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A Letter from "Rev. K. Van Den Bosch and Rev. Postma, A. Krabshuis, Elder, Jan Rabbers, Formerly Also an Elder of Emmen, Now Zeeland" to the "Reverend Synodical Assembly in Hogeveen"

K. van den Bosch

Postma

A. Krabshuis

Jan Rabbers

Harry Boonstra

See next page for additional authors

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Authors

K. van den Bosch, Postma, A. Krabshuis, Jan Rabbers, Harry Boonstra, and Nella Kennedy

April 23, 1860

A letter from "Rev. K. van den Bosch and Rev. Postma, A. Krabshuis, elder, Jan Rabbers, formerly also an elder of Emmen, now Zeeland" to the "Reverend Synodical Assembly in Hogeveen" defending their separation from the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church. "We are the seed of Abraham, and not born out of whoredom, and we had to separate from our brothers when we discovered that they whored after a stranger." The group is looking for more understanding from its mother church in the Netherlands for the Separation of 1857.

Translated by Harry Boonstra. Item 34 in my inventory of materials brought back from the Netherlands in 1973. The original is in the CRC archives in Rotterdam.

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Adres, Den Wel Eerwaarden Heer
K van den Bosch, Predicant te
Zeeland Ottawa Countij
Noord America St Mich

N. America
Michigan
April 23/60

Eerwaarde Sijnodale Vergadering
te Hogeveen!

Broeders in onzen Heere en Koning Jezus Christus, die in t midden der Zeven gouden Kandelaren wandelt, die zijne oogen heeft als een vlamme vuurs, en onze werken weet, Hij geeve the Sijnode die genade door zijne kragtdadige tegenwoordigheid, en de ruime invloeiingen des Geestes, dat Hij ook van des Broeders werkzaamheden zeggen mag, Gij houd mijnen Naam, en hebt mijn geloof niet verlochent, gij hebt om mijns Naams wil gearbeid, en zijt niet moede geworden. Hij geeve de Broeders veel genade, licht en geestelijk verstand om in alle duistere zaken die voor mogen komen, naar Konings wil, tot zijne Heerlijkheid, en het heil der Kerk, en gemeenten, zoo binnen als buiten Nederland, te handelen, opdat het ware Sion allerwege moge groeijen en bloeijen in vrugten der Eerste liefde, en zoo haar oude glans en luister uit het stof herleeve, dat zij zoo. -

Broeders! Het is nu 3 jaren geleeden, dat onze gemeenten zich tot de Sijnode gewend hebben, met openlegging van onze toestand en begeerte en behoefte betuigend, om van onze Moederkerk als haare echte kinderen geerkend, en onze belangen behartige, en schoon wij in dit opzigt met de Joden konden zeggen, Wij zijn Abrahams zaad en niet geboren uit hoererijs, en ons van onze broeders moesten separeren, toen wij ontdekten, dat zij ging afhoereren met eene vreemde, kregen wij een antwood van onze Moeder dat ons met leedwezen vervulde (namelijk) geen bevoegtheid te hebben om te oordeelen of wij haaere echte kinderen waren of niet, uit oorzaak der tegenstrijdige berigten die van hier (Noord Amerika) ontvangen waren, dit wierp ons wel wat ter needer, doch zijn niet verdorven, aan de andere zijde konden wij

[2]

het ook eenigszins billijken, daar er zeker bij de Sijnode berigten waren ingekomen, van Perzonen en Leeraars, daar men alle vertrouwen instelde, vroeger getrouwe ijveraars der waarheid, opregte aanklevers en Handhavers der Formulieren van Eenigheid, doch wat is de mensch, wat is de Christen, wat zijn de Leeraars op zich zelve, zoo de Heere zijne genade hand onttrekt, en vleesch werelds belang en grootheid op den voorgrond komt, dan kunnen er wel eens sterren van den Hemel vallen, ten minsten voor een tijd, zoo zij waarlijk Apostelen zijn, doch sHeeren woord moet tog onze regel blijven, Tot de wet en het getuigenis, zoo zij niet spreken en handelen na deezen worde, het zal zijn dat zij geen dageraad zullen hebben, maar onze moeder zal zekerlijk zeggen, gijlieden hebt Uw aan een ander Kerkgenootschap verbonden gehad, en alzo betoond bastaards geworden te zijn, doch onze Moeder moet weten, dat dit alleen geschied is op de stellige verzekering en betuigen. Het is onze moederkerk, van de Leeraars daar wij volkomen vertrouwen in stelden, en ons de taal Barbarisch zijnde, niet konden onderzoeken, hoewel de Notabelste leeden het met bezwaar deden, en de thans onder ons arbeidende Leeraar,

en Konzulent het niet heeft kunnen doen, doch toen wij van tijd tot ontdekten, dat wij misleid waren, en het Protesteren ons niet kon baten, Ja volgens het Rapport van Ds Wijckof vrugteloos was, zeggende, Staat het de Broeders naderhand bij ons niet aan, men kan broederlijk vaarwel zeggen, en gaan bij een ander Genootschap, want het is alles de Kerk, wat Rome niet (bij voorbeeld) de onderscheidene genootschappen, zijn als zoo veele huisgezinnen die onder een dak wonen. Wij willen gerne bekennen roekeloos en onbedagtzaam gehandelt te hebben behalve onze Leeraar, ons aan te sluiten aan een genootschap dat wij niet kenden, en voor ons gemoed niet konden zeggen. Ik weet en ben verzekert, doch nu wij door genade zijn wedergekeerd, mag de moeder ons nu buiten t huis laten staan, en den wettigen Herder die in t huis altijd gebleven is, de gemeenschap weigeren, dat is onverantwoordelijk, doch tot roem van de ge...

