

Summary

How apostolic momentum brings a rigid church in motion

Research into the origin and intent of the main themes of the Church Order of 1951

The apostolate is widely recognized as the determinative paradigm of the Church Order of 1951.

This study does not examine the apostolate as such, but the question of how apostolic impetus has put a rigid church in motion and freed it from the 'Babylonian exile of the General Rule' that king Willem I imposed on the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) in 1816. The apostolate can serve as an eye-opener for an understanding of the subjects that formed 'hot' items at the discussions of the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) in the context of the process of a merger with the Reformed Churches (GKN) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELK) in the Netherlands on their way to becoming the Protestant Church in The Netherlands (PKN). In this respect there was often an appeal to backgrounds and intentions of the Church Order of 1951, while it was not clear whether these were right, and even less whether these occurred selectively. The objective of this research is to clarify which arguments were exchanged and what the interpretation was of the various formulations and concepts. In order to make this as clear as possible we will be focusing on the primary sources only in the first three parts.

This study is also of current interest.

The Restored Reformed Church (HHK) took the Church Order of 1951 with her in 2004, when (parts of) the congregations had not joined the Protestant Churches of the Netherlands (PKN).

This analysis asks this church (HHK) whether she consistently applies her own doctrinal understanding to the Church Order of 1951. This study can enlighten all the churches of a Presbyterian-synodical model concerning the manner in which proposals of the Church Order were treated and arguments were started. Hence, it can be a contribution to each synod that is responsible for making changes to the Church Order in the process of evaluating its own present action.

At the same time this study is important for many churches in view of their ecclesiastical governance and their reflection on ecclesiological dogma, because it shows that in the opinion of the men of that time, a church without apostolic motivation is not a true church.

This study consists of four parts and twenty-seven chapters.

Part I contains the development in the General Synod of 1940-1945. The *Acts* of the General Synod function as the source

Part II (chapters 8 to 11) deals with the work of the *committee for principles of Church Order* of the years 1942-1945. The detailed minutes that were taken by Wagenaar, the secretary of the committee, function here as source. Chapters 12 and 13 examine how the Church Order was established in the *Committee for Church Order*, and the manner in

which the concept is dealt with in the General Synod
The minutes of this committee and the *Acts* of the General Synod form the sources.

In Part III (chapters 14 to 20) the subjects of the discussions follow systematically. These chapters examine both what was said on this subject in the committee for Church Order, as well as later in the first and second reading of the General Synod.

It is also concerned here with a study of the sources.

The sources are established by the minutes of the committee of Church Order and the *Acts* of the General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK).

Part IV (chapters 21 to 27) is the evaluating section. Chapter 21 evaluates the process by which the Church Order of 1951 was established. The subjects of Part III are evaluated in the following chapters.

Part I. The developments in the General Synod 1940-1945

Chapter 1 shows that the General Rule that king Willem I imposed on the Church had great consequences. The Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) no longer had official meetings but committees. The General Synod believed that this meant that it might no longer make confessional statements. Both in the nineteenth century as well as in the first four decades of the twentieth century all attempts to break with the General Rule had been futile. However, there was a breakthrough in 1940, notably due to the action of the evangelist Hendrik Kraemer and the appointment of Koeno Henricus Eskelhoff Gravemeyer on 1 April 1940 as secretary of the General Synod. The third important factor was the outbreak of the Second World War

Chapter 2 commences with an article that Hendrik Kraemer wrote in *Word and World* about 'Church reorganization'. He analyzed the need of the church and called the church to assemble at a general ecclesiastical meeting in order to bring to life powers that are in the church and have these flow through the whole church. The thread of apostolate runs through this. The Church exists for the world.

Kraemer's proposal found resonance. The church called for the requested meeting as a *committee for church consultation*. This committee established a working order to look at various aspects of work in which the church should take part, including *Church and the Building-up (of church and congregation)*. The apostolic concept came into action and brought movement into the church. The Synod began to speak to the church, people and government.

Chapter 3 starts with a second article written by Kraemer in 1941 in *Word and World* with the title 'The Church in motion'. He indicated in this that the church had been moved into action. The apostolate is now brought even more emphatically to the fore.

