobation* sometimes means only *passing by* (*praeteritio*) but at other times both *passing by* (*praeteritio*) and *condemnation* (*damnatio*) is reflected in the Canons, precisely in the two articles against which the gravamen is directed. In I, 6 the phrase "that decree of election and reprobation" (*decretum illud electionis et reprobationis*) refers to reprobation in its narrower sense, as the equivalent of nonelection or passing by, with only God's good pleasure as its cause. In I, 15, however, the phrase "and this is the decree of reprobation" (*decretum reprobationis*) refers to reprobation in its broader sense, as embracing both preterition (nonelection, or passing by)



with God's good pleasure as its cause, and damnation, with man's sin as its cause.

In this report, whenever there is a danger of being misunderstood, we shall make clear in which sense we are using the word *reprobation*. In harmony with the teaching of I, 6 and I, 15, however, the committee affirms that no other cause can be found for the *passing by* than God's sovereign good pleasure, whereas the cause of *condemnation* is man's sin and unbelief.

One further comment should be made. The fact that I, 15 speaks of "the decree of reprobation" should not be understood as implying that this is a separate decree or decision of God which stands wholly by itself, independent of the decree of election. The decree or decision of reprobation is to be thought of as an aspect of a single decree or decision. The fact that I, 6 speaks of a "decree of election and reprobation" makes this clear, as does also the statement in I, 8, "There are not various decrees of election, but one and the same decree. . . ." It should be noted in addition that even I, 15, which speaks of "the decree of reprobation," begins with a discussion of election, going on to say that it is the testimony of Scripture that "not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by. . . ." In other words, that Canons in I, 15 understand God's passing by of some not as the content of a separate decree but as an action of God which is involved in, and therefore a facet of, the one decree of election.

#### *D. Analysis of the Canons, with Specific Reference to Their Teaching on Reprobation*

In connection with our mandate, the committee conducted an in-depth study of the Canons of Dort, to see whether they do indeed teach what the gravamen claims they teach. What follows next, therefore, is an analysis of the Canons focused on what they say concerning reprobation. (All quotations from the Canons found in this report are from the Psalter Hymnal version unless otherwise noted.)

We think it can fairly be said that the overriding concern of the Canons is to defend the sovereign grace of God and the assurance of faith. The writers of the Canons saw that the teachings of the Arminians compromised the absolute sovereignty of God's grace and the assurance of faith; and it is this that provoked their response. In particular, they disputed what they understood to be the Arminian contention that God elects on the *condition* of faith, and that faith itself is not one of God's gracious gifts but, rather, man's turning toward God in his own strength. To this the writers of the Canons replied: No, *faith itself* is a gift of grace. We do not of our own free will *come to* faith. We are *elected to* faith. For in our natural condition we *would not come to* faith. Dort is in great measure the elaboration of that conviction, coupled with the belief that not all are saved. To say it once again: Dort represents an attempt, no doubt deficient and fallible, to proclaim the sovereign grace of God and the assurance of faith in the face of what it recognized as a serious threat to those biblical teachings.

It should not be overlooked that the Canons begin with history—not with the eternal decrees of God, not with the decisions of God from

before the foundation of the world, but with our actual, historical, human condition.

The first thing said about our human condition (Article I, 1) is that it is the condition of fallenness, and that this fallenness is shared by every individual human being, leaving each one "deserving of eternal death." As to the cause of this fallenness of our historical condition, Article I, 5 says explicitly and emphatically that this cause lies not in God but in man himself. God has not *made* man act thus. God is not the cause of man's evil.

The thinking of Dort concerning the fallenness of our historical condition is amplified in Articles 1 through 3 of the Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine. There Dort puts forth its doctrine of original sin, concluding as follows: "Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and are by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto; and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, or to dispose themselves to reformation" (III-IV, 3).

Concerning our historical condition, Dort has no more than spoken of its fallenness than to go on, in Article I, 2 and 3, to strike a new note: the note that God, out of love, entered our history by sending among us his Son Jesus Christ and the messengers of his gospel. It is God's decision that his wrath shall abide "upon those who believe not this gospel. But such as receive it and embrace Jesus the Savior by a true and living faith are by Him delivered from the wrath of God and from destruction, and have the gift of eternal life conferred upon them" (Article. I, 4).

It is only when we reach Article 6 of the First Head that another level, the level of eternity, is introduced into the discussion.

At this point the question arises: What accounts for the fact that some people respond to the gospel with this true and living faith? The answer offered is that God *chooses* them as recipients of his gift of faith (see also Paragraph 1 of the Rejection of Errors under the First Head). He decides to select, or elect, certain members of this fallen humanity for this gift of faith. And if it be asked when God made this selection, *before* they fell or *after* they fell, there is some evidence for the conclusion that for the writers of Dort the "When?" question does not apply. The decree in question is an *eternal* decree of God. What takes place in eternity, they would appear to say, does not stand in some before-and-after relation to what takes place in history.

Dort never tires of insisting that faith is a gift of God, not just in the sense that God offers it to those who receive it, but rather in the sense that God effectually moves them to have faith. It is not a matter of free volition on their part to have or not to have faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This is made particularly clear in Articles 10 through 16 of the Third and Fourth Heads, and in Paragraph 6 of the Rejection of Errors under those Heads. Speaking of the grace of regeneration, Article 16 says that this "does not treat men as senseless stocks and blocks, nor take away their will and its properties, or do violence thereto; but it [the grace of regeneration] spiritually quickens, heals, corrects, and at the same time sweetly and powerfully bends it [the will of man]. . . ." But Article

10, speaking of obeying the call of the gospel, says that this "is not be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will. . . , but must be wholly ascribed to God, who, as He has chosen His own from eternity in Christ, so He calls them effectually in time, confers upon them faith and repentance. . . ." And in Article 12 we read, "And this is that regeneration. . . which God works in us without our aid." And again, in Article 12, ". . . all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. . . . Wherefore also man himself is rightly said to believe and repent by virtue of that grace received." And so, in conclusion, Article 14 says: "Faith is therefore to be considered as the gift of God, not on account of its being offered by God to man, to be accepted or rejected at his pleasure, but because it is in reality conferred upon him, breathed and infused into him; nor even because God bestows the power or ability to believe, and then expects that man should by the exercise of his own free will consent to the terms of salvation and actually believe in Christ, but because He who works in man both to will and to work, and indeed all things in all, produces both the will to believe and the act of believing also."

Dort points out, however, that according to scriptural teaching God decides to choose *only some* as recipients of this gift of faith, and so to choose only some for the salvation which he, on the basis of the work of Jesus Christ, has decreed as consequent upon faith. It is God's eternal decree to select certain ones for the gift of faith and to pass others by for this gift. This choosing of some and passing by of others can be thought of as a single (complex) decision. But we can also speak of the former phase of this decree as the decree of election and of the latter as the decree of reprobation. Reprobation, as understood in Article I, 6, is a passing by with respect to the gift of faith.

A question that you and I might be inclined to ask, again, is, *When* did God decide to pass over certain persons with respect to the gift of faith, with the consequence that they are consigned to the destruction of which their sin has made them worthy? Did he make this decision before they ever sinned—indeed, before they ever existed? And again, the answer that Dort might very well have given is that this is an inappropriate question. There is no "when" to the eternal decrees of the eternal God. God did not make this decision before they ever existed or sinned. But neither did he make it after they existed or sinned.

There is one more thing which Dort sees as lying in the background of our historical condition, something presupposed by the election/reprobation decree. There is an eternal decree on God's part to the effect that he who sins shall perish, unless in some way the sentence of condemnation shall be lifted from him on the basis of something which exculpates him (Article 1 of the Second Head). In Article 15 of the First Head it is apparent that this decree of condemnation is included in what is called the decree of reprobation, whereas in Article 6, as we have already seen, it is only God's passing over some in his distribution of the gift of faith that is called the decree of reprobation. It is important for understanding the structure of Dort's thinking that "reprobation" understood as passing

over (*preterition*) be clearly distinguished from the decree of *condemnation*.

Now there is never anything whatever in the human person himself which exculpates him from the sentence of condemnation; there is nothing in his person or his actions which is sufficient to lift the curse. Only in the work of Christ is there something sufficient for lifting the sentence of condemnation from those to whom his merits are applied. And in fact Christ's work is sufficient for lifting this curse from *all* mankind (Article 3 of the Second Head). In the light of the work of Jesus Christ, God has decided that all those who have faith in him shall, on the ground of Christ's work, be delivered from their just sentence of condemnation (Article 7 of the Second Head).

But on the basis of what in the human being does God pick out some and not others for faith? Repetitiously Dort says that God does not choose on the basis of any feature whatever in the human being. He chooses solely "out of his own good pleasure." He grants salvation to those who have faith, grounding this on the merits of Christ to whose family these belong by virtue of their faith. But he gives faith to whom he will, not on the basis of anything whatever that differentiates one human being from another, but solely on the basis of his own good will. "This election," says Dort, "was not founded upon foreseen faith and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the prerequisite, cause, or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to the obedience of faith, holiness, etc." (Article 9 of the First Head). "The good pleasure of God is the sole cause of this gracious election; which does not consist herein that out of all possible qualities and actions of men God has chosen some as a condition of salvation, but that He was pleased out of the common mass of sinners to adopt some certain persons as a peculiar people to Himself. . . ." (Article 10 of the First Head). At every turn Dort wishes to protect its confession that the faith to which salvation is granted is the *utterly unconditional* gift of God, while still affirming that the gift is not granted to everyone.

This perspective quite obviously raises a number of hard questions, to some of which Dort addresses itself. One such question is this: Isn't God, after all, the *cause* of the unbelief of those who in fact do not have faith? After all, a person has faith in Christ only if God grants him faith. So is not the cause of the fact that some person does not have faith to be located in God? To this Dort repeatedly says "no"; the cause lies in the sinful condition of the man himself, and of this sinful condition God is not the cause. God is the cause of unbelief only in the sense of "deficient causality." Suppose that lined up before a judge are a number of criminals, none of whom is penitent. And suppose that the judge has decided to pardon all who become penitent, and has announced this. Suppose further now that the judge decides to *induce* some to become penitent. That does not make him the *cause* of the impenitence of the others—though it is true that *if* he had wished he *could* have induced them too to become penitent. Deficient causality in this case amounts to the judge's not having induced penitence when he could have.

Another question which arises is this: Doesn't God act unjustly in this election/reprobation decree of his by selecting some and passing by

others, when the consequence of this choice is that the former are saved and the latter are delivered into misery? Dort repetitiously resists this charge too. All of us, says Dort, are deserving of condemnation because of our sins and our unbelief. No man can say that he is not worthy of punishment, nor can anyone say that that which he has done which is worthy of punishment is something that he was made to do by him who hands out the punishment. No person who experiences eternal punishment can say that he did not deserve it. None of the criminals standing before the judge in whom the judge decides not to induce penitence can say that he is not worthy of being consigned to punishment.

We come, then, to the questions which most directly concern us in our deliberations. Does Dort teach that before the existence of human beings, thus before they have done anything, God consigns some to destruction wholly apart from what they may do? Or, alternatively, does Dort teach that God decides to *make* some people perform the sins *for* which he subsequently punishes them? Worse yet, does Dort teach that God creates some people for *the purpose* of consigning them to destruction? To each of these questions the answer is most emphatically, "No." These are thoroughly unwarranted interpretations of Dort. In the first place, to say it again, we should perhaps not even speak of "before" here. But secondly, God consigns someone to destruction only on the basis of what that person does; and whatever evil actions that person performs, he is not by God *made* to perform them.

So can we then say that God rejects those who reject him? Most emphatically we can. What Dort wishes to emphasize, however, is that God does not reject *all* who reject him. Some who reject him he decides nonetheless to choose as recipients for the gift of faith, and thus, for salvation. These, though they have rejected him in the sense of their sin generally, do not, of course, reject his gift of faith. On the contrary, God effectually and irresistibly plants faith in them.

We take this interpretation of the text of the Canons to be confirmed by the Conclusion of the Canons, by the evidence assembled in the previous study of the historical background of the Synod of Dort, and by the comments about reprobation made by the delegates to the Synod of Dort (see above). Thus we do not regard the Conclusion as representing, in the words of the gravamen on page 339, "a drawing back at the brink from the enormity of the consequences of a theological rationalism. . . ." Rather, we see the Conclusion as summarizing a few of the main teachings of the Canons. The Conclusion rejects the charge that the Reformed churches teach that God is "the author of sin." We have already seen that this thought is repeatedly repudiated in the body of the Canons. The Conclusion rejects the charge that the Reformed churches teach that "if the reprobate should even perform truly all the works of the saints, their obedience would not in the least contribute to their salvation. . . ." Dort's thought is clearly that if those who are passed over for faith, and thus ultimately condemned, *had* performed all the works of righteousness, they would receive salvation. The Conclusion rejects the charge that the Reformed churches teach that "God, by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestinated the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and has

created them for this very purpose. . . ." In the body of the Canons it is taught that God has not created anyone for the purpose of damnation. Damnation is a response to the evil the "reprobates" do, of which God is not the cause. Again, the Conclusion rejects the charge that the Reformed churches teach that "in the same manner in which the election is the fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety. . . ." Reprobation is the passing over of some for the gift of faith, the consequence of which is the consignment of them to destruction on account of their sin and unbelief. But the Canons teach that this passing over is not a *cause* of their unbelief and impiety, except in the sense of a "deficient cause."

The understanding of what the Canons teach about reprobation which has been set forth above should be kept in mind as we proceed to our analysis of the gravamen.

### III. THE GRAVAMEN

#### A. *An Historical Evaluation of the Gravamen*

Dr. Boer by his own testimony purposely formulated the gravamen with little or no attention given to the doctrine of election. He explicitly states that the gravamen does not call into question the doctrine of election as confessed in the Reformed churches. Yet Dr. Boer asserts that historically election and reprobation have been intimately connected and bound together as correlates and contrasts. If this is indeed true, it would seem that to eliminate the doctrine of reprobation from the church's confession or to declare that doctrine confessionally nonbinding would have some implications for the church's understanding and confession of the doctrine of election. Dr. Boer would have aided the church in its appraisal of his gravamen if he had commented more extensively on the traditional doctrine of election and on his present views regarding that doctrine.

According to Dr. Boer, election and reprobation in Reformed theology are two inseparable faces of the one coin of predestination. Boer further asserts that election and reprobation are nevertheless altogether distinct and that therefore reprobation requires a biblical and theological underpinning corresponding to its distinctiveness. Boer contends that the Synod of Dort attempted to give reprobation such a biblical and theological underpinning. The history of the proceedings of the synod, however, indicate that election and not reprobation was the central issue at Dort. The synod did not give the doctrine of reprobation independent status, nor did it intend to do so. Reprobation enters the Canons only insofar as is necessary to secure the Reformed doctrine of particular or individual election (I, 6), and to highlight the unmerited grace of election (I, 15). The Synod of Dort did not attempt to establish a scriptural basis for reprobation independent of election. The delegates knew that Scripture frequently and exhaustively set forth election but that it rarely mentioned reprobation, and that, when it did, Scripture usually referred to reprobation in connection with election.

Dr. Boer is also mistaken in his assessment of the rejection of the charge "that in the same manner (*eodem modo*) in which election is the

fountain and cause of faith and good works, reprobation is the cause of unbelief and impiety," found in the Conclusion of the Canons. According to Boer this rejection "is not a credible withdrawing of the clear contrary teaching of the Canons in I, 6 and I, 15. Rather, it must be seen as a drawing back at the brink from the enormity of the consequences of a theological rationalism made by men who, on the one hand, did not have the courage to stand by what they had written and, on the other hand, refused to break with the logical premise that led them to it" (Gravamen, p. 339).

Contrary to Dr. Boer's opinion, however, the fathers of the Synod of Dort were lacking neither in courage of conviction nor in understanding. The rejection in the Conclusion which was quoted above was not an afterthought. The Conclusion was carefully formulated and thoroughly discussed at the same time that the articles of faith under the various heads of doctrine were approved in their final form. The delegates knew what had been confessed in Articles I, 6 and I, 15, and they realized the compatibility and consistency of what was said in these articles with what they were rejecting in the Conclusion.

From an historical point of view, Boer's contention that the Contra-Remonstrants at the Conference in the Hague simply deduced reprobation from election as a logical consequence (Gravamen, p. 340) is unfortunate. The history of the debate shows that the Contra-Remonstrants resisted the efforts of the Remonstrants to force them to affirm a parallel relationship between election and reprobation and to draw logical conclusions from election that would lead to a doctrine of unconditional condemnation. The Contra-Remonstrants did not attack the Remonstrants' position on reprobation. The Contra-Remonstrants expressed their opinion on reprobation only insofar as this was necessary to clarify their doctrine of particular or individual election. They considered reprobation implicit in the biblical teaching on election and they made greater use of Scripture to support their position than Boer acknowledges (see the quotation from the *Schriftelijke Conferentie* on pp. 349-50 above).

According to Dr. Boer, John Calvin simply deduced reprobation from election without regard to Scripture. To demonstrate his contention Boer quotes two brief passages from Calvin's *Institutes*. The first quotation is: "Many professing a desire to defend the Deity from an invidious charge admit a doctrine of election, but deny that anyone is reprobated. . . . This they do ignorantly and childishly, since there could be no election without its opposite, reprobation" (Gravamen, p. 340). In Battles' translation of the *Institutes* the crucial phrase "since there could be no election without its opposite, reprobation" is rendered "since election itself could not stand except as set over against reprobation." The quotation is taken from the first paragraph of Book III, chapter 23, after Calvin has already devoted two chapters containing much biblical material to predestination. In this paragraph Calvin is concerned to refute the opinion of those who wish to maintain a doctrine of election but who deny reprobation. He asserts that God in election sets apart those whom he adopts into salvation; therefore, it would be highly ab-

surd to say that others can acquire by chance or by their own effort the salvation that God confers only to some by election. For Calvin, implicit in biblical teaching about the setting apart or electing of some to salvation is the passing by of others.

Contrary to Boer's contention, Calvin does not simply deduce reprobation from election nor does he arrive at a doctrine of reprobation by means of a rational argument. He rather appeals directly to Scripture to support his view. The Scripture passages on which Calvin comments rather extensively in this connection are Matthew 15:13 and Romans 9:14-23.

Dr. Boer's second quotation from Calvin is "And again: . . . in the person of Abraham, as in a withered stock, one people is specially chosen, while others are rejected" (Gravamen, p. 340). It is taken from Calvin's first chapter on predestination (Book III, chap. 21, par. 5). Contrary to Boer's opinion, the quotation demonstrates neither an "unprincipled, ruthless" exegesis "that bends any desired Scripture to its foreordained meaning" (Gravamen, p. 341), nor a doctrine of reprobation that is no more than a logical consequence of election. In the paragraph from which the quotation is taken, Calvin is dealing with biblical materials illustrating what he called the first stage of election or general election. An example of election is given, Calvin contends, in God's gracious choice of the whole offspring of Abraham and, more particularly, in his choosing the nation of Israel. In the person of Abraham one people is peculiarly chosen, while others are rejected. The cause for the choice is solely God's freely given love. Drawing on redemptive history, Calvin cites numerous passages from the Old Testament, especially from Deuteronomy and Psalms, to indicate that the nation of Israel was his chosen, special, separated people, his inheritance, and that for no other reason than the free demonstration of his mercy. The biblical references and the use to which Calvin puts them represent an appropriate and responsible exegesis.

Dr. Boer further comments on the following statement by Louis Berkhof: "the doctrine of reprobation naturally follows from the logic of the situation" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. I, p. 100; also in *Systematic Theology*, pp. 117-18; see Gravamen, p. 341).

It may indeed be conceded that this statement, taken in isolation, leaves something to be desired. The statement, however, follows an extensive discussion of the divine decrees, predestination and election, in which Berkhof attempts to lay a biblical basis for the doctrine. He also appends a list of texts to his discussion of proofs for reprobation. Matthew 11:25, 26; Romans 9:13, 17, 18, 21, 22; 11:7; Jude 4; and I Peter 2:8, he believed, support the doctrine.

Finally, Boer's charge that the Canons imply that "the sovereign grace that elected me to be a child of God without regard to any merit on my part has as its logical and necessary opposite a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death without regard to any demerit on their part" (Gravamen, p. 341) does not accurately represent the teachings of the Canons. Neither does this statement accurately reflect the doctrine taught by the Reformed churches. Historically, the



enemies of the Reformed churches assailed the Reformed doctrine of predestination with this charge. The Synod of Dort, however, specifically repudiated this teaching. Among the teachings which, according to the Conclusion of the Canons, "the Reformed Churches not only do not acknowledge but even detest with their whole soul" is the following: "that the same doctrine [the doctrine of predestination] teaches that God, by a mere arbitrary act of his will, without the least respect or view to any sin, has predestinated the greatest part of the world to eternal damnation, and has created them for this very purpose."

B. *The Meaning of the Expression, "the express testimony of sacred Scripture"*

The first three lines of I, 15 in the Psalter Hymnal version of the Canons read as follows: "What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is *the express testimony of sacred Scripture* that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree. . . ." (italics mine, A.H.). The words which have been italicized, "*the express testimony of sacred Scripture*," are frequently quoted in the gravamen. Note, for example, the following quotations: "The 'express testimony of sacred Scripture' (Chap. I, Art. 15), which the Canons claim teach the doctrine of reprobation is in fact not to be found in the Scriptures" (Gravamen, p. 330). "Before examining these passages it is well to note precisely what it is that they as 'the express testimony of sacred Scripture' must establish" (Gravamen, p. 331). "Supporting data of Scripture must, therefore, establish in terms of 'express testimony,' that is, plainly, unambiguously: . . ." (Gravamen, p. 332). "For the texts in question represent 'the express testimony of sacred Scripture' which gives biblical warrant to the teachings in question" (Gravamen, p. 339). ". . . Reprobation is said to be squarely based on 'the express testimony of sacred Scripture'" (Gravamen, p. 341).

When one looks up the word *express* in a dictionary, one finds such meanings as "explicit," "definite," or "specific." It would therefore seem that the words "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" point to a series of Scripture passages which *explicitly* teach the doctrine in question. Boer is therefore not wrong when he says, on page 332 of the gravamen, that "express testimony" means that something is taught *plainly and unambiguously*.

It ought now to be observed, however, that the words "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" are not a proper translation of the original Latin text. The Latin text says the following about sacred Scripture: "*quod porro testatur non omnes homines esse electos, sed quosdam non electos.*" It will be noted that the word behind the translation "testimony" is not a noun but a verb: *testatur*. The Latin text does not contain any word corresponding to the English word "express" or "explicit." A literal translation of the Latin, as given in our new translation (see above), reads as follows: "in that it [holy Scripture] further bears witness that not all men have been chosen, but that some have not been chosen." That this is the proper rendering of the Latin text is corroborated by the Dutch translation (which, as noted above, has an of-

ficial standing since it was adopted by the Dutch delegates to the Synod of Dort): "*wanneer zij [de Heilige Schrift] wijders getuigt, dat niet alle menschen zijn verkoren, maar sommigen niet verkoren [zijn, understood].*" The word *wijders* does not mean "explicit" but "further." Literally translated, the Dutch version reads as follows: "when it [holy Scripture] further testifies that not all people have been chosen, but that some have not been chosen."