[3]

genade, het berouwt ons nog niet tot op deezen dag, wij zijn en worden gesterkt, en onder alle tegenstand en beproevingen wassen wij, gelijk Israel in Egipte, ten minsten in de waarheid, eenen zin en gevoelen hoewel het geestelijk leven weinig is, dog wij hebben ook weinig prediking slechts eenmaal per maand, Ds. K. van den Bosch, Predicant te Zeland en Konzulent over de 4 gemeenten, doch allerwege breiden zig de gemeenten uit, en wat zou er meer uitbreiding komen, zoo onzen Leeraar meer hulpe kreeg in den groten oogst, en daar de Heere werken en bidden verordineert heeft, zoo hebben wij ook de middelen, die ons dienstig voorkwamen beproeft, zooals Ds Schoemaker, F. A: Kok, en P. J: de Groot, kunnen getuigen, doch tot hiertoe vrugteloos, wat zullen wij zeggen, de Heere is Suverein [soeverein], en antwoord niet van zijne daden, schoon wij meenen de beloften te hebben, dat onze oogen eens onze Leeraars zullen zien, zoo kan daarom soms de Heere nog lange uitstellen, hoewel het voor ons vleesch pijnlijk is, dat in geen banden wil, doch in dit opzigt komt ons eene zaak wonderlijk te pas, uit de Westfaalsche Republiek; toen wij lazen van dat Huisgezin, die al 15 Jaren hadden gezugt, gewagt, en uitgezien om eene reine sprake tot den volke, wat zal het ongeloof en de vijand daar ook al niet wijs gemaakt hebben, maar op sHeeren tijd word alles beschaamd, en het geloof overwon, de Koning Jezus die de verwagtinge des ellendigen niet in eeuwigheid vergeet, ruste Ds Postma uit, en toe met wijsheid, getrouwheid en standvastigheid, om te spreken en te handelen na t harte van Jeruzalem, die ook om hulpe roept uit Nederland gelijk onze Predicant begeert, langs dien weg moeten de bleetende Schapen tot de kudde en den Herder verzamelt worden, dit zou ook onder ons het geval zijn, - Broeders! Wij kunnen het in gemoede voor den Heere verklaren dat geen Sectegeest of vooroordeel ons heeft gedreven, maar onze onvoorwaardelijke aanneming en erkenning, innige liefde en verkleeftheid onzer Formulieren, en Kerkenorder van Dordrecht, kon niet verdragen dat dezelve zoo vertrapt zouden worden, onder het dekkleed van [line missing in photocopy - perhaps even a page???

[4]

Wij zijn hier in America, en kunnen hier niet handelen als in Nederland, tot onze blijdschap gaan meer broeders en zusters de oogen open, voor 14 dagen kwam nog tot ons over een oude moeder in Israel, uit de gemeente Holland, en een Broeder en zuster uit de gemeente Kalamazo, die goede rekenschap van het werk der genade in hunne harten konden geven, en verklaarden, al lange met een bezwaard gemoed verkeerd te hebben,

de oogen gaan meer open, - den in Nederland door vele welbekenden ouderling, B: H. Ploeg, heeft in de gemeente Holland voor het ouderlingsch: bedankt, en Protesteert openlijk onder t volk, en Nieuwpapier, dat is alleen ons verschil, ZEW wil nog Protesteren, wij zeggen, Protesteert, doch het kan niet baten wij hebben het al jaren gedaan, ouderl: B:H: Ploeg gevoelt veel behoefte, om onzen toestand op nieuw weer aan de Sijnode aandienen, en dat de weg mogte kunnen gebaant worden, om in de Afg Gem: Graafschap een Orthodoxsche Leeraar te verkrijgen, veele te Holland Separeren zich in gezelschap, en zien uit na de gem: Graafschap, dat er eens een vaste Leeraar mogte komen een huisgezin komt reeds getrouw tot ons op, Ja Broeders! Het is treurig de ware schapen van Jezus Kudde zijn verstroot op de bergen, en gaan elkander voorbij, gins, en elders, o wat zou er van worden, zoo er die bemoedigende belofte niet stond, Ik zal na mijne schapen vragen, en Ik zal ze opzoeken, O Mogt die Eeuwige, onveranderlijke Opzoekende liefde, ons nog eens voorkomen, en ook hun die vroeger onze broeders waren, weer brengen in de Oude sporen, o t is te bejammeren van zulke Leeraars die om aards gewin, onderstand en grootheid, onze Religie ontrouw worden en den blinden op den weg doen dolen. -

Noch deelen wij de Sijnode meede, dat wij onderhandelingen gehad hebben met de Afg: Sijnode in t Oosten, die reeds in 1825 [sic] uit de Duts Reform zijn uit gegaan, en ze altijd noemen De Arminiaansche Kerk, doch hoe zuiver anders ook in de leer, kunnen wij met hun niet vereenigen, omdat zij de wedergeboorte stellen tot grond van aanneming voor ledematen, en doop. -

Nu Geliefde Broeders! De Heere leide u in en door zijn woord en Geest, wone kenlijk in de vergadering, en doe den stok lieflijkheid en Zamenbinding bloeijen, en geeve zoo de belangen van Sion in Nederland, Africa, N: America, enz als onze regte moeder behartigen, en kenne, en erkenne en ondersteune met raad en daad, hare getrouwe Zonen, en Herders Ds K van den Bosch, en Ds Postma. Biddet om den vrede van Jeruzalem.