The movement made headway in the General Synod. The *Acts* show that the General Synod was strongly involved in the work. Delegates of the established working parties appear in the meeting. It turned out to be apostolate in word and deed. The movement reverberated through the church.

Chapter 4 comments on the fact that in 1942 several preachers, who were committed to

the process of reformation, were imprisoned by the German occupying forces, including the 'leaders' Gravemeyer, Kraemer and Scholten. Those who retained their freedom carried on working steadily. However, the reports from the working parties, and the extent of the minutes showed that the process of reformation was threatened and was in danger of stagnating the apostolate.

Chapter 5 describes a powerful revival of the process of reformation that was seen in the year 1943, partly due to the release of various preachers. Gravemeyer had been released from his position of delegate general secretary in order to act within the Church Consultation to coordinate and stimulate all (aspects of the) work. The reports showed how the working parties had become increasingly aware of their apostolic task and submitted a variety of proposals to the synod for the expansion of their work. The synod continued to speak confessionally to the church. An ecumenical awareness began to awaken and the General Rule was adjusted accordingly.

At the end of the year 1943 a request from the Reformed Council for internal mission came before the synod to establish an organization Church and World, in order to instruct people in evangelism. The apostolic thought received a wholly concrete and permanent form here.

Chapter 6 reveals that some preachers in the Netherlands sympathized with National-Socialism. Hence discipline is now also discussed in the synod, the doctrine that had not been exercised since 1816.

In the minutes we find that the synod is already in the process of the reconstruction and establishment of society after the war (including the new establishment of broadcasting). The war had forced the church to speak prophetically to the occupier. And the church was now prepared to speak to the new government. Because of the war the church increasingly sought more contact with other churches. The preparations for Church and World also continued. The feeling that the end of the war was near (after D-day, 6 June 1944), and the thought that the church must be ready had added additional urgency to the case. Various members of the synod had the feeling that the plan was still incomplete, but Gravemeyer's fervent petition kept the case moving.

In addition considerations regarding the *Draft-Regulation* had been brought to the synod's table in 1944. The *Draft* was positively welcomed in all provincial church and Classis meetings. Some people were concerned about how certain subjects would be further interpreted in the church. The liberal members were afraid of discipline, the orthodox were concerned about the confessional content of the new Church Order.

Chapter 7 – With this chapter we arrive at the year 1945. The minutes did not reveal any new developments. The *Draft* was adopted, and the General Synod settled only a few matters that were still in hand.

The case of the NSB-preachers (National Socialist Movement) was discussed again. With regard to discipline it seemed that the church had not found a solution during the year. The fact that the General Rule made the doctrine on discipline impossible was increasingly experienced as a burden. The committee for Church Order would have liked to solve the matter of discipline in the new Church Order. The closure of the last meeting of the General Synod revealed an expectation that the new organization would add new strength for the church, in order to bring the people to Jesus Christ to boldness and to confront the world to which Christ is entitled.

Part II. The work of the committee for the principles of Church Order 1942-1945, and the work of the committee for Church Order 1946-1950

Chapter 8 shows that from the Building-up (of the Congregation) a committee for the principles of Church Order was established. This committee, however, did not work according to the directive of the principles of Church Order. As its president, the lawyer, P. Scholten, quickly submitted a proposal with the request for reorganization. It would have two divisions. He wanted first to create a new synod, and this new synod should then provide a new Church Order. The war was not the right time for direct reform. Besides he also feared that the battle between the parties within the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) would resurface. The members of the committee thought fairly homogeneously about the objections against the General Rule. The same was true about the idea that the church should be governed by officials. There were different thoughts regarding the function and the interpretation of the confession

Chapter 9 discloses that Wagenaar joined Scholten and proposed that the General Rule did not have to be 'reconstructed'. It needed only to regulate the implementation in newly added articles. This stirred up many things. Thanks to Severijn a dramatic discussion developed that led to the recognition that the church and all her congregations are founded upon the Confession. The formulation of 'in obedience to God's Word and founded upon the Confession of the Dutch Reformed Church' (NHK), was accepted by the entire committee. However, the exegesis of this formula was not established.

