

REFORMED CONTINUA

Magazine of The Reformed Churches (restored) of The Netherlands

Proverbs 8:32

- Volume 11 - April 2013 -

From the editor

April 2013

This 11th issue of the Reformed Continua comes to you in April 2013 and we are thankful to the Lord Who made this possible.

This is a special issue and it contains the following:

- Letter from our Deputies for Contact Churches Abroad that was sent to Synod Carman 2013 of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- Introduction to the above-mentioned letter.

It is the Lord Himself who preserves His church to the end. It is all His work. We may know and experience this.

In thankfulness for the given gifts we may also inform you that our student C. Koster has successfully taken his classis examination and classis South-West has pronounced him eligible for the ministry.

May this issue also be well-received. We hope and pray that world-wide eyes may be opened to the proper view on the church, as we confess every Sunday in our worship-services and that it may contribute to God's church-gathering work, to the honour of His holy Name.

Joh. Houweling, Bleiswijk

The Letter of the CRCA (Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad) of The Reformed Churches in the Netherland (restored, RCNr/DGK), to Synod Carman 2013 of The Canadian and American Reformed Churches

Introduction

The Reformed Churches (restored) in the Netherlands (RCNr) attempted to continue the sister church relationship with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches (CanRC) which we had before our Liberation of 2003 from the Reformed Churches liberated (RCNlib/GKv).

At two subsequent synods: Synod Smithers 2007 and Synod Burlington 2010, requests to recognize the legitimacy of our Liberation were refuted. Our churches were judged to be schismatic and were called on to reconcile with the RCNlib from whom we were judged to have an 'unlawful separation'. However, in the meantime we had contacts with the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford, which was formed after Liberation from the CanRC in 2007. Through that contact we gained more insight into the developments within the CanRC. At our Synod Emmen 2009-2010 we decided to recognize the grounds for their liberation and to enter into a sister-church relationship with them'. The CanRC Synod Burlington 2010 appointed a subcommittee to seek contact with both RCNlib and RCNr. In April 2012 we had a meeting with that subcommittee, in which we discussed the issues with the RCNlib, our Liberation of 2003 and the underlying issues causing the liberation of the LRC of Abbotsford in 2007. Because we were not allowed to contribute to the text of the subcommittee's report to Synod Carman 2013, and because we were of the opinion that some issues should have been dealt with more broadly, we as deputies of RCNr decided to send a letter, as an addition to the report of the subcommittee, to the upcoming Synod Carman 2013

The content of that letter will follow below.

For those who are not familiar with the CanRC, we will first give a short introduction of these churches and to their relationship with the RCNlib. After the Liberation in 1944, individual members of the liberated churches decided over time to migrate to North America, mostly for economic reasons. When the first wave of immigrants came to North

America in the late 1940s, they first sought the possibility of joining with the Protestant Reformed Churches in America (PRC), but these efforts were unsuccessful. The PRC maintained that God made his covenant with the elect only, which was not an acceptable doctrine for the liberated members. Some also sought to join the Christian Reformed Church (CRC). However, the CRC maintained official relationships with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (synodical) and sided with these churches. The CRC did not allow discussions of the issues related to the Liberation of 1944 and so effectively closed the door for dialogue and the possibility of union.

Thus they started with the institution of a new federation. The first Canadian Reformed church was instituted in Coaldale, Alberta, in 1950 and the first American Reformed church was instituted in Grand Rapids, in 1955.

Synod Coaldale 1977 of the CanRC declared the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to be a true church. In 1992 Synod Lincoln, rescinded the rules for Sister Church relationships and formulated the new rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, as a replacement, to also enable relationships with churches that did not have the Three Forms of Unity. Despite the existence of unresolved 'divergencies' regarding the doctrine and practices of the OPC, the CanRC still wanted to proceed entering a relationship with them. Synod Neerlandia 2001 established an Ecclesiastical Fellowship with OPC, The United Reformed Churches of North America (URCNA), the Reformed Churches of the United States (RCUS) and The l' Église Reformée de Quebec (ERQ). Federative unity with the URCNA, a federation of churches that separated from the CRC in 1996, mainly because of the ordination of women into the offices of elder and minister, is currently being pursued.

Synod Smithers 2007 of the CanRC further decided to join the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) a denominationalist inter-church council.