Namens Gemeenten K van den Bosch, Leeraar en Conzulent
A Krabhuis Ouderl: Jan Rabbers vroeger ook [?] Ouderling te Emmen thans te Zeland

[The document contains a number of misspellings and incorrect verb conjucations.

Nella Kennedy, transcriber,
March 2006]

North America, Michigan

April 23, 1860

Reverend Synodical Assembly in Hogeveen:

Brothers in our Lord and King Jesus Christ, who walks among the seven golden candlesticks, whose eyes are like a flaming fire, and who knows our works. May He, through his powerful presence, give the Synod grace and the abundant out-pouring of the Spirit, so that he may also say of the work of the brothers: You keep my Name and have not betrayed my faith, you have labored for my name's sake, and have not become tired. May he give the brothers much grace, light, and spiritual understanding, so that in all difficult issues which may arise you may act according to the King's will, to his glory, and for the welfare of the Church and the congregation, in as well as outside the Netherlands. Thus may the true Zion grow and flourish in fruits of first love, and if her old splendor and lustre may arise out of the dust--so be it.

Brothers, it has now been three years since our congregations turned to the Synod with a ^{disclosure} revelation of our situation, and we desired and testified to the need to be recognized as the true children of our Mother church, and asked her ^{take care of our affairs} to have our interest at heart. ^{And although we could} We could in this regard say with the Jews: We are the seed of Abraham, and not born out of whoredom, and we had to separate from our brothers when we discovered that they whored after a stranger, ^{we} However, we received ^{nevertheless} an answer from our Mother which filled us with sorrow, when she said that she was ^{did not have the authority what} not able to judge if we were her true children or not, because of the conflicting reports which have been received from here (North America). This answer made us rather downcast, but ^{we not ruined by it.} On the other hand, ^[2] we could somewhat understand Synod. ^{synod most likely had received} There probably were reports from people and ministers who were completely trusted and who were, ^{had it in earlier} at one time, faithful, fervent workers for the truth, who adhered to and maintained the Forms of Unity.

But, what is man, what is the Christian, what are the ministers in themselves, if the Lord withdraws his hand of grace, and the flesh, worldly interest, and ^[importance] greatness come to the fore? Then the stars may fall from heaven, ^{at least for} at least for a time, if they are true apostles. However, the Word of the Lord must remain our guide, ^{after all, "to the law and to the testimony"} our law and witness. If they ^[the false preachers?] do not speak and act according to this Word, they shall not ^{not} see daybreak. ^[have the light of day]

But ^{on the basis of} our Mother will say, you have united with another denomination, and have thus shown yourselves to be bastard children. But our mother must know that all this happened only at the firm assurance and declarations ("It is our Mother Church") of our minister. We completely trusted him, and the language was foreign (lit. barbaric) to us, and we could not investigate (the church),

We are here in America, and cannot act as in the Netherlands. We are happy to see that there are more brothers and sisters whose eyes are opened. Two weeks ago an old mother in Israel came to us from the congregation of Holland, and a brother and sister from the congregation in Kalamazoo, who could give a good account of the work of grace in their hearts, and who declared that they had lived with a heavy conscience for a long time.

More and more eyes are opened. Elder B. H. Ploeg, known by many in the Netherlands, has declined the office of elder in the congregation of Holland, and he openly protests among the people. So with Nieuwpapier (the name of a newspaper in the Neth?) although we differ with him. His Reverence still wants to protest; we say, you can protest, but it will do no good--we have done so for years. Elder B. H. Ploeg feels the need to present our need to the Synod again, that the way may be opened to obtain an Orthodox minister in the general congregation of Graafschap. Many in Holland are separating themselves into a communion, and look to the congregation of Graafschap, with the hope that one day a permanent minister may be found. One family now comes to us faithfully.

Yes brothers, it is sad. The true sheep of Jesus' flock are scattered on the mountain, and pass each other, here and there. Oh! what would happen if we did not have that encouraging promise: "I shall ask for my sheep and seek them!" Oh! that the eternal and unchangeable, seeking love may still appear to us, and may also ^{bring} ^{on to} ^{paths once again} return to the old track those who were at one time our brothers and sisters. How deplorable that these ministers became unfaithful to our religion and caused the blind to ^{drift on} wander in the way--for the sake of earthly gain, support (of the government) and greatness.

We also inform Synod that we have had negotiations with the General Synod in the East, which already came out of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1825, and always called ^{W. H. H. H.} at the Arminian Church. But, although they are otherwise very pure in doctrine, we cannot join with them, because they hold that regeneration is the ground for the acceptance of members and of baptism.

^{Now,} ^{Beloved} Dear Brothers, may the Lord guide you in and through his Word and Spirit, live visibly in the Assembly, and may he cause the stem of love and community to flower. And may you, as our true Mother, look after, know, ~~acknowledge and support,~~ ^{and know, acknowledge and support with counsel and deed her faithful sons and shepherds} with counsel and deed, the interests of Zion in the Netherlands, Africa, North America, etc.

Pray for the peace of Zion.

^{Jerusalem}
Her faithful Sons and Shepherds,
on behalf of the congregations,
Rev. K. van den Bosch and Rev. Postma
^{Pastor + Moderator}
A. Krabshuis, elder

Jan Rabbers, formerly also an elder of
Emmen, now Zeeland
On behalf of the congregations, K. van den Bosch, Minister and Counselor

North America, Michigan

April 23, 1860

Reverend Synodical Assembly in Hogeveen:

Brothers in our Lord and King Jesus Christ, who walks among the seven golden candlesticks, whose eyes are like a flaming fire, and who knows our works. May He, through his powerful presence, give the Synod grace and the abundant outpouring of the Spirit, so that he may also say of the work of the brothers: You keep my Name and have not betrayed my faith, you have labored for my name's sake, and have not become tired. May he give the brothers much grace, light, and spiritual understanding, so that in all difficult issues which may arise you may act according to the King's will, to his glory, and for the welfare of the Church and the congregation, in as well as outside the Netherlands. Thus may the true Zion grow and flourish in fruits of first love, and if her old splendor and lustre may arise out of the dust--so be it.