The technical proposals of Wagenaar were accepted. Scholten added a commentary to the project in which various remarks were made concerning its content. Scholten connected the need for a new Church Order clearly with apostolate. Scholten also spoke about the task of interdenominational and ecumenical work that had progressed in the war and should be extended after the war.

Chapter 10 examines the additional articles. Also discussed here is the meaning of the above-mentioned formula about Scripture and Confession. Scholten called the ascertainment of an exegesis of this formula the task of the new General Synod.

As a result of a discussion with Severijn the third version of *Scholten's Commentary* appeared with a new section on the Confession, in which was noted that the church should both guard against fear of the Confession as well as adhering uncritically to the Confession. At the same time it was mentioned that the Confession must be understood dynamically and not statically. They are the streams of every epoch that should force the church to reflection and to renewed confession.

In this the church should first resort to the old Confession to determine whether the answer is already there.

If not, then the churches should complement, add, modify and use new formulations.

Chapter 11 notes that in the concluding phase, the committee went to work carefully in order to create the widest possible support for the draft. Meetings were held with senior leading figures from the various denominations of the church. Two delegates from each classis were 'trained' to enable them to support the draft when discussed in the meetings of the classis. A meeting with members of the provincial church government would also be called. The proposal was accepted by the General Synod in the first reading.

The considerations of the meetings of the Classis and provincial governments were

positive.

The point of discussion concentrated on three subjects in particular, namely, the qualified majority of two-thirds, the right of veto of the provincial church meetings, and the formula of article I. This last point caused concerns, in particular regarding the uncertainty that the exegesis was not definite. The proposal was accepted by the General Synod without major changes.

Chapter 12 sees the new General Synod appointing a *Committee for the Church Order*.

The synod appointed Scholten again as president. As soon as he had accepted the working order he asked Wagenaar to design the new Church Order. In the first meeting Scholten said that people could so much better discuss pragmatically and more fruitfully with each other. With this Scholten, the lawyer, indicated the pervading tone of the work of the committee, namely, to become more concrete as soon as possible. There was again no place to consider the principles of Church Order. Wagenaar indicated that in his *Building project* he would remove himself as far as possible from the General Rule, and to let Dordt and other Reformed Church Orders take part. Important was his distinction between the true Church Order and the Roman articles and administrative implementation of the ordinances. As far as the Confession was concerned, Wagenaar took the point of view that was laid down in the comments at the working order. He proposed to divide the work of the committees in its entirety, and to set up sub-committees, where qualified non-members could also participate. The ordinances would be prepared by sub-committees. This meant that the momentum would be maintained. The committee decided as early as the first meeting to take *Wagenaar's Building project* as its starting point.

The approach that the committee followed in the last part of the project showed great resemblance to the strategy of the working order. And so the committee held, among other things, a conference with leading figures of the church. The apostolate in this chapter is not much discussed, because the technical side of the process in particular is dealt with. The content is treated at the various topics. However, from the outset the apostolate had also determined the technical side.

Chapter 13 examines the treatment in the General Synod.

The synod formed ten committees, each of which studied different ordinances. A central committee of conformity was also appointed, where all lines were coordinated.

In the first reading the Church Order was unanimously adopted. After the Roman articles the ordinances were treated. When these were also accepted, all the votes were taken for the entire Church Order. It was accepted with 39-3. In the meeting of October 1950 the considerations were discussed in the subcommittees.

It was also established that the two delegates, who were appointed to the reduplicated synod as consultants, were permitted to be present. About six thousand amendments were presented to the reduplicated synod. After Church Order and ordinances were treated systematically, the members of the synod received their first opportunity to speak before the final vote. The Liberals and the Reformed (Hervormd Gereformeerd), each in their own way, wrestled with the Confession in article X.

Thereafter the Church Order with the ordinances was accepted with 76-14. The new Church Order would come into force on 1 May 1951. After the adoption 31 people began legal proceedings against the Church Order.

The committee members of the Church Order were most affected by the fact that among them was Severijn, their own committee member. The church was declared to be right.

The same was applied to those who appealed to a higher court. Severijn did not take part in this.

Part III. Subjects in the committee for Church Order and their treatment by the General Synod 1945-1950

Chapter 14 examines the treatment of the balance of the relationship between the rural church (Article I) and the local congregation (Article II) and also of the committee and the General Synod. At the treatment of article I in the committee, the completeness of the local congregation was established without lapsing into the autonomy of the local congregation.