The mistranslation "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" ascribes to this scriptural testimony a certain weight and explicitness which the fathers of Dort never intended to ascribe to it. They only intended to say that Scripture "bears witness" or "further bears witness" to the teaching in question. What the fathers of Dort were alluding to, in other words, was not an "express testimony" of Scripture, but simply the "testimony" of Scripture.

We now proceed to another matter, even more important than what has just been discussed. We call your attention now to the following paragraph, found on page 341 of the gravamen:

In view of this very strong deductionistic emphasis in Reformed theology, notably illustrated in the position taken by the Contra-Remonstrants in 1611, it is altogether remarkable that the logical correlation between election and reprobation finds no place in the Canons. Reprobation is not presented there as an implicate or necessary consequence of election. Quite the contrary: reprobation is said to be squarely based on "the express testimony of sacred Scripture."

In this paragraph we hear Boer asserting that Reformed theologians like Calvin, Louis Berkhof, and the Contra-Remonstrants of 1611 arrived at the doctrine of reprobation by simply making a rational or logical deduction from the doctrine of election. In a previous part of our report, however (the section entitled "An Historical Evaluation of the Gravamen"), it was pointed out that this is not a correct analysis of the situation. It was there shown that the Contra-Remonstrants of 1611, Calvin, and Berkhof found the "doctrine of reprobation" to be, not just "a logical consequence of the doctrine of election" (Gravamen, p. 340), in the abstract, but an inescapable aspect or facet of the *biblical* doctrine of election. In other words, these Reformed theologians taught the "doctrine of reprobation" because they were convinced that the kind of election to eternal life *which the Bible teaches is a limited election*. Since, so they said, the Bible does not teach that God elected *everyone* to salvation, it teaches that God elected *a certain number of people* to salvation; this means that there must also be *a certain number of people* whom God did not elect to salvation. To call this "mere logical deduction" fails to recognize the fact that the Reformed theologians alluded to found this to be the teaching of the Bible. They admitted that the Bible says much more about election than about reprobation, but they found the Bible's teaching about election to be such as to convey clearly the understanding that not all men have been elected to eternal life, and that some have not been so elected.

Boer now goes on to say that the Canons of Dort, in establishing the doctrine of reprobation, do not follow the procedure ascribed to the

above-mentioned Reformed theologians: "Reprobation is not presented there [in the Canons] as an implicate or necessary consequence of election. Quite the contrary: reprobation is said to be squarely based on 'the express testimony of sacred Scripture'" (Gravamen, p. 341). In other words, Boer interprets the words "the express testimony of sacred Scripture" as pointing to a set of scriptural proofs specifically establishing the doctrine of reprobation in distinction from the doctrine of election.

By way of reply, we once again look closely at the text of I, 15. The opening lines of the Psalter Hymnal translation of this article read as follows: "What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree. . . ." Leaving aside for the moment the problem we have with the words "express testimony," note that according to this statement the testimony of Scripture is this: "not all, but some only, are elected." These words, that is to say, are a statement about divine election—a statement which underscores and illumines the unmerited grace of that election. That statement is this: election is limited, not universal; some only are elected, while others are passed by. *This* is the testimony of sacred Scripture. The body of scriptural material alluded to, in other words, is not a group of passages which independently prove the doctrine of reprobation, but rather a group of Scripture passages which affirm that *election is limited*. The fathers of Dort were convinced that this was the way *the Bible taught* the doctrine of election. It is evident, therefore, that their basis for teaching the "decree of reprobation" was not different from that of the Reformed theologians discussed above.

One further comment should be made about the translation just quoted. In the Psalter Hymnal version the last clause of the quotation given above reads "while others are passed by in the eternal decree." The Latin text, however, does not have the word for *decree* but the word for *election* (*electio*). A more accurate rendering of the passage, therefore, is given in our new translation: "What is more, holy Scripture most especially highlights this eternal and undeserved grace of our election, and makes us appreciate it, in that it further bears witness that not all men have been chosen, but that some have not been chosen, or have been passed by in God's eternal election. . . ." Those who have not been chosen, the fathers of Dort said, have been passed by in God's election—that is, they have not been elected, as others have been elected. This it is to which holy Scripture "further bears witness"—not by a specific group of texts which explicitly set forth the doctrine of reprobation independently of the doctrine of election, but rather by its teaching about the limited nature of election. Boer's assertion that Dort believed in the existence of a specific body of Bible passages which prove the doctrine of reprobation separately from the biblical evidence for the doctrine of election must therefore be rejected as incorrect.

### C. *An Analysis of the Gravamen*

What follows is an analysis of the gravamen for the purpose of determining whether Dr. Boer's critique of what the Canons of Dort teach on

the question of reprobation is correct, and whether his gravamen should be sustained. Boer reads I, 6 and I, 15 of the Canons as teaching what he calls "the doctrine of reprobation," or "the Reformed doctrine of reprobation." He does not find this doctrine to be "unambiguously taught in the Scriptures of the Old and/or the New Testament." He holds that only such doctrines as are unambiguously taught in the Scriptures of the Old and/or New Testament should be included in the official creeds of the church. And so he asks that the doctrine of reprobation be excised from, or become a nonbinding part of, the creeds of the Christian Reformed Church, referring particularly to I, 6 and I, 15 of the Canons.

Dr. Boer's procedure in his gravamen is to look at the biblical texts cited by the Canons themselves as support for what is said in I, 6 and I, 15. He concludes that these texts do not support the teaching as he understands it. Nor, he says, does he know of any other texts which do so. He does not, understandably, provide an exegesis of every text which has ever been offered in support of the teaching.

Why, it may be asked, has Boer singled out the doctrine of reprobation for his fire? May there not be other doctrines in the creeds of the Christian Reformed Church which are not unambiguously taught in the Scriptures? The answer is surely that it is the *character* of this doctrine which makes Boer single it out for attention. What Boer says is this: "It is my position that so sinister and doomful a teaching as reprobation, whereby a massive segment of mankind, generally considered in Reformed theology to be the great majority of the human race, past, present, and future, is consigned to everlasting damnation before they ever came into being, must, if it is to be confessionally held, be directly, explicitly, and unambiguously taught in Scripture itself" (Gravamen, p. 340).

The heart of our assessment of the Boer gravamen will have to lie in our judgment as to whether Boer is correct in his analysis of what the Canons say in I, 6 and I, 15; and then, secondly, whether he is correct in his claim that the scriptural passages adduced by the Canons do not support what he interprets them as saying. Let us begin by seeing how well Boer's interpretation matches up against the interpretation which we have adopted.

It would be well at this point to have in front of us the passages under dispute, I, 6 and I, 15 (see above, pp. 356-57).

Dr. Boer speaks often of "the doctrine of reprobation." He says that the doctrine of reprobation is taught in the two passages under discussion. He says that the doctrine of reprobation is not taught in the Scriptures. He says that he wishes the doctrine of reprobation to be nonbinding on office-bearers in the Christian Reformed Church. What, then, does Boer take "the doctrine of reprobation" to be?

Dr. Boer's "official" explanation is that the doctrine of reprobation is

- a. a divine decree
- b. which has been made in eternity
- c. which condemns a segment of mankind to eternal death
- d. and which is characterized by distinctly positive as well as negative actions on God's part.

Now a striking feature of Boer's gravamen is that very little, if any, of it is devoted to a criticism of points a through d as such. Rather, Boer's pro-

test is focused almost exclusively on various ancillary teachings that he takes Dort to be affirming *about* such a decree. Boer does not take the Canons as *merely* teaching that there is a divine eternal decree to condemn a segment of mankind to eternal death, in the exercise of which decree God performs positive as well as negative actions. Rather, he takes the Canons as teaching a variety of things about this decree, all of these together making up the Reformed doctrine of reprobation; and it is those other things on which he concentrates his fire. Let us, then, first consider what Boer says about these (purported) ancillary teachings; and that done, let us consider whether he wishes to protest against a through d as such.

Clearly one focus of Boer's objection to what he takes to be the teaching of the Canons on reprobation is their teaching, on his interpretation, that God is the cause of unbelief. For example, on page 339 of the gravamen he says, "The statement in the Canons, 'That some receive the gift of faith from God and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree (Chap. I, Art. 6),' is in its second part untrue and constitutes a denial of the nondisclosure in the Word of God of any cause of unbelief other than the heart of man." And again, on page 335, "All who wish to find backgrounds, occasion, or explanation for unbelief in any other area than that of human responsibility within the dimension of history will forever have their way barred by Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. . . ." And again, on page 338, ". . . There is no eternal decree that withholds repentance and faith from anyone. Unbelief is from the beginning to the end of Scripture the fault and responsibility of man himself."

A second focus of Boer's objection is the teaching of the Canons, as he interprets them, that certain human beings are consigned to damnation before they ever exist, and thus apart from any merit or demerit on their part. For example, on page 340 of the gravamen he speaks of human beings as being, in the Canons' teaching, "consigned to everlasting damnation before they ever came into being." And on page 341, in his summation, he speaks of "a sovereign wrath that damns men to an existence of everlasting death without regard to any demerit on their part."

It seems clear that it is especially on these two matters that the issue is joined between Boer, on the one hand, and the Canons as he reads them on the other: that an eternal decree of God is the cause of unbelief, and that human beings are consigned to damnation before they exist and apart from anything that they actually do.

Is Boer's reading of the Canons accurate on these two points? On the first, our earlier analysis (see the previous section of our report entitled "An Analysis of the Canons. . .") makes it quite clear that he is mistaken, and that the Canons say what Boer thinks ought to be said: namely, that the cause of unbelief lies solely in man. Perhaps there are common interpretations of the Canons according to which they say what Boer takes them to say. But the Canons themselves do not say this. Unbelief is to be ascribed to the responsibility of human beings themselves. It's true that God, from the mass of unbelieving humanity, singles out some for the gift of faith. And when it is asked, "What about the others?" it can be said of them that God is the "deficient cause" of their unbelief. So far as "deficient cause" is concerned, however—and Boer seems clearly to be

working with this concept of cause—they themselves are the agents of unbelief. By contrast, God is the "efficient cause" of faith. And that is surely what lies behind the famous denial of "in the same manner" (*eodem modo*) of the Conclusion.

It should be granted that I, 6 and I, 15 by themselves are not decisively clear on this point. But surely I, 5 is decisively clear: "The cause or guilt of this unbelief as well as of all other sins is in no wise in God, but in man himself. . . ." And it fits with the fact that I, 6 clearly understands reprobation simply as preterition: passing over, or passing by.

What about the second focus of Boer's objection, that the Canons teach that God condemns certain human beings to eternal damnation before their existence, and thus wholly apart from any merit or demerit on their part? Again, we judge that the Canons do not teach this, though once again it's probably true that popular interpretations of the Canons have them teaching this. What the Canons teach, so far as condemnation is concerned (and I, 15 understands reprobation as including the decree of condemnation) is that God condemns to destruction only those who do, in fact, sin and exhibit unbelief, and that he does so only *on the basis of* their sin and unbelief. Human beings are condemned only on the basis of what they actually do in history. So Boer's second objection also does not touch the Canons.

In summary, if the decree of reprobation is understood as God's eternal decision to pass by (*praeteritio*) some in the distribution of faith, then it cannot accurately be said that the Canons teach that this decree is the cause of unbelief. If, on the contrary, the decree of reprobation is understood as including God's eternal decision that he who sins shall perish unless his sins are atoned for and forgiven, then it cannot accurately be said that the Canons teach that by virtue of this decree God condemns certain human beings to eternal damnation before their existence and wholly apart from any merit or demerit on their part.

We judge that these two points constitute the focus of Boer's objection to the Canons, and that on these points he misinterprets the Canons. We must now, though, raise the question of whether perhaps his protest is really deeper than either of these two points. Could it be that even if he granted that he had misinterpreted the Canons on these two points, he would nevertheless protest the teaching of the Canons on reprobation?

We have seen that the Canons speak ambiguously in their reference to a decree of reprobation. In I, 6 it seems clear that reprobation is simply *passing by*: From eternity God has decided to elect some *but not all* to faith. In I, 15, by contrast, what is called "reprobation" includes the sentence of condemnation: From eternity God has decided that he who sins shall perish unless his sins are atoned for and forgiven.

Our question now is this: Does Boer hold that there is no decision of God from eternity to grant the gift of faith to some *but not to all*, and is this at the bottom of his protest? Alternatively, does he hold that there is no decision of God from eternity that he who sins shall perish unless his sins are atoned for and forgiven, and is this at the bottom of his protest?

In this connection, the following passage from the gravamen must be considered:

... It is not proposed that there are no eternal backgrounds to God's actions in history. . . . The salvation of God's people lies anchored in their election from eternity. . . .

The question with respect to reprobation is rather this: may God's response to the sin and unbelief of men—which response is fully accounted for by the historical situation in the light of law and gospel—have imputed to it an eternal cause for which no warrant is to be found in Scripture? Sin and unbelief are exceedingly dark mysteries on the origin and cause of which Scripture sheds no light. Redemptive revelation with Christ and his work at its center is not concerned with their explanation but with their conquest and elimination from God's world.

All who wish to find backgrounds, occasion, or explanation for unbelief in any other area than that of human responsibility within the dimension of history will forever have their way barred by Jesus' lament over Jerusalem. . . . (Gravamen, p. 335).

When we first read these words of Boer, it may indeed seem that he is opposed to any talk of a decision from eternity to pass by or to condemn. Yet, on closer reading, it looks as if his intent is once again to insist that we must not locate the cause of man's sin in some eternal decree of God.

In fact, Boer explicitly says that God's people are elected from eternity to salvation; he explicitly says that the faith whereby we are saved is a gift of God; and he clearly holds that not all human beings are believers. Thus it seems that, according to his position, God from eternity elects some *but not all* to saving faith—which is the main point of I, 6. So far as we can tell, this, on his view, is part of the "eternal backgrounds to God's action in history" the existence of which he is ready to acknowledge. Similarly, there is no indication in Boer's gravamen that he wishes to protest the teaching of I, 15, that from eternity God has decided that he who sins shall perish. So far as we can tell, this, on Boer's view, is also part of the "eternal backgrounds to God's action in history."

Could it possibly be Boer's view, however, that though God from eternity elects some but not all for the gift of faith, it is not true that from eternity he decides to pass some by with the gift of faith? Dr. Boer, so far as we can tell, does believe that God from eternity elects some but not all to saving faith. Yet, on page 335 of his gravamen, he protests the teaching of the Canons that the non-receiving of the gift of faith proceeds from God's eternal decree. Could it be that Boer thinks the Canons are correct in saying that some but not all are elect, but not correct in saying that God in his election passes some by?

Dr. Boer sometimes speaks of the "rationalistic" tendencies of the Canons. Likewise he speaks of the "deductionistic" emphasis in Reformed theology. And he sees one manifestation of this deductionistic emphasis in the claim that there is a necessary correlation between election and reprobation. Could it be that in his protest against such "deductionism" is to be found the key to his gravamen?

Now it should indeed be granted that from the fact that God elects human beings to saving faith it does not *follow* that he passes over any. God was free to elect all. In this sense, reprobation is indeed not a

necessary correlate of election. A father may choose to give gifts to all his children. But that is not really relevant to the point at issue here. For Boer and the Canons agree that according to Scriptural teaching God elects some but not all. So the issue is not whether reprobation is a necessary correlate of election. The issue is whether reprobation is a necessary correlate of *limited* election. When Reformed theologians arrived "deductionistically" at reprobation from election, surely it was always *limited* election that they had in mind.

Boer praises the Canons for the fact that they, unlike many Reformed theologians, do not suggest that reprobation is a deduction from limited election. Rather, says Boer, they claim that the doctrine of reprobation is based on "the express testimony of Scripture." In fact, though, says Boer, there is no such testimony. And if anybody replies that, nonetheless, reprobation can be deduced from limited election, his answer is that on something so crucial he wants Scripture, not deduction.

We say that this is *possibly* how Dr. Boer is thinking. If so, our reply is as follows: The Canons mean to use the phrase "passes some by" in such a way that the sentence "From eternity God elects some but not all to saving faith" is *synonymous with* the sentence "From eternity God elects some to saving faith and passes some by." The Canons do not mean to say something additional with that second sentence. They mean to say *the very same thing*. The Canons don't speak of deduction here because they don't see themselves as making any deduction. They are merely saying the same thing in different words. Consequently, if Dr. Boer accepts the teaching of the Canons that God elects some but not all, then he also accepts their teaching that God elects some and passes some by. For this is the very same teaching. Boer might, for various reasons, strongly prefer the former way of expressing the thought to the latter way. But the two expressions embody the very same thought. And what I, 15 means to claim as being "the express testimony of Scripture" is just this: that God elects some but not all.

So once again we are unable to discover a point on which Boer clearly disagrees with something that the Canons teach.

While agreeing with the Canons that God from eternity has decided to elect some but not all to saving faith, and that from eternity God has decided to punish whoever sins unless his sin is atoned for, Boer asks that the passages on reprobation in I, 6 and I, 15 either be excised from the Canons or be made nonbinding on office-bearers in the Christian Reformed Church. We recommend that this request should not be granted. Our grounds are these:

(1) Dr. Boer takes the Canons as teaching, in I, 6 and I, 15, that God's decree of reprobation is the cause of unbelief; and he argues that this is not taught in Scripture. We judge, however, that the Canons do not teach this.

(2) Dr. Boer takes the Canons as teaching, in I, 6 and I, 15, that by virtue of the decree of reprobation, certain human beings are consigned to damnation apart from any merit or demerit on their part; and he argues that this is not taught in Scripture. We judge, however, that the Canons do not teach this.



(3) Possibly Dr. Boer thinks that when the Canons say that God elects some and passes some by, they mean something more than that God elects some but not all; and perhaps he wishes to say that the former expression, unlike the latter, is unwarranted by Scripture. We see no reason to think, however, that the Canons mean anything different by these two expressions.

In recommending this disposition of the gravamen we do not wish to be taken as suggesting that the Canons are in every way satisfactory. On the contrary, the Canons confront us not only with inadequacies but with unresolved questions, problems, and tensions. There is, for example, no discussion of the election of Israel and of the church, whereas a balanced treatment of election would surely require attention to that. Likewise, the fact that our election is election *in Christ* does not receive very adequate treatment in the Canons. Again, it has often been suggested in recent years that the Canons think too deterministically about the way in which God grants us his gift of faith. And the Canons apparently see no problem whatsoever in construing the biblical language of "before the foundation of the world" as meaning *from eternity*—that is, from timelessness. Furthermore, it would seem to be an implication of the teaching of the Canons on reprobation, plus their teaching on the nature of our fallen condition, that for a person who never comes to faith, it was in fact always impossible that he would. Yet that seems to be in tension with the genuinely biblical note sounded in III-IV, 8-9, where Dort speaks of the well-meant gospel offer, and of God's desire that those who are called should come to him. Perhaps this is a tension that we must live with if we would adequately reflect the biblical witness. At other points, however, some of which we have mentioned, Dort appears to us to be definitely inadequate. Accordingly, in defending the Canons against the Boer gravamen, we are not suggesting that Dort provides an unimprovable theological structure. We are only saying that Boer, on the points at issue, has misinterpreted the Canons.

The bulk of Boer's gravamen is devoted to showing that the scriptural passages adduced by Dort do not teach that an eternal decree of God is the cause of unbelief, and do not teach that God from eternity consigns certain human beings to damnation wholly apart from any merit or demerit on their part. Since we judge that Dort does not teach these doctrines, we conclude that Boer's exegesis is strictly irrelevant to the issue we are asked to decide. We judge, however, that it would not serve the church well if we simply refused to enter into the interpretation of the passages cited. Accordingly, we turn now to these passages.

#### IV. THE SCRIPTURAL BASIS

##### A. *Scripture Passages Adduced by the Delegates to the Synod of Dort*

In an earlier section ("Comments about Reprobation Made by the Delegates to the Synod of Dort"), reference was made to the reports or judgments produced by the various delegations, both domestic and foreign, to the Synod of Dort—reports which preceded and were basic to the final formulation of the Canons. In order to indicate the range and type of Scripture passages adduced by these delegations (seven from

foreign countries and eleven from the Netherlands) in support of the doctrine of reprobation, we now present a summary of these passages, drawn from the above-mentioned reports. In this summary the passages are listed under the specific aspect of the doctrine of reprobation in connection with which they were adduced.

1. That God has determined not to elect some people but to leave some in their sins and not to have mercy on them in Christ:
  - Ps. 147:20
  - Matt. 2:14; 7:23; 11:15, 25, 27; 13:11, 13
  - John 3:36; 6:43, 65; 10:26; 13:17, 18; 17:6, 9, 12
  - Acts 14:16; 16:6, 7
  - Rom. 9:6, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25
  - Rom. 10:19; 11:7
  - I Thess. 5:9
  - II Tim. 2:20
  - I Pet. 2:7, 8
  - I John 4:6
  - Jude 4
  - Rev. 13:8; 17:8
2. That God does not give faith, repentance, and salvation to some:
  - Ps. 147:19-20
  - Isa. 6:9
  - Matt. 3:11; 11:21, 23, 25; 13:10, 38
  - Luke 2:24; 8:10
  - John 3:8; 10:26; 12:39, 40; 14:17; 17:9, 25
  - Acts 14:16; 16:6, 7, 9; 28:26-27
  - II Cor. 4:3-4
  - II Thess. 2:2
  - I John 3:12
3. That some have not been given to Christ:
  - John 17:6
4. That certain ones were previously assigned to condemnation:
  - Prov. 16:4
  - Rom. 9:22
  - I Thess. 5:9
  - Jude 4
5. That reprobation has been decreed from eternity:
  - Rom. 9:13, 21, 22
  - II Tim. 2:20
  - I Pet. 2:7, 8
  - Rev. 17:8
6. That the cause for reprobation (or preterition) lies in the free will or good pleasure of God:
  - Matt. 11:25, 26; 13:11; 20:15
  - John 12:12, 39, 40
  - Rom. 9:11, 12, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29
  - Eph. 1:11

7. That the decree of preterition is unchangeable:  
Job 12:14; 23:13  
Matt. 15:13  
James 1:17
8. That the decree of preterition is not a cause of sin nor of condemnation:  
Hos. 13:9  
John 8:21  
Rom. 9:22; 11:22
9. That those who are condemned are condemned because of their sins:  
Matt. 7:23  
Rom. 9:18; 11:7  
II Thess. 1:8; 2:11, 12  
I Pet. 2:8  
Jude 4
10. That God permits the reprobates to walk in their own ways:  
Acts 14:16; 17:30  
Rom. 1:24, 28  
I Cor. 1:8  
Eph. 2:1, 2, 3, 12; 4:17, 18
11. That the reprobates in various ways and stages reject the gospel which is preached to them:  
Matt. 13:19ff.  
Acts 28:24, 25  
Heb. 6:5, 6; 10:26
12. That the end of reprobation is not the perdition of the reprobates but the honor and glory of God:  
Exod. 9:16  
Prov. 16:4  
Rom. 9:17, 22; 11:36

#### B. *An Analysis of the Scripture Passages Dealt With in the Gravamen*

The main part of Dr. Boer's gravamen is devoted to an exegesis of texts cited by Dort, to see whether any of them support the doctrine of reprobation. He concludes that none does, that in the main "the texts adduced assume throughout rather than establish an eternal decree of reprobation" (Gravamen, p. 339). Naturally, as Dr. Boer sets out on this exegetical inquiry, he works with reprobation *as he conceives of it*. He searches the biblical evidence to see whether it is taught anywhere that there is an eternal divine decree whereby God is the cause of unbelief and whereby God condemns certain people wholly apart from what they do. We agree that the biblical passages cited by Dort do not support the existence of a decree of reprobation thus understood. It has been our contention, however, that Dort does not teach that there is a decree of this nature.