In our letter, we have defended the legitimacy of our Liberation of 2003 and stressed the impossibility of reconciling with churches that continue the path of deviation from God's Word, the Three Forms of Unity and the Dordt Church Order. In addition to that, we criticize the various Ecclesiastical relationships, using the developments within the RCNlib as a mirror for the CanRC to judge their own development.

We hope that this will help them to again become truly reformed churches.

Letter

To General Synod Carman 2013 of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches
The Synod Organizing Committee
Canadian Reformed Church of Carman West
Box 2009, Carman MB, R0G 0J0.
E-mail: carmanwestclerk@gmail.com

Zwolle The Netherlands, March 13th, 2013

Dear brothers,

As a result of the meeting we, as Deputies for Contacts with Churches Abroad of The Reformed Churches (restored) (DGK/RCNr), held in April 2012 with your Subcommittee of the Netherlands Committee for Relations Churches Abroad, and their report to your synod, we feel urged to send you this letter. We would like to explain our reasons for sending this letter and will elaborate further on the matters that were discussed during the meeting.

Reason for our letter

We were pleased that we could again have an opportunity to exchange views and visions about being the church of the Lord, and to see to what extent further contact would be possible.

On two successive CanRC synods (Synod Smithers 2007, Art. 143 and Synod Burlington 2010, Art. 106, 107, 155) we were judged by you as being schismatic, despite some appeals against this from some of your own churches. In 2010 you again insisted upon calling us to reconcile with the RCNlib. Therefore, it struck us as positive that the members of your subcommittee were now more understanding of the need for our Liberation in 2003.

The subcommittee also admitted to us that the extensive information about our Liberation which we had in the past provided, had not been fully studied by you in detail.

We are pleased that the subcommittee now acknowledges this and has come to a more accurate assessment of the extremely sad developments within the RCNlib.

We hope and pray that you will now call the RCNlib to true repentance with God's Word in regard to your existing contacts with them, and that you will reconsider the nature of your relationship with them on the basis of God's Word and the Reformed Confessions.

In the aforementioned meeting we not only discussed the developments within the Netherlands, but we also raised the issue of the necessity for the liberation of the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford in 2007 and the related developments within your churches in Canada and America. As you know, in 2010, after carefully verifying the legitimacy of their liberation, we entered into a sister-church relationship with the LRC Abbotsford.

Unfortunately, we could not enter into an in depth discussion of the related issues within the CanRC during the meeting. In addition to this, we were surprised that your subcommittee did not want to sign the draft minutes that were drawn up by us. Instead, they let us know they would write their own report of our meeting, without asking us for confirmation of the contents.

However, our opinion is that the report of the subcommittee did not do justice to the issues related to the liberation of LRC Abbotsford. That is why we feel compelled to send this additional letter to you. We have also informed your subcommittee about this, stating our reasons.

We hope that you as synod will understand this and will consider some matters that we will raise in the context of possible mutual contacts. Although these matters were mostly dismissed by your subcommittee during the meeting, we nevertheless consider them very important for your churches and for our possible relations with you.

In this letter, we will therefore comment on your judgment of our being schismatic and on the developments that have led to the liberation in Abbotsford.

CanRC's attitude towards RCNlib and RCN� (DGK)

Our rules for establishing a sister relationship state that our churches, by means of our deputies, have to ascertain first that a foreign church not only officially recognizes the Reformed Confession of the Word of God, but also actually maintain it in their ecclesiastical practice of doctrine, worship, church government and discipline.

Your repeated rejection of our request to be accepted as a sister church as well as the need for the LRC Abbotsford to liberate from you, forced us to make a very careful assessment.

We believe that, in both of these cases, the central issue is the way you as CanRC, enter into and maintain relationships with other churches, both from abroad and in your own country. Particular attention should be given to the criteria and the degree of diligence you are using in such relationships. To explain that to you is difficult without being very straightforward. We still hope that you will see in our confronting message our intention to show love for the church of Jesus Christ and all her members.

First, we would like to mention your attitude towards the RCNlib. Unfortunately, you apparently were not able to recognize that for a long period of time the marks of the true church could no longer be found in these churches. Although there may have been impeding factors of distance and problems of language for you, you could already have had much earlier insight into the developments, because of the availability of synod decisions and a wide variety of publications about the situation in the Netherlands. We, from our side, could point to the material we have provided you in the past. With your insistence on calling us schismatic we are left with questions, such as: Why didn't the available material prompt you to become alert much earlier and why did this material not prevent you from continuing to attribute to these churches faithfulness to Scripture and confession? By doing so you have up to now postponed the necessity of calling them to repentance.