When treating article II regarding congregations, the matter was clearly defined in as much that the members should first belong to the reformed congregation and consequently to the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK).

However, the amendment that the synod made to article II regarding the concept of church was greater than the synod itself had probably realized. The figure of members by birth was not limited to the children of reformed *baptized* parents.

The committee spoke about the paradox of the rural church and the local congregation. The General Synod also discussed this paradox at length.

Chapter 15 presents two themes: the Apostolate (article VIII) and the Confession (Article X).

The committee for Church Order chose the order of apostolate first and then the confession, because it opted for an Apostolic National Church. Everyone was aware of the apostolic task when the subject was treated in the first reading of the synod.

At the same time there were two movements.

Some considered that a reversal of the order would reverse the developments of the last few years. Others believed that the formation of a confessing congregation was genuine Protestant apostolate.

Article VIII. Of apostolate

In the committee for Church Order, article VIII developed into the next version. Israel, the work of mission, the witness to government and people, and the work of re-Christianization and reformation of our people, all received a place. Van Ruler had great influence on the order. Winning souls for the gospel was not the only importance for the committee, but also to secure the possession of God's Word in the whole world, ensuring that according to God's commandment the order of life there may be maintained. And so the motive provided prospects of a theocracy.

In the synod L. Kievit called for a competent explanation of the concept of apostolate. No straightforward answer came forward.

Miskotte dissociated himself from Van Ruler's explanation, because otherwise he would also have to be against it.

Article X. Of Confessing

Wagenaar's draft stated that the church in a confession of faith lays down the summary of her general Christian faith.

The committee counted among the confessional writings the old Christian creeds, the

Belgic Confession (or the Netherland Confession), the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt. For the sake of a Wallonian Reunion the Genevan Catechism was also added in the course of the process. The relationship between the church and the confessional writings was expressed as 'In agreement with the confession of the fathers, and a responsibility for the present Church' confessing the self-revelation of the One Triune God. With this the bond with the entire confession was demonstrated. At the same time it was said of the confession that it was drawn from Holy Scripture. And that the Bible was the only source of preaching and as a general rule of faith, the final standard for the pure confession of the church. With the confession, discipline was also addressed. The committee was of the opinion that the church doctrine of discipline was needed, but was not looking for it. Anything that 'affects the foundation of the church would deserve discipline'. Discipline was developed in the committee from judicial to juridical. In a transitional regulation the rule was that in the next ten years the church should not proceed to discharge from office. The church must first have time to learn to profess. In the synod the orthodox L. Kievit proposed that during this time the church should also refrain from a judicial verdict. At the first reading of Article X of the General Synod it seemed that there was a concern about a new confession. The response from the committee was that this 'repeatedly renewed confession' must not be understood as a new confession, but as always confessing. The wording of 'in communion with' was interpreted by various members as a new 'nulla quia absurdum /quatenus'. The committee indicated that 'in accordance with' was weaker. The formulation was unanimously adopted. At the second reading this 'in communion with' was once more discussed. This appeared to be the result of various debates in and outside of the synod, and in particular by D. Bakker's publication of a brochure, in which he indicated how he, as a Liberal, interpreted these words.

In 1953 the General Synod responded to a letter from the Dutch Reformed Church Bond of Officials in the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) that the synod had not objected to the declaration that 'in communion with' implied 'in accordance with' when the latter word meant 'a bond' by the witness of the Holy Spirit to the religion of the confession.

Chapter 16 treats the subject of holy baptism. The issue of infant baptism was discussed in the General Synod, having taken an extensive report on the question of infant baptism as its basis. The synod distanced itself from Karl Barth's position. There was no difference of opinion regarding infant baptism. The report was adopted unanimously.

As a result of the concept that Van Ruler established with regard to baptism, the apostolate came promptly and clearly under discussion in the committee. Van Ruler mentioned only infant baptism. According to him adult baptism belonged in the ordinances. The other members of the committee wanted to include adult baptism, more specifically because it could be expected in view of Christianization and re-Christianization. Van Ruler called infant baptism the norm, and adult baptism a deviation (from the norm). In the case of the Netherlands he viewed it from the corpus christianum, therefore both may not be put next to each other. The committee maintained that article VIII mentioned Christianization and re-Christianization. The solution was found in the formulation by two members, in which infant baptism is listed first, and therefore has primacy.