The exegetical studies which follow are presented by the committee as examples of responsible exegeses of the passages discussed by Boer in his gravamen. The committee does not mean to insist that the interpretations given are the only possible ones. It only intends, in this section of the report, to point out that in the exegesis of Scripture passages there are in some cases considerations which are not fully honored either by Boer or by the Canons.

Since Paul's teaching regarding election is primarily set forth in Romans 9-11, and since many passages are cited or quoted from these chapters in the Canons, an overview of these chapters will first be presented. After that will follow an analysis of the passages from the Canons discussed by Boer in his gravamen. (All Scripture quotations given in this report, unless otherwise identified, are from the Revised Standard Version.)

### 1. The Interpretation of Romans 9-11

Chapters 9-11 of Paul's Epistle to the Romans are often referred to as the *locus classicus* for the doctrine of election. This designation is certainly correct, since Paul departs from the major argument in chapters 1-8 and addresses himself specifically to the problem of the salvation of his countrymen in the light of that previous discussion. Nearly all commentators observe the distinct unity of these chapters and their separateness from what precedes and succeeds them. In one sense it can be said that in the preceding chapters Paul has been discussing the doctrine of justification by faith theologically and now in these chapters he deals with it historically as he faces the reality of Israel and her history.

The issue faced in these chapters is stated in chapter 9:6—has the word of God failed? How does Israel, to whom the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, the promises belong (9:4), relate to this justification in Jesus Christ described in the previous chapters? Paul's answer is a vindication of God's word through an analysis of God's election of Israel.

Recent commentators (for example, Herman Ridderbos and Ernst Käsemann) have stressed that Romans 9-11 must be seen in the framework of the history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*). The existential fact faced by Paul is the failure of the Jews to recognize and accept "the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (8:39). Justification by faith, so cogently argued in Romans 1-8, does not seem to function effectively for the Jews. Paul must integrate the doctrine of justification into the history of Israel. Throughout the history of Israel God was selecting: Isaac/Ishmael; Jacob/Esau; Moses/Pharaoh. Ridderbos (*Aan de Romeinen*, pp. 228-29) observes that these examples do not refer primarily to individual and personal election and rejection, but to God's people Israel in the history of salvation (*Heilsgeschichte*). Thus the "children of God" (9:8) are not all the descendants of Abraham, but those of Isaac; not all the descendants of Rebecca, but those of Jacob; not all men, but those upon whom God has mercy. In this way the purpose of God's election continues (9:11).

Paul's deep concern in these chapters is to express a word of hope for his countrymen. The clear implication of the foregoing discussion in

chapters 1-8 is that salvation is only through faith and that those who seek to attain salvation by works of the law are doomed to failure. And that means that many of his compatriots, especially the Pharisees, are doomed. This leads to two questions: (1) Is this something new in God's salvation program? and (2) Is God being unfair in functioning with a selected portion within the larger group to which he addresses himself?

The first question Paul answers with an argument from history. Throughout the Old Testament era, selection was occurring. The first illustration relates to Abraham's seed, which was further delineated through Isaac. The second illustration relates to Isaac's seed, which was further delineated through Jacob. Hence, this remnant concept should be well known to Paul's Jewish readers.

The second question Paul answers with a theological argument. The sovereignty of God, which defines God as God, grants him the right to deal with his people as he pleases. This sovereignty, however, must not be construed in a crass or despotic way. Rather, two considerations must be kept in perspective regarding this: (1) God's selection is an act of grace and love; and (2) those not selected have disqualified themselves through their sins. On the one hand, God could exercise his sovereignty as a potter exercises control over the clay he manipulates. In fact, God even did so in the history of Israel in his use of Pharaoh. However, this gives man no occasion to challenge or blame God. On the other hand, in all of his dealings with mankind, both with the elect (vessels of mercy) and the nonelect (vessels of wrath), he exercises great long-suffering and mercy.

A further problem for Paul's Jewish readers is the role of the Gentiles in God's salvation program. Does their presence imply God's rejection of the Jews? This Paul answers with a very strong denial. His own salvation is Exhibit A of God's continuing concern for Jews. However, the actions of some of Paul's compatriots have opened the way of salvation to the Gentiles. By using the metaphor of grafting, Paul asserts that God is still deeply concerned with the original tree which contains both Jewish and Gentile branches.

It must be observed that throughout this entire discussion in Romans 9-11 Paul's focus is on the ones saved, whether Jew or Gentile, who are recipients of God's electing love. Paul does not dwell upon nor emphasize the obvious implication of this focus—that there are some who are not saved, whom God has not graciously favored. Furthermore, Paul avoids making God responsible for the condition of this latter group.

Paul's concern in these chapters is for Israel as God's covenant people. He begins and ends with a concern for Israel. He vindicates God's dealings with Israel in history. Even though Israel rejected God, yet God has not totally rejected her—in fact, in the plan of God the scheme of Israel/Gentiles is going to be reversed: just as Israel's rejection brought salvation to the Gentiles, the salvation of the Gentiles will bring salvation to Israel.

The structural outline of Romans 9-11 forms a chiasmic framework which clearly displays this basic concern of Paul regarding the Jews:

1. Paul's passion for his kinsmen, concluding with a doxology (9:1-5)
2. Nature of Israel's election: God's prerogative (9:6-13)
3. God's freedom: mercy and hardening (9:14-29)
  4. Central significance of faith for Israel and Gentiles (9:30-10:17)—the preached word
  - 4'. Israel's guilt in rejection (10:18-21)—rejected word
  - 3'. Israel's situation: mercy and hardening (11:1-10)
- 2'. Divine mystery: grace remains for Israel (11:11-27)
- 1'. Paul's hope for Israel, concluding with a doxology (11:28-36)

This outline of Romans 9-11 provides some significant perspectives regarding Paul's teaching in these chapters:

1. These chapters begin and end with a clear statement of Paul's concern for and interest in his fellow Jews. The items discussed in these chapters, including election, must be subsumed under this primary theme.

2. The opening and ending sections of these chapters conclude with a doxology. For Paul this is a fitting conclusion to any reference to God's gracious dealings with his people. References to election in Ephesians 1 and I Thessalonians 1 are also within the framework of a doxology.

3. In the chiasmic structure the central section relates directly to the first and last points of the outline (which are synonymous) and brings the argument to a climax. The focus in the central section is on the Word proclaimed and rejected. This is the existential fact which the Jews must face. Those who rejected the Word have become hardened (11:7).

These chapters clearly affirm that God has graciously chosen certain people (both Jews and Gentiles) to be recipients of salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. 9:11; 11:7, 28). These are referred to as a remnant (9:27; 11:5). But what about those not chosen for salvation? Paul does not say in this discussion that God rejected them. One could say that God's not choosing some is tantamount to his rejection of them. Paul, however, does not specifically draw that implication. Paul continually stresses that, whereas election is by grace (11:5), the condition of the nonelect results from their unbelief (11:20; cf. 11:30-32). On the contrary, God has maintained a gracious attitude even toward the disobedient ones (10:20).

A closer examination of some passages in these chapters will put into sharper perspective this positive statement regarding election. In 9:19-24 Paul answers an objector (v. 19) by appealing to the sovereignty of God as illustrated in the potter's control over the clay (vv. 20-21). In verses 22-23 Paul continues this discussion with a question that is incomplete and inadequately conveyed in most translations. The question is in the form of a conditional sentence—the protasis is in verse 22. This type of conditional sentence is a logical condition in which the protasis is assumed as true, almost approaching a casual sense. A very literal translation (omitting the participial clauses for later discussion) would be: "since (if) God endured with much patience vessels of wrath." The apodosis is not expressed, but the sentence continues with a purpose (*hina*-final) clause in verse 23 (the *kai* at the beginning of verse 23 should perhaps be omitted, following certain manuscripts). Thus the apodosis must be supplied from the context. In verse 21 reference was made to the two kinds of

vessels made by a potter: those for beauty (*eis timēn*) and those for menial use (*eis atimian*). In verses 22-23 two kinds of vessels are again mentioned—vessels of wrath (*orgēs*) and vessels of mercy (*eleous*). God has endured the former with much patience (*makrothumia*). Obviously, Paul intends to affirm that God shows a greater patience and graciousness to the vessels of mercy. He perhaps intends here the same rhetorical device he uses in 11:12 and 24—from the lesser to the greater. A suggested full translation would be: "Since God endured with much patience vessels of wrath, how much more will he not endure (or, be gracious to) vessels of mercy?" The participial clause in the protasis ("desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power") contains a circumstantial participle which should be interpreted as conveying a concessive idea: "although desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power." This sets in bolder relief the great patience which God has exercised.

These vessels of wrath are described (RSV) as "made for destruction" (*katērtismena eis apōleian*). This participle can be identified as being either in the middle or passive voice. The former is preferred, since to suggest that they were thus made by someone else (namely, God) would hardly make God's exercise of great patience necessary. Rather, in the middle voice the reflexive sense is conveyed: the vessels *prepared themselves* for destruction. On the other hand, the vessels of mercy are described as those whom *God prepared beforehand* for glory. It is striking that Paul uses the active voice in this description of the vessels of mercy, whereas to describe the vessels of wrath he uses either the middle or the passive voice; by this usage (even if one interprets the participle as passive) Paul avoids making God responsible for the condition of the vessels of wrath.

In conclusion, an expanded translation of 9:22-23 would be: "Since God, although desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath who had prepared themselves for destruction, how much more will he not be gracious to his chosen ones in order to make known the riches of his glory for the vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory?" To be observed here is that God is not responsible for the vessels of wrath—for if he had made them vessels of wrath, what would be the point of his dealing patiently with them? On the contrary, he does endure them with much patience. However, God has himself prepared the vessels of mercy for glory, both from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

In Romans 11:17-24 Paul attempts to explain the relationship of Jews and Gentiles in God's salvation plan by means of the figure of a tree and the grafting in of branches. The Jews, as God's chosen people, are a cultivated olive tree. Many natural branches of this tree, Paul goes on to say, have been cut off because of unbelief. In turn, wild olive shoots, namely, Gentiles, have been grafted into the cultivated olive tree. It is still possible, however, for the cutoff natural branches (Jews) to be grafted back into the cultivated tree.

Although Paul strains the practice of grafting as used in dendrology, he does convey some significant lessons by this illustration:

1) The "cutting off" of the Jews was caused by their unbelief (11:20). This is evidence of the severity (*apotomia*) of God (11:22)—he will not tolerate unbelief.

2) The "grafting in" of the Gentiles was an act of the kindness (*chrēs-totēs*) of God (11:22).

3) Through faith the Jews can be "grafted back" into the cultivated olive tree (11:23).

4) This passage is a warning against conceit on the part of the Gentiles (11:18-20). This again emphasizes the graciousness of God's actions and the fact that being part of the tree, that is, being a recipient of salvation and being numbered among the elect, is not by works, but by the grace, that is, electing love, of God.

It is in the light of this foregoing discussion that the concept of *hardening* must be seen. The Jews who were cut off were hardened (11:7, 25). God hardens the hearts of whomever he wills (9:18). This hardening, to be sure, is not an arbitrary or despotic act of God. The hardening of the Jews is subsequent to their sins and unbelief. Pharaoh's heart was hardened. However, these examples of hardening had a redemptive purpose (9:17; 11:25-26). This hardening was temporary and revocable. If any hardened Jews discontinue in their unbelief, they can be grafted back into the tree (11:23). This reaffirms the well-meant offer of the gospel: in every proclamation and invitation of that gospel, the possibility of acceptance by the hearers is an open one.

In Romans 9-11 there is a clear statement of election: God has chosen certain ones to be the recipients of his gracious salvation in Jesus Christ. On the other hand, Paul carefully avoids making God responsible for the lost condition of the nonelect (whose existence he does not deny). Hence, there is no explicit statement here or anywhere else in Scripture of the doctrine of reprobation understood as the teaching that God is the cause of unbelief. Scripture does not go that far, lest man's responsibility for his lost condition be mitigated. As one faces these profound realities, he can only respond with Paul: "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!" (Rom. 11:33).

## 2. The Textual Material Discussed in the Gravamen

In his gravamen Boer discusses nine passages given in the Canons of Dort as scriptural support for certain teachings. We shall examine these briefly to see how Dort uses them and what they do teach. Along the way we shall see, indeed, that they do not teach the existence of an eternal decree whereby God causes unbelief and condemns apart from merit or demerit.

### 1. Acts 15:18 AV (I, 6)

The text of Acts 15:18 quoted in the Canons is from an inferior text tradition not represented in any major manuscript witnesses. The translation of the Latin text used in the Canons (not the text in the Vulgate) is: "For he knows all his works from eternity." The preferred text as found in the more reliable manuscripts reads instead of the above: "known from eternity." This phrase must be read with the preceding



clause: "says the Lord, who makes these things known from eternity" (cf. RSV; NIV inadequately translates "who does these things . . .").

As used in I, 6, this text is quoted to prove the existence of God's eternal decree. In I, 5 it is argued that faith is the free gift of God, whereas the cause of unbelief is in no way in God. The clear assumption, not explicitly stated, is that not all receive the gift of faith from God. Article I, 6 explicitly states that this receiving, by some but not all, of the gift of faith, is due to God's decision in eternity. To support this claim, Dort couples Acts 15:18 ("for he knows all his works from eternity") with Ephesians 1:11.

As a proof text for the eternity of God's decree, this inferior text does not establish a decree of reprobation. However, the preferred text of Acts 15:18, cited above, does not teach the eternity of God's decree, but rather refers to the Lord's action of revealing his activities to his people—in fact, not all his activities, but only those referred to in the immediate context. Hence, according to the preferred text Acts 15:18 does not teach anything regarding God's eternal decree, and according to the inferior text it only refers to the eternity of God's decree and not specifically to a decree of reprobation.

Future translations of the Canons should more clearly indicate that an inferior reading of Acts 15:18 is being cited in I, 6.

## 2. Ephesians 1:11 (I, 6)

Boer observes that Ephesians 1:3-14 is a hymn of praise about God's redemptive work and does not refer to reprobation. He also affirms that the Canons assume that the decree of reprobation must be included in the counsel of God's will.

It must be noted that the Latin text of the Canons does not quote this text but only gives the citation. The Psalter Hymnal edition of the Canons quotes the last part of the verse: "who worketh all things after the counsel of his will." This lifting of a subordinate clause from its immediate and larger contexts is improper and misleading, since the meaning of this clause and the content of "all things" are controlled by these contexts.

This doxology in Ephesians 1:3-14 eulogizes God's redemptive work. The focus is on God's election (1:4) of the Ephesians, on their foreordination (1:5, 11), and on the revelation of the mystery of his will to them (1:9). The doxology makes no reference to the unredeemed ("reprobate") or their lot.

Apparently the Canons consider that "all things" in 1:11 must include reprobation. Dr. Boer rightly challenges this assumption, since the passage deals only with the elect. Furthermore, the term "all things" is completely enclosed by concepts referring to election and the calling of the elect. Ephesians 1:11 introduces the second formulation of the reason motivating this doxology. The two formulations (1:4 and 11) of the reason are closely parallel in content, structure, and vocabulary. Both refer to the experience of the redeemed. Insofar as the Canons in I, 6 affirm that God's people are redeemed through grace according to the counsel of God's will, they properly cite Ephesians 1:11.

### 3. Romans 9:20 (I, 18)

Dr. Boer again argues that this text is only relevant if the "decree of reprobation" has been proven from Scripture elsewhere in the Canons. The use of this text, as in the preceding instances, is based on the assumption of the existence of a decree of reprobation in Scripture.

This question is raised in Romans 9:20 as an answer to someone who is challenging God's sovereignty. In fact, the objector has questioned human responsibility over against God's sovereignty. A dimension of that sovereignty was expressed in 9:18—God's freedom to "have mercy" and to "harden." In the analysis of Romans 9:19-24 given above, the limited and temporary character of this "hardening" was described, and Paul's continual insistence that God cannot be held responsible for the condition of the "nonelect" was demonstrated. Election is the decree which bestows the gift of God's free grace, but the "just severity of reprobation" is the result of man's own sin, not the result of a decree of God. Though Romans 9:20 in its context does not deal with election and reprobation as coordinate and parallel concepts, the passage is rightly used in I, 18 to reply to those who challenge God's sovereignty.

### 4. Matthew 20:15 (I, 18)

Boer argues that the Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard has nothing to do with election and reprobation, but rather has to do with the question of "degrees of reward." He also objects to the partial quotation of the verse.

The Canons seemingly interpret this conclusion of the parable as referring to God's freedom to deal with people (that is, elect and reprobate) as he desires. This interpretation was no doubt suggested by the addition to Matthew 20:16 ("for many are called, but few are chosen" [cf. Matt. 22:14]) found in the *Koine* text, in C, D, *Theta*, and the Vulgate (and hence in the text in the early seventeenth century), whereas all modern translations omit it (following a better and more reliable text tradition). This addition would set the application of the parable in the framework of election (and probably reprobation).

Boer rightly observes that the parable deals with "degrees of reward." Everyone of the workers received his pay. The parable does not focus on the selection or election of workers, but on the landlord's gracious act of paying the workers. Furthermore, this focus on the generosity and graciousness of the landlord is emphasized in the second part of this verse (surprisingly omitted in the Canons): "Or do you begrudge my generosity?" The contrast here is between the landlord's generosity and the protesting workers' jealousy and envy, motivated by their stinginess.

To say, as Boer suggests, that the Canons are using this passage to prove the doctrine of reprobation is false, since the Canons here are reacting against the murmurings of the Arminians who claimed that the Reformed view represented God as not dealing equitably with all men. However, in the context of the second part of Matthew 20:15, the focus of this partial quotation in I, 18 is on the landlord's (that is, by extension, God's) goodness—a positive rewarding of the employed workers, with no reference to a negative attitude toward unhired laborers in the marketplace. We conclude that this passage does not deal with the ques-

tion of election and reprobation, but that it may be an appropriate reply to those who find inequity in God's dealings.

5. and 6. Romans 11:33-36 (I, 18), and Romans 9:18 (Rejection of Errors, I, 8)

Boer treats these two passages together, since Romans 9-11 constitute a unity. The committee observes, however, that Dort uses these two passages in different contexts and for different purposes. Looking first at Romans 9:18, Dr. Boer correctly observes that God's hardening of an individual's heart is not the result of an eternal decree but is rather God's reaction to the individual's sin and rebellion. Such hardening does not imply everlasting damnation nor rule out subsequent repentance. It is in response to the salvation of Gentile and Jew that Paul proclaims the "magnificent doxology" of Romans 11:33-36. Boer rightly concludes that "the backgrounds, occasion, or explanation for unbelief" must be located in the area "of human responsibility within the dimension of history" (Gravamen, p. 335).

As was shown earlier, the salvation-history or *Heilsgeschichte* approach to Romans 9-11 is a valid and preferred interpretative framework for these chapters. Furthermore, the focus on the historical and limited dimension of "hardening" which Boer suggests is a proper interpretation of this concept, as indicated in the interpretation of Romans 9-11 given above. Hence, it is improper to cite "having mercy" and "hardening" as "firmly decreed" in Romans 9:18, as is done in the Rejection of Errors, I, 8.

The doxology in Romans 11:33-36 celebrates the salvation of Jews and Gentiles. As demonstrated by the structure of Romans 9-11, this doxology balances the doxology at the beginning of Romans 9, which also deals with the salvation of Israel. To identify the "mysteries" celebrated by the doxology in Romans 11:33-36 as election and reprobation, as is done in I, 18 of the Canons, is a misinterpretation of the doxology in its context in Romans 11. That there is grace remaining for Israel (through grace experienced by the Gentiles) is the divine "mystery" (*mysterion*, 11:25) of these chapters. This, then, is the context in which such words as "depth," "unsearchable," and "inscrutable" in 11:33 must be understood. These words recall Romans 9:20.

Boer notes the neutral sense ("the fixed purpose of divine grace") given to "judgments" (*krimata*) in the Greek-English Lexicon of Bauer, Arndt, and Gingrich. Furthermore, "judgments" is balanced in the parallelism by "ways" in the next line, which concept cannot be limited to a negative sense. Romans 11:32 ("for God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all" [cf. 9:20]) summarizes the preceding discussion: Jew and Gentile have been consigned to disobedience, but both are or will be enjoying God's mercy. Earlier this "consigning" had been described as "cutting off" or "breaking off" because of unbelief (11:20). In God's mysterious work (cf. 11:25)—disobedience of Jews = mercy to Gentiles (once disobedient) = mercy to Jews (now disobedient)—God judges all (*hoi pantes*) and has mercy on all (*hoi pantes*). This soteriological focus is the occasion for the doxology in Romans 11:33-36.

To cite Romans 11:33-36 as referring to the "mysteries" of election and reprobation is improper. This doxology is an expression of faith and hope for the believer as he reflects upon his election.

7. and 8. Matthew 13:11 and 11:25-26 (Rejection of Errors, I, 8)

Boer questions whether the inability to understand in Matthew 13:11 is to be regarded as a permanent condition. The mission of the disciples to witness in Jerusalem and in all Judea and the call to repentance in Hosea (Gravamen, p. 336) suggest that the blindness of the Jews was a "self-created judgment on their disobedience." Boer further affirms that the circumstance alluded to in Matthew 11:25-26 in no way points to an eternal decree of reprobation.

The Rejection of Errors, I, 8, attempts to prove that it is firmly decreed (*stat enim illud*) that God passed some by (*praeterire*) in the communication of grace by quoting Romans 9:18 (treated above); Matthew 13:11; and Matthew 11:25-26.

Matthew 13:11 must be understood within the framework of Jesus' ministry to the Jews. The contrast is between the disciples and Jewish non-disciples (cf. B. Van Elderen, "The Purpose of the Parables According to Matthew 13:10-17," in *New Dimensions in New Testament Study* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974] pp. 180-90). By quoting Isaiah 6:9-10 from the Septuagint, Matthew in 13:14-15 describes an existing condition of the Jews by verbs in the aorist indicative (v. 15). In the Hebrew of Isaiah 6:9-10 these verbs are *hiphil* imperatives. This Matthean description of the Jewish non-disciples comports with Paul's discussion in Romans 11 regarding the hardening of Israel (see above). That this condition is not the consequence of an eternal decree with its concomitant permanence is indicated by the command in an historical situation in Isaiah 6:9-10 (Hebrew). Similarly, the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah 6:9-10 is quoted in Acts 28:27; and in John 12:40, although a synonym is used, the tense is aorist (describing a past condition). There seems to be an attempt in the Septuagint to reduce the harshness of the Hebrew text (in which the prophet is commanded by God to "make the heart of this people fat"), and this thought is carried over into the New Testament quotations.

