NO SALVATION OUTSIDE THE CHURCH? *

In Article 28 of the Belgic Confessions we confess that everyone is bound to join himself to the true Church “since this holy congregation is the assembly of those who are saved, and outside of it there is no salvation...” (a)

Rev. I. de Wolff notes that “here we are dealing with a statement which has caused a great deal of controversy. Everyone is admonished to join the true Church, because outside of it there is no salvation; and the question has been raised whether salvation is then actually dependent upon church membership, so that whoever is not joined to the true Church is lost. Since no one wishes to draw this conclusion, and since nevertheless the confession expresses itself quite unambiguously, there are all kinds of attempts to find solutions.” (b)

Rev. de Wolff then gives some example of such attempts. The obvious meaning of the words “outside of it there is no salvation” (c) is undermined by suggesting that the word “salvation” should be taken in a restricted and therefore modified sense, or that outside of the “sphere of influence” of the Church there is no salvation.

He also mentions that “we naturally must reject the idea that the Confession should refer to the so-called invisible church, for one cannot join himself to that which is invisible.” He then concludes that “we have to take the words of confession literally. The confession does not say that outside the church no one shall be saved, but that outside of it there is no salvation. That is not the same thing.

The meaning is: God does not give salvation to the world, not to the false church... but to the true Church where He wants to live with Word and Spirit, as it is also said of that church that it is an assembly of those who are saved. Salvation, therefore, has to be sought there where God gives it, and that is not outside of the Church but in the Church; just as He has also given Christ to be Head of the Church, and has poured out the Holy Spirit in the midst of it, and has given His Word to it, - so likewise salvation. This is the general rule.” (d)

“He who accepts the salvation in Jesus Christ with a true faith should desire to receive salvation where Christ saves, namely inside the communion of the Church... That is why we should not look for it anywhere else.” (e)

We must recognize that there is the danger that we seek our salvation in the Church or in the Confessions apart from Christ. We do not confess to believe in the Church, and we do not believe in our Confessions, but we confess our faith.

We must also be aware of the danger that we seek our salvation in Christ outside of the church and apart from the Confessions of the Church. We must be careful not to foster radical individualism. The Lord has given the Church as the place where salvation is to be found.

Does the Church save? Of course not! It is the Church that the Lord is saving. The means of grace and the government of Christ are found in the true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. We create false dilemmas when we perceive a personal relationship with our Saviour to be distinguished from Church membership. How can we speak of being related to the head and not being related to the body? It is a matter of covenantal life and death whether we are living members of the Church of
Jesus Christ. “The Lord is particular about the Church membership of the believer. Therefore we must also be particular about it.” (f)

Are the Confessions “saving documents”? Definitely not, but how can we separate our love for our Saviour from our confessions of Him? Is not the Saviour we love the Saviour whom we confess? Is not our confession of Him to come from and reflect the love with which He first loved us? The only Saviour we can know and love is the Saviour revealed in Scripture and confessed by His Church. “With the heart man believes and so is justified, and he confesses with his lips and so is saved.” (Rom 10:10)

Ron Dykstra

*From Information, July 3/93.

(a) Book of Praise: “since this holy assembly and congregation is the assembly of the redeemed and there is no salvation outside of it...
© Book of Praise: “there is no salvation outside of it...
(b) (d) The Church, I. de Wolff (p.14,15)
(e) (f) We Believe, J.A. Vink (p.29)

Synod 1998 about the OPC

The decision of General Synod Fergus 1998 about the OPC has given cause for quite a few reactions. This does not come as a surprise. I don’t think that the brothers at Synod 1998 were of the understanding that this decision would resolve all the differences about this matter. They felt that this was the responsible way of dealing with it. The churches now have to examine what they did. Some have already indicated their disapproval and have suggested that the decision must be appealed. There are also many who feel that Synod 1998 did the right thing. Prior to Synod 1998 we had our differences about it, and we still have them today. The amount of submissions to the last General Synods and their contents are a proof of this. It is therefore very important that we listen to each other.

General Synod 1998 maintained several decisions of previous Synods about our contact with the OPC, but it also indicated that the matters of admission to Lord’s Supper and confession membership must be resolved according to an agreement proposed by Synod (See Acts, pages 157, 158). If the OPC does not adopt this agreement, Synod decided that the next General Synod would have to reconsider the present relationship (Recommendation J).