Although it is gratifying that the subcommittee now has shown better insight, it is sad and worrying that this comes so late. The present widespread deviations within RCNlib are all results of an ongoing revolutionary process that became already very obvious well before our liberation in 2003. This process of decline within RCNlib in the period

1970-2010 was recently described by an outsider, the sociologist prof. dr. G. Dekker, who wrote in 1992 a book about the decline in the RCNsyn. His new book was published in March 2013 and entitled 'De doorgaande revolutie; De ontwikkeling van de Gereformeerde Kerken in perspectief (The ongoing revolution; The development of the RCNlib in perspective).

Even at your last Synod Burlington 2010, you did not show evidence of understanding the true nature of the developments in the Netherlands. You did not even want to express that in us as RCN�, a desire for the truth could be found. Instead, you decided to maintain your judgment of us as being schismatic and to instruct your deputies to call us to reconciliation with the RCNlib (Synod of Burlington 2010, Art 155).

Brothers, we believe that our reformation 10 years ago was a return to God's Word by His grace after a long period of appeals and public warnings against ongoing decline.

It was by God's grace that He thus preserved His church in the Netherlands. It was not our strength or wisdom but only God's unmerited mercy.

After 2003, the RCNlib continued to decline, with the effects of this decline extending to all areas of church life. We will not give examples of that in this letter. We think that they are abundantly available to all of you. If God does not perform a miracle, there is and will remain an unbridgeable gap between RCN� and RCNlib. Therefore, we do not want, and we are not permitted, to go back to them.

Your Synod Burlington 2010 proposed 'reconciliation', but that can only be achieved with God's Word and the Reformed Confessions. That does not mean that we did not attempt to recall the RCNlib from their wrong way. Our last extensive letter by our Synod Emmen 2009 ([click here: attachment*](#)) gives evidence of that. Unfortunately, Synod Harderwijk 2010 of the RCNlib dropped the matters discussed in our letter, rejected our urgent call by interpreting it as a rejection of them, and made an end to their correspondence with us. Our last synod of Hasselt 2011 still again tried to reopen the correspondence.

The mirror of the RCNlib

In our view the history of deformation within the RCNlib may serve as a mirror for all churches who want to enter into alliances with other churches

which tolerate deviations from the pure doctrine of Scripture.

In the RCNlib the processes of loosening the authority of Scripture, the undermining of God's commandments, the disappearance of strict exercise of discipline, the liberty in 'worshipping', the progress of secularization, etc. all had multiple causes. But among them a very crucial and common cause already became recognizable since the early nineties. That was the unstoppable desire for church unity with other churches, despite evidence of toleration of biblical criticism and heresies within these churches.

We are referring to the wrong alliances with de Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken and the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. In the beginning, synods of the RCNlib recognized the tolerance of heresies and Bible criticism in these churches. However, after a time of warning these churches, the approach of RCNlib synods changed more and more towards a desire for unification and tolerance toward the associated deviations.

In that process a bottom-up method was introduced. That included the unification of local churches before achieving unification of the federations. That process is still going on.

Unscriptural tolerance to external deviations at the level of local churches has inevitably contributed to tolerance at all levels within the RCNlib. So we could see changes over time in the way internal matters were assessed. Examples of that are the changed views regarding the fourth and seventh commandments, the hermeneutics at the theological university, evangelical influences, exercise of discipline, etc. Driving forces of false ecumenism together with postmodern thinking were largely responsible for unscriptural tolerance that corrupted all areas of church practice, doctrine, worshipping, church government and discipline.

The active cooperation of the RCNlib with the national synod movement clearly shows how far these churches have lost their way. This last example is in itself only a symptom of the corrupted nature of the church.

Ecclesiastical fellowships (EF's) and Art. 28 BC

But how were things going with the CanRC in their relationships with other churches?

Because of our contact with LRC Abbotsford we studied the acts of your synods and numerous publications which focused on your relationships with other churches.