A proper understanding of Matthew 13:11 must be derived from the immediate context in which these words are found. Jesus is answering the disciples' question about his use of parables. His answer distinguishes two groups: "you" (the disciples) and "they" (non-disciples). Both groups have the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," but only the disciples know and understand these mysteries, since this knowledge has been given to them. Following the logion about the "haves" and "have-nots," Matthew quotes Isaiah 6:9-10. Clearly the non-disciples (the "have-nots") are the Jews who do not accept Jesus. This is also indicated in Matthew 13:17 and elsewhere, as Matthew relates Jesus to the Old Testament and to the Jews. The fact that the Jewish non-disciples do not receive this new knowledge is due to their hardened condition in an historical situation (described by the use of the Septuagint rendering of Isaiah 6:9-10); this non-reception has not been caused by a decree of God, but by the actions of the Jews themselves.

Matthew 11:25-26 is Jesus' prayer of thanksgiving to the Father following the pronouncement of woes upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. It is followed by a discussion of the relation of the Father to the Son in verse 27, and by the familiar "come unto me. . ." in verses 28-30. The Rejection of Errors, I, 8 quotes Matthew 11:25-26 to distinguish the "wise and understanding" from the "babes" as if the former were the reprobate and the latter were the elect. However, to identify the two groups in Matthew 11:25-26 as two fixed groups is questionable. Entrance into the kingdom is through humility ("becoming as a child"). The "wise and understanding" must humble himself as a "babe"—the childlike and innocent state of an initiate in the faith (cf. Matt. 18:3). The contrast is not in terms of two fixed groups but rather in terms of two conditions which can be found in one individual.

This revelation to the "babes" is according to the "gracious will" (*eudokia*) of God (11:26). When used of God, this term refers to God's divine favor upon his chosen ones. Furthermore, the Son chooses those to whom he reveals the Father (11:27). No reference is here made to those not chosen. At best, Matthew 11:25-26 refers only to God's gracious attitude toward his chosen ones; it does not refer to the nonelect.

In conclusion, Dr. Boer has correctly judged that Matthew 11:25-26 and 13:11 do not prove that God decreed (*decrevisse*) to leave some in condemnation (*damnatio*) or to pass them by (*praeterire*).

#### 9. Romans 9:11-13 (I, 10)

Following the discussion of these eight passages, Dr. Boer devotes over three pages (Gravamen, pp. 336-39) to a discussion of Romans 9:11-13 (quoted in I, 10). He recognizes that the Canons in I, 10 quote this passage in connection with election, not reprobation. He goes on to discuss this passage in detail, however, because of its popular use in connection with reprobation.

Boer notes that Paul in Romans 9:11-13 quotes from Genesis 25:23 and Malachi 1:1-3. The names *Jacob* and *Esau* are used by Malachi in a collective sense, as referring to the people of Israel and the people of Edom. This corporate sense had already been present in the oracle to Rebecca recorded in Genesis. According to the quotation from Malachi ("Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated"), God's love for Jacob had been shown in his election of the people of Israel, but God's hatred of Esau had been occasioned by Esau's attitude toward Jacob and by the attitude of the Edomites toward the people of Israel. Paul continues to speak in terms of this corporate and collective sense (in which *Jacob* means the people of Israel and *Esau* means the Edomites) as he discusses the continued manifestation of God's grace to the Jews, even though salvation now comes to the Gentiles.

Because of God's love and election of Israel (his people), he will protect them against all who oppose them. This opposition occasions God's hatred of Esau (the Edomites) and of all evil forces (Rom. 8:38-39). Boer concludes this discussion by observing "but the divine protection in which God's hatred of the enemies of his salvation comes to expression has nothing to do with either personal or collective reprobation as an eternal decree" (Gravamen, p. 338-39).

It must be observed that the Canons rightly use Romans 9:11-13 in I, 10 to substantiate the doctrine of election. It is also noteworthy that this passage was not used elsewhere in the Canons to substantiate the doctrine of reprobation. Boer rightly objects to a popular use of the Esau reference to support reprobation.

The Canons strikingly omit verses 11b and 12a in the citation of Romans 9:11-13. This omitted material emphasizes that election is because of the one who calls (God), and not because of works. Paul in Romans 9:6-18 cites various examples to demonstrate that throughout Israel's history God was selecting: Isaac/Ishmael; Jacob/Esau; Moses/Pharaoh. In this way the purpose of God's election continues (9:11).

In Romans 9:13 Paul is quoting Malachi 1:3 from the Septuagint, which uses the aorist tense to translate the Hebrew verb forms. This Greek tense describes an historical situation in past time: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Paul uses the verb *miseō* ("I hate"), the Septuagint's rendering of the Hebrew *sane'* in Malachi 1:3. Furthermore, it is questionable that these verbs meaning "to hate" must always be interpreted in an absolute and rigorous sense as the opposite of "to love." At times these verbs mean "to love less," signifying a lesser degree of love. In Genesis 29:31-33 Leah is described as hated by Jacob, whereas in verse 30 it is reported that Jacob loved Rachel more than Leah. Similarly, in Luke 14:26 Jesus indicates that his follower must hate (*miseō*) father, mother, and other relatives, whereas in Matthew 10:37 Jesus indicates that his follower must love him more than father, mother, and other relatives (*phileō huper*). Do these two renderings derive from a Semitic source using the Hebrew root *sane'* (also found in Aramaic)? (Cf. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 293; *contra*, e.g., Murray, *NICNT: Romans*, Vol. II, pp. 12-24.)

The only occurrence of *miseō* with God as subject in the New Testament is in Romans 9:13. Wherever "God" occurs as the subject of *sane'* in the Old Testament with a personal object, that object is further described in the immediate context as having occasioned the hatred.

The above analysis of the verb *to hate* in Hebrew and Greek suggests two very important conclusions for this study. First, the verbs need not be interpreted in the absolute sense in which *to hate* means "to wish the nonexistence of someone" or "to separate completely and absolutely from someone." Rather, another possible meaning is "to love less." Secondly, this attitude of God is a result of the individual's actions in an historical situation. This attitude on God's part may eventuate into final condemnation, but in the historical situation during the individual's life the possibility of repentance gives meaning to the well-meant offer of salvation.

Some may question Boer's emphasis upon the corporate meaning of Jacob and Esau in the Malachi passage quoted in Romans 9:13. Recent exegesis has also focused on this collective sense. However, this collective sense need not negate the individual and personal element in election. In conclusion, Romans 9:13 (with Malachi 1:3) clearly displays God's great displeasure regarding Esau. The passage does not motivate this attitude of God, but from the context it is clear that God's attitude is

a consequence of the unbelief and rebellion of the sinner (Esau) and is not due to an eternal decree. On the other hand, the context clearly indicates that God's love for the elect (Jacob) is motivated by his grace and kindness, not by the actions of the individual.

This evaluation of Dr. Boer's analysis of textual material in the Canons has demonstrated that in the light of current textual studies certain passages were improperly used by the Canons—for example, Acts 15:18. Further, it has been shown that current exegesis has interpreted certain passages (e.g., Matt. 20:15 and 13:11) differently than they were interpreted in the seventeenth century. In conclusion, Boer's analysis has indicated that the scriptural data in the Canons do not support a decree of reprobation from eternity in the sense in which he conceives of it: namely, an eternal decree of God whereby God is the cause of unbelief and whereby God condemns certain people wholly apart from what they do. We agree that neither the Canons nor the Scriptures teach such a decree. That there is, however, a sense in which the Scriptures do teach that not all have been elected by God to eternal life but that some have not been so elected will be shown in the section of our report which now follows.

### *C. Other Scriptural Material Which Is Relevant to the Question at Issue*

The committee is of the opinion that at this point we have finished our work—we have dealt with the gravamen. Technically speaking, therefore, we could conclude our report at this time. As a service to the church, however, we would like to put our observations about the gravamen into a broader context. Therefore we now continue.

From the "Analysis of Scripture Passages Dealt With in the Gravamen" it has become apparent that the committee agrees with Dr. Boer that the Scripture passages which he cites in his gravamen do not specifically and explicitly teach the doctrine of reprobation. Despite this measure of agreement with him, however, the committee is still of the opinion that the synod should not accede to Boer's request that the sections of the Canons which present the doctrine of reprobation be either excised from them or made nonbinding. The reasons for this judgment on the part of the committee have been given in the section of our report entitled "An Analysis of the Gravamen." In that section it was made clear that the committee does not consider the gravamen to be valid or (to use a word found in our mandate) "cogent," because what Boer understands the Canons as teaching they do not in fact teach.

But now the question might well arise: If the committee does not find the doctrine of reprobation explicitly taught in the passages quoted in the gravamen, why does the committee not conclude that the Scriptures do not in any way teach a doctrine of reprobation? Our answer is this: It is indeed the teaching of Reformed theologians and of the Canons of Dort that God's election of his people to eternal life does not include every person but is a limited election, including only certain persons. This being the case, it is obvious that some persons have not been elected to eternal life. Another way of saying this is to say that some persons have been passed by in God's election to eternal life. This passing by (or *preterition*) is one aspect of the doctrine of reprobation understood in the broader

sense. The other aspect of the doctrine of reprobation thus understood is the decision or decree of God to condemn those who remain in their sin or unbelief. This decree of condemnation, too, it was found, was the teaching of Reformed theologians in general as well as of the Canons of Dort.

But what, now, is the scriptural basis for these two doctrines: the doctrine of preterition (or the passing by of some in God's election to eternal life) and the doctrine of the condemnation of those who persist in their unbelief and sin?

To begin with what was mentioned last, that God has decided or decreed to condemn and punish everlastingly all those who continue in their sin and unbelief and are not joined to Christ by faith is clearly taught in Scripture. To mention only two passages, note the following: "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests [or remains—Greek: *menei*] upon him" (John 3:36). "But by your hard and impenitent heart you [those who continue to do what they judge to be wrong in others] are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. . . . For those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil, the Jew first and also the Greek. . ." (Rom. 2:5, 8-9).

The committee does not believe that Boer is minded to dispute the point just stated, namely, that God has decided to condemn and punish all those who persist in their sin and unbelief—particularly not since he recognizes in his gravamen that there are indeed "eternal backgrounds to God's actions in history" (Gravamen, p. 335).

But how about the doctrine of *preterition* or *passing by*? How about the teaching that God from before the foundation of the world has decided to pass by some men with his grace and not to elect them to eternal life? What is the scriptural basis for this teaching?

It is the conviction of your committee that the scriptural teaching on election is this: election to eternal life is not universal but limited. If election is limited to certain persons, or to a certain body of persons, there are some who have not been elected. To say that some have not been elected, we believe, is only another way of saying that not all have been elected.

How can we show that Scripture teaches that election is limited? We begin with the Old Testament. The Old Testament describes Yahweh (or Jehovah) as choosing the following: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, the Levites, Joshua, Gideon, Samson, Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Elisha, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Zerubbabel, and others. In each case, the choosing of one person involved the *passing by* of other persons, not as an optional matter, but as an inherent aspect of the choosing. So, for example, in choosing Abraham (or Abram, as he was then called), God did not choose Nahor, Abram's brother. In choosing Jacob, God did not choose Esau. In choosing David, God passed by Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, and all the other sons of Jesse.

In choosing Abraham, God also chose Abraham's descendants to be his "chosen people." This means that other people were not selected to be



God's "chosen people." Boer on page 340 of the gravamen criticizes Calvin's statement that the choosing of Abraham's descendants means that others were rejected; his criticism comes down to this: other nations were not rejected by God, since Israel was to be a blessing to all the nations. All this is true. But the fact still remains that God had one chosen people, and that chosen nation was Israel, not the Philistines, or the Edomites, or the Egyptians. In choosing the descendants of Abraham as the chosen people, God passed by the other nations (cf. Deut. 10:14-15, quoted in the Rejection of Errors, I, 9). This remains true even though it be granted that Abraham's descendants were chosen in order to be a blessing to all the nations of the world.

It was, of course, true that the selection of the Israelites as God's "chosen people" did not at all guarantee that every Israelite would infallibly be saved. Many Israelites, to be sure, became covenant breakers and were lost. But the principle has been clearly established, namely, that in the choosing of some God passed others by. This is clearly taught in the Old Testament.

The election of individual persons to salvation is not as clearly taught in the Old Testament as in the New Testament. Calvin recognized this in his *Institutes*. He begins his discussion of predestination in the *Institutes* by setting forth the fact God has chosen the Israelites to be his special people, and he grants that many members of this chosen race turned away from God and were lost (*Inst.*, III, 21, 5). He then goes on to talk about a "second, more limited degree of election" (III, 21, 6)—that is, the election of individuals who will infallibly come to salvation. "Although it is now sufficiently clear that God by his secret plan freely chooses whom he pleases, rejecting others, still his free election has been only half explained until we come to individual persons, to whom God not only offers salvation but so assigns it that the certainty of its effect is not in suspense or doubt" (III, 21, 7; Battles trans.). In other words, the Bible teaches both the election of groups (such as Israel and the church) and the election of individuals. These two types of election are not contradictory but complementary.

It is in the New Testament that we find clear teaching about the election of individuals (though it must be remembered that these individuals are never elected in isolation but have been chosen in Christ and have been elected together with other members of the body of Christ and of the church). But here again the principle holds which we already found to be true in Old Testament teaching: some but not all are elected.

In establishing this point, the committee does not intend to provide anything like an exhaustive Scripture study. We cite only a few New Testament passages by way of illustration, to show that God's electing to eternal life is done in such a way that some are elected while others are passed by.

The Gospel of John contains many references to a group of people who, Jesus says, have been given to him by the Father. We conclude that these must be the elect, whom God has chosen before the foundation of the world and has given to Christ as his people. Christ speaks of this group in John 6:37 and 39: "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and him who comes to me I will in no wise cast out. . . . And this is the

will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up at the last day." If, as Jesus says here, those whom the Father gives him will indeed come to him in faith and will be so preserved by him that none of them will be lost but all of them will be raised with glorified bodies at the last day, it is clear that there must be some who have not been so given to Christ.

In his so-called high-priestly prayer, recorded in John 17, Jesus makes many references to those whom the Father has given him. Though the immediate reference here may be to Jesus' disciples, we would not be justified in restricting this group to the disciples alone, particularly not in view of verses 20 to 21: "I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. . . ." Jesus makes the following statements about this group: ". . . since thou [the Father] hast given him [Jesus] power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom thou hast given him" (John 17:2); "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word" (v. 6); "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me, for they are thine" (v. 9); "Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world" (v. 24). In the words just quoted Jesus tells us that those whom the Father has given to him are people to whom he has given eternal life, to whom he has manifested the Father's name, who have kept the Father's word, for whom he is praying, and whom he desires to be with him in glory forever. Certainly it is clear that there are some people who have not been given to Christ by the Father, and to whom the statements just summarized do not apply. This is particularly underscored by verse 9, in which Jesus indicates that there is a sense in which he is not praying for certain people: "I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom thou hast given me."

In Acts 13 Luke records Paul's visit to Antioch of Pisidia. On the second Sabbath of Paul's visit the Jews contradicted what was spoken by Paul, and reviled him. Paul therefore turned away from the Jews and turned to the Gentiles. The result of Paul's preaching to the Gentiles is recorded in the following words: "And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). It is, of course, possible that some of the Jews who rejected Paul's message on that day later became believers. But the statement "as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" means that foreordination to eternal life does not include all men.

A well-known New Testament passage dealing with election is Romans 8:28-30: "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him [or, "to them that love God all things work together for good," ASV], who are called according to his purpose. For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified." Here

again the implication is clear: not all men are predestined to eternal life. For those who are so predestined will certainly and unfailingly be justified and glorified; the Bible, however, clearly teaches that there are some who will be neither justified nor glorified. The passage also teaches that for those who are called according to God's purpose and therefore predestined to eternal life all things work together for good. Obviously, however, all things do not work together for good to those who remain under the wrath of God. Once again we have seen that, according to the Scriptures, election is limited.

## V. THE CONTINUED FUNCTIONING OF THE CANONS IN THE CHURCH

### A. *The Binding Character of the Canons*

On page 330 of his gravamen Dr. Boer asks that "the doctrine of reprobation ought therefore to be excinded from or become a non-binding part of the creeds of the Christian Reformed Church." The committee, as has become evident, is not minded to go in either of these two directions. But the request that certain parts of our creeds should be made nonbinding suggests that it might be helpful for us to look briefly into the question of the binding character of the Canons of Dort.

In addition to formulating the Canons, the Synod of Dort also drew up and adopted a Form of Subscription, which was intended to preserve the doctrinal unity of the Reformed churches. The text of this Form of Subscription can be found in the Psalter Hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church. Every office-bearer of that church is required to sign this form before he takes up the duties of his office. It should be observed, however, that the church does not bind these office-bearers to a legalistic acceptance of and agreement with every single word or expression in our doctrinal standards. What these office-bearers are required to assent to is that these standards are in harmony with the Scriptures. This is borne out by the guidelines which follow.

The Synod of 1976 adopted the following *guidelines* "as to the meaning of subscription to the confessions by means of the Form of Subscription."

"1. The person signing the Form of Subscription subscribes without reservation to all the doctrines contained in the standards of the church, as being doctrines which are taught in the Word of God.

"2. The subscriber *does not* by his subscription declare that these doctrines are all stated in the best possible manner, or that the standards of our church cover all that the Scriptures teach on the matters confessed. Nor does he declare that every teaching of the Scriptures is set forth in our confessions, or that every heresy is rejected and refuted by them.

"3. A subscriber is only bound by his subscription to those doctrines which are confessed, and is not bound to the references, allusions, and remarks that are incidental to the formulation of these doctrines nor to the theological deductions which some may draw from the doctrines set forth in the confessions. However, no one is free to decide for himself or for the church what is and what is not a doctrine confessed in the stan-

dards. In the event that such a question should arise, the decision of the assemblies of the church shall be sought and acquiesced in" (Acts of Synod 1976, Art. 64, I, C, 3, a, pp. 68-69).

In the above decisions the Synod of 1976 made clear that the doctrinal standards of the Christian Reformed Church do not bind its office-bearers in the same way that the Scriptures do. This is in agreement with what we find in Article 7 of the Belgic Confession: "Neither may we consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, of equal value with those divine Scriptures. . . ." All of our doctrinal standards have an historical context, and reflect the time in which they were written. They were the work of fallible men who had to use the Bible texts and translations which were available to them in their day. The guidelines adopted by the Synod of 1976 take these facts into consideration, and therefore make the *doctrines* contained in these standards binding, not every jot or tittle, word or expression, phrase or sentence found in these standards.

According to the guidelines just quoted, one may feel that a certain doctrine is not stated in the best possible way in one of our doctrinal standards, and yet have no difficulty in signing the Form of Subscription. One may also feel that certain Scripture references adduced by a doctrinal standard to establish a doctrinal point may not really establish that point, and still feel free to sign the Form of Subscription—so long as he holds to the doctrine in question. Similarly, one may have difficulty with "allusions and remarks that are incidental to the formulation of these doctrines" in our creeds, and yet be able to sign the Form of Subscription.

In this connection your committee calls attention to the following paragraph from the gravamen: "I call to the attention of the synod the theological and ecclesiastical import of the fact that the texts which have been adduced by Dort are an integral and inseparable part of the Canons themselves and have therefore the full weight and status of confessional statements. . . . It is therefore not possible to disagree with Dort's understanding of these texts and still agree with the teachings that are based on them" (Gravamen, p. 339). In the light of the guidelines adopted by the Synod of 1976, the statements just quoted are not correct. Agreement with the doctrines taught by the Canons of Dort does not mean accepting in every instance the validity of Dort's use of these texts. Your committee, in other words, does not feel that its members violate the stipulations of the Form of Subscription when they, while accepting the teaching of the Canons on the doctrine of reprobation, do not understand all the Scripture passages quoted by the Canons in support of that doctrine in the same way that the fathers of Dort did.

One more point may be made in this connection. Dr. Boer insists that, in order to be included in one of our doctrinal standards, a doctrine must be taught "directly, explicitly, and unambiguously" in the Scriptures (Gravamen, p. 340). He apparently wishes to leave no room in our creeds for doctrines which the Bible teaches by way of implication, or which we arrive at by means of reflection upon the clear teachings of Scripture. Since Dr. Boer does not find the doctrine of reprobation

taught explicitly in Scripture, he feels that our doctrinal standards may make no reference to it.

Our doctrinal standards, however, do not set forth only what is *explicitly* taught in Scripture; they also teach what is deemed to be clearly *implied* in Scripture. So, for example, even though no New Testament texts can be found which explicitly command believers to baptize their infant children, Question 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism teaches that the infants of believers should indeed be baptized, pointing to the continuity that exists between the Old Testament and New Testament phases of the covenant of grace, and between circumcision and baptism. If we were to insist that only what is *explicitly* taught in Scripture may be contained in our doctrinal standards, we would have to eliminate from our creeds all references to infant baptism, not only in the Heidelberg Catechism, but also in Article 34 of the Belgic Confession.

### B. *The Canons and Preaching*

We have seen that the Scriptures do not teach a doctrine of reprobation which makes God the cause of the unbelief of man and which describes God as condemning people wholly apart from their merit or demerit. We have also seen, however, that the Scriptures do teach a kind of "doctrine of reprobation"—that is, that God's election of people to eternal life is a limited one, which does not include all men. This being the case, there are some who have not been elected to eternal life. If one prefers, therefore, instead of speaking of a "doctrine of reprobation" he could speak about a "doctrine of limited election" as another way of saying the same thing. The aspect of this doctrine which has just been described is commonly called *preterition* (or *passing by*). The other aspect of the doctrine, understood in its broader sense, is commonly called *condemnation*—that is, that God condemns and punishes forever all those who remain in their sin and unbelief. Your committee not only believes that, according to Scripture, God will condemn such people; it also believes that God has decided from eternity, or, to use a biblical phrase, from before the foundation of the world, to condemn such people. The basis for that condemnation, however, is to be found solely in the persistent unbelief and sin of those so condemned.

In this section we deal with the practical aspects of our problem. We shall try to answer such questions as the following: How should the doctrine of limited election function in the church? Can the doctrine of limited election be preached, and, if so, how should it be preached?

#### 1. The Mystery Involved

The first thing we wish to say about this matter is to affirm that we are dealing here with a mystery far greater than the human mind can comprehend. This is where we must begin and end. Nothing in our report may be construed as in any way suggesting that we are trying to explain why God deals with his creatures the way he does. We simply have no explanation.