Several brothers have criticized and questioned this approach. Although I can appreciate the direction that Synod 1998 took, I share the concerns expressed by others. I share their concern that as we seek unity with other federations we are making rules and conditions as we go along. Will we do the same with the United Reformed Churches? Then we have a very long and difficult road ahead. Is it indeed proper to come up with these kinds of agreements as we find out things about the other federations? I do not think so! On what basis do we seek unity? Is it not on the basis of Scripture and Confession? That is sufficient. When a federation pledges to abide by the word of God and the Doctrine of God’s Word and also proves this in its actions and decisions, then we should not come up with more conditions. Rather, we should extend the hand of brotherhood,
sincerely and honestly. You could compare it to admission into the church. What do we ask of those who want to join? Do we ask them to sign all kinds of agreements about confessional membership and supervision of the Lord’s Table? No, we admit them when they promise and prove to be bound to God’s Word and the Three Forms of Unity, no more, no less.

The trouble concerning the contact with the OPC is that since 1977 the churches have proceeded on two tracks, the one said, “you are true church,” the other said, “but no fellowship” Subsequent Synods have continued this two track system. It was the hope of Synod Abbotsford to get away from this. Synod Fergus has shifted the emphasis, perhaps, but continued on the same two track system. I do not believe that this will solve the difficulties. We have to go deeper. We have to get rid of this two track approach.

Allow me to work this out further. As Reformed Churches we put a lot of emphasis on the Confessions, and rightly so. We maintain that in the confessions the Church summarizes the true and complete doctrine of salvation. The Church is the pillar and bulwark of the truth. This means that when the church uses confessional language, she holds up the doctrine of God’s Word. This, in turn means that when you use this confessional language you are duty bound to abide by it and live up to it. Otherwise, what do your words mean? If the church publicly states, this is what the Confession says, but does not abide by it, she devalues her own language. It will have far reaching consequences for the church. I believe that this is the case in our decision regarding the OPC.

In 1977 the CanRC made a decision regarding the OPC. Synod decided with thankfulness to recognize the OPC as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession. (Acts 1977, Art.91) Synod even referred to the Confession. We made a decision with our Confession in our hands. We said, “OPC, we recognize you as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word of God speaks about it.” But then we decided not to live up to this decision, no pulpit exchange, and no intercommunion. Here lies the problem. We have not lived up to what we said on the basis of God’s Word and the Confession.

Now it is possible that having made the decisions in 1977, the churches came to serious doubts about this whole matter. But then you cannot maintain such strong language as we used in 1977, and at the same time not implement it. Indeed, it is one of two things; either we live up to the decisions of 1977 or we admit we were wrong in 1977. Our wrong as CanRC is that we have maintained that decision of 1977, but at the same time have refused to live up to it. This way you can make all kinds of agreements, but they side step the issue.

We should go to the OPC and say, “here is our hand of fellowship, and we are one.” But then we should also dare to admit that we have been wrong all these years. Or, we should go to the OPC and say, “we cannot maintain what we said in 1977 for these reasons.” Then we also have to admit wrong for not saying this sooner. In light of the language used in 1977 we have no other way out. At the same time, whether we go ahead or break it off, an admission of wrong is in place.

Synod 1998 has not helped the churches by continuing on a two track approach. It maintains 1977, but at the same time puts conditions on the table, that prevent full fellowship. That is wrong toward
the OPC; it also has consequences for us. In maintaining this approach we continue to devaluate our confessional language. For what does it mean to say, you are church of the Lard Jesus Christ?

I see this devaluation reflected in the decisions of Synod as well.

On page 153 of the Acts, (Consideration B.4.c) I read: It should be understood that there is no doubt that the divergences need to be discussed on an ongoing basis. But it should then also be realized that they can be discussed within a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship. Meanwhile, no one in the Canadian Reformed Churches is bound to the Westminster Standards within such a relationship. The confessions of others may be of interest and value to all, but one is bound only to the confessions adopted by the federation of which one is a member or office-bearer. Similarly, in a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship, though the pulpits are in principle open, this is still by invitation only.

Apart from the question of whether these divergences can be discussed within a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (I don’t believe it) Synod’s consideration devalues the binding to the confession. You can have your own standards, but another can have different set. You can take or leave it. Sure you have to discuss, but what does that mean when you have accepted each other already? It sends the message; your confession can say this, but so what? In dealing with the ICRC Synod was rightly concerned about this, but now it does exactly what it warned against in Art. 52. We begin to legitimize what we have been doing with the OPC over the years.