Brothers, it has now been three years since our congregations turned to the Synod with a revelation of our situation, and we desired and testified to the need to be recognized as the true children of our Mother Church, and asked her to have our interest at heart. We could in this regard say with the Jews: We are the seed of Abraham, and not born out of whoredom, and we had to separate from our brothers when we discovered that they whored after a stranger. However, we received an answer from our Mother which filled us with sorrow, when she said that she was not able to judge if we were her true children or not, because of the conflicting reports which have been received from here (North America). This answer made us rather downcast, but

On the other hand, we could somewhat understand Synod. There probably were reports from people and ministers who were completely trusted and who were, at one time, faithful, fervent workers for the truth, who adhered to and maintained the Forms of Unity.

But, what is man, what is the Christian, what are the ministers in themselves, if the Lord withdraws his hand of grace, and the flesh, worldly interest, and greatness come to the fore? Then the stars may fall from heaven, ? at least for a time, if they are true apostles. However, the Word of the Lord must remain our guide, our law and witness. If they (the false preachers?) do not speak and act according to this Word, they shall not see daybreak.

But, our Mother will say, you have united with another denomination, and have thus shown yourselves to be bastard children. But our mother must know that all this happened only at the firm assurance and declarations ("It is our Mother Church") of our minister. We completely trusted him, and the language was foreign (lit. barbaric) to us, and we could not investigate (the church),

although the more important members did it with objection; the ministers now serving us (who is also our Counselor) was not able to do so. But after a while we discovered that we had been deceived, and that our protesting would not do any good. According to the report of Rev. Wyckoff the protesting was to no purpose. He said: "If the brothers will eventually not lick it in our church, then they can bid us a brotherly farewell and go to another denomination. They are all the Church (which Rome, for example, is not) and the various denominations are like many families who live under one roof."

We readily confess that, except for our minister, we acted recklessly and thoughtlessly in joining a denomination which we did not know, and of which we could not say, in good conscience, "I am certain and I am assured." But now that we, by grace, have returned, may our Mother let us stand outside the house and refuse communion with the lawful shepherd who always remained in the house? Such action is unjustifiable. But, in praise of grace, up to this day we do not regret our action, we are strengthened, and, like Israel in Egypt, we grow amidst all opposition and trials. At least, there is growth in truth, in one purpose and feeling, although the spiritual life is not much, because we have little preaching, only once a month from Rev. K. van den Bosch, minister in Zeeland and Counselor of the four congregations. However, the congregations are growing and there could be even more growth if our minister had more help in the great harvest. Since the Lord ordains work and prayer, we have tried the means which seemed useful to us as the Rev. Schoemaker, F. A. Kok, and P. J. de Groot can testify; but up to now these attempts have been in vain.

What shall we say? The Lord is sovereign and does not have to answer for his deeds, although we think that we have his promises that we shall one day see our ministers. Therefore the Lord can postpone it a longer time? even though that is painful to our flesh which does not want constraint. But in this connection we are mindful of a case in the Republic of Westphalia. Here ~~in~~ a family has been sighing and waiting and looking for a pure preaching to the people for fifteen years. How unbelief and the enemy must have been telling them things. But in the Lord's own time everyone is put to shame. Faith triumphed, and the King Lord Jesus, who does not forever forget the expectations of the suffering ones, equipped R. v. Postma with wisdom, faithfulness, and firmness, to speak and to act to the heart of Jerusalem. Our minister desires that in our case we also ask for help from the Netherlands, so that the bleating sheep may be gathered to the flock and to the Shepherd in this way.

Brothers we can earnestly declare before the Lord that we are not driven by a sectarian spirit or by prejudice; but unconditional acceptance and acknowledgement, deep love and adherence to our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht could not tolerate that these could be trampled under cover of _____

We are here in America, and cannot act as in the Netherlands. We are happy to see that there are more brothers and sisters whose eyes are opened. Two weeks ago an old mother in Israel came to us from the congregation of Holland, and a brother and sister from the congregation in Kalamazoo, who could give a good account of the work of grace in their hearts, and who declared that they had lived with a heavy conscience for a long time.

More and more eyes are opened. Elder B. H. Ploeg, known by many in the Netherlands, has declined the office of elder in the congregation of Holland, and he openly protests among the people. So with Nieuwspapier (the name of a newspaper in the Neth?) although we differ with him. His Reverence still wants to protest; we say, you can protest, but it will do no good—we have done so for years. Elder B. H. Ploeg feels the need to present our need to the Synod again, that the way may be opened to obtain an Orthodox minister in the general congregation of Graafschap. Many in Holland are separating themselves into a communion, and look to the congregation of Graafschap, with the hope that one day a permanent minister may be found. One family now comes to us faithfully.

Yes brothers, it is sad. The true sheep of Jesus' flock are scattered on the mountain, and pass each other, here and there. Oh! what would happen if we did not have that encouraging promise: "I shall ask for my sheep and seek them! Oh! that the eternal and unchangeable, seeking love may still appear to us, and may also return to the old track those who were at one time our brothers and sisters. How deplorable that these ministers became unfaithful to our religion and caused the blind to wander in the way—for the sake of earthly gain, support (of the government) and greatness.