Chapter 17 deals with the Confession of faith and the Lord's Supper. The purpose of the catechesis was regarded to partake of the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

A public confessional was considered as a request to receive access to the Lord's Supper.

The article regarding the Lord's Supper was unanimously accepted by the General Synod without change. The apostolate was not among the subjects on the agenda, but clearly in the sense that catechesis was distinguished from the responsibility of the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) for the youth of the nation, who would not be reached by catechesis. This responsibility is separately and clearly expressed in the Church Order.

Chapter 18 examines the treatment of the diaconate. There was not much of a difference of opinion within the committee with regard to the diaconate itself. The diaconate was formulated as a service of mercy by which the congregation meets its mission through the diaconate. The diaconate was anchored in the communion of the Lord's Supper. The baptized members also are to be involved in their diaconal service to the church and the world. With an appeal to the Belgic Confession of Faith, the diaconate received a complete and full position in the Church Council. In the formulation of the contents of the diaconate, the committee took the point of view of the new situation, that the government should regard themselves to be responsible for poverty. For this reason the Church Order formulated the diaconate as having less concern for the relief of the poor, but it received a greater function in its task for social justice. If the government was wanting in this, it should be the task of the diaconate to make the church aware of this (situation), so that the church would address the government concerning this. At the same time the diaconate received the liberty to deal with entirely different tasks, such as rehabilitation, child welfare, home help, aid to refugees and so on. The content was very wide. It encompassed socio-medical, socio-economic and socio-pedagogical aspects. In addition, various elements of the war were included, among them, the intake and welfare of the oppressed, the persecuted and banished, and in particular, those who suffered for the sake of justice.

In the discussion regarding the office of deacon it emerged that the committee would actually have preferred a whole new view for this office, but in order not to overburden the project it had joined the tradition of the three-fold office. Van Ruler himself said that he did not have clarity regarding the office.

Chapter 19 examines the treatment and the formulation of marriage. A precise formulation of the meaning of ecclesiastical confirmation and blessing of a church marriage came from Van Ruler. By the addition 'ecclesiastical' on the one hand it was pointed out that civil marriage was a true marriage and that, on the other hand, the church had her own responsibility to state or not to state the benefit of marriage. The distinctive character of marriage is that it is instituted by a holy God, of which its sanctity must be maintained in the congregation. The approval of the church council to confirm a marriage ecclesiastically, is a matter of discipline, hence the choice of words.

Also, the treatment of divorce and second marriage was studied, both in the committee and in the synod.

The apostolate is addressed here only indirectly.

Chapter 20 examines the relationship with other churches and the unification of these churches. Wagenaar indicated in his *Building up* project that the debate concerns the Protestant Churches. From the documents of the committee, and the *Acts* of the synod, it is evident that Rome was seen as a danger, because this church attempts to seize power. The committee intended reunification for those churches that were related by confession. Since the war, contact with other churches was well under way.

The apostolate was also discussed in these articles. Van Ruler stated that the whole point was to aim for a national church. In his view this was directly connected with the kingdom and the national church. The matter of ecumenism was found to be of great importance, particularly from an apostolic view.

Part IV. Evaluation process of the establishment of Church Order and of the treatment of various themes

Chapter 21 evaluates the process initiated by Kraemer in word and writings. It was one of the four factors that resulted in the establishment of the Church Order of 1951.

The second important factor was the outbreak of the war, which gave the synod the opportunity to break with the silence of the church that had begun in 1816.