The Consideration I just quoted comes back as part of Recommendation C. Moreover, that the differences between the three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards are not such that they prevent Ecclesiastical Fellowship but they are divergences about which there can continue to be discussions among those who belong to Reformed Churches.

Synod maintained the decision of Synod 1992 in this regard (Acts 1992, Art.72, V.B, page 55). Not only does it maintain this decision it also broadens it. Synod 1998 speaks of a discussion among those who belong to Reformed Churches. Who are they? Are we still dealing with a sister-church relationship? Synod 1992 at least made it specific, it said this concerns the OPC. But now it is “those who belong to Reformed Churches”. That is not only vague language; I see it as a proof of devaluation of confessional language.

Does all this mean I would favour entering into a sister-church relationship with the OPC? Not at all! My point is that you cannot maintain 1977 and at the same time put up additional conditions. You are either duty bound to implement 1977, or you are duty bound to break it. Several brothers who voiced objections to Synod 1998 want to go the first way, I would defend that we have to go the second; the decision of 1977 has to be taken back. We have been wrong as churches to make it and maintain it. The basis on which I say this is the fact that the OPC maintains the Westminster Standards and the CanRC the Three Forms of Unity. Synod 1998 in the Consideration quoted above indicates that there is a difficulty between these two sets of standards. Why would you otherwise make such a consideration? But then you have to go further. The discussion has to deal with the question whether the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity can be put on the same level. If they can, then stop putting up conditions. If they cannot, then let’s deal with that.
Now I know that Synod 1986 received a report dealing with these divergences. Synod 1998 said that it is the ground for the 1977 decision. If that is so, then why put up conditions? In addition, that report submitted to 1986 had its conclusion already before the evidence was presented. Synod 1984 gave the Committee the mandate: “to publish, for the benefit of our Churches, a detailed evaluation of the confessional and church-political divergences, showing proof that these divergences do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The mandate was not, evaluate and, see whether there is no impediment. But, evaluate to prove that there is no impediment, the conclusion of that report was already determined before the report was written. My conclusion is that these two sets of Standards have not been properly evaluated.

A related question to this is whether the sister-church relationship as we had it at the time, and as it had developed over history was meant to cover a relationship between churches with different confessions and church orders?

That brings me to these two matters which Synod 1998 now wants to resolve by means of an agreement. I said earlier that this is not right. You accept each other on the basis of God’s word and the Confessions. I share Synods concerns about these matters, but I go a step further. These matters have everything to do with the Confessions. The way the Westminster speaks about the Church is not the same as the Three Forms of Unity. Therefore, do not make a separate agreement, and end up in long debates about the history of fencing the table, or whether we ever had confessional membership, but go to the root, the difference in Standards.

We are all aware that we are not dealing with a minor issue. If we as churches maintain 1977, then we better stop making agreements, for then we can be found opposing the Lord. I believe we have to go the other way. Admit our wrong in making the decision of 1977. Admit our wrong in not implementing it all these years. It is drastic, yes. but if before the Lord this is required, then we better do it. The first rule in the church of Jesus Christ is to be more obedient to God than to man. Then we can expect a blessing from the Lord.

Rev. D. G. J. Agema

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH:

A Contradiction?

It won’t come as news to anyone when we conclude, that as Reformed people, we often have many heavy discussions about all kinds of topics. Can the Hymns be accepted in the Church in the manner in which they have recently been introduced? Is preaching that only consists of speaking and explaining still consistent with our time? Or should we add other things instead of only the spoken word of the preacher, to bind the promises of God on the hearts of the believers? And when we speak about the offices it does not take long before you hear, “can’t the sisters participate in the offices?” But in all these discussions one equally important topic often remains in the background. This is the topic of the relationship of Christ to His Church. Doesn’t the Church receive too much emphasis in relationship to Christ? Is there annoyance with or even offense taken against the Confessions of the Church among us? That’s what we would like to touch on in this article.

Christ Alone
A discussion about the relationship between Christ and His Church is sometimes quickly broken off with the words: Christ alone! Through faith in this Saviour we have access to the God of life. Then we should give each other some room about other, subordinate, matters. After all, the main point is that one confession - Christ is our Lord! Faith in Him gives joy and brings redemption. Have a look; this Son of God has earned everlasting life for all who believe in Him. What more could we want from such a Lord?