If someone should ask, But why does God pass some by in his election to eternal life? the answer is simply, We do not know. We confess and

trust that there is some good reason, but we do not know the reason. And nothing that theologians, writers, or synods say will ever give us that reason. We stand here before mystery.

But the fact that God does indeed elect some to eternal life constitutes an even greater mystery. For the basis of that election is not to be found in anything that those so chosen do or will do; it is found solely in the undeserved grace of God. And if we have been so favored as to belong to those so chosen, we can only bow the head in profound humility and adoration, giving eternal thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Calvin's advice on this matter, given in the midst of his discussion of the doctrine of predestination, is very much to the point: "... let us not be ashamed to submit our understanding to God's boundless wisdom so far as to yield before its many secrets. For, of those things which it is neither given nor lawful to know, ignorance is learned; the craving to know, a kind of madness" (*Inst.*, III, 23, 8; Battles trans.).

## 2. Sovereignty and Responsibility

In speaking about the "decrees" or decisions of God, we must always be careful to maintain both the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. Those who are condemned by God are fully responsible for the sin and unbelief which is the basis for their condemnation. Yet, in the light of scriptural teaching about God's sovereignty, we cannot believe that it comes as a surprise to God that some people are lost. If not a sparrow can fall to the ground without the Father's will (Matt. 10:29), how can the final destinies of persons who are the crown of God's creation fall outside of the superintendence of God? Men may indeed defy God; but God still remains in control—even the wrath of men shall praise him (Ps. 76:10). God is never the cause of man's sin; yet he always remains in control of it.

That God remains in control even when men sin is evident from the story of Joseph. No one will deny that Joseph's brothers sinned shamefully against him when they sold him into slavery. Yet, years later, Joseph said to his brothers, "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good..." (Gen. 50:20). The very sin of these brothers was overruled by God in such a way that it was made to serve his purpose. The supreme example of God's control over sinful deeds is found in the crucifixion of Christ. Peter, addressing those who were instrumental in putting Jesus to death, said to them: "This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2:23). Because of God's sovereign overruling, the worst sin in the history of mankind has become mankind's supreme blessing.

Though we must continue to insist that man is wholly responsible for his sin and unbelief, we must with equal vigor maintain that in all of this God continues to be sovereign and continues to be in such control that all his purposes will be accomplished in the end. Augustine put it neatly when he said that the sin of man always remains "against but not beyond the will of God" ("*contra sed non praeter voluntatem Dei*").

### 3. Can "Reprobation" Be Preached

One of the arguments which has been adduced in favor of excising all references to reprobation in the Canons is that "the doctrine of reprobation" cannot be preached, and anything which cannot be preached ought not to be found in our doctrinal standards. This argument presupposes that in adopting a creed the church always makes the judgment that every statement found in that creed can be used as a basis for preaching. This, however, is a dubious thesis. Often it was polemical considerations which led the church to formulate a creed. In other words, the usefulness of creedal materials for preaching was usually not a primary consideration in the formulation or adoption of a creed.

The committee admits that the doctrine of reprobation as set forth in the gravamen (namely, that God is the cause of unbelief and that God condemns men to eternal death apart from their sin) cannot be preached, since it represents a misunderstanding of what both the Scriptures and the Canons teach. As far as the doctrine of limited election which has been defended in this report is concerned, however, we do not agree that this doctrine cannot be preached in an edifying way. We do indeed grant that *preterition*, when abstracted from its embracing context of election, cannot be preached in such a way that hearers are edified. But we would insist that the *condemnation* aspect of this doctrine not only can but must be preached. Sinners must be warned that unless they repent and believe in Christ for salvation they will indeed be condemned for their sins. For a preacher not to give such a warning would mean that he is shirking his task.

The Bible, in fact, contains many warnings which set forth the teaching that sinners will be condemned if they persist in their sin and unbelief. John 3:36 has already been quoted ("He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him"). Jesus himself uttered a similar warning: "... if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire" (Matt. 18:8). To the same effect are these words from Hebrews 2:1-3: "Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?"

### 4. Is the "Doctrine of Reprobation" a Hindrance to Preaching?

The answer to this question is a clear and unambiguous no. We do not preach to people as those who are under the classification of being either elect or reprobate; we preach to saints who have come to faith in Christ and to sinners who need to believe in Christ for their salvation. And we preach in the hope that everyone to whom we preach will be enabled by the Holy Spirit to accept the gospel or to persevere in the faith. Note the reference in III-IV, 15 of the Canons to the so-called judgment of charity with which we must regard those to whom we preach. Calvin's words are also helpful here:

"For as we know not who belongs to the number of the predestined or who does not belong, we ought to be so minded as to wish that all men be saved." So shall it come about that we try to make everyone we meet a sharer in our peace. But our peace will rest upon the sons of peace. . . . Hence, as far as we are concerned. . . a healthful and severe rebuke should be applied as a medicine to all that they may not either perish themselves or destroy others. It belongs to God, however, to make that rebuke useful to those whom he . . . has foreknown and predestined (*Inst.* III, 23, 14, quoting from Augustine's *On Rebuke and Grace*).

Herman Bavinck's comments on this point are also worth remembering:

The doctrine of election should not be preached in order to terrify many—as is often done—but in order to bid all to partake of the riches of God's grace in Christ. No one *has a right* to believe that he is a reprobate, for everyone is earnestly and unfeignedly called and is in duty bound to believe in Christ unto salvation; no one *can* believe it, for his very life and whatever makes life dear to him is an evidence of the fact that God has no pleasure in his death. . . (*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 3rd ed., Vol. II, p. 422; trans. Wm. Hendriksen in *The Doctrine of God*, p. 405).

In this connection a word should be said about the so-called well-meant offer of the gospel. The Canons, which lay much stress on election, clearly teach that God desires the salvation of all to whom the gospel is preached. They do so particularly in the following two passages:

Moreover, the promise of the gospel is that whosoever believes in Christ crucified shall not perish, but have eternal life. This promise, together with the command to repent and believe, ought to be declared and published to all nations, and to all persons promiscuously and without distinction, to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the gospel (II, 5).

As many as are called by the gospel are unfeignedly called. For God has most earnestly and truly declared in His Word what is acceptable [or *pleasing*—Latin, *gratum*; Dutch, *aangenaam*] to Him, namely, that those who are called should come unto Him. He also seriously promises rest of soul and eternal life to all who come to Him and believe (III-IV, 8).

The fathers of Dort apparently saw no conflict between holding to the doctrine of limited election on the one hand and to the earnest call of the gospel on the other, since they believed that Scripture teaches both. We, too, should maintain both of these teachings. We may not be able to harmonize these two doctrines in our finite minds, but if Scripture teaches both, we must accept both. We must therefore urge all people to accept the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ, trusting that God will enable those whom he has chosen to eternal life to respond to the gospel call with a living faith.



### 5. Is the Doctrine of Election a Hindrance to Preaching?

No, the doctrine of election is not a hindrance to preaching. On the contrary, this doctrine is a source of encouragement to the preacher. The preacher can, of course, not change the hearts of his hearers, nor can he move anyone to repent and believe the gospel. God, however, can do so. The preacher therefore trusts that God will provide the response of faith in those whom he has chosen. The preacher may safely leave the results of his preaching to God, knowing that all those who have been ordained to eternal life will believe—if not now, then later.

As a matter of fact, not only is the doctrine of election no hindrance to preaching; that doctrine makes preaching necessary. For God's election includes the means as well as the end. If God has chosen someone to be saved, he has chosen that person to be saved through the preaching and teaching of the Word (except for exceptional cases such as those involving children of believers who die in infancy). The Canons, in fact, specifically teach that preaching is necessary as a means of grace:

As the almighty operation of God whereby He brings forth and supports this our natural life does not exclude but require the use of means by which God, of His infinite mercy and goodness, has chosen to exert His influence, so also the aforementioned supernatural operation of God by which we are regenerated in no wise excludes or subverts the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the seed of regeneration and food of the soul (III-IV, 17).

### 6. How Should the Doctrine of Election Be Preached?

The Canons of Dort, while insisting that the doctrine of election should be preached, utter some cautions as to the way in which it is to be preached:

... It [the doctrine of election] is still to be published in due time and place in the Church of God, for which it was peculiarly designed, provided it be done with reverence, in the spirit of discretion and piety, for the glory of God's most holy Name, and for enlivening and comforting His people, without vainly attempting to investigate the secret ways of the Most High... (I, 14).

Similar cautions are expressed in the Conclusion to the Canons:

... Synod exhorts all their brethren in the gospel of Christ to conduct themselves piously and religiously in handling this doctrine...; to direct it, as well in discourse as in writing, to the glory of the Divine name, to holiness of life, and to the consolation of afflicted souls; to regulate, by the Scripture, according to the analogy of faith, not only their sentiments, but also their language, and to abstain from all those phrases which exceed the limits necessary to be observed in ascertaining the genuine sense of the Holy Scriptures....

The doctrine of election ought to be preached in such a way as to promote gratitude on the part of believers for having been saved by grace

alone. It ought also to be preached in order to bring comfort to God's people—the comfort of knowing that the God who has begun a good work in us will carry it on to completion until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6), and that, if we truly belong to Christ, no one will ever be able to snatch us out of his hand (John 10:28). This is the way in which the doctrine of election is presented, both in the Scriptures and in the Canons of Dort.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That synod give the privilege of the floor to the following representatives of the study committee when this report is discussed: the chairman, B. Nederlof; the reporter, A. Hoekema; and other members of the committee who may be available at the time.

2. That synod do not accede to the request made in Dr. Harry Boer's Confessional-Revision Gravamen: namely, that "the doctrine of reprobation ought . . . to be excinded from or become a nonbinding part of the creeds of the Christian Reformed Church" (Gravamen, p. 330).

#### *Grounds:*

- a. The Canons of Dort do not teach what the gravamen erroneously understands the doctrine of reprobation to be: namely, a decree by means of which God is the cause of man's unbelief, and by means of which God has from eternity consigned certain human beings to damnation apart from any merit or demerit on their part.
  - b. The Scriptures do teach a doctrine of election and reprobation, in that they teach that some but not all have been elected to eternal life.
3. That synod recommend this report to the churches for study.
  4. That synod refer this report for information to the churches which are in ecclesiastical fellowship with the Christian Reformed Church, and to the churches which belong to the Reformed Ecumenical Synod.
  5. That synod discharge the committee.

The Committee on Dr. Harry Boer's  
Confessional-Revision Gravamen

Bastiaan Nederlof, chairman

Anthony A. Hoekema, reporter

Herman Hoekstra

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Albert Wolters

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## REPORT 31

## SERVICE COMMITTEE FOR USE OF MEMBERS' GIFTS

*INTRODUCTION*

We present to the Synod of 1980 the concluding chapter of our efforts to fulfill the work given us by the Synod of 1977. This committee was established at that time for three years in accord with the recommendation of Report 40 (Section III) with the following mandate:

a. to identify barriers both organizational and attitudinal, to the church's use of the gifts of all its members and to recommend to synod and to local congregations ways consistent with Scripture in which those barriers can be removed;

b. to encourage committees, classes, and boards to continue and expand the practice of nominating and electing members of groups currently not being fully used;

c. to maintain the data bank, keep it up to date, enlarge it to include any interested member of the church, and encourage its use by church organizations and others approved by synod or the various classes;

d. to work with the Education Department of the Board of Publications to continue developing adult educational materials that will encourage fuller use of gifts;

e. to respond to consistories and local groups when they request advice, materials, or names of resource persons to help them bring about fuller use of the gifts of all members of the local congregation. (Acts of Synod 1977, p. 42)

The personnel of our committee changed a bit. Our valuable member, Claudia Beversluis, began a residency program in a Detroit hospital and found it impossible to meet with us. We received alternate Dr. William Stob as a regular member and added Mrs. Margaret Kleis and Rev. John Kerssies, all of whom contributed constructively to our discussions and decisions.

## I. IDENTIFICATION OF BARRIERS TO USE OF MEMBERS' GIFTS

*Preamble*

We confess that the church is the body of Christ. The description of the church as a body is inherent in all of Scripture, especially in the New Testament. Paul acknowledges this concept par excellence and writes about it to the Corinthian church, a church which failed to demonstrate the bodily character of the church in a concrete way. The Corinthians, even though they possessed an abundance of spiritual gifts, used them individually and failed to employ them to build up the body as a whole.

Perhaps the challenge we face in the Christian Reformed Church is just the opposite. We have good, solid views on the church as a body, but we have difficulty relating that body-concept to the spiritual gifts. The result has been gifts buried, unused, and unemployed. We hold to the biblical teaching of the one body, but we have let go of the varieties of gifts of which Paul speaks in I Corinthians 12.

Our mandate "... to identify barriers, both organizational and attitudinal, to the church's use of the gifts of all its members and to recommend to synod and to local congregations ways consistent with Scripture in which those barriers can be removed" has been studied and discussed at great length. We are dealing with an extremely complex problem. By no means do we consider our findings to be exhaustive or conclusive.

This report concentrates on the two kinds of barriers found in our mandate: Organizational Barriers which concern the organizational structure of the church, and Personal or Attitudinal Barriers which deal with the individual church member. Each barrier will be discussed as follows: (a) the identification of the barriers, (b) a description or explanation and/or possible causes for the barrier, (c) recommended ways to remove the barrier. Some of the barriers, descriptions, and remedies overlap. This could hardly be avoided.

Before discussing specific barriers and remedies, we suggest some general ways to help remove any or all of the barriers:

1. Education through sermons and the educational program of the church;
2. Training of church members in specific areas of service;
3. Establishment of households of faith, fellowship families, shepherding groups, etc.;
4. Use of gifts surveys, questionnaires, and suggestion boxes.

Elaboration of some of these suggestions may be found under "Adult Education Materials," "Resource Files," and "Banner Articles" in this committee report.

#### A. *Organizational Barriers*

1. Churches hold to stereotyped view of gifts.

a. Within the church there are some stereotyped ideas as to who is gifted, what these gifts are, and how they ought to be used. The notion is quite prevalent that only ministers, elders, deacons, teachers, and organists, and possibly a few others are the gifted ones within the church. Thus seen, gifts are limited to the preaching, teaching, and musical functions within the church, to be used in a traditional way which centers the activities of the church around the worship service, church school, societies, and the like.

b. Even though the Church Order emphasizes the task of the preacher, it does in no way limit the gifts to the traditional ones adhered to in many churches. The reason for such a stereotyped view of gifts lies in a lack of the proper biblical understanding of the church of Christ as a body functioning with many parts. Theoretically we hold to such a view of the church, but practically we quite often do not.

c. Remedy: The church must be willing to be open to the biblical directives concerning the church as the body of the Lord—a body made up of many members *each* of whom has been given gifts by the ascended Lord (Eph. 4:4-13). There must moreover be a willingness to *use* the whole variety of members' gifts. Surveys can be conducted to delineate the various gifts and needs present within the church and outside of it.

## 2. Churches have a clergy-centered view of the gifted body.

a. Many congregations are largely passive and silent. Barring a few exceptions, the minister is expected to "do it all" because "he knows it all and after all he is getting paid for it." Besides, "he is the only one with adequate training." This clergy-centered view of the church

- 1) is reflected in the worship services which ultimately shape church life as a whole,
- 2) limits the church's vision as far as the development of people's gifts is concerned,
- 3) produces a leader/follower style of ministry. The minister simply lives up to the expectation of the congregation. As he is the chairman of the most important committees within the church, there is no need for a ministry which calls for local initiative and imagination.

b. The cause for this clergy-centered ministry may be in part the remnant of Roman Catholic thinking within the Protestant church. It may also be partly rooted in the ideal of "American" efficiency: it will get the job done. However, it is obviously a misunderstanding of the thrust of the Scriptures. It may even be based on the wrong translation of Ephesians 4:11-12, with the so-called fallacy of the misplaced comma.

c. Remedy: Reevaluate the role of ministers, as they are called to equip God's people for ministry. Ministers should be willing to undergo some serious self-examination and learn to limit their own involvement. They should strongly resist playing the traditional role of the minister. This self-examination, however, is not to be limited to the clergy, for congregations also need to be willing to adopt a style of ministry which may be different from that traditionally practiced. Perhaps the task of the minister should be limited to preaching, teaching, and pastoral calling and/or counseling. Some of the other tasks he presently performs, e.g., chairing consistory and/or committees, leading Bible studies, teaching all catechism classes, reading the Scriptures during the worship services, etc., could be relinquished to other gifted members within the church.

## 3. Churches lack vision as to proper channeling of gifts.

a. It happens that a church is aware of the many gifts that are present within its body, but both the consistory and the members lack the vision as to how these gifts can be properly used. Consequently many gifts remain unused and become part of the "hidden talents."

b. The lack of vision for properly channeling members' gifts in most cases is rooted in an inadequate understanding of the nature of

the church's ministry. We are able to use some kinds of gifts but do not know what to do about others.

c. Remedy: The church must recognize that whatever gifts the Lord gives to his people can be employed within the context of kingdom service. A more detailed list of the various needs could be drawn up and communicated to the members.

#### 4. Churches lack vision as to the needs for gifts.

a. Closely related to number 3 is the fact that churches tend to overlook needs which are present within the church. Sometimes the elderly, the lonely, the shut-in, both within the church and more often within the immediate community, have been neglected. It may well be that such neglect is not by design but by oversight.

b. One reason for such lack of vision is that the responsibility for looking after the above-mentioned needs has been placed in the hands of a few who are already very busy. Or perhaps the entire congregation has not been made aware of the needs.

c. Remedy: Consistories must look to members of the congregation for help in ministering to the needs of the congregation and the larger community. Surveys of both needs and gifts can be very helpful in this area. Further remedies are suggested under "E—Resource Files."

#### 5. Churches lack vision in discovering hidden gifts.

a. The gifts of teaching and music are stressed to the extent that these seem to be the chief gifts the church can use, and many other gifts are overlooked.

b. The cause of this lack of vision as to tapping new resources might have to be sought in the same fear of change that will be discussed under number 5 of Personal and Attitudinal Barriers.

c. Remedy: Create a gift committee and/or a job-creation committee. Courses could be given to develop gifts. Make use of suggestion boxes.

#### 6. Churches have no vehicle to make the needs known to those who have gifts.

a. Flowing out of Organizational Barriers 3, 4, and 5 is the lack of proper communication which guarantees matching gifts and needs. All too often church bulletins are limited tools in this respect. Church services are, as a rule, too formal to serve as a system for the ongoing discovery of needs and gifts and the bringing together of the two. Many churches have no record-keeping system of needs and gifts.

b. The absence of such a vehicle of communication is quite often due to the size of the congregation. Many congregations are so large that word-of-mouth communication is not adequate to match the needs with the gifts. Again, since the responsibility is placed in the hands of a few, communication in nonvocal ways is often neglected.

c. Remedy: Sometimes a survey-questionnaire, if it is taken seriously and followed through, can be the tool which opens up communication. Keep up-to-date files of members and/or have a sound

record-keeping system. Dividing the congregation into smaller fellowship families can also foster awareness of needs, opportunities, and special abilities or gifts. (Samples of surveys are available upon request.)

7. Churches lack procedures for the recognition of gifts.

a. It is our conviction that gifts need to be publicly recognized (Rom. 16). However, quite often churches lack proper procedures for such recognition and thus there is no proper reinforcement of gifts.

b. The reason why such procedures are lacking in many churches is that people all too often are taken for granted. It is often assumed that the gifted person will automatically share his gifts with the body.

c. Remedy: Print more extensive church directories or publish a monthly or bimonthly newsletter keeping the church up to date as to who is doing what, thus reinforcing gifts. Conduct commissioning services for the Sunday school staff and others involved in various aspects of church work.

8. Churches lack a sense of community.

a. The last organizational barrier to be mentioned is perhaps the most important one, possibly a barrier in which other barriers have their origin. In many churches there is a lack of true Christian cohesion. There is no sense of family, of truly belonging together to one body. Many a church resembles the Sears store model, where people are served by hired personnel.

b. The roots of this barrier lie deep. It is the result of the influence of a western cultural condition with its ideal of individualism. Many western Christians, our churches included, are caught in the vise of this paralyzing philosophy, so that true community becomes impossible.

c. Remedy: Rediscover the Word of God as it opens to us the perspective of the church as the body of Jesus Christ. This body consists of members, different kinds of members, all gifted members, who are there for each other and together for humanity.

B. *Personal or Attitudinal Barriers*

1. The member lacks awareness of his or her gifts.

a. Sometimes the remark is heard, "I am nothing special," or "I really do not possess any gifts or talents." This indicates an attitude which results in a person's gift(s) remaining dormant and unused. (S)he *has* gifts, as the Bible teaches, but is not aware what these gifts are.

b. Reasons for such negative self-evaluation and self-image may be:

- 1) the person may be caught within a traditional, narrow idea of what gifts really are and which gifts are really important;
- 2) since the work in the church appears to be carried on rather effectively, there is no need for the gift to be developed;

3) the excuse may be given that the person lacks sufficient formal education;

4) it may simply be that the person has never been asked to do something and thus has never been challenged to employ his/her gifts.

c. Remedy: Since each member has gifts, the whole body of believers should help the individual to discover these gifts, encourage their development, and find ways to employ them. This may demand that the church widen its ministry and that the workload is no longer carried by a few "experts."

2. The member lacks awareness of the need for his/her gifts.

a. Sometimes it happens that the person is aware of having gifts but lives with the notion that these gifts are not needed. New members of the church may have to find their own way as they do not know in what manner their gifts can be best employed.

b. This situation may well occur because the needs for gifts are not duly publicized to the congregation. It is also possible that the person is content with traditional, set patterns and does not look for new opportunities for service. Often consistories are too dominant and feel that they have to do all of the work themselves. Sometimes it is assumed that only the educational gifts can be used within the church.

c. Remedy: Some councils ask new members in what capacities they have served and where they would like to use their gifts now. One young father answered immediately, "I'd like to work with the Cadets." Such response is heartwarming to the church and productive for the new member. In family visiting the council can find out about specific needs and about the areas where family members believe they can best help in the church's ministry. Be free to put a new emphasis on the variety of gifts and to explore ways of using all of them within the body.

3. The member depreciates his/her gifts—false humility.

a. False humility—here a person discounts his own abilities. He does not value his own gifts to be nearly so important as the gifts which others have. He remains self-conscious as to what other people think and always compares himself to the successful person.

b. True humility, on the other hand, can be described as the giving of self in order to meet the needs of others and thus calls for obedient service. False humility arises from a deep sense of insecurity and thus from a very negative self-image. It can very easily become habit forming and another excuse for remaining uninvolved.

c. Remedy: Develop a positive self-image. Encourage those who feel inadequate. Recognize all who are using their gifts within the church. Stress the true sense of humility as being obedient service. "Loving my neighbor means seeing a need that I can fill."