We have to acknowledge that we are not aware whether such analyses were made by RCNlib in the past in the setting of their sister-church relationship with you.

Our new contact has caused us to study and assess the matter of your EF's. We hope it may give you insight why we decided to establish a sister-church relationship with LRC Abbotsford.

We will first discuss the aspect of the EF itself (union), and then the aspect of the grounds for that relationship (truth).

As you will probably agree, all forms of unity or cooperation have to be tested to in connection with what we believe in Art. 27 and 28 BC. Art. 28 refers to the local expression of the same one catholic church that is discussed in Art. 27 BC. On the basis of that article of faith, fellow churches within the same area should together bend their neck under the yoke of Christ. As to the local church, that yoke of Christ includes - in addition to the richness of God's Word in preaching, doctrine, the administration of the sacraments and the exercise of discipline- simultaneous subjection to the supervision of the offices, mutual brotherly edification, admonishment and comforting. As to the federation, this yoke of Christ includes the benefits of church government according to the adopted Church Order. In such a Scriptural union, the members really are of one faith, one Spirit and so together really one Body (Eph. 4).

We understand it will be a long road to achieve satisfactory agreements in all respects if it concerns two separate bonds of churches with their own traditions. We also acknowledge that it requires a high rate of self-denial. But it is our conviction that this is what Art. 28 BC really asks from all churches in obedience to our Lord.

Since 1977, you have declared the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) to be a true church, and since Synod Neerlandia 2001 you even have an official EF-relationship with this church. However, you do not have any prospect of complete ecclesiastical unification.

In your design, you are thus left with a static situation, where multiple churches of Christ co-exist. But is Christ divided (1 Cor. 1: 13)?

Prior to the unification of federations of churches from Afscheiding and Doleantie in the Netherlands in 1892, no interchurch fellowship was practiced.

First, all matters of divergence were resolved as much as necessary in the opinion of both churches, and only then were the pulpit exchanges and the sharing of the Lord's Table allowed within one federation. There may be criticism regarding the adequacy of the preparation in 1892, but we will let that rest. Our forefathers first tried to have one true foundation, and then progress to one united church. Why did you not likewise first resolve the divergences you had encountered in the OPC and only then start the process for joining in one federation of churches?

In our opinion your form of cooperation and co-existence by EF within the same country or area, does not really meet the Scriptural model of the one household of Ephesians 2 and 4, which is summarized in Art. 28 BC, in which all true believers hold to the one truth and growth together in mutual love to the one Head, Christ (Eph. 4: 16).

EF is a model that is valid for use in cases of geographic or linguistic barriers, but how can you defend its use in the light of Art. 28 BC when the concerned churches shared the same geographic areas? Of course we realize that in vast countries as Canada and America far more problems have to be overcome than will be encountered in The Netherlands. The distances are enormous, the overlapping areas may differ from church to church. But in your own federation you already have to cope with enormous distances. Differences in tradition or ethnic background, may also form problems. But in the light of Eph. 2: 11-22 and 1 Cor. 1:13 they should not be insurmountable obstacles. The perspective from which all these matters have to be solved should come from the standpoint of the Lord and not from our own human traditional standpoints.

'Rejecting all things contrary to the pure Word of God'

Then the second aspect: the grounds for union. You will agree with us that the first condition for unification is the sharing of the true foundation of Holy Scripture and the Reformed Confessions. This first condition should be fulfilled prior to all activities toward unification. Therefore, not only Art. 28, but also Art. 29 BC is at stake.

All marks of the true church should first be mutually recognized. That should be done 'diligently and very carefully' (Art. 29 BC). That should also include the recognition of what is said in the

short summary, that the concerned church will 'govern itself according to the pure Word of God and reject all things contrary to it regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head.' That points to the actual maintaining of the truth.

The doctrines of the concerned church may not be settled as 'less pure' as is often advocated with a plea to the Presbyterian Westminster Confessions. A reformed church is bound to its own confession. If it is concluded during the contacts that the foundation of the other church is not fully pure, this church should then be called to reformation.

Being a true church does not mean that the church members themselves are always pure in their thinking and acting. We all are sinners, and therefore not pure. But the foundation of the true church of Christ should be the uncorrupted Word of God. Therefore erring members can be admonished according to the pure foundation. Everything that is contrary to the pure foundation should be rejected in faithfulness to the true church of Christ. When deviations are tolerated within the church, Christ is no longer followed as the only Head.