Soon we see how fast the lines from this view are pulled through. If faith in Christ alone is sufficient then we can have a variety of views about the Church. You can find this Christ everywhere, can’t you? You don’t really need to be Reformed. Other church federations preach Christ as well. Admittedly with some other emphasis, but when we recognize the love of Christ we may extend the hand of brotherhood and can work with them in this society. Such working together is very necessary, for just see how the working together with unbelievers breaks down Christian faith. For these reasons many do not want to speak too specifically about so-called subordinate matters such as: offices, child baptism, preaching and the church. These matters are less urgent, you hear them say.

No Isolated Christ

Is it true that faith in Christ is sufficient and that all those other points can be minimized? Does it fit into a life with Christ when people speak about the Church as a matter about which you can make choices? Is Church choice a matter of human preference? Is it typical of the Church that she stands separate from Christ our Head?

To find the answer to these questions we must learn to know Christ in His work and in His Person as the Bible has taught us about them. Then we read there that Christ is the Head of His congregation (Eph.4:15, 5:23; Col.1:18). Christ rules His people, the Church.

Just as a general directs his army, so Christ leads the Church against sin and against the world. As a king He protects and maintains His Church. On the way to the new heaven and the new earth we are being led by Christ as our good Shepherd.

Those who want to isolate Christ from His Church have understood nothing about His work as redeemer. He came to earth to purify from sin a people for Himself (Titus 2:14). Christ gathers and preserves a Church that will live to the praise of His Father in heaven.

Surely, we believe that it is through Christ alone that we receive salvation and forgiveness of sins. But this Christ calls all who believe this to come into the protected enclosure of the communion of saints. That’s why we should say more about Christ than that He is the Saviour Who has saved us from sin. This Saviour is also our Head, our King and Shepherd Who wants to lead His people.

Christ the Preserver of His Church

These lines all come together in Lord’s Day 21 of our Confession. From the beginning of the world to the end of the world Christ gathers a congregation that is chosen to everlasting life. When someone speaks of Christ, then they are speaking of this Church-gatherer. Wasn’t this also His intent when He came to earth? At His birth the angels sang that He came on earth to bring peace to the men of His good pleasure. His work on earth was, as Guarantor and Mediator, to redeem from
sin, and from then on to let His people live out of that redemption. It is for this that He has given all of His power and love. He has descended into the depths of hell so that His people might live.

So, when the Church now speaks about this Mediator, we will not short change Him when we call the Church, that He bought, the personal work of Christ. On the contrary, the Church only exists because Christ lives! Those who refuse to reckon with the Church short-change her Head. In the honour of Christ the praise for His Church may not be omitted. “This Church shall steadfastly love and faithfully serve Him as her Saviour (who as a bridegroom for his bride laid down His life for her on the cross) and celebrate His praises here and through all eternity.” (Canons of Dort, Chap.II, Art.9).

**Christ the Comfort for His Church**

Now that the connection between Christ and His Church can be clear, we can proceed; for we do not need to remain at a thankful reflection of what Christ has done in the past. It is not so that we, as believers, speak about a Christ Who has once completed His work and thereafter has moved to the sidelines. Certainly not! But because Christ came to earth for His people the Saviour, who died on the cross and rose from the grave, is also active after the resurrection.

He went to heaven to work for us as our Head and our King. Therefore, Christ’s Church may in full assurance confess that, from heaven, He provides us with everything we need to live to Him. He is there, in heaven, for our good. From heaven He sends us His Holy Spirit as counter-pledge by whose power we seek the things that are above, where Christ is (Lord’s Day 18). From heaven Christ works according to the established structures of His Word and Holy Spirit. He has provided offices to comfort and serve the saints. Further He has taught that the sacraments are to be administered in order to strengthen us, all the more, in our faith. These are all gifts that the ascended Lord has given to His Church.

Those, then, who act as if it is only about Christ, and that the sacraments and offices do not add anything, do not know Christ’s care very well. In this way they deny themselves much comfort. For precisely in the Church is where you see the real glitter and glory of the gifts from Christ. That’s where the promises of God are proclaimed from the Word and displayed in the sacraments. It is precisely in the gathering of the Church that we receive the love of Christ via the care of the special offices.

Of course! All those who know that Christ will give the glory and honour for His redemptive work to Him alone. But then included with this redemptive work He also gathers, defends and preserves us on the way to the Father’s house.