The war contributed to the transcendency of party allegiances that also can be explained from a socio-psychological perspective. The war also forced the act of charity, a witness in deed. The war taught the synod to speak also to the government and increasingly revealed the consciousness of the prophetic role of the church. Furthermore, the war led to an acceleration of developments. The thought that the church would need to be ready after the war, the establishment of 'Church and World' was a clear proof of this. The participation of the lawyers Scholten and Wagenaar was seen as an important factor that made the arrival of the Church Order of 1951 possible. In both committees, these two lawyers provided the agenda and presided over the subjects for discussion. However, at the same time their practical approach was partly to blame for the fact that the preliminary questions were not discussed. They were subsequently redirected by Scholten to the new synod. The Church Order was not the result of sitting as pupils at the feet of the apostles, but of theologians with their own vision, by whom the means were given to come to an acceptable conclusion. Besides, everyone produces concepts and issues from their own insight. This insight does not proceed to a precise formulation of the contents with which it is occupied. For example, it does not come to an in-depth conversation concerning the authority of Scripture and the relation between the Old and New Testament. There is also no uniform exegesis of what apostolate is. It is not inconceivable that if this had happened the members of the commission would not have agreed and thus no Church Order would have come into existence.

The end of this chapter evaluates how it was possible that Severijn took part in a lawsuit against the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) regarding the new Church Order. As the most plausible reason was given the fact that Severijn's influence was lost to I. Kievit, who had great influence among the Reformed (Hervormd Gereformeerd) and who, in word and letter, attacked Severijn, mentioning him by his full name.

Chapter 22 evaluates Articles I and II regarding church and congregation. The relationship between the rural church and the local congregation was characterised by the committee as a paradox and as a dialectical relationship. The relationship was identified, but the initial questions were not discussed. The church was seen and typified as a national church, although the description in the text of the Church Order itself was not. This typifying would indicate that the church was concerned with the salvation of the whole nation. Van Ruler fleshes this out from his view of theocracy: the Catholic Church is not spread within the nations, but joins herself to the nations.

Those born from reformed parents were called a third category by the members of a congregation. The Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) took a unique position with this 'members by birth' in connection with the world church, without having considered a sound reason for this.

Within Part IV is *chapter 23* the most substantial chapter, as chapter 15 is in part III. This shows exactly what the core of the Church Order of 1951 is: an apostolic Protestant Church.

Article VIII. Of Apostolate

Apostolate is a winged expression, but an unambiguous exegesis cannot be found. The concept underwent a change by Van Ruler. For Kraemer, and most of the committee, it was the concern of the witnessing of Christ by missions in and outside the nation. In Van Ruler's opinion the concern was not so much for the conversion of an individual, but particularly for the Christianization of the life of the nation; the battle between theocracy and the kingdom. Barth also was concerned that the church should focus on the whole of society. The Barthians and Van Ruler had become allies. However, Barth's vision delivered a socio-critical vision. The Barthian line won in the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK). At the same time this line was radicalised.

The theme of 'the councils and apostolate' is evaluated after the discussion of the prophetic role of the church, and the difference in vision regarding the colony between Van Ruler and Kraemer. The councils developed after the war into their own little kingdoms. A problem was identified, namely, that during the establishment and development of the councils all the threads came together in the Church Consultation in general and in the five-man strong central committee as the mother of all councils in particular. In the Church Order of 1951 we do not find an equivalent for both. In this way the councils of the church withered and became infertile, and evidently harmful to the church. The history of development of the institute of Church and World showed this in particular. One of the causes identified here is the fact that there were no preliminary questions regarding the theocracy, nor regarding the prophetic role of the church. The question arises as to whether there was a common ecclesiology.

Article X. The Confession of the Church

Since the working order, the formula '*In obedience to the Holy Scriptures and founded on the confessional writings*' has given guidance to the life of the church and originated the history of the Church Order of 1951. In spite of the fact that this formula played such an important role, its content is nowhere accurately formulated. Kraemer and Gravemeyer did not want to say what the content of the confessional was, because they were afraid that, as a result, the political strife would flare up again. The church had first to be church and understand her confession. Scholten refused to discuss this question, because this would be the task for the new synod.

That the church must profess is a matter for the working order, but *what* the church should profess must be articulated by the new synod. And so everyone had put his own insightful tinge to the formula. The question of this study is why, for example, they had not immediately taken hold of the creed that the one and only catholic world church confesses. Why did the committees not speak out that the Nicaeno-Constantinopolitanum is after all the faith that the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) confesses, and that those who do not confess this must draw the conclusion that they stand outside the world church?