Revelation 2 and 3 are often quoted to defend existing impurities of the foundation of a church. But this pleading ignores the instructions in these letters that Christ's Spirit is directing toward 'less pure' churches and it also ignores the promises and threats He connects respectively with obedience and disobedience to His commands.

In our meeting with your subcommittee we pointed out the essential requirement of rejecting all things contrary to the pure Word of God. Unfortunately, by doing this we were qualified as being '200% reformed' with a reference to Donatists. However, we are convinced that in this way we are only following our one Head, and are trying to act in agreement with our Reformed Confession of faith. In trying to do this faithfully, we all continually need His help and assistance. It therefore requires our continuing struggle and prayer.

We gladly agree that the churches with which you have an EF relationship have shown sound vision in many respects. But that is not enough. These churches should also show evidence of rejecting all forms of heresies and deviations from the pure Word of God, as we already have discussed.

If you recognize such deviations, the first need and duty should be to discuss it and to call them

to repentance, before declaring them as a true church and starting the process of unification. Of course, these contacts require patience and perseverance, but they should never result in unscriptural tolerance for the sake of unity.

We will now go into more detail regarding concrete matters that are related to this, matters that are well-known to you, since many appeals and publications have addressed them over time in your churches.

OPC

Since the very first contacts with the OPC, questions have multiplied about two central issues.

First, the lack of binding to the adopted confessions (Westminster Standards) among OPC members, defined as lack of confessional membership.

Secondly, the opening of the Lord's Supper for non-members without an attestation, defined as lack of supervision and fencing of the Lord's Supper.

Regarding the first issue, 'having a confession' is not the same as 'actively maintaining a confession.' How can members, be living members, if they are not bound to the doctrine of the Word of God as summarized and defended in the confessions of the church? How can they be living members if they disagree with parts of this confession or are unfamiliar with it? How can discipline function if this binding to confession is not established?

Regarding the second issue, how can the Table of the Lord be held holy if non-members are permitted to participate without a valid attestation and only on the basis of self testimony?

How can someone testify to his own behavior? Does not the holiness that our Lord requires at His table extend to both doctrine and life of the members of His body (1 Cor. 5; see also Art. 61 CO)? The Bible teaches that the elders should fence the table and the whole congregation is responsible for that (1 Cor. 11: 30).

These are not minor matters but they concern the marks of the true church (Art. 29 BC). We therefore cannot understand how your churches could have ever declared the OPC to be a true church without first trying to correct the recognized deviations. That these deviations, you also call them 'divergencies,' should not be easily accepted as compatible with our Three Forms of Unity and the Dordt Church Order is repeatedly brought to your attention by the appeals dealing with them. An

exemplary illustration was the separation of Rev. Hofford and his congregation from the OPC and their union with the CanRC as the true church in 1987. The grounds of their separation (10 years after your declaration of the OPC as a true church) were related to the above mentioned deviations and their origins.

From the Acts of Synods 1992, 1995, and 1998 it is quite apparent that the above issues ('divergencies') were placed repeatedly on the agenda. These divergencies were seen at that time as an obstacle to come to a sister-church relationship, but in fact they should have been assessed as a fundamental barrier to recognition of the OPC as a true church.

But Synod Neerlandia 2001 showed an unexpected shift in the attitude towards the OPC; it simply decided to push aside the divergencies and their objections without resolving them. This synod simply decided that these principal divergencies no longer formed obstacles. As the CanRC, you then did not have an impediment to enter into an EF-relationship with the OPC. This is incomprehensible in the light of your own binding confessions and, in our opinion, therefore not defensible toward the Head of the church.

Synod Chatham 2004 rejected appeals against the decision of Neerlandia. After that synod the ecclesiastical way was officially no longer open for appeals dealing with the divergencies. What occurred at the synods of 2007 and 2010 with new appeals can easily be guessed: all were rejected because of the lack of new arguments. In that way all members of the CanRC are obliged to accept your synod decisions, became co-responsible for them, unless they would liberate themselves from them.

The results of impurity and tolerance

Engaging in EF without a true match of all the marks of a true church has major consequences, as we will show. One is related to the adopted doctrine of the church.