H. W. van Egmond (Reformanda, No.14 - Apr.7/99)

Translated by PdB

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**LEUSDEN, THE NETHERLANDS** (April 8, 1999) URNS - Meeting April 7, the synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) of Leusden 1999 chose the Rev. H. J. Boiten, age 53, from Amersfoort as its president. The Rev. P. Schelling from Leeuwarden became vice-president, the
Rev. Luiten from Alkmaar head secretary and the Rev. D. T. Vreugdenhil from Cappelle aan den IJssel assistant secretary. Once again no elder was chosen to be part of the synodical board.

The Rev. J. H. Ulehake, pastor of the host church, opened the meeting of the General Synod of the Gereformeerde Kerken (vrijgemaakt) on the morning of April 7. “This synod which we just opened is the last one in this century,” he reminded his audience. He said that the synods in this century “in our Gereformeerde Kerken were witnesses of battle and progress, sometimes moving close to the abyss and many times enduring attacks on the Word of God and the confessions of faith.” Moreover, Ulehake said that, even though many people worry about Y2K and the end of a millennium is coming closer, “since we are gathered in the Koningshof [King’s Court], we also show that the Lord rules and that the church is His possession.”

The minister touched shortly on one of the subjects that the synod will deal with: “Unfortunately, the issue of hymns threatens to split our church apart, even though the singing of God’s praises should bring us together! For that reason, I sincerely hope that God will continue to sit enthroned on our songs of praise in the 21st century.”

Appointment of Elders as Officers Urged
The minister of Leusden read a few letters of people who had asked if an elder could be appointed to the synodical board. “And if they could be presidents of committees.” The answer that he gave was fully affirmative. Afterward, for the first time in history, he asked all members to introduce themselves before the vote was cast, “because you know who the ministers are, but the elders often do not know each other, nor are known by you.”

It turned out to be a diverse group of people, and synod members have a variety of hobbies. Among the elders were business people and city council members. The Rev. P. Schelling from Leeuwarden [capital of the province of Friesland] described himself as “a minister from a semi-rural town west of Groningen.”

Synodical Officers
During the first round of open elections the Rev. H. J. Boiten was chosen to be president with 19 of the 36 votes. The Rev. P. Schelling was chosen with a majority during the second round of elections to become the vice-president. During the first round of open elections the Rev. J. Luiten was chosen to be the head secretary. He asked all the synod members to cooperate efficiently to finish the minutes speedily. To choose the assistant secretary a second election was again necessary, and the Rev. D. T. Vreugdenhil was chosen. The new president addressed the synod in name of the newly elected board. He remarked that, even though the issue of hymns had generated much response, it was not necessarily the most important issue on the agenda. He wanted to remind the members of the synod that their task is limited in certain respects, but “that we have to bear each other’s burdens in the churches.”

Allocation of tasks
Yesterday afternoon many tasks were assigned; committees were chosen and tasks allocated. It
was, moreover, decided that the deadline to submit documents was to be “the 12th of April, exactly at midnight.” The first plenary meetings with fixed topics are expected to be held during the week beginning April 12.

United Reformed News Service

MORE SYNOD NEWS FROM THE NETHERLANDS

Summary of the First Three Weeks at Synod Leusden

Elder P.G.B.de Vries has been appointed by Synod Leusden to be the liaison between Synod and the press. He has published three weekly reports on the web page of this Synod. We have taken the liberty to summarize his summaries.

Besides the moderamen which we have heard about via Reformed New Service, the Committees were established as follows:

Committee 1
Convener: Rev. J.J. Schreuder
Members: Revs. Reitsema and Meijer, and elders Heek, Van Loon and Wietsma
Subject matter: Office and Training
This committee will deal with the following matters: Women’s voting right, church exams, the interpretation of art. 14 CO (matters dealing with the release of ministers from their congregations), help for theological students, the blessing, and finally all matter dealing with the Theological University

Committee 2
Convener: Rev. T. de Boer
Members: Revs. Leeftink and Huttinga, and elders Douma, Haitsma, Koppelaar and De Vries
Subject Matter: Doctrine, Diaconate, Evangelism, Radio and TV, and Finances
This committee will deal with: Doctrine re Rev. Hoorn, doctrine re. the fourth commandment, Confessions, diaconal matters, radio and TV broadcasts, Evangelism (proposals from various Reg.Synods re. the formation of national deputies, request from Brunssum for missionary-minister for Maastricht), not to forget all matters of finance, not only those of Synod itself, but also those of the various deputies. This committee is already being referred to as the ‘watch-dog’ of Synod, and finally an appeal.