4. The member possesses fear of failure due to previous experience of failure.



a. Sometimes a person is caught by fear of rejection. He may previously have tried to use his gifts within the church but did not succeed as well as he had hoped. There may have been hurtful criticism from others, possibly from perfectionists.

b. When called upon again, the person cringes for fear of making the same mistake. Hurts and embarrassments from previous failure keep him from offering the services he could render. The person himself might be a perfectionist and not satisfied with anything less than flawless performance.

c. Remedy: Exercise a real concern for those who have been hurt because of previous failure. Encourage them to try again, emphasizing that flawless perfection cannot be had on this side of the grave. Proficiency increases with practice. Some training might be provided to help the person gain a measure of self-confidence. Small support groups can work as real stimuli for positive involvement.

5. The member possesses fear of change.

a. Besides the fear of failure there is the fear of change. A person may be afraid of trying something not proven. One is apprehensive about being different and doing things differently from the traditional customs. Change (e.g., in worship services or in starting deaconess programs), it may be felt, disturbs the peace and thus introduces an element of uncertainty. This fear of change will often limit the use of gifts within the church to a small number of people.

b. Even people who desire change are held back, being afraid to step on other people's toes. Introducing changes always involves taking a number of risks—and some people are not prepared to take risks.

c. Remedy: It should be noted that changes are an essential part of human life. Furthermore, we do well to heed the instruction of Paul in Romans 14 and 15 and in I Corinthians 8 that the weak—those who fear change?—must grow up in faith. The strong—those who are mature in faith?—must coach the weak without offending them. Changes can be recognized as a natural development of growing up in Christ under wise pastoral leadership and in the loving fellowship of believers. A twentieth-century church living in the twentieth century responds to current needs, and that sometimes involves change.

6. The member encounters limitations due to stereotyped ideas.

a. Stereotyped ideas as to what kinds of gifts the church is able to employ prevent people from fully using their gifts within the church. Remarks such as, "I am too old/too young," "I am handicapped," "I have a limited education," "They don't need women as ushers," or "Men do not help with the dishes" reflect such stereotypes and have a way of limiting the use of members' gifts.

b. Stereotyped ideas have deep roots within our western cultural tradition. Quite often they have also been firmly entrenched in the Christian church. Those who find themselves in stereotyped categories (too old, too handicapped, single, etc.) suppose that they are automatically excluded from active functioning within the church.

c. Remedy: Conduct a survey of gifts in which all the possible gifts are included. Stress the diversity of gifts and the need for these gifts. This calls for an imaginative approach on the part of consistories. Overlooked groups often respond eagerly to opportunities for service.

7. The member sets other priorities; result: apathy.

a. Setting other priorities is another barrier to the use of members' gifts. The church should not fret when people's gifts are employed within the wider area of God's kingdom (family, Christian school, etc.) so that little time can be found for the instituted church. However, we ought to be concerned when members use their gifts only to promote their own little kingdoms. Members such as these display a religious commitment which is at best traditional and at worst an empty form. The word which best describes such an attitude is *apathy*, a complete lack of feeling for the things of the Lord.

b. The root of apathy is unbelief, a sin against the first commandment when other gods have replaced the service of the true God. Worship of the Lord gradually recedes.

c. Remedy: A change in attitude, by way of repentance and conversion. Much can be done in the context of family visiting and pastoral calling. Preaching conversion is another powerful instrument. Small households of faith can be real assets as well. Churches should work toward the prevention of apathy, e.g., immediately plugging in new members by giving them active roles.

8. The member is oriented to passivity, e.g., in worship services.

a. Closely related to apathy is passivity. The person is caught in the "being lived" syndrome, where he feels rather comfortable. In fact, he may hide himself under the flag of piety and humility. It is a form of spiritual anemia.

b. Passive orientation has become a culturally expected mode of behavior. Modern entertainment by way of television and movies has made people passive spectators rather than active participants in the affairs of life. Sometimes the church itself has become part of this "being lived" syndrome, as church services display the "entertainers-entertained" model and the church members are caught in a "consumer mentality."

c. Remedy: In its preaching and teaching the church needs to challenge the initiative and imagination of all of God's people so as to wean them away from passivity and to chart avenues in which to lead them into active service within the kingdom. One way to do this would be to look for ways to use members' gifts in the context of the worship services.

9. The member is obsessed with power needs.

a. Obsession with certain power needs can become barrier to the use of gifts. It is possible for someone to want to play the organ but to refuse to serve as a choir director. Or someone may be willing to serve

as chairman of the committee but not as a regular member. Or again, the member seeks all kinds of leadership positions, keeping others out.

b. Power needs may arise from an attitude of arrogance and pride. However, it may also constitute a genuine evaluation of the person's own abilities.

c. Remedy: If power need arises from arrogance, the church needs to stress the virtue of humility and that Christians are called to follow the example of the Lord (see Philippians 2:5ff). On the other hand, if such power need arises from genuine self-evaluation, the church should be willing to act with a measure of flexibility and plug the person in where his abilities are best used, carefully avoiding accumulation of functions by just one or a few persons.

10. The member has a negative, critical attitude.

a. A negative, critical attitude can serve as another barrier to the use of members' gifts. Such a negative attitude may be vented against the pastor, consistory members, or other members of the church. Quite often this kind of attitude stifles any positive resources a person may have and thus tends to be self-destructive.

b. Such a critical attitude may arise from a person's own sense of inferiority—by his negative critique he attempts to score a positive point. For some, purity and orthodoxy are more important than people and as a consequence they adopt a rather condemnatory style.

c. Remedy: It should be pointed out to the critic that encouraging people to utilize their gifts even when this means tolerating lower caliber performances is more helpful than displaying a critical and negative attitude. However, the church ought to listen carefully to honest criticism, must be willing to remove whatever legitimate obstacles stand in the way, and try to channel the negative and critical attitudes into positive and constructive directions.

11. The member needs public recognition.

a. Public recognition can serve as a positive tool in the use of members' gifts as it personally encourages the worker to continue and assures him that his gifts are well received and appreciated. However, the need for public recognition can also work negatively; the member feels neglected by the body politic. This may cause hard feelings and unhappiness. It may cause a person not publicly recognized to "throw in the towel."

b. Part of the problem is, of course, that some gifts are singled out to be more important than others. The church may not explicitly give expression to that sentiment; quite often implicitly it does.

c. Remedy: Gifts must be publicly recognized. Vehicles must be found which will make certain that no one is overlooked in this recognition. Households of faith may be channels by which such recognition can be expressed.

### *Conclusion*

This summarizes what we have found. It is our hope that this report may serve the churches as a guideline or a springboard for discussion on

the barriers to the use of members' gifts. Therefore we are making available a reprint of our report on barriers.

Since our three-year term of appointment expires this year we are happy that the Christian Reformed Board of Home Missions is also deeply interested in the use and development of gifts of church members. The Home Missions staff is developing a pilot project aimed at enhancing use of gifts. Home Missions representatives have reported to us monthly on the progress of this undertaking. It is our hope that the mandate given to us by the Synod of 1977 and carried out by us to the best of our abilities may be expanded still further by the Home Missions staff.

## II. RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC MANDATES OF SYNOD

### A. *Encouraging Greater Diversity in Committees, Classes, and Boards*

Responding to mandate item B, again in the autumn of 1979 letters were sent to all Christian Reformed consistories and classes encouraging selection of nominees for positions of church leadership with an eye to involving groups currently not being fully used.

### B. *Volunteer Resource Bank (VRB)*

The preponderance of our efforts has been directed in 1979 toward getting the Volunteer Resource Bank functioning (cf. Mandate item C). This project, approved by the Synod of 1979, is now under way.

Synod authorized the appointment of a volunteer coordinator (cf. Acts of Synod 1979, p. 43). However, it became apparent to us that a small committee would be preferable to one person. Four people were chosen: Dr. Ralph Vunderink (chairman), James Hoekenga, Louis Van Ess, and Vonnie Poortenga. The Rev. Duane VanderBrug and Charles Schrader helped design the Volunteer Resource Bank concept and the latter continues as a resource person. The coordinators are to see to the development of a system to recruit persons for volunteer services within the CRC and to facilitate their use by Christian Reformed agencies. Two of our members, Bernice VandenBerg and Dr. William Stob, are willing to serve in an advisory capacity.

Letters have been sent to all Christian Reformed churches requesting the appointment of a volunteer contact person for each congregation to be a channel of information about volunteering and a facilitator for potential volunteers. Letters to Christian Reformed agencies and boards have solicited their interest, support, and involvement.

We have authorized the Volunteer Coordinating Committee to begin with a pilot project to sample congregations. The questionnaire, mailing, and the results are being developed and handled by a professional organization, the Calvin College Social Research Center, in order to insure high quality in this important endeavor.

We are enthusiastic about the possibilities of this project. It took longer to get underway than we had envisioned. When the VRB is in full swing we have every confidence that with God's blessing many members in our denomination will find short-term volunteering a rewarding experience, and the needs and dreams of agencies and missions will be better served.

### C. *Adult Education Materials*

This committee made early attempts to work with the Education Department for development of a study book on women's gifts. A manuscript was written but judged unacceptable. Subsequently the publication of "The Place of Women in the Bible" by the Rev. Verlyn Verbrugge has been noted.

### D. *Resource Files*

A file compiled by this committee is available as a resource for church groups to assist them in endeavors to bring about fuller use of the gifts of their members. Materials are available on the following topics:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Senior citizens                       | 6. Singles                                      |
| 2. Children in worship;<br>Sunday school | 7. Volunteer survey forms and<br>questionnaires |
| 3. Litanies and commissioning<br>forms   | 8. Deaconesses                                  |
| 4. Widows                                | 9. Households of faith                          |
| 5. Youth                                 | 10. Every Member Conferences                    |

Samples of these will be available at synod.

### E. *Banner Articles*

Early in the life of this committee the Banner granted space for articles supporting and promoting greater use of people in the life of the church. This series has been called "Every Member a Member." A variety of writings has been published during this year:

1. "Consistories, Is Your Door Open?" by Claudia Beversluis

In the interest of greater church involvement, members should have access to the challenges, struggles, problems, and decisions relating to church business. Benefits of the "Open Door" policy are suggested.

2. "The Role of Widows" by Dr. Sidney Greidanus

When we think of widows today, we usually think in terms of what the church can do for them rather than what they can do for the church. Does the New Testament appear to support a religious order for widows in order that they may exercise their gifts for God and their neighbor? What structures can the church provide for widows to use their gifts?

3. "Single and Gifted" by Dave Larsen

A model for meeting needs and raising potential of young single adults in Chicago Classis South is explored.

4. "Using the Gifts of the Youth Elder," by the Rev. Lammert Slofstra

A synopsis of the benefits of electing elders with the special task of the well-being of the youth of the church by a minister who has seen "Youth Elders" at work in practically all the congregations he has served and has come to appreciate their work tremendously.

5. "The Common Directory—Something Special" by Rose Van Reken

Church directories and responsive litanies can be used to express appreciation and concern for those involved in the congregation's program and outreach. Free samples of litanies and projects booklets offered upon request.

6. "Opportunity after Opportunity" by Bernice VandenBerg

One congregation's response to the need for more concern and involvement in kingdom work. The use of questionnaires and forms explained and positive results listed. Several forms and questionnaires used by different congregations made available upon request.

7. "Households of Faith" by the Rev. Lammert Slofstra

One congregation's exploration of a new effort—dividing into small groups to meet every other month with the one purpose to meet needs, express concern, and develop gifts for each individual within that "household of faith." Other churches may call them "Family Fellowships" or "Shepherding Groups"—an exciting structure to carry out the mandate to love one another.

These articles generated many requests from churches for material and additional information. A total of seventeen articles were published during the two years in the "Every Member a Member" department.

### III. RECOMMENDATIONS AND REQUESTS:

1. We ask that the privilege of the floor be given to Mrs. Rose Van Reken, chairman; and the Rev. Jim Kok, reporter, when this report or matters relating to it are discussed.

2. We recommend that synod refer our report, "Barriers to the Use of Members' Gifts," to the congregations for study, discussion, and possible action.

3. We recommend continuation of the Volunteer Resource Bank for an indefinite period of time. Jurisdiction over the Resource Bank Committee, we recommend, should be given to the Synodical Interim Committee.

4. We recommend that synod appoint the following to serve on the committee for the Volunteer Resource Bank: Dr. Ralph Vunderink (chairman), James Hoekenga, Vonnie Poortenga, and Louis Van Ess, with Bernice VandenBerg and Dr. William Stob serving in an advisory capacity.

5. We request continued funding of the Volunteer Resource Bank.

6. We recommend that our resource files be placed in the office of the Stated Clerk for distribution from his office upon request. Churches which have approached us for help in the development and use of

members' gifts may thus have an address at which the resources gathered by our committee can be tapped for years to come.

7. We ask that the Service Committee for Use of Members' Gifts be discharged.

Service Committee for Use  
of Members' Gifts  
Rose Van Reken, chairman  
Jim Kok, reporter  
Bernice VandenBerg, secretary  
Claudia DeVries Beversluis  
Donna Tinholt Hekman  
John Kerssies  
Margaret Kleis  
Lammert Slofstra  
William Stob

REPORT 32

CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY COMMITTEE

I. MANDATE AND MEMBERSHIP

This committee was appointed by the Synod of 1979 "with the mandate to draft a contemporary testimony, taking into account the suggestions and guidelines as outlined in the report" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 75).

Of the members appointed by synod only S. Wiersma declined to serve. We then contacted the first alternate given. The committee now consists of G. J. Spykman; M. N. Greidanus; C. Hoogendoorn; R. J. Mouw; B. Nederlof; R. Recker; G. VanderVelde; H. DeMoor, Jr; and L. DenBesten.

As part of the procedure adopted by synod we are "required to submit annual progress reports to synod" and "expected to present a draft of the contemporary testimony within four years (1983)" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 76).

II. PROGRESS REPORT

Your committee has begun to hold meetings, coming together with a sense of excitement about the greatness of the task before us and with humble dependence on God's Spirit to lead us.

There is a large amount of material from previous committees and from other churches with which we must become acquainted. We shall also meet with "resource persons" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 76, III, C, 4) who can help us in this work.

We have adopted the method, at this stage at least, of holding relatively few meetings, but assigning research to be circulated to all committee members. Afterward we meet for discussion with each other and with consultants. We trust that this will be a thrifty and useful way to lay the groundwork for the proposed draft of a contemporary testimony.

We have chosen as our officers: G. J. Spykman, chairman; H. DeMoor Jr., secretary; M. N. Greidanus, reporter.

III. RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received as information.

Contemporary Testimony Committee  
 G. J. Spykman, chairman  
 M. N. Greidanus, reporter



## Overtures

### Overture 1 — Pastoral Experience Requirement for Seminary Professors

Classis Northcentral Iowa overtures the Synod of 1980 to begin a policy of requiring seminary professors to spend one year serving as pastor in a congregation for every five years they serve as teacher in the seminary.

*Grounds:*

1. This would allow seminary professors to better understand the ongoing pastoral ministry, enabling them to be more effective in their task of training students for the pastoral ministry.
2. This would allow the people in the denomination to become more familiar with the seminary faculty.

Classis Northcentral Iowa  
John Elenbaas, stated clerk

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### Overture 2 — Publication of Financial Reports

Classis Illiana overtures synod to require all its boards, agencies, and committees to make a full, complete, and detailed financial statement and disclosure of all its income and expenditures, including, but not limited to, individual salaries, benefits, and expense and travel accounts; and that synod further direct the Office of the Denominational Financial Coordinator and/or Synodical Treasurer, after an official audit has been completed of the financial books and records of each denominational board, agency, or committee, to publish a report of the audit annually and distribute a copy of the report to each consistory.

*Grounds:*

1. Faithful stewardship requires us to be accountable.
2. The constituency paying the quotas is entitled to this information.
3. The constituency lacks adequate information regarding the receipts and expenditures of the denominational boards, agencies, and committees.
4. Each consistory annually prepares and distributes a detailed financial statement to its constituency accounting for all income and expenditures.
5. Article 27 of the Church Order provides that the authority of the consistory is original and that of the major assemblies is delegated; that is, the major assembly is responsible to the minor assembly for its stewardship.
6. It is a dictate of responsible business to provide detailed financial statements of income and expenditures on an annual basis.
7. "All things should be done decently and in order" (I Cor. 14:40).

Classis Illiana  
Harry G. Arnold, stated clerk

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### Overture 3 — Revise Structure of Denominational Boards

Classis Kalamazoo overtures the Synod of 1980:

1. That synod declare that classical representation on denominational boards, except for the CRWRC, be equally distributed between clergy and lay members;
2. That the practice of appointing members-at-large to denominational boards, except for the CRWRC, be terminated; and
3. That a committee be appointed to suggest a method for implementing these changes.

*Grounds:*

1. Thirty-eight representatives from thirty-eight classes should be an adequate number of members for any denominational board.
2. Present board membership does not reflect a balanced representation of the office of believer by laymen, nor is it a fair representation of the office of ministry. (See explanation below.)
3. There are many lay members available whose participation in the work of denominational boards would provide a broader resource of insights and abilities. (See I Cor. 12:4-7.)
4. This would be more in harmony with the precedent of the early Christian church where the apostles appointed deacons that they (the apostles) might "continue... in the ministry of the Word." (See Acts 6:4.)
5. This would increase the involvement of the lay membership of the church in the King's business, thereby thwarting hierarchical tendencies in the church.

Explanation of *Ground 2* above:

The significance of the office of believers (lay members), as a basic Reformed principle, has been overlooked by boards and synods in their application to classical representation on boards. A board membership policy which fully honors the office of believer in the church needs to be established.

The Calvin, Home Missions, and World Missions boards have been from their inception staffed almost exclusively by clergy. It is on these boards that criticism is focused. Is this tradition valid? If valid, why is there a need for members-at-large?

Members-at-large serving on denominational boards are "homeless" representatives who are responsible to no one. Their appointments should be terminated for the following reasons:

- a. The member-at-large is not responsible to, nor does he report to, any ecclesiastical body. He has no ecclesiastical fellowship or calling in the discharge of his duty. Synod, having once elected him, never has any concern for him or word to him. The member-at-large is responsible only to himself.
- b. The body that nominates the member-at-large does not know him. It nominates on the word of a board member from a general area. The synod that elects him is even further removed.
- c. The area that the member-at-large "represents" is fully represented already by the classical districts that constitute his "district."
- d. Synods and classes do not choose their own members. On what Reformed principle are members-at-large appointed to boards?
- e. There is no need to have boards with more members than the classes provide. The thirty-eight members of a board should be fully able to do the work that needs to be done.
- f. There is no administrative principle that governs the number of members-at-large that may be appointed. Three years ago World Missions had five members-at-large; today there are eight. Why not twelve, or sixteen, or twenty?

The material presented and the argumentation used is not to be construed to be anti-ministerial. In proposing a 50 percent representation for the clergy, a balance of the two offices of lay believer and minister will be accomplished.

## Board Membership: (1977-1979)

	1977		1978		1979		1979 Member at Large	Total Board Members
	Clergy-Lay		Clergy-Lay		Clergy-Lay			
Calvin	35	3	35	3	34	4	9	47
Home Missions	35	3	35	3	29	9	11	49
World Missions	36	2	31	7	32	6	8	46
Publications	20	18	19	19	16	22	4	42
CRWRC	0	38	0	38	0	38	6	44

Classis Kalamazoo  
Jack Stulp, stated clerk

### Overture 4 — Study Implications of Membership in Elks Lodge

Classis Kalamazoo overtures synod to study the matter of membership in the Elks Lodge to determine whether membership in the Elks is incompatible with membership in the Christian Reformed Church.

*Grounds:*

1. A church of Classis Kalamazoo has a specific case before it. (See attached request to classis and letter.)
2. Initial research has indicated that the Elks Lodge is not a typical secret society and membership in the Elks neither contains nor implies any religious commitment other than that the member "believe in God."
3. Previous decisions of synod (see Acts of Synod 1975, pages 547-569) have concluded that membership in all lodges is incompatible with membership in the CRC. These decisions have been based on the religious stance of the Masonic Lodge, when in reality there appears to be a profound difference between the Masons and the Elks.

Classis Kalamazoo  
Jack Stulp, stated clerk

#### Request to Classis and Letter

Classis Kalamazoo

Dear Brethren,

Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ desires to become a communicant member of Third Christian Reformed Church. At our council meeting we decided to seek the advice of classis because of a peripheral, not essential, relationship to the Elks.

In our judgment, Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ has made clear in his letter that his involvement with this organization does not implicate him in any religious or philosophic commitment.

We are of a mind to accept him on the basis of his personal testimony, but before doing so, we request classis to make a judgment concerning the appropriateness of our intention.

Sincerely,

THE COUNCIL OF THIRD CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

William D. Buursma, pastor

Dear Brethren,

When I joined the Elks in St. Joseph, I was only asked whether I believed in God, and I made no oath commitment to any philosophy of life. I have never attended any meetings, have made no effort to become involved in the Elks, and never intend to do so. I do not know their secrets if they have them.

My only reason for being involved with them is business and financial. Membership in the Elks costs significantly less than the Country Club. In my work it becomes necessary to take business acquaintances golfing and to lunch. The facilities in the Elks meet these needs and I do hope that you will allow me to keep this privilege.

I can assure you, brethren, that I, in no way, consider myself to be bound to any fellowship with the Elks. I and my family very much want to have our fellowship with the people of Third Church.

I understand the difficulty you face as elders, but I would appreciate consideration of the problem I present.

Sincerely,

### Overture 5 — Restrict the Role of Seminary Professors at Synod

Classis Grandville overtures synod to amend the Synodical Rule (III, A, 3) so as to read: "The Seminary Advisers shall have the privilege of the floor upon the request of the chair or the members of synod, for the purpose of advising synod on matters before it."

*Grounds:*

1. This is in harmony with the advice of the Study Committee of 1961.
2. This will effectively implement the decision of 1961 (3—Ground b) which indicates that synod wanted to change the former rule because it "gave the seminary professors the same privilege of the floor as that given delegated members of synod."
3. The extensive participation of the seminary professors in the discussions of all matters before synod in the years since 1961 indicates that the intent of the decision of 1961 has not been achieved: namely, that the role of the seminary professors be that of *advisers* who do not have the same privilege of the floor as that given the delegated members of synod.

Classis Grandville presents the following materials in support of its overture:

*History*

1. Classis Alberta South overtured the Synod of 1959 "to amend the Rules for Synodical Procedure, Section III, A, 5 to read:

"The emeriti professors may be present at synod in a limited advisory capacity, their advice being given upon the request of the chairman or of synod. They shall not function as advisers on advisory committees except by request" (Acts of Synod 1959, p. 10).

—The grounds cited the increased number of emeriti professors during the coming years and the danger of allowing a group of office-bearers to have a permanent voice at synod though they are not delegated.

—The Synod of 1959 did not accede to this request on the grounds that the danger cited by Classis Alberta South was not substantiated, and that it is to the advantage of synod to use the wisdom of the emeritated professors.

2. Synod of 1960 received five overtures dealing with the matter of seminary professors as synodical advisers.

—Synod decided to reconsider Alberta South's overture to the Synod of 1959 on the ground that "the Synod of 1959 did not address itself to the problem raised by Classis Alberta South. . . ."