The OPC appeared to have no problems with Baptists sharing their celebration of the Lord's Supper. The OPC writes this on its official website. Apparently, the difference of its doctrine with that of a Baptist is not a matter of deviation from the Truth. The site connects its view with its doctrine of the invisible church. According to the OPC site the reason for fellowship can be summarized in

the following kind of 'core confession': 'If they have their hope in Christ to save them from their sin.' We will quote this passage:

Here is real and active unity around the truth. Untruth can never bring unity, but truth always should. Whether or not we see organic, actual, visible unity among the churches, even among Reformed churches, Christ's prayer is being answered when I receive another brother or sister because they confess the same Lord and Saviour I do. I have fellowship with them even as we might disagree about baptism or church government or even whether they believe that Jesus Christ died for those whom the Father gave him alone. If they have their hope in Christ to save them from their sins, we have a place to start in building our unity of the faith in the bond of peace (Eph. 4:1ff).' (http://www.opc.org/qa.html?question_id=482, click on the link to go to the OPC site).

Astonishingly, this view by the OPC does not do any justice to the truth of Holy Scripture, consistent with the Three Forms of Unity regarding the true doctrines of the catholic church (visible church), covenant (Baptism), sacraments (Holy Baptism and Lord's Supper) and discipline. It opens up the way to accepting or tolerating serious heresies including Anabaptism and Arminianism. It also minimizes the true and complete doctrine of salvation to a core faith. What we believe and confess concerning this dangerous view is so clearly stated in Heidelberg Catechism LD 27, and Art. 34 BC, in which the Anabaptistic doctrine is specifically rejected as error.

Along the same lines one of your ministers (Rev. James Visscher) wrote in *Clarion* in 1987 about baptism and anabaptism:

'Baptism conveys the promises of God, but it also conveys the demands of God. It calls on all those who have been baptised, when they reach their years of discretion, to cleave to the Lord in faith, hope, love, and obedience. Failure to do so does not nullify the covenant; it does something worse, it unleashes the curses of the covenant (cf. Deuteronomy 29). In conclusion, we say about the Anabaptist position:

- *By excluding the children of believers from baptism it goes contrary to the whole character of God's progressive revelation;*
- *It caters to individualism and refuses to recognise the biblical teaching of covenantal solidarity;*
- *It undermines the unity of the Word of God and the people of God by either driving a wedge*

between circumcision and baptism or else by distorting the meaning of circumcision;

- *By implication it makes God a God of the strong, the mature, the able, the adult but places in question whether he is also the God of the very young, the mentally disabled, and all those who can for one reason or other not meet the pre-condition of faith;*
- *It emphasises the subjective by making something in man the sole pre-condition for baptism.'*

Examples within the CanRC

The above example may help you to understand how pluralism and tolerance will facilitate the spread of heresies, destroy the truth and profane the Lord's Supper. Although you yourselves may not agree with the views of the OPC, tolerating the false doctrines from which this view originates makes you co-responsible. Furthermore, given the opening of your own pulpits to OPC ministers, the opening of your Lord's Supper and other co-operative events; the ongoing erosion and destruction of originally sound doctrines is only a matter of time due to your EF relationship with the OPC.

As an example of this, in the meeting with your subcommittee we pointed to the uncritical invitation of a Baptist speaker by a Can Ref. Church in Hamilton in 2010. We also mentioned that a family magazine (*Reformed Perspective*), originated from CanRC members and circulating among your families, characterized an Arminian group as 'a church of Christ,' without receiving any protest. Unfortunately, these examples were not taken seriously by your committee members.

'More or less pure'

What is the origin of these erroneous OPC views on church, sacraments, and discipline which result in unscriptural tolerance? As you know, the OPC adheres to the Westminster Standards. The concept of 'more or less pure' (W.C. Art. 25.4) in combination with the 'invisible catholic church' (W.C. Art. 25.1), and an ambiguous doctrine on the covenant with the emphasis of the election (LC, Q/A 31,) may give rise to pluriformity, false ecumenism and tolerance of heresies. The absence of confessional membership even further facilitates the emergence of all this. In the light of these fundamental deviations, the tolerance of all kinds of errors may be expected.

Brothers, once unscriptural tolerance is accepted

within the church, it always strides forward. If the door is ajar its opening will proceed.

