

Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford

C/O 2043 Jordan Place, Abbotsford, B.C., V3G 2C3

February 28, 2013

General Synod Carman West 2013
of the Canadian Reformed Churches
C/O Canadian Reformed Church at Carman West
P.O. Box 2009
Carman, Manitoba
R0G 0J0

Esteemed brothers:

We are writing to you out of our deep concern over the growing deformation and apostasy that is occurring in the Canadian Reformed Churches, specifically as a result of the acceptance and implementation of unscriptural general synod decisions. We convey to you an urgent call to reform the church and to return it to its confessional basis as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity.

From the time of their institution in Canada in the 1950's the Lord had richly blessed the Canadian Reformed Churches and caused them to be a blessing. As pillar and foundation of the truth they functioned by God's grace as a salt and light to Canadian society. But now we see how these same churches are in decline, subject to deformation and corruption.

Over the last number of years it has become increasingly obvious that the root of this deformation and corruption is in the enactment of general synod decisions that conflict with Scripture and the confessional basis of the church as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity.

We summarize and explain the progress of deformation as a result of major general synod decisions as follows:

- 1) the Synod 1977 decision to recognize the OPC as a true church;
- 2) the Synod 1992 decisions to extend ecclesiastical fellowship to the FSC and the PCK;
- 3) the Synod 1992 decision to become a member of the International Council of Reformed Churches;
- 4) the Synod 2001 decisions to extend ecclesiastical fellowship to the OPC, the RCUS and the URCNA;

- 5) the Synod 2007 decisions to extend ecclesiastical fellowship to the ERQ and the RCNZ;
- 6) the Synod 2007 decision to become a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council; and
- 7) the Synod 2007 decision to declare a lawful secession by De Gereformeerde Kerken (hersteld) as "schismatic."

Beginning with the decision of Synod 1977, most of the above general synod decisions have been appealed to subsequent general synods, with many of them being appealed more than once. However all of the appeals have been denied and the scriptural, confessional and church orderly basis for these appeals has been disregarded, with the following serious consequences:

- 1) All of the above mentioned decisions (with the exception of the last one listed) conflict with the consideration of Synod 1965 that "*Correspondence with Churches abroad should not be entered into, until upon a conscientious and serious investigation, it has become apparent that these Churches not only officially embrace the Reformed confession and church polity but also in fact maintain them*" (*Acts*, General Synod 1965, Article 141, II). This consideration has never been appealed nor has it been officially set aside by any subsequent general synod.
- 2) The above decisions have led to corruption in the preaching – by an implicit acceptance of the doctrine of the pluriformity of the church, which has its roots in the concept of the "more or less pure church" as explained in Chapter 25:4 of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The permission of pulpit exchange with ministers who hold to this and similar confessions, without resolution of this and other confessional divergencies, make legitimate the preaching of unscriptural doctrine in the Canadian Reformed Churches, contrary to the Subscription Form.
- 3) The above decisions have led to corruption in the administration of the sacraments – by the admission of people to the Lord's Supper, of whom it cannot be known whether they profess the Reformed faith. The acceptance of attestations from churches that do not require adherence to their confessional standards, and whose confessional standards diverge from those of the Canadian Reformed Churches, give evidence to an unscriptural unity, and therefore corrupts the pure administration of the sacraments as Christ has instituted them.
- 4) The above decisions have led to corruption in the exercise of church discipline – by the admission to the Lord's Supper of people about whom the appropriate information regarding their doctrine and life has not been determined. This is in conflict with Scripture and the confession, and

Article 61 of the Church Order. In this way the work of the consistories in maintaining order and discipline in the church is undermined.

- 5) The above decisions have led to corruption in the government of the church – by the failure of the general synods to maintain the requirement for confessional membership as indicated in the first question of the Form for the Public Profession of Faith. In this way the scriptural unity of faith, that is essential to the pure administration of the Lord's Supper, is not maintained.
- 6) The above decisions have led to corruption in the integrity of the process of appeal under Article 31 of the Church Order – by the failure of the general synods to properly consider the scriptural, confessional and church orderly basis for numerous appeals which have been submitted to them by churches and church members. Although the full ecclesiastical way under Article 31 of the Church Order has been followed, decisions have been made and maintained, as described above, which have been proven to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order.

The decision to declare the lawful secession of De Gereformeerde Kerken (hersteld) in the Netherland as "schismatic," thereby supporting the extremely serious deformation of the sister churches in the Netherlands, has served to deepen the corruption in the Canadian Reformed Churches as is evidenced by the introduction of new unscriptural hymns, the practice of women voting and the toleration of scripture criticism.

It is the acceptance and implementation of the above general synod decisions in the Canadian Reformed Church at Abbotsford which gave rise to secession from that church and the institution of the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford. Further details concerning this secession can be found at www.calltoreform.com under Librum – Correspondence with the Canadian Reformed Church at Abbotsford – Chronology of Correspondence I.

This is not to say that we are without guilt in this matter, for on occasion we have also been negligent in sounding warnings about these wrong decisions. With profound sadness we must admit that we may have been less than consistent in opposing them and perhaps have even made ourselves a party with them.

However we dare do so no longer.

In humble submission to His Word we beseech you by the grace of God to return to obedience to God's Word, to the confessional basis as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity, as you were when you were first established in Canada. We call upon you to restore the unity which was broken by the above general synod decisions. We do so because:


- a) Submission to the above general synod decisions of the Canadian Reformed Churches brings us into conflict with what God teaches us in His Word concerning the basis of the unity of the church (Psalm 119:63, John 4:24, John 17:17, Acts 4:32a, Ephesians 4:4,5), and as we confess it in Articles 27, 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession and Lord's Day 21, Q.&A. 54 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- b) Submission to the above general synod decisions of the Canadian Reformed Churches brings us into conflict with what God teaches us in His Word concerning the admission to the Lord's Supper (2 Chronicles 30:18-20; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:17-20, 26-32,) and as we confess it in Lord's Days 30 and 31 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- c) Submission to the above general synod decisions of the Canadian Reformed Churches brings us into conflict with what God teaches us in His Word concerning the use of church discipline (Joshua 7:10-15; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:12-13; 2 Corinthians 13:1, 5; 2 Thess. 3:14-15) and as we confess it in Lord's Day 31, Q.&A. 85 of the Heidelberg Catechism.
- d) Submission to the above general synod decisions of the Canadian Reformed Churches brings us into conflict with what the churches have agreed to concerning the order of the Church (Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8-9; 16:19; 18:15-18; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 14:33a; Galatians 5:1; 1 Timothy 3:15; Article 32 of the Belgic Confession and Articles 31, 61, 66, and 76 of the Church Order).

Our motivation in writing to you is threefold – our love for you, our desire to keep Christ's church faithful to Scripture and the Three Forms of Unity, and, most importantly, our respect for the integrity and honour of the King of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We wish you much strength and wisdom from the Holy Spirit as you study this matter, and we pray that together we may work for the restoration of the true unity of His Church in Canada and throughout the world.

Yours in His service,


J. van Laar,
Chairman
Email: vanlaarfarms@gmail.com


J. Vantil,
Clerk
Email: johnvantil@shaw.ca