—The Synod of 1960 amended the rules to read: "The emeriti professors shall have a limited advisory capacity, their advice to be given upon the request of the chairman or the synod. They shall function as advisers to advisory committees upon the request of synod or an advisory committee" (Acts of Synod 1960, pp. 26ff.).

—Two of the overtures concerned active seminary professors. It was decided "to appoint a study committee to reevaluate our present rules for synodical procedure regarding the place and function of the professors of Calvin Seminary as synodical advisers" (Acts of Synod 1960, p. 28).

3. This study committee reported to the Synod of 1961. Their recommendations are recorded in the Acts of Synod 1961, page 358, as follows:

"A. Advisers to Synod

1. Seminary professors

a. To serve on the advisory committees of synod.

b. To be present or available to synod for advice, upon the request of the chair or members of synod.

2. Emeriti professors

a. To serve on advisory committees when requested by synod.

b. To be available to synod for advice, which is to be given upon the request of the chair or members of synod.

3. President of Calvin Seminary

To advise synod on matters pertaining to the seminary.

4. President of Calvin College

To advise synod in matters pertaining to Calvin College."

The Synod of 1961 did *not* adopt the recommendations of the study committee. Instead, it adopted the following recommendations of its Advisory Committee (Acts of Synod 1961, p. 52):

"1. That synod adopt the heading 'Duties of nondelegated Synodical Functionaries' for II, A of the rules for Synodical Procedure.

2. That the seminary professors serve on the advisory committees of synod.

3. That the seminary professors be present at synod where they shall have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of advising synod on matters before it, subject to the accepted rules governing discussion. On important questions the chair, or any member of synod, may request their advice.

*Grounds:*

- a. The recommendation of the study committee would curb the activity of our seminary professors unduly.
  - b. The former rule gave the seminary professors the same privilege of the floor as that given delegated members of synod, while this reading emphasizes the fact that they are *advisers*.
4. That emeriti professors of the seminary serve on advisory committees when requested by synod.
  5. That emeriti professors of the seminary be available to synod for advice, which is to be given upon the request of the chair or members of synod.
  6. That the President of Calvin Seminary advise synod in matters pertaining to the seminary.
  7. That the President of Calvin College advise synod in matters pertaining to Calvin College."
4. The Synod of 1968 received a communication from the faculty of Calvin Seminary (Acts of Synod 1968, p. 617) requesting synod to declare that:
- "1. Only one-half of the [seminary] faculty shall be required and permitted to attend any synod in an advisory capacity.
  2. A system of rotation shall be established and administered by the faculty whereby a member is designated as adviser to synod once every two years, except that the president shall be designated each year."

The communication stated that "the faculty has for some time felt that it is neither necessary nor desirable that all its active members should each year be in attendance at synod in the capacity of advisers" because:

"... the present size of the faculty makes advice to synod available in every area of synod's interest even on the basis of a reduced representation of the seminary faculty.

"... inasmuch as the presence of twelve or more faculty members constitute a group equal in size to the delegation from three or more classes, this creates a situation in which these men are tempted either (1) to sit as silent, unproductive, and distracting observers, speaking only when advice is explicitly sought, or (2) to involve themselves to an inordinate degree in the affairs of synod.

"... the annual attendance of the full complement of the faculty is *not desirable from the standpoint of the faculty* inasmuch as this tends to preempt time that could be devoted to scholarly pursuits to the profit, not only of the faculty, but of the entire church which it serves."

The Synod of 1968 adopted the recommendation of the seminary faculty "that only one-half of the seminary faculty shall be required to attend synod each year in an advisory capacity, except the president, who shall be present each year" (Acts of Synod 1968, p. 68).

*Observations*

The current status of the seminary professors at synod is that "they shall have the privilege of the floor for the purpose of advising synod on matters before it, subject to the accepted rules governing discussion. On important questions the chair or any member of synod may request their advice."

—This, as it stands, can be understood to say that seminary professors have the full privilege of the floor to advise synod on *all* matters before it without their advice being requested. This puts them on an equal basis with the delegates of synod re the privilege of participating in discussion.

—However, *Ground b* of Synod's 1961 decision indicates that this was not the intent of synod since it states explicitly that this is supposed to be an improvement over the former rule "which gave the seminary professors the same privilege of the floor as that given delegated members of synod, while this reading emphasizes the fact that they are *advisers*."

—It has been the observation of many past delegates that the seminary professors, in line with a long tradition, feel that they have the freedom to become freely involved in the discussion of all the issues before synod, and that not merely in an advisory capacity.

Classis Grandville

Leonard Van Drunen, stated clerk

## Overture 6 — Petition for Division of Classis Grand Rapids East

Classis Grand Rapids East overtures the Synod of 1980 to approve the following division of itself to be effected during the September 1980 session of Classis Grand Rapids East:

### CLASSIS A

Boston Square  
Calvin  
Christ Community  
Church of the Servant  
Eastern Avenue  
First  
Fuller Avenue  
Grace  
Madison Square  
Nelard Avenue  
Oakdale Park  
Plymouth Heights  
Seymour  
Shawnee Park  
Sherman Street  
Woodlawn

16 congregations  
2,391 families  
9,871 Total members

### CLASSIS B

Ada  
Alto, Lakeside  
Brookside  
Caledonia  
Cascade  
Dutton  
East Paris  
Millbrook  
Princeton  
Lake Odessa  
Lowell, Calvary  
Middleville  
Portland

13 congregations  
1,359 families  
5,744 Total members

### Grounds:

1. The size and nature of Classis Grand Rapids East, comprising twenty-nine churches, 3,750 families, and inner-city to rural areas, contributes to inefficient functioning in ministering to the needs of particular areas and churches.
2. This division will allow greater use of human resources and more effective promotion of the ministries and common concerns pertinent to each area and can thereby also contribute to the denominational life of the Christian Reformed Church.
3. Both proposed groups are of adequate size to responsibly finance and support the various ministries within these two areas.
4. While quota obligations of the current classis would remain in effect through December 31, 1980, the September reorganization will allow both new classes to establish proposed budgets for 1981.
5. This proposed division conforms to the structure and functioning of the Christian Reformed Church and kingdom life in these respective areas.

The Rev. Vern Geurkink asked that his negative vote be recorded. The attached report of the Classical Realignment Study Committee was accepted as material to be forwarded to synod with the overture.

Classis Grand Rapids East

J. A. Vander Ark, stated clerk

## MATERIAL IN SUPPORT OF CLASSIS GRAND RAPIDS EAST OVERTURE RE DIVISION OF CLASSIS

Classical Realignment Committee Report:

The Classical Realignment Committee endorses the overture of the Caledonia Christian Reformed Church to divide classis rather than realign with other area classes.

### Grounds:

1. Classis on May 12, 1977, recognized that "the size of classis is such that a reduction in the number of churches in classis would be desirable" (Minutes, Art. 18).
2. While classis in May, 1977, favored realignment instead of the formation of a new classis, realignment with area classes would provide only a temporary solution.
  - a. The proposal that Princeton, Dutton, Caledonia, and Middleville become members of Classis South would leave Classis East the largest classis in the denomination with twenty-five churches and 3,361 families.
  - b. Classis Grandville, the second largest with its twenty-three churches and 3,355 families may in the near future face the same problem Grand Rapids East does now. The above four churches from Grand Rapids East moving to Grand Rapids

- South at this time would reduce the future possibilities of realignment between Classes Grandville and Grand Rapids South.
- c. If Classes Grand Rapids East and Grand Rapids South could equally divide, they would each have 22.5 churches and 3,084 families. If Classes Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids South and Grandville could equally divide they would each have 22.67 churches and 3,174 families. The addition of new congregations in any realigned classis would soon create the very problems now faced in Classis Grand Rapids East.
  - d. Since 1970, ten new congregations have been organized in Classes Grand Rapids East, Grand Rapids South, and Grandville: five in Grand Rapids East, one in Grand Rapids South, and four in Grandville.
3. The division of Classis Grand Rapids East as proposed will allow for the following future possibilities:
    - a. Realignment between Classes Grand Rapids South and Grandville. The Byron Center and Dorr churches moving to Grand Rapids South would increase it to twenty churches and reduce Grandville to nineteen churches.
    - b. Realignment between Classes Grand Rapids South and the proposed Classis Grand Rapids East. If Grand Rapids South would continue to grow following the above possible change, Alger Park, Burton Heights, LaGrave Avenue and possibly Bethel and Grandville Avenue now in Grand Rapids South could join Grand Rapids East.
  4. The proposed Classis B has good potential for growth with the rate of growth in its area during the last decade averaging forty-two families per year.

### Overture 7 — Designate Sanctity-of-Life Sunday

Classis Hudson overtures synod to designate the Sunday prior to January 22 (anniversary of the Supreme Court decision re abortion on demand) as Sanctity-of-Life Sunday to be observed annually by all congregations of the Christian Reformed churches.

#### Grounds:

1. Acts of Synod:
  - a. 1972, Article 47: "That synod call believers to a ringing testimony against the evils of abortion as practiced in our society, and encourage them to promote action and legislation that reflects the teaching of Scripture." (Adopted by Synod on June 19, 1972.)
  - b. 1976, Article 61: "That synod call the classes, consistories, and members of our congregations in both the United States and Canada to do all in their power to protect and promote the sanctity of human life, at any age; publicizing the issues, educating people, organizing committees, and doing whatever is considered necessary to confront people with crucial physical and moral issues which are at stake." (Adopted by Synod on June 14, 1976.)
2. United States is in extremity. Since 1967, when states began relaxing abortion laws, in excess of 9 million babies have been aborted, 30 percent of all pregnancies have ended in abortion. The report further states that 1,370,000 abortions were performed in 1978. (This is stated in the Alan Guttmaker Institute report released to the Associated Press on January 6, 1980.)

In 1972, John Hopkins Medical Center filmed the starvation of a Down's Syndrome baby. This baby was put on a "low calorie diet" (no calories) until the baby died in fifteen days. This is infanticide.

If, in this last part of the twentieth century, the Christian community does not take a prolonged and vocal stand for the dignity of the individual and each person's right to life—for the right of each individual to be treated as created in the image of God, rather than as a collection of molecules with no unique value—we feel that as Christians we have failed the greatest moral test to be put before us in this century (*Whatever Happened to the Human Race?*, p. 195).

3. "On the basis of an unweakened Bible, we must teach and act, in our individual lives and as citizens, on the fact that every individual has unique value as made in the image of God. This is so from a child just conceived in the womb to the old with their last gasping breath and beyond; for death does not bring the cessation of life, but all

people will spend eternity somewhere. . . with God or not, depending on their relationship to Christ as Savior" (*Human Race*, p. 198):

4. Precedents for such action are:
  - a. SCORR
  - b. World Hunger Sunday
  - c. Work of CRWRC
  - d. Proverbs 24:11-12 and Ephesians 6:12

Classis Hudson  
Gerald W. Frens, stated clerk

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### Overture 8 — Assign Announcements re Calls to Classical Stated Clerks

Classis Columbia overtures synod to declare that the following duty shall be included among the duties of the stated clerk of each classis: to report to the denominational church papers *promptly* each accepted call to a church within his classis.

*Grounds:*

1. With growing frequency accepted calls are reported very late or not at all.
2. Information re accepted calls becomes extremely important to calling churches. Prospects have been considered who have accepted calls and are thus ineligible for consideration. Published acceptances would remove this problem.
3. A large number of members in our communion continue to be interested in pulpit exchanges. Full and complete reporting stimulates this interest.
4. This is not a burdensome task for the stated clerks. Not that many notices would have to be sent to the publishing office during a year by each stated clerk.
5. Even though it has been announced that the pastor accepting a call should notify the church papers, confusion continues to grow and persist as to whose responsibility this is. If this is designated as the stated clerk's responsibility, this confusion will end.

Classis Columbia  
Howard B. Spaan, stated clerk

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### Overture 9 — Reports on Salary Schedules

Classis Orange City overtures the Synod of 1980 to urge all denominational boards and agencies to comply with the decision of the Synod of 1978 re "Reports on Salary Schedules" (Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 94f.) and make these available to all consistories by way of Agenda, Acts of Synod, or some other appropriate form.

*Grounds:*

1. Most of the boards and agencies have, in our judgment after reviewing all the available reports, failed to comply with this decision.
2. Our consistories and classes are expected to abide by synodical regulations; the same may rightly be expected of all who work under synodical supervision.
3. Such reports will remove much of the disappointment and dissatisfaction found in the churches because such reports are not now published.

Classis Orange City  
Karl Bratt, stated clerk

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### Overture 10 — Restrict Aid for Seminary Students

Classis Orange City overtures synod to restrict tuition assistance provided for seminary students by quota monies (79 percent for regular full-time students) so that it apply only to students whose intention it is to enter the ministry of the Word and sacraments in the Christian Reformed Church.



*Grounds:*

1. The present policy of subsidizing all Calvin Seminary students, including women and noncandidacy students, confuses the primary purpose of Calvin Seminary, which is stated clearly in Article 19 of the Church Order: "The churches shall maintain a theological seminary at which men are trained for the ministry of the Word."
2. The subsidy of those students whose intention is to become ministers of the Word and sacraments is the responsibility of the churches, according to Article 21 of the Church Order: "The churches shall encourage young men to seek to become ministers of the Word and shall grant financial aid to those who are in need of it."

Classis Orange City

Karl Bratt, stated clerk

### Overture 11 — Interpreting of 1979 Decision to "Defer Implementation"

The Consistory of the Christian Reformed Church of Washington, D.C. overtures synod to declare that the decision of the 1979 Synod instructing consistories to "defer implementation" of the 1978 synodical decision (allowing the ordination of qualified women to the office of deacon) does not affect those churches which had already put the 1978 decision into effect before the Synod of 1979.

*Grounds:*

1. One cannot logically "defer implementation" of a course of action already put into effect. (The definition of the word *implement*, according to the *American Heritage Dictionary*, is, "to provide a definite plan or procedure to ensure the fulfillment of.")
2. The imprecise language of the 1979 decision has allowed for various interpretations; some churches continue to nominate and ordain without regard to sex, while other churches that had ordained women now feel they are prevented from doing so.
3. The 1979 Synod expressed its desire to "avoid hardship to those consistories who have implemented the decision." A church faces serious hardship when, having elected women to the office of deacon, it must once again deny them that office, thereby denying the church their needed services.
4. The struggle over the interpretation of the decision of the Synod of 1979 is undermining the peace and unity of our congregation.

Consistory of Washington, D.C.

Charles Mast, clerk

*Note:* This overture was submitted to Classis Hackensack, meeting January 22, 1980, but was not adopted.

### Overture 12 — Decision of FNC Committee

Classis Hackensack overtures synod to reverse the decisions made by the Fund for Needy Churches (FNC) Committee not to grant the request of the North Haledon Consistory for aid, as submitted in applications for 1979 and 1980.

(Section I was submitted to the Synod of 1979 but because of procedural errors could not legally be received as a matter before synod.)

I. In 1979 the North Haledon Christian Reformed Church overtured synod to reverse the decision made by the FNC Committee not to grant our request for aid as submitted in our revised application submitted to them on November 21, 1978.

*Background*

The application for FNC subsidy from the North Haledon Christian Reformed Church was submitted to the committee on August 9, 1978. This was before the Acts of Synod 1978 were published. The information contained in the application was supplied on the basis of the instructions in a letter, dated June 27th, from the secretary of the FNC committee. Since that time the Acts of Synod 1978 has been received and, in reviewing the decision regarding

ministers' compensation, we found that our application did not conform with the Acts of Synod 1978.

Your attention is directed to Report 20-A. (Par. V, pp. 432f., and Art. 77, Par. C, pp. 91f.), noting especially the section titled "Congregational Responsibility," and the recommendation and grounds adopted by the Synod of 1978.

In order to comply with the mandate of synod, we resubmitted a revised application so that we would be able to supply our pastor with a salary in accord with the current Compensation Guide for Ministers.

Our second application was not granted; therefore, we now appeal to synod to reverse the decision of its FNC Committee.

*Grounds:*

The FNC Committee did not grant our request for three grounds. Listed below are these three grounds and our objections to them:

1. The FNC Committee writes: "The FNC Committee is set up to assist churches in paying a 'minimum' salary as set by synod and not to assist according to the cost of living index."

*Our Objection*

The FNC Committee has neglected to take seriously Article 77, V. The article clearly states that synod is not simply requesting churches to pay minimum salary as outlined by the FNC Committee, but synod is requesting churches who are not meeting the current "Compensation Guide for Ministers" to apply for aid. FNC is mandated by synod (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 92, ground b) "to assist the churches upon proper application, to the best of its ability, to correct ministers' compensation inequities."

2. The FNC Committee writes: "The church may (as some of the churches receiving aid from FNC in your classis do) pay more than \$170 per family per year toward the minister's salary and thus pay him according to the cost of living index."

*Our Objection*

This ground does not speak to the issue we raise. We fully recognize and believe along with the FNC Committee that each church before applying to the FNC ought conscientiously to evaluate their ability to pay as much as possible toward the support of the minister's salary. Each church that applies to FNC needs to evaluate what makes them a needy church. In so doing, the needs of their ministry to the congregation and community must be considered.

The obligation of raising classical and synodical quotas, as well as the minimum of \$170 per family per year, must be evaluated in the light of the stewardship ability of the families of each church. Many times these obligations restrict the small church from conducting programs which would be conducive to their growth.

In our situation, we believe that the only way we are able to give our pastor a salary in accord with the "Compensation Guide for Ministers" is to follow the advice of synod and apply for additional aid.

3. The FNC Committee writes: "The committee questions whether the housing value as listed is a real figure and why the car allowance is not mentioned."

*Our Objection*

Our housing value is calculated higher than the annual compensation survey on our application. Our value is listed at \$4,108 and if we do it according to the compensation survey it would be \$3,924. The car allowance is not mentioned because the annual compensation survey does not list car allowance as part of the total compensation.

On the basis of the above objections we overture synod to honor our request for aid as submitted on our revised application in order to pay our pastor's salary according to the "Compensation Guide for Ministers."

II. The second part of this overture deals with the application made to the FNC Committee for 1980. Our application for 1980 was based on the mandate of synod to support our pastor according to the cost of living index. Classis, however, recommended that the additional money over and above FNC minimum be shared between FNC and our church. However, the FNC Committee has not followed the mandate of synod and the recommendation of classis and rejected these requests for aid by approving only minimum aid for our church. For reasons cited above, we request synod to honor our application for aid as submitted in accordance with the mandate of synod.

*Grounds:*

1. The Synod of 1948 (Acts of Synod 1948, p. 18) reminded all churches that they should apply to the FNC in order to pay their ministers at least the minimum salary. The Synod of 1970 (Acts of Synod 1970, pp. 44, 45, 46) adopted guidelines for minister's salaries and additional benefits. The Synod of 1975 (Acts of Synod 1975, p. 117) adopted an Ordained Men's Compensation Survey and instructed FNC to make every attempt to comply with these guidelines. (FNC has not made any attempt to comply.) The Synod of 1978 (Acts of Synod 1978, p. 92) mandated FNC to assist the churches upon proper application. FNC has not followed the mandates of synod. Synod should let it be known that committees and boards of synod are not to act on their own but must carry out the mandates of synod.
2. The FNC Committee claims that North Haledon CRC is receiving maximum aid. This is not true: they are receiving maximum according to FNC maximum, but not according to synod's cost of living index.

Classis Hackensack

Cecil N. Van Dalfsen, stated clerk

Supplementary materials furnished will be forwarded to synod's advisory committee.

### Overture 13 — Reappraisal of Ministers Pension Fund

Classis Alberta South overtures Synod to initiate a thorough reappraisal of the present Ministers Pension Fund, taking into consideration, among other things, the overtures sent to last year's synod regarding this (cf. Overtures 23, 24, 49 in Acts of Synod 1979).

*Grounds:*

1. Several churches and classes raised objections to the new pension plan when it was first proposed (cf. Acts of Synod 1968, pp. 570-574), and after ten years of operation it has still not been demonstrated that the "advanced funding concept" is either necessary or an improvement over the previous "pay-as-you-go" plan. Many of our churches, ministers included, have serious objections to the present plan.
2. One of the reasons initially presented for the implementation of the present plan was that such funding would soon be a legal requirement. However, as late as last year (1979), the report of the Ministers Pension Plan states: "It is *expected* that in a few years the CRC Pension Plan . . . will come under government rules in both the United States and Canada. When that probability materializes, then funding will be a legal requirement." In a venture such as this, we ought not to operate on the basis of expectations or probabilities. Moreover, it is not at all certain that the government will pass such legislation.
3. Contrary to what we were led to believe, due to inflation, full funding and a reduction in quota are becoming increasingly illusory.
4. For the church to have and operate a multi-million dollar fund in the light of the present world situation ("rich Christians in an age of hunger") is not good stewardship and is ethically questionable, to say the least. (Cf. synod's own reports on this: "And He Had Compassion on Them" and "World Hunger and Structural Change.")
5. The type of investment used in connection with the present plan is also open to serious question.

Classis Alberta South

Paul D. Stadt, stated clerk

### Overture 14 — Dismiss Study Committee re Office of Deacons

Classis Sioux Center overtures synod to reduce the length of appointments on the committee re "Synodical Studies and Decisions Pertaining to the Office of Deacon" to the time

already served, and, after thanking the present committee for their service, appoint a new committee with the same mandate to report to the Synod of 1982.

*Grounds:*

1. The widespread impression has been created in the church that this committee is not well balanced in terms of representing the differences in viewpoint in the matters under discussion (cf. the personal protests in Acts of Synod 1979, p. 137; Banner Aug. 17, 1979, p. 11; Outlook, Aug. 1979, p. 15). In light of the intense, denomination-wide debate over the question of women in ecclesiastical office and in light of synod's mandate that this committee "review *without prejudice* the 1978 Report on Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office" (*italics added*), the church is ill served by the appointment of a committee which gives the appearance of being weighted in one direction.
2. The study committee was not presented for adoption by synod according to the rules previously laid down by synod. Prior to the formation of the study committee under discussion, synod adopted the following motion: "That new study committees to be appointed by synod shall be nominated by the advisory committee which recommends the study with the advice of the officers of synod" (Acts of Synod 1979, p. 15). This procedure apparently was not followed and no explanation is given as to the reasons why not. This does a disservice to the church by creating unnecessary suspicion over an issue that is already highly controversial and emotional.

Classis Sioux Center

Edward J. Knott, stated clerk

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### Overture 15 — Discontinue Movie Reviews in Banner

Classis Minnesota South overtures synod to request the Board of Publications to discontinue reviews of movies in the Banner.

*Ground:*

These reviews are unnecessary because

1. Reviews of movies, which are at least as thorough and critical as those which we find in the Banner, are available elsewhere in daily papers and secular magazines.
2. Secular reviews are in print at a much earlier time and therefore are more useful to those who wish to have this guidance.

Classis Minnesota South

B. Den Herder, stated clerk

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### Overture 16 — Replace Synodical Rules of Order with Robert's Rules of Order and a Parliamentarian

Classis Minnesota South overtures synod to decide to follow ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER in conducting its business and to arrange for a parliamentarian who will offer advice on parliamentary procedures.