We also inform Synod that we have had negotiations with the General Synod in the East, which already came out of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1825, and always called it the Arminian Church. But, although they are otherwise very pure in doctrine, we cannot join with them, because they hold that regeneration is the ground for the acceptance of members and of baptism.

Dear Brothers, may the Lord guide you in and through his Word and Spirit, live visibly in the Assembly, and may he cause the stem of love and community to flower. And may you, as our true Mother, look after, know, acknowledge and support, with counsel and deed, the interests of Zion in the Netherlands, Africa, North America, etc.

Pray for the peace of Zion.

Her faithful Sons and Shepherds,

Rev. K. van den Bosch and Rev. Postma

A. Krabshuis, elder

Jan Rabbers, formerly also an elder of

On behalf of the congregations, K. van den Bosch, ^{Emmen, now Zeeland} Minister and Counselor

Address: The Rev. Mr.
K. Van den Bosch, pastor in
Zeeland, Ottawa [sic] County
North America, St. of Mich.

N. America
Michigan
April 23, 1860

Rev. Synodical Assembly
in Hogeveen!

Brother in our Lord and King Jesus Christ, who walks among the seven golden candlesticks, whose eyes are like a flaming fire, and who knows our works. May He, through his powerful presence, give the Synod grace and the abundant outpouring of the Spirit, so that he may also say of the work of the brothers: You keep my Name and have not betrayed my faith, you have labored for my name's sake, and have not become tired. May he give the brothers much grace, light, and spiritual understanding, so that in all difficult issues which may arise, you may act according to the King's will, to his glory, and to the welfare of the Church and the congregations, in as well as outside the Netherlands. Thus may the true Zion grow and flourish in fruits of first love, and if her old splendor and luster may arise out of the dust – so be it.

Brothers, it has now been three years since our congregations turned to the Synod with a disclosure of our situation, and we desired and testified to the need to be recognized as the true children of our Mother church, and asked her to take care of our affairs. And although we could say with the Jews, "We are the seed of Abraham, and not born out of whoredom." We had to separate from our brothers when we discovered that they whored after a stranger. However, we received an answer from our Mother which filled us with sorrow, when she said that she did not have the authority to judge whether we were her true children or not, because of the conflicting reports which had been received from her (North America). This answer disheartened us somewhat, but we are not ruined by it. On the other hand, we could

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understand Synod to some extent. She certainly had received reports from people and ministers who were completely trusted and who had in earlier years been faithful, fervent workers for the truth, who adhered to and maintained the Forms of Unity.

But, what is man, what is the Christian, what are the ministers in themselves, if the Lord withdraws his hand of grace, and the flesh, worldly interest, and greatness [importance] come to the fore? Then the stars may fall from heaven, at least for a time, if they are true apostles. However, the Word of the Lord must remain our guide, after all, *to the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them* [Is. 8:20: *Tot de wet ende tot het getuigenisse: zo zij niet en spreken nae dezen woorde 't zal zijn dat ze geen en dageraet en zullen hebben.*]

But our Mother will say, you have united with another denomination, and have thus shown yourselves to be bastard children. It is our mother church, with ministers on

whom we placed complete trust, and which we – not knowing the language [lit.: the language was barbaric to us] – could not examine, although the most notable members did so with reservations. The pastor [who is also] the moderator laboring among us now was not able to do so. But after a while we discovered that we had been misled, and that our protesting would not do any good. Yes, according to the report of Rev. Wyckoff it was fruitless. He said: “If the brothers will eventually not like it in our church, then they can bid us a brotherly farewell and go to another denomination. They are all the church which Rome (for example) is not. The various denominations are like so many families who live together under one roof.”¹

We readily confess that, except for our minister, we acted recklessly and thoughtlessly in joining a denomination which we did not know, and of which we could not say, in good conscience, “I am certain and I am assured.” But now that we, by grace, have returned, may our Mother let us stand outside the house and refuse communion with the lawful shepherd who always remained in the house? Such action is irresponsible. But, in praise of ...²

[3]

grace, up to this day we do not regret our action, we are being strengthened, and like Israel in Egypt, we grow amidst all opposition and trials. At least, there is growth in truth, in one purpose and feeling, although the spiritual life is slight, because we have little preaching, only once a month from Rev. K. van den Bosch, minister in Zeeland and moderator of the four congregations. However, the congregations are growing everywhere and there would be even more growth if our minister had more help in the great harvest. Since the Lord ordains work and prayer, we have tried and tested the means which seemed useful to us as the Rev. Schoemaker, F. A. Kok, and P. J. de Groot³ can testify; but fruitless until now.

What shall we say? The Lord is sovereign and does not justify his deeds, although we think that we have his promises that we shall one day see our ministers. Therefore the Lord can postpone it a long time sometimes, even though that is painful to our flesh which does not want constraint. But in this connection we are mindful of a case in the Republic of Westphalia, where we read about a family which has been sighing and waiting and looking for a pure preaching to the people for fifteen years. How unbelief and the enemy must have been telling them all sorts of things. But in the Lord’s own time everyone is put to shame. Faith triumphed, and the King Lord Jesus, who does not forever forget the expectations of the wretched, equipped R. v. Postma with wisdom, faithfulness, and steadfastness, to speak and to act according to the heart of Jerusalem. He asked for help from the Netherlands as our pastor also desires. By these means the

¹ Since Van den Bosch did not use quotation marks it is difficult to tell whether this is Wyckoff verbatim.

² The sentence ends with “ge” on page 2, although page 3 begins with “genade” written out full. Although some books – mostly prior to the 19th century – put in a catchword on a line at the very bottom of the page, it is most unlikely that Van den Bosch did so. He did not do so on the other pages. It is most likely that page 3 is missing.