The fact that the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) did not include the judicial but also the juridical discipline into the new Church Order is due to the issue of the preachers, who in the war sympathized with the NSB and openly expressed this. The fact that the synod decided not to implement judicial or juridical discipline for the first ten years, is ultimately the reason that after 1 May 1961 discipline in the Church Order is only written pro forma. Articles VIII and X are the final articles that are evaluated in this chapter. The apostolate comes before the confession to indicate that the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) chose a Church Order of a missionary style church. As such there ought not be any objection to the order, if the contents of every concept had been clearly formulated. And the distinction between the *essence* of the church and the *role* of church had been clarified. The subsequent development showed that the establishment of a primacy is in itself a form of confession. The apostolate moves the confession increasingly behind the scenes. At the end of this chapter the only conclusion can be drawn is that the manner in which form is given to the apostolic character of the Church Order, the objective of apostolate has not been reached. It was the intention of the compilers that by apostolate the church would bring the secular world to Christ's church, but the question may be asked whether in reality the development has not achieved the reverse.

Chapter 24 evaluates articles XV, XVII and XVIII.

Article XV says that baptism should indeed be administered in the midst of the congregation. But it says nothing about the contents of baptism. Everything is approached from the covenant and from this the national church is being considered.

The catechesis is understood as an education in the faith.

It is distinguished from the responsibility of the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) for the youth of the nation, who are not reached by this catechesis.

The same criticism regarding baptism can also be expressed regarding the Lord's Supper, namely, that the preliminary question of what the Lord's Supper meant were not included. The apostolate was not explicitly covered in these articles. However, the diaconate is clearly founded on the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Chapter 25 evaluates the service of charity. Although it is claimed that a whole new vision of the diaconate had been founded on the Church Order, it is demonstrated that the new development had already come into action in 1922 by the laws of the government, while thereafter the war had given a huge expansion to it. This does not detract from the fact that apostolic thought also has an important influence.

In the case of the diaconate it is also evident that fundamental questions were not worked out.

The diaconate, for example, is founded on the communion of the Lord's Supper, without having considered the eschatological aspect of the Lord's Supper.

Chapter 26 established that not much time was spent in the treatment of marriage, neither in the committee for the Church Order, nor in the synod.

Van Ruler said in the synod that *confirmation* expressed more the juridical side of marriage, while the more religious side lies in the blessing. Here also it is evident that the terminology was not defined for the church.

The committee's initial intention was to point out that a second marriage cannot be confirmed, unless the first marriage is dissolved by the death of one of the married couple. This was abandoned after the church's negative views of the report 'Divorce and

Second Marriage' and the attached amended proposal for the General Rule.

Chapter 27 evaluates Article XXV. Of the relationship with other Churches. And article XXVI. Of the reunification of Churches.

The ecumenical awareness came truly alive by the Second World War. The ecumenical thought embraced the Church Order as *inclusio*. After all Article I begins with the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK) 'as revelation of the one holy catholic or universal Christian Church'. The Reformed (Hervormden) credited themselves indeed with a key position. A regret is expressed in the evaluation concerning the committee's exclusion of the *notae ecclesiae* in this subject. The sinfulness of division would have been expressed as well as the justification of the tension between truth and unity. At the same time holiness and apostolate would have made the church contemplate the profound question as to whether she is truly devoted to God and in all things committed to apostolic doctrine. The proper employment of 'apostolic' would also have put apostolate critically in the right order. Even better, the catholicity of the church would have been the best motive to realize that this church must be universal in the inhabited world.

In these articles the apostolate is also spoken of as an important motive. The division within the churches works detrimentally to the outside.

Chapter 28 concerns itself with an *Epilogue*. It reflects on the boundless commitment of the members of both committees for which they are praised, while at the same time the finger is pointed to the profound error that the committee did not follow the appeal of Bakhuizen van den Brink first to examine together the principles of Church Order. The preliminary questions were not studied by a group of 'scholars'.

We get the impression that a pragmatic design led to a pragmatically designed Church Order without an actual theological foundation. The absence of a reflection on the preliminary questions has led to a Church Order, and therefore to an ecclesiastical life, without a determined course. In fact, in this way the situation had not changed and the General Rule of king Willem I remained entrenched. It is not surprising that later various committee members were disappointed about what had become of their work and dreams.

Translation: Annemie Godbehere