*Ground:*

This will help synod to carry on its business in an orderly way.

Classis Minnesota South

B. Den Herder, stated clerk

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### Overture 17 — Delegation of Deacons to Major Assemblies

#### I. AN INTERPRETIVE HISTORY OF THE ISSUE AS FACED BY THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

References to diaconate issues facing our denomination through its history have not been frequent but have surfaced with increasing regularity and insistence.

In the period 1857-1880 two issues were faced: the work of deacons and whether a deacon could be delegated to classis. (Cf. *Index Christian Reformed Church Synodical Decisions 1857-1976*, "Deacons," p. 100.) It appears that the ramifications of that decision for the issue at hand have never been fully explored.

From that time to the present the issues raised focused more on the *work and status of deacons in the local consistory*. The declarations of the Synod of 1938 seem to be the final answer on that issue (Agenda of Synod, II, 1938, pp. 91-99; Acts of Synod 1938, p. 81). 1962 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1962, pp. 496, 95.)

The same year that reported the organization of the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee is the year synod was approached, in connection with church order revisions, to consider delegating deacons to classes and synod. Considerations for Classis Chatham's overture were that this would more truly reflect the full work of Christ as prophet, priest, and king; this would bring diaconal work more under the jurisdiction of the church, instead of in conferences and associations; and this would provide the needed broader discussion and consideration appropriate to broadening diaconal work.

Synod rejected the overture because "insufficient scriptural evidence has been adduced to warrant such a change in the Church Order."

1963 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1963, pp. 443-446, 116f.)

Classis Chatham resubmitted its overture along with a report that addresses itself to scriptural, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical considerations regarding the essential unity of the offices, differences in the offices, deacons and ecclesiastical assemblies, and practical matters. Synod's advisory committee opined that the conclusions were still more inferential than directly scriptural.

Synod appointed a study committee to address itself to the issue but also urged the church to discuss the issue because the material of the overture was relatively new and judged that the church was not ready for this innovation, since only one classis had studied the matter.

1966 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1966, pp. 112-128, 551, 22f.)

The appointed committee submitted its report and recommendations (endorsed by Classis Lake Erie). The committee, noting the 1963 advisory committee's concern for scriptural data, presented a thorough report, the largest portion of which dealt with biblical references (office of the deacon, relation to the office of elder to the office of deacon, and office in the church). The other sections were a theological study of the ministry and offices of the church (addressing itself to questions about the unity, distinctiveness, and equality of the three offices), and an historical survey of the process of diaconal representation practiced by the Gereformeerde Kerken.

The committee favored some change in the method of delegation to major assemblies because of (1) the biblical recognition of the authority of all ecclesiastical office, (2) the importance of the priestly aspect of the church's ministry, (3) the large number of matters at major assemblies that concern deacons, and (4) the recognized principle of the equality and unity of office.

The committee recommended that: (1) synod declare that, in the light of Scripture and the Reformed confessions, it judges that there are no lawful objections to the delegation of deacons to the major assemblies of the church; (2) synod refer a specific procedure of delegating deacons (with identical mandates and credentials) to major assemblies and the needed changes of the Church Order to the churches for consideration; (3) the churches be urged to reactivate the office of deacon on the local level; and (4) the whole issue be settled in 1968.

Synod, again expressing its concern about inferential argumentation, referred the issue to the churches, continued the committee, and added five specific questions to them for answer.

1967 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1967, pp. 232-255, 670-673, 701, 703)

The committee reported an evenly divided response from the churches to their report. Agenda overtures urged synod not to delegate deacons with identical mandates and credentials, to study further the biblical status and authority of deacons, and to reject the report because (1) Scripture says church government is the task of the elders, (2) Scripture says the task of the deacon is to care for the needy in word and deed, and (3) the historical position of the Reformed churches conflicts with it.

The committee responded to the questions that dealt with the following issues: Do major assemblies demand the presence of *deacons* because they must be characterized by the representation of *all the offices*? Does concern for not "lording it over" demand equal

representation? Where precisely does the *authority* of the deacon lie? How will the distinctiveness of the diaconal office be maintained if deacons have mandates and credentials identical to those of ministers and elders at major assemblies? Should we be learning something from the Old Testament idea of office about how it is to be viewed in the New Testament? The committee responded to further objections and then resubmitted its recommendation.

The advisory committee challenged several points of the committee's report, but synod declared that "the delegation of deacons to the major assemblies of the church is neither prohibited nor demanded by Scripture and the Reformed confessions. *Ground:* Neither Scripture nor the Reformed confessions speak specifically to this matter."

Then synod, instead of waiting to present the issue to the churches for a year, decided to settle the matter right there. Its decision was "not at the present time [to] move in the direction of delegating deacons to major assemblies." This was followed by a refusal to accede to the committee's recommendation that synod urge the reactivation of the office of deacon on the local level. The committee was released and the issue declared still open to the thought and reflection of the churches.

1970 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1970, pp. 523f., 96ff.)

That thought and reflection began coming in again three years later. Classis Hamilton asked synod to reconsider the whole issue because "many matters which are distinctively the responsibility of the diaconal office are considered at major assemblies" and "diaconal conferences which take decisions in matters pertaining to the work of mercy have no authority to implement these decisions in the church."

Synod agreed to look into it and appointed a committee.

1971 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1971, pp. 641, 659, 137f.)

Additional material for that committee's consideration came from a Classis Sioux Center overture, the thrust of which was to change the Church Order so as to provide for the delegation of deacons because (1) each office should be represented; (2) the deacons must be involved in decision making, because acts of mercy extended through them are interwoven with the church's spiritual ministry; (3) the cost of synod will be reduced significantly; and (4) the representation of local church to classis will be increased.

1972 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1972, pp. 363-383, 47f.)

The committee submitted majority and minority reports, and synod's advisory committee "was not in complete accord with either the majority or minority reports."

The minority report judged that synod should move in the direction of delegating deacons because (1) synod had already declared that Scripture and the confessions did not prohibit this action; (2) the unity of the offices argues for the propriety of doing so; (3) on the local level deacons are already involved in the government of the church; and (4) long tradition points in this direction.

Synod, however, chose not to go in the direction of delegating deacons. It decided not to declare itself on two statements proposed by the advisory committee, but declared the whole issue still open to the constructive attention of the churches.

1975 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1975, pp. 633, 103.)

On the basis of synod's own statements (1973) concerning the nature of ecclesiastical office and ordination, Classis Muskegon urged synod to revise the Church Order so as to specify the delegation of deacons to major assemblies.

Synod returned the overture to Classis Muskegon, requiring that more attention be paid to the function of deacons, preserving the distinctiveness of the offices, demonstrating that the full expression of the diaconal function calls for delegation to major assemblies, and addressing itself to the problems created in major assemblies by changing the Church Order.

1976 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1976, pp. 630, 52f.)

Classis Muskegon, believing its point missed and its overture misunderstood, resubmitted it with explanations and a further request that synod appoint a committee to consider the implications of the 1973 guidelines for the deacon delegation issue.

Synod refused to adopt the overture because it did not see that adoption of the guidelines of 1973 had "created an entirely new situation." It also declined to appoint a committee, judging the suggested study to be Classis Muskegon's responsibility.

1978 (Cf. Acts of Synod 1978, pp. 662f, 115.)

Synod sustained the appeal of the Fremont II Consistory challenging Classis Muskegon's decision to delegate deacons to classis on a temporary, experimental basis, as being contrary to Church Order.

## II. ANALYSIS, OBSERVATIONS, JUDGMENTS

The history above is necessary to show the zigzag course the issue has followed over the sixteen years it has been before us. It appears that this course resulted from minute concern paid to detailed items and issues raised by persons, advisory committees, study committees, churches, classes, and synodical discussion. The history reveals the swirling of recurrent themes surrounding the simplicity, clarity, and cogency of the original Chatham overture and the substantial guidance of the 1967 report. The following "chart" seeks to make that description more graphic:

CONSIDERATIONS FOR  
DEACON DELEGATION

1. The church must be open to the work of the Holy Spirit shaping, molding, equipping it to minister in our times.
2. The church must recognize the authority, unity, and equality of all the offices.
3. It is important to the priestly work of Christ. The work of mercy is interwoven with the total spiritual ministry of the church.
4. A long tradition points to its appropriateness.
5. Scripture and the Reformed confessions do not prohibit it.
6. It has developed in the Gereformeerde Kerken.
7. It is appropriate that the deacons be involved in the decision-making process regarding diaconal matters on a broader scale.
8. The expanding work of deacons calls for representation in the forum where their expanding work is discussed.
9. It will bring the work of diaconal conferences under the authority of the church.
10. As elders' authority and function finds a reflection in broader assemblies, so, too, must the deacons'; or as unity of office is seen in local circumstances, so, too, must it be seen in major assemblies.
11. It will enhance the office of deacon.
12. It will reduce the cost of synod.
13. It will increase participation of the local church in classis.

CONSIDERATIONS AGAINST  
DEACON DELEGATION

1. Scripture does not demand it.
2. Common or equal authority does not mean identity of function.
3. The focus of real diaconal ministry is local.
4. It is contrary to the historical Reformed position.
5. Scripture and the confessions do not demand it or speak directly to it. There's too much inference.
6. That was a rough road, the way they did it.
7. Major assemblies are representative of the church, not the offices.
8. Concern not to "lord it over" does not demand equal representation.
9. It will give the deacons an authority their office doesn't possess.
10. It will destroy the distinctiveness of the offices.
11. It will endanger the vitality of the office at the local level by increasing diaconal activity in major assemblies.

Initially, as is proper and usual among us, concern was expressed about the scriptural justification for making a change in our delegations to classis and synod. Once, however, that basic concern was faced and synod made the decisive statement of 1967 ("...neither prohibited nor demanded by Scripture and the...confessions"), the discussion has focused on lateral issues and moved increasingly to practical considerations—as it must.

It appears that the significance and impact of that decision in 1967 has never completely sunk into the consciousness of our denomination. Once it has been declared that the issue is not one of principle, not one which the Scriptures demand of us but also not one which the Scriptures prohibit, then the form of the questions changes and the criteria for answering it change also. Then it becomes a matter of judgment, and the criteria may be any or all of the

following: wisdom, feasibility, practicality, cost, effect on growth, diaconal willingness, and so on.

We believe that the issue of delegating deacons to major assemblies among us is now basically a practical question. Classis Muskegon believes that it can assist synod in finding its way through the maze we now face by presenting a practical solution.

### III. A CONCRETE PROPOSAL FOR DELEGATING DEACONS TO MAJOR ASSEMBLIES

#### A. *Background*

For several years Classis Muskegon has been concerned with the matter of delegating deacons to major assemblies. In most of its consideration it dealt with the issue on the level of theory or principle. In 1977, however, classis received from one of its churches an overture outlining a plan for delegating deacons to classis and requesting that this plan be adopted. The proposed plan was submitted for the following reasons:

1. Much of the material considered at classis is not specifically germane to the office of elder. As a result many of these matters are dealt with in a perfunctory manner, and in addition much time is taken from those matters to which the elders should be devoting themselves in more detail.

2. Deacons are more directly involved on a congregational level with many of the matters dealt with at classis than are the elders. However, since they do not attend classis they are not in direct contact with these matters. As a result they often operate from a position of noninvolvement.

Furthermore, this proposed plan took due consideration of the distinction between the offices of elder and deacon. It was based upon consideration of the following:

1. Some of the matters considered at classis are the direct concern of the elders; for example: discipline cases, doctrinal matters, examination of candidates, and so forth. (Cf. Articles 24 and 65 of the Church Order, and the provisionally approved "Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons," Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 376-377.)

2. Some of the matters at classis are more directly the concern of the deacons; for example: report of the delegate to the CRWRC, SCORR, Use of Members' Gifts, Task Force on World Hunger, Church Help Fund, FNC, and so forth. (Cf. Article 25 of the Church Order, and the provisionally approved "Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons," Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 376-377.)

3. Some of the matters of classis are of equal concern to both offices jointly; for example: support of needy students. Included in this is an opportunity for the deacons to fulfill their responsibility "to render account of their work" (cf. Church Order, Art. 35c) and for the elders to inform the deacons of their activities. This is done by each group reading its concept minutes for the day.

After due consideration of the proposed plan, Classis Muskegon decided to put it into operation for one year beginning with the classical meeting in the spring of 1978. This was to be on a trial basis in keeping with the declaration of synod that the matter should be dealt with as far as possible on a local level. The plan was that if the arrangement should prove to be workable and beneficial, it would then be proposed to synod as a basis for delegating deacons to major assemblies throughout the denomination. The plan was utilized at the spring 1978 meeting of classis. It was followed for the one meeting only since an appeal was brought to synod maintaining that this procedure was contrary to the Church Order. This protest was sustained by the Synod of 1978 and, therefore, classis desisted from carrying it further. However, the effectiveness of the procedure was very evident. Various individuals testified to the meaningfulness of the experiment. Many deacons asserted a real enthusiasm for the meaning it gave to their office. One church in particular noted a sizable increase in giving to CRWRC after one of the deacons had attended classis. One of the functionaries of classis noted that his report had received a far greater expression of interest when he delivered it to the deacons. As a result of this experience, it was the decision of classis that this matter should be further pursued and brought to synod through an overture.

#### B. *The Proposed Plan*

In the light of the experience and study of Classis Muskegon we present a plan for the delegation of deacons to major assemblies. This plan recognizes both the unity of office and the distinctions to be maintained between the offices of elder and deacon.

1. For classis

- a. The classical committee, or some other committee appointed by classis, meets a sufficient length of time before the meeting of classis and prepares an agenda



which divides the items for consideration by classis according to the following categories:

- 1) Matters to be considered by the deacons,
- 2) Matters to be considered by the elders,
- 3) Matters to be considered by elders and deacons jointly.
- b. Each church delegates to classis, the pastor, one elder, and one deacon.
- c. Classical meetings may follow the following format:
  - 1) Meet together for opening devotions and constitution of classis,
  - 2) Meet separately to deal with matters assigned to elders and deacons respectively,
  - 3) Meet jointly for:
    - (a) Consideration of matters of common concern,
    - (b) Reading of all concept minutes,
    - (c) Closing of classis.
2. For synod
  - a. The Synodical Interim Committee shall prepare the agenda for synod, appointing the committees of synod and designating which matters are to be considered by:
    - 1) The elders and pastors,
    - 2) The deacons,
    - 3) The delegates of synod jointly.
  - b. Each classis delegates to synod: one pastor, one elder, and one deacon.
  - c. The outline for the meetings of synod is as follows:
    - 1) Meet jointly,
    - 2) Meet separately,
    - 3) Meet jointly.

#### C. Necessary Church Order Changes

We alert synod to the fact that, should synod agree to the plan submitted here, changes will have to be made in Articles 40a and 45 of the Church Order.

#### IV. OVERTURE RE DELEGATION OF DEACONS TO MAJOR ASSEMBLIES

On the basis of the foregoing Classis Muskegon overtures synod:

##### A. To adopt a plan for the delegation of deacons to major assemblies.

*Grounds:*

1. Synod has declared that "the delegation of deacons to the major assemblies is... (not) prohibited... by Scripture and the Reformed confessions." (Cf. Acts of Synod 1967, p. 93.)
2. The delegation of deacons to major assemblies will reinforce the importance and work of the office of deacon. (Cf. Art. 25 of the Church Order and the provisionally approved "Form for the Ordination of Elders and Deacons," Acts of Synod 1979, pp. 376-377.)
3. Many of the matters discussed at major assemblies are matters that are dealt with by the deacons in the local congregation.

##### B. To implement a plan to delegate deacons to the major assemblies by adopting the following proposals:

1. That an exception to the provisions of Church Order, Article 40a be granted until 1983 to those classes of the Christian Reformed Church which so desire in order that deacons may be delegated to classical meetings.
2. That synod instruct those classes which choose to include deacons as delegates at their meetings to do so according to the guidelines set forth above (III, B, 1).
3. That those classes which seat deacons as delegates according to these guidelines be requested to report on the effectiveness of their experience.
4. That the Synod of 1982 be requested to appoint a committee to receive these reports from the classes, to evaluate them, and to make recommendations to the Synod of 1983 regarding the delegation of deacons to classes.
5. That the Synod of 1983 give consideration to the restatement of the provisions of Church Order, Articles 40a and 45 regarding the delegation of deacons to major assemblies, for ratification by the Synod of 1984.

6. That procedures for delegating deacons to synod be delayed until the Synod of 1984.

Classis Muskegon  
Harvey D. Bultje, stated clerk

### Overture 18 — Adopt Statements from Report on Mission Principles

Classis Eastern Canada overtures the Synod of 1980 to adopt the following recommendations contained in the report of the Committee on Mission Principles in its report to the Synod of 1977 (Acts of Synod 1977, Report 42, p. 633f.):

A. Regarding the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee

1. That greater effort be made to relate this ministry to the entire ministry of the church.
2. That CRWRC concentrate on working in closer consultation, planning, and correlation with other agencies, especially when nonemergency programs are contemplated.
3. The work of CRWRC must be compatible with the mission of the church. Doing good deeds may not become an end in itself but must serve the progress of the gospel.
4. The CRWRC constitution should be reviewed and revised to make provision in the CRWRC mandate for areas of ministry not presently and specifically provided for, and to delineate more clearly the interrelationships that must apply in regard to other agencies. At present these matters are inadequately provided for.

5. The CRWRC must remain sensitive to the duty to work in close cooperation with national governments and churches, as well as with our own church agencies.

B. Regarding the Christian Reformed Board of World Missions

1. That the provisions in the Mission Order of the CRWM for field councils be understood as the basic structure for realizing mutual cooperation on fields where more than one agency is involved. In most cases we believe that the Mission Order as adopted and amended by the Synod of 1976 provides an adequate mechanism for such interrelationships. Where this cannot be done through a single field council structure, the agencies involved must create the necessary means for cooperation and integration.

2. Minutes and reports of field councils should be sent to each agency involved in a specific cooperative ministry. Individual workers remain under the jurisdiction of their specific boards.

3. The CRWM is capable of and ought to be utilized for providing the basic orientation for work in areas of cooperative effort.

4. The CRWM has primary responsibility for insuring effective liaison with national churches.

*Grounds:*

- a. It is important not only that our church be aware of the oneness of the mission of our church, but also that our churches on the mission fields be aware of that oneness.
- b. The work of CRWRC must be compatible with the mission of the church. Doing good deeds may not become an end in itself, but must serve the progress of the gospel.
- c. This integration of the mission of CRWRC and the Christian Reformed Board of World Missions has so far not been realized. To the contrary, the development is toward independent action.
- d. Now that our church is about to enter our "hunger" target country, Sierra Leone, it is especially important that the two ministries be integrated.

Classis Eastern Canada  
Steven Sietsema, stated clerk

### Overture 19 — Formation of a Classis of Indian Churches

Classis Rocky Mountain overtures the Synod of 1980:

1. That synod approve the concept of the Council of Indian Churches (CIC) taking steps toward becoming an officially recognized classis within the Christian Reformed denomina-

tion possessing unique features as a classis, such as:

- a. All sessions of classis shall be conducted in English and Navajo,
- b. The proposed classis shall be regulated by the Church Order, modified with the concurrence of synod to meet the unique cultural needs of the Indian churches,
- c. The member congregations shall participate in payment of denominational quotas at a level recommended by the classis,
- d. Classis shall participate in denominational affairs (synod, its boards, etc.) as mutually agreed upon by the classis and synod.

*Grounds:*

- 1) The Church Order defines a classis as a group of neighboring churches.
  - 2) The biblical guidelines for the growth of Indian churches urge local congregations to seek early recognition as churches.
  - 3) The formation of a classis, as proposed, is judged to be the only arrangement under which the majority of the churches can organize and participate meaningfully on a classical level.
  - 4) The CIC consists of fifteen member congregations, the majority of which will be able to organize under the above provisions.
2. That the 1980 Synod authorize the Council of Indian Churches, in consultation with the Board of Home Missions and Classis Rocky Mountain, to develop and refine the concept and plan for becoming a classis, and report back to the synod in 1981.
  3. That the 1980 Synod be informed of the position of the CIC that the Christian Reformed Indian churches shall be expected to contribute to denominational quotas at a level recommended by the classis of the Indian churches.

*Grounds:*

1. This enables them to establish their identification with the denomination in its total program.
2. Participation in the payment of denominational quotas is an established feature of Reformed policy and practice.
3. Recognizing the uniqueness of the "Indian Field" with its own local mission challenge, its present dependence upon denominational funds, and the general economic level of its membership, the level of quota participation can best be determined by the classis involved.

Classis Rocky Mountain

Gerald R. Erffmeyer, stated clerk

Three enclosures are submitted with this report: (1) a copy of a letter of endorsement from the Home Missions Board, (2) a report of committee for Indian Church Growth (Dec. 1978), and (3) a report of the Christian Reformed Council for Indian Churches (Jan. 22, 1980). (These materials will be forwarded to the advisory committee at synod. W.P.B.)

## Printed Appeal

### Classis Alberta North Appeals Decision of the 1979 Synod re Provisions for Future Needs

Classis Alberta North appeals the decision of the Synod of 1979 (Acts of Synod, 1979, Art. 92, 5, p. 105), which affirms that Art. 92, 5 "be its answer to Overture 23."

*Ground:* Article 92, 5 simply asserts that Overture 23 "fails to provide adequate scriptural proof that it is unscriptural for an individual or the church of Christ to lay up money or goods for the needs of our future." This assertion begs the question and does not do justice to, nor demonstrate *that*, or *how*, the scriptural proof advanced in Overture 23 is inadequate.

Classis Alberta North  
H. Jonker, stated clerk

### LIST OF PERSONAL APPEALS

1. W. Ludwig, C. Bruinsma, W. A. Schilthuis, R. Boonstra, and W. Jongejan appeal decision of Classis Huron re Suspension.
2. Mr. Clarence Reyneveld appeals decision of Classis Grand Rapids South.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is crucial for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to support informed decision-making.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in data management and analysis. It discusses how modern software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and reporting, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data management, such as data quality, security, and privacy. It provides strategies to mitigate these risks and ensure that data is used responsibly and ethically.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes by summarizing the key findings and recommendations. It stresses the importance of ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that data management practices remain effective and aligned with the organization's goals.

6. The sixth part of the document provides a detailed overview of the data collection process, including the identification of data sources, the design of data collection instruments, and the implementation of data collection procedures.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of data quality and the steps taken to ensure that the data collected is accurate, complete, and reliable. It also addresses the issue of data consistency across different sources and time periods.

8. The eighth part of the document focuses on data security and privacy, detailing the measures implemented to protect sensitive information from unauthorized access, disclosure, or loss. It also discusses the importance of obtaining informed consent from data subjects.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the role of data in decision-making and the importance of using data to inform strategic planning and operational decisions. It highlights the need for clear communication and collaboration between different departments and stakeholders.

10. The tenth part of the document provides a final summary and concludes the report. It reiterates the key findings and recommendations and expresses confidence in the organization's ability to implement the proposed data management practices effectively.