³ Pieter Jansz. De Groot received three calls to Graafschap between Jan. 1860 and Jan. 1861, all of which he declined.

bleating sheep must be gathered to the flock and to the Shepherd. This should be the way among us as well.

Brothers! We can earnestly declare before the Lord that we are not driven by a sectarian spirit or by bias; but our unconditional acceptance and acknowledgement, deep love and devotion to our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht could not tolerate that these would be trampled under the cover of⁴

We are here in America, and cannot act as in the Netherlands. We are happy to see that there are more brothers and sisters whose eyes are opened. Two weeks ago an old mother in Israel came to us from the congregation of Holland, and a brother and sister from the congregation in Kalamazoo, who could give a good account of the work of grace in their hearts, and who declared that they had lived with a heavy conscience for a long time.

More and more eyes are opened. Elder B. H. Ploeg, known by many in the Netherlands, has declined the office of elder in the congregation of Holland⁵. He protests openly among the people, [in] the newspaper,⁶ although we differ with him. His Reverence still wants to protest. We say "protest," but it will be to no avail [for] we have this for years already. Elder B. H. Ploeg feels the need to present our situation once again to Synod, and that the way may be readied to obtain an orthodox pastor in the *Afg[escheiden] Gem[eente]* [the Seceded church] in Graafschap. Many in Holland are separating themselves in communion, and look to the congregation in Graafschap that a permanent pastor may come there some time. One family now comes to us faithfully.

Yes brothers, it is sad to see the true sheep of Jesus' herd scattered on the mountains, and passing each other here and there. Oh! What would happen if we did not have that encouraging promise: "I shall ask for my sheep and seek them." Oh! That the eternal and unchangeable, seeking love may still appear to us, and may also bring on the old paths once again those who were at one time our brothers. How deplorable that these ministers became unfaithful to our religion and caused the blind to drift on the way – for the sake of earthly gain, support and greatness.

We also inform Synod that we have had negotiations with the General Synod in the East, which already came out of the Dutch Reformed Church in 1825 [1822], which they always called the Arminian Church. But, although they are otherwise pure in doctrine, we cannot join with them, because they hold that regeneration is the ground for the acceptance of members and baptism.

Now, beloved brothers, may the Lord guide you in and through his Word and Spirit [and may] live visibly in the Assembly, and may he cause the staff of love and community to

⁴ It is probable that the next page is missing.

⁵ Ploeg wished to be considered as emeritus elder in Holland in March 1860, objecting during a meeting to the changes in the election process. Consistory mentions his name again in April, having tried to speak to him in vain about his inflammatory pieces in *De Hollander*.

⁶ The writers of the letter used the anglicized *nieuwpapier*, a literal translation of *newspaper*, which, if this were a Dutch word, would have to be *nieuwspapier*.

flower. And may you, as our true Mother, look after the interests of Zion in the Netherlands, Africa, North America, etc., and know, acknowledge and support with counsel and deed her faithful sons and shepherd, Revs. K. van den Bosch and Postma.

On behalf of the congregations [and] K. van den Bosch, pastor and moderator

A. Krabshuis, elder
Jan Rabbers, formerly also an elder of
Emmen, now
of Zeeland

[Translation: Harry Boonstra, revisions: Nella Kennedy,
March 2006]

although the more important members did it with objection; the ministers now serving us (who is also our Counselor) was not able to do so. But after a while we discovered that we had been ^{misled} deceived, and that our protesting would not do any good. ^{yes} According to the report of Rev. Wyckoff ^{it} the protesting was ^{fruitless} to no purpose. He said: "If the brothers will eventually not like it in our church, then they can bid us a brotherly farewell and go to another denomination. They are all the Church (which Rome, for example, is not) and the various denominations are like many families who live under one roof."

We readily confess that, except for our minister, we acted recklessly and thoughtlessly in joining a denomination which we did not know, and of which we could not say, in good conscience, "I am certain and I am assured." But now that we, by grace, have returned, may our Mother let us stand outside the house and refuse communion with the lawful shepherd who always remained in the house? Such action is ^{irresponsible} unjustifiable. But, in praise of ^{being} grace, up to this day we do not regret our action, we are strengthened, and, like Israel in Egypt, we grow amidst all opposition and trials. At least, there is ^{slight} growth in truth, in one purpose and feeling, although the spiritual life is not much, because we have little preaching, only once a month, from Rev. K. van den Bosch, minister in Zeeland and ^{every while} Counselor of the four congregations. However, the congregations are growing and there would be even more growth if our minister had more help in the great harvest. Since the Lord ordains work and prayer, we have tried ^{+ tested} the means which seemed useful to us ^{such} as the Rev. Schoemaker, F. A. Kok, and P. J. de Groot can testify; but ^{fruitless} up to now these attempts have been in vain.