The ongoing developments within the RCNlib should serve as a harrowing and tangible example to all of us. But do you not observe a progression in tolerance also within the CanRC since 1977 and 2001? In the meantime, you now have EF-alliances with an increasing number of other churches, exhibiting tolerance, for example, to the RCUS (same pluriform or multiform church vision, see their 'Principles of Church Unity - 1999; Special Committee Report of the Reformed Church in the United States [1999]') and the URCNA (covenant vision, Synod Schererville 2007, point 6).

More recently you have gone even further in your unity drive by actively joining the denominationalist group NAPARC. This NAPARC membership will lead to further erosion of your confession to maintain the truth by rejecting all things that are against the pure Word of God.

After all, you now also have active interaction with other churches that teach errors like experientialism, pietism, and passivity (Free Reformed Churches of North America and Heritage Reformed Churches). If you do not call them to repentance, you are now also co-responsible in view of your commitment to NAPARC. In addition, how will you require your members to be bound to Art. 29 BC, while accepting the NAPARC interchurch transfer agreements? How will you prevent the members from joining the worship services of the other members of NAPARC?

We fear that in this way heresies will be more and more reduced to matters of difference of interpretation, rather than differences between truth and falsehood. We are afraid that the abovementioned pluriform church concepts of 'invisibility' and 'more or less pure' may have already become part of your own vision.

We will give another example. Your intensive search for unity with the URCNA, which recently reinforced the wrong doctrine regarding internal and external covenant (Synod Schererville), has led to the following tolerant statement of two of your professors:

It is theoretically possible that some ministers preach an internal/external distinction within the covenant, and that this would be tolerated within the Canadian Reformed federation. But that is rare and when it happens, it is not because the

Can. Ref. seminary had taught them in that way. (Christian Renewal 10 March 2010)

When we confronted your sub-committee with this statement, they defended this by pointing out to us the tolerance that existed before 1944 in the Reformed Church in the Netherlands, regarding different visions of the covenant. Apparently, this tolerance towards the teaching of presumptive regeneration, which had such a devastating effect in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and its worldwide alliances (CRC!), ought to be considered still normative for us?

Calling and requests

Brothers, why are we so direct and to the point? Because we, ourselves, have experienced the destructive powers of tolerance, pluralism, and false ecumenism in the Netherlands. We also had to face the attractiveness of these developments for the postmodern human being: less than 1.5% of the RCNlib members have been liberated from that process.

Another reason to be so confronting is because our hearts go out to you as brothers and sisters to which we were connected in the past in the unity of the truth. This relationship has been broken as a result of the necessity of our liberation, a liberation which you still have not recognized as legitimate.

While we still have some contact, we have the opportunity to warn you not to go the same way as the RCNlib. In the RCNlib our warnings and appeals had, humanly speaking, only limited success. Postmodernism with its pluralism and relativism already had such firm grip in the RCNlib, that appeals to God's Word did not have any effect already in the late nineties.

In the RCNlib, we saw the first public signs of decline in the acceptance of women's voting (Synod Ommen 1993) and the introduction of hymns with unscriptural texts (Synod Berkel and Rodenrijs 1996). We see these same issues now reappearing in your Churches.

This is another indication of your being on the wrong path.

In the past the RCNlib was warned repeatedly not to go the same road as the RCNsyn. Now we want to use the road of the RCNlib as a mirror to you as the CanRC.

Numerous appeals from inside your churches dealing with EF decisions were rejected by your preceding synods. We sincerely hope that you are still open to the above criticism and will decide to come back from your ways of false ecumenism and tolerance that already have a long history.

We will therefore specifically ask you as General Synod of the CanRCs to suspend your existing EF relationships with participating churches in Canada and North America, in order to test them against God's Word and the Reformed Confessions, and to withdraw from the membership in NAPARC. In addition to this, we would ask you to rescind your previous judgment of RCNr (DGK) as being schismatic.

Wishing you God's wisdom in your considerations and deliberations,

Greeting you on behalf of the Deputies for Contacts with Churches Abroad of The Reformed Churches (restored),

*J. Houweling, chairman
A. van der Net, secretary*

P.S. This letter will also be published in our internet magazine Reformed Continua

(*Attachment: Letter from Synod Emmen 2009-2010 to the RCNlib [translated]) (Click here: <http://www.reformedcontinua.nl/article/34>).

Click on this line to find information on internet about all the local churches

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