Committee 3
Convener: Rev. H.M.Smit
Members: Revs. Zomer and J.A. Schelling, and elders Van de Burgh, Van Harten, Veldman and Veurink
Subject Matters: Worship Services, Liturgy and Hymns
This Committee will deal with: Interpretation of art. 65 en 66 CO (Synodical determination of order of worship and regular Catechism preaching), special days for prayer, Bible translation, worship services, church music/hymns, marriage form and the form for baptism

Committee 4
Convener: ds. H.J. Messelink
Members: Revs.Nieuwenhuis and P.J.Trimp, and elders Smit, Van der Lugt and Zwarteveen
Subject Matter: Ethics, Ministry and Discipline
This Committee will deal with: Art. 31 CO, baptism of (foreign) adopted children, Lord’s Supper and refugees, divorce, ministry for the deaf and hearing impaired, military, pastoral care for the young church members, ministry (incl. matter relating to sexual abuse), and a number of appeals and discipline cases.

Committee 5
Convener: Rev. P.H. van der Laan
Members: Rev. Van der Sloot and elders De Boer, Koopman, Nederveen en Sytsma
Subject Matters: Mission, Church Relations, and Publications
This Committee will deal with: Mission (GMO/IRTT), Church Unity, Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken, Relations with Churches Abroad, Deputies re.Church and Government, and finally synodical publications.

Brother de Vries also gave a short description of his experience as a member of Synod. How it felt to sit there on the first day, wait and watch as things began to unfold. By Friday afternoon he had observed many things that made the head spin. A demand by the chairman for work that was expected was surely optimistic. Yet by Friday the brothers could join in thanksgiving for the work that they could have already accomplished and in prayer for the major tasks and decisions that lay ahead.

One of the points that receives somewhat more attention than it does in Canada and probably also Australia, is the matter of advisors. Each committee tries to determine, early on, which advisors it would like Synod to invite. It appears that only some (minor) matters will not need advisors.

When finally Synod does meet in plenary session it is requested that some ‘finger exercises’ are performed. In this manner br. de Vries quotes the chairman as he describes the first ginger steps Synod takes in the matter of decision making and working as a plenary body. This is not diminishing of the importance of the early matters, but merely a matter of delegates feeling their way through the procedures.

Radio and TV
The first matter up for discussion was that of TV and Radio. As the report was well but together, Synod did not have to spend much time. Yet, one can scarcely under estimate the importance of this matter. The TV transmissions regularly draw as many as 85,000 people, while radio audiences are harder to measure.
It appears, also to be customary to have deputies attend Synod when their matters are being discussed. It seems that the smaller distances have some advantages. During the visit with deputies for TV and Radio there was some discussion about the need to ensure that church services that are broadcast are not altered from their original purpose because they are being broadcast. It was noted that responsibility for this lies with the local Church. A letter from a brother regarding this matter was declared inadmissible.

Br. de Vries also noted that the sermons that are broadcast are also available on the Internet. For our purposes in Canada and Australia, those who still read Dutch, or who prefer to read Dutch can have a look, or have someone else search them out.

National Prayer Days
The second matter up for discussion was National Prayer Days. Classis Midden-Holland reported that there had been no reason to declare such a day, nor had they received any request from the churches.

Other matters in short:
A brother requested amendment to some parts of the Confessions (incl. ‘He descended into hell’ from the Apostle’s Creed). This request was dismissed as it had not followed the church orderly way.

A call to repentance with regard to the proper Confession of Dordt was also denied as it had not been dealt with at the minor assemblies.

A request to alter the Acts of Heemse (whether or not those Acts, in dealing with the Hoorn case, had a printing error or not) which had been dealt with by Spakenburg 1987, Ommen 1993, and Berkel / Rodenrijs 1996 was not responded to favourably.

An appeal that Synod Berkel had not dealt with a brother’s letter was denied.

Website
The website from which these notes have been taken is www.synode.org. It has received more than 800 hits in the first weekend. Obviously there is much interest in these matters. We hope that those who do not have access to such a site will appreciate our efforts to bring them the hi-lites.

PdB with permission from P. DeVries