What shall we say? The Lord is sovereign and does ^{justify} not have to answer for his deeds, although we think that we have his promises that we shall one day see our ministers. Therefore the Lord can postpone it ^{yet} a longer time ^{sometimes} even though that is painful to our flesh which does not want constraint. But in this connection we are mindful of a case in the Republic of Westphalia, ^{where we read about} Here ~~is~~ a family has ^{which} been sighing and waiting and looking for a pure preaching ^{to} the people for fifteen years. How unbelief and the enemy must have been telling them things. But in the Lord's own time everyone is put to shame. Faith triumphed, and the King Lord Jesus, who does not forever forget the expectations of the ^{wretched} suffering ones, equipped R. v. Postma with wisdom, faithfulness, and ^{steadfastness} firmness, to speak and to act to the heart of Jerusalem. ^{He asked for help from the Netherlands as our pastor does} Our minister desires that in our case we also ask for help from the Netherlands, so that the bleating sheep may be gathered to the flock and to the Shepherd in this way. ^{This should be the way among us as well.}

Brothers we can earnestly declare before the Lord that we are not driven by a sectarian spirit or by ^{bias} prejudice; but, ^{out} unconditional acceptance and acknowledgement, deep love and ^{devotion} adherence to our Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dordrecht could not tolerate that these would be trampled under cover of _____

11
Adres, Den Wel Eerwaarden Heer
K van den Boech, Predicant te
Zeeland Ottawa County
Noord. America. St Mich

N. America Eerwaarde Synodale Vergadering
Michigan
April 23/66 te Hogeveen!

Broeders in onzen Heere en Koning Jesus Christus, die in
t midden der Leven gouden Handelaven wandelt, die zijne
Oogen heeft als een vlamme vuurs, en onze werken weet,
Hij geeve de Synode die genade door zijne kragt daadige tegen
woordigheid, en de ruime invloeyingen des Geestes, dat Hij
ook van des Broeders werkzaamheden zeggen mag, Gij hebt
mijnen Naam, en hebt mijn geloof niet verloocht, gij hebt
om mijns Naams wil gearbeid, en zijt niet moede geworden.
Hij geeve de Broeders veel genade, licht en geestelyk verstand
om in alle duistere zaken die voor mogen komen, naar Ho-
nings wil, tot zijne Heerlykheid, en het heil der Kerk, en ge-
scenten, zoo binnen als buiten Nederland, te handelen, opdat
het ware Sion allerwege moge groeijen en bloeijen in vrugten
der Eerite liefde, en zoo haar oude glans en luister uit het stof
herleev, dat zij zov. —

Broeders! het is nu 3 jaren geleden, dat onze gemeenten zich
tot de Synode gewend hebben, met openlegging van onze toestand
en begeerte en behoeftte betruigende, om van onze Moederkerk als
haare echte kinderen geerkend, en onze belangen behartige, en uhoon
wij in dit oprigt met de Joden konden zeggen, Wij zijn Abrahams zaad
en niet geboren uit hoererij, en ons van onze broeders moesten Separe-
ven, toen wij ontdekten, dat zij ging afhoereren met eene vreemde,
kregen wij een antwoord van onze moeder dat ons met leedwezen ver-
vulde (namelyk) geen bevoegtheit te hebben om te oordelen of wij haare
echte kinderen waren of niet, uit oorzaak der tegenstrydige berigten
die van hier (Noord Amerika) ontvangen waren, dit wiers ons wel wat
ter needer, doch zijn niet verdorven, aande andere zijde konden wij

het ook enigzins billijken, daar er zeker bij de Synode berigten
waren ingekomen, van Personen ende leeraars, daar men alle eer
trouwen in stelde, vroeger getrouwe ijveraars der waarheid, opregte
aanklervers en Handhavers der Formulieren ^{van} eenigheid, doch wat is
de mensch, wat is de Christen, wat zijn de leeraars op zich zelven, zoo
de Heere zijn genade hand onttrekt, en vleesch werelds belang en
grootheid op den voorgrond komt, dan kunnen er wel eens sterren van
den Hemel vallen, ten minsten voor een tijd, zoo zij waarlijk Apostelen
zijn, doch Heeren woord moet tog onze regel blijven, Tot de wet en het
getuigenis, zoo zij niet spreken en handelen na deezem worde, het zal
zijn dat zij geen dageraad zullen hebben, maar onze moeder zal zeker
lijk zeggen, gij lieden hebt Uw aan een ander Kerkgewootschap verbon-
den gehad, en alzo betoond ~~betoond~~ bastaards geworden te zijn, doch on-
ze moeder moet weten, dat dit alleen geschied is op de stellige verze-
kering en betuigen Het is onze moederkerk, van de leeraars daar wij
volkomen vertrouwen in stelden, en ons ditaal Barbarisch zijnde, niet
konden onderzoeken, hoewel de Notabelite ^{het met bevestiging deden} leeden, en de thans onder ons
arbeidende leeraar, en Konzulent het niet heeft kunnen doen, doch
toen wij van tijd tot ontdekten, dat wij misleid waren, en het Protesteren
ons niet kon baten, ja volgens het Rapport van D^r Wijkhof vrugteloos
was, zeggende, Staat het de Broeders wederhand bij ons niet aan, men
kan broederlijk vaarwel zeggen, en gaan bij een ander Genootschap, want
het is alles de Kerck, wat Rome niet is (bij voorbeeld) de onderscheidene ge-
woottheden, zijn als zoo veel huis gezinnen die onder een dak wonen
Wij willen geerne bekennen roekeloos en onbedagzaam gehandelt te hebben
behalve onze Leeraar, ons aante sluiten aan een genootschap dat wij niet
kenden, en voor ons gemoeed niet konden zeggen Ik weet en ben voorzeker, doch
nu wij door genade zijn weder gekeerd, mag de moeder ons nu buiten huis
laten staan, en den wettigen Herder die in huis altijd gebleven is, de ge-
meenschap weigeren, dat is onverantwoordelijk, doch tot roem van de ge-

in genade, het berouwt ons nog niet tot op dezeren dag, wij zijn en worden
ver gesterkt, en onder alle tegenstand en beproevingen wassen wij, gelijk
regte Israël in Egypte, ten minsten in de waarheid, eenen eim en gevoelen
at is hoewel het geestelijk leven weinig is, dog wij hebben ook weinig prediking
n, zoo slechts eenmaal per maand, D^r N van den Bosch, Predicant te Zeland
7 en en Konsulent over de 4 gemeenten, doch allerevege breiden zig de gemen
van ten uit, en wat zou er meer uitbreiding komen, zoo onzen Leeraar meer
vstelen hulpe kreeg in den groten oogst, en daar de Heere werken en bidden
het verordineert heeft, zoo hebben wij ook de middelen, die ons dienstig voor
it zal kwamen beproeft, zoo als D^r Schoemaker, F. H. Toth, en P. J. de Groot,
eher kunnen getuigen, doch tot hiertoe vrugteloos, wat zullen wij zeggen, de
bon= Heere is Soeverein, en antwoordt niet van zijne daden, schoon wij meenen
n on de beloften te hebben, dat onze oogeneens onze Leeraars zullen zien, zoo
oze kan daarom soms de Heere nog lange uitsstellen, hoewel het voor ons vlees
wij pijnlijk is, dat in geen banden wil, doch in dit opzigt komt ons eene zaak
niet wonderlijk te pas, uit de Westfaalsche Republiek, toen wij laxen van
ons dat Huisgezin, die al 15 jaren hadden gerugt, gewagt, en uitgezien
ch om eene reine sprake tot den volke, wat zal het ongelof en de vijand
en daar ook al niet wijs gemaakt hebben, maar op Heeren tijd word alles
loos beschaamd, en het gelof overwon, de Koning Jesus die de verwagting,
ren gedes ellendigen niet in eeuwigheid vergeet, ruste D^r Postma. uit, en
want tre met wijsheid, getrouwheiden standvastigheid, om te spreken en te han
ege delen na tharte van Jeruzalem, die ook om hulpe roept uit Nederland
nien gelijk onze Predicant begeert, langs dien weg moeten de bleetende scha
 hebben pen tot de kudde en den Herder verzamelt worden, dit zou ook onder ons
iet het geval zijn, — Broeders! wij kunnen het in gemoede voor den Heere verkla
t, doch ren dat geen Sectegeest of vooroordeel ons heeft gedreven, maar onze on
shuis onvoorwaardelijke aanneming en erkenning, innige liefde en verkleef
ege heid onzer Formulieren, en Verkenorde van Dordrecht, kon niet verdragen
tege dat deselve zoo verbrayt zouden worden, onder het dekhleed van, 12

Wij zijn hier in America, en kunnen hier niet handelen als in Nederland, tot onze blijdschaps gaan meer broeders en zusters de oogen open, voor 14 dagen kwam nog tot ons over een oude moeder in Israel, uit de gemeente Holland, en een Broeder en zuster uit de gemeente Palamaro, die goede rekenschap van het werk der genade in hunne harten konden geeven, en verklaarden, al lange met een berwaard-gemoed verkeerd te hebben, de oogen gaan meer open, - den in Neder-land door weake welbekenden vaderling, B: H. Ploeg, heeft in de gemeen-te Holland voor het vaderlingsch: bedankt, en Protesteert openlijks on-^{ter volk,} en Nieuwspapier, dat is alleen ons verschil, ^{Wij} wil nog Prote-steren, ^{wij} zeggen, Protesteert, doch het kan niet baten wij hebben het ds-javen gedaan, vaderl: P: H: Ploeg gevoelt veel behoefte, om onzen trestand op nieuw meer aan de Synode aandienen, en dat de weg moogt kunnen ge-^{baant} worden, om in de Afg: Gem: Graafschaps een Orthodoxe Leeraar te verkrijgen, vele te Holland separeren zich in gezelschap, en zien uit na de gem: Graafschaps, dat er eens een vaste Leeraar moogt komen een huis ^{geen} komt reeds getrouwt tot ons ons, Ja Broeders! het is tren-^{sig} de wareschapsen van Jesus Christus zijn wortwort op de bergen, en gaan elkander voorbij, gins en elders, o wat zou er van worden, zoo er die bemve-^{digende} belofte niet stond, Ik zal na mijne schapen vragen en Ik zal ze oproeken, O moogt die Eeuwige, onveranderlijke Oproekende liefste, ons nog eens voor komen, en ook hun die vroeger onze broeders waren, weer brengen in de oude sporen, o ^{is} te bejammenen van zulke Leeraars die om aard's gewin, onderstand en grootheid, onze Religie ontrooven worden en den blinden op den weg doen dolen.

Noch deelen wij de Synode mede, dat wij onderhandelingen gehad hebben met de Afg: Synode in ^t vosten die reeds in 1825 uit de Duits Reformatie zijn uit-^{gegaan}, en ze altijd noemen De Arminiaansche Kerk, doch hoe zuiver anders ook in de leer, kunnen wij met hun niet vereenigen, omdat zij de wedergebor-te stellen tot grond van aanneming voor ledematen, en doops.

Nu geliefde Broeders! de Heere leide u in en door zijn woord en geest, wone kenlijks in de vergadering, en doe den stoks lieflijkheid en Samenbinding bloeijen, en geeve zoo de belangen van Sion in Nederland, Africa, N: A: merica, enz als onze rechte moeder behartigen, en kenne, en erkenne en ondersteune met raad en daad, hare getrouwe zonen, en Herders D: K van den Bosch, en D: Postma. Biddet om A: Raabshuis Oudek ^{den vrede vry, Jeruzalem.} ^{Sam: Rabbe's vroege} Namens Gemeentens ^{en} van den Bosch ^{Leeraar} ^{Baderling te Emmen} ^{en} ^{Continent} ^{Chamste keland}