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**Provisional ACTS**

of

**General Synod 2025**

of the

Canadian Reformed Churches

held at

**Aldergrove, British Columbia**

from

**May 6-16, 2025**

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### Acronyms and Nomenclature

The following conventions have been used in the Acts of GS 2025. The conventions are consistent with those followed since GS 2016.

1. The abbreviation for a subcommittee is the abbreviation of the main committee dash abbreviation of the subcommittee. (E.g. CRCA-SRN, CCU-SCO).
2. Names of churches are shortened to “the PLACE NAME CanRC”. If a church is referred to by further qualifiers, the qualifier is added in parentheses.

Examples: the Aldergrove CanRC, the Glanbrook (Trinity) CanRC, the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC.

3. Other church federations are referred to by their name in English. The abbreviation used is the one used in the language of origin.

Examples: the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ), the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB).

4. References to acts of general synods are according to the following formula: GS YEAR art. ### mat./obs./cons./rec. #.# or, for 2022, GS YEAR art. ### mat./dec./gr. #.#.

Examples: “GS 2016 art. 94 obs. 3.3.5” refers to Acts General Synod 2016 article 94 observation 3.3.5; “GS 2022 art. 124 dec. 3.3.2 & gr. 4.2” refers to Acts General Synod 2022 article 124 decision 3.3.2 and ground 4.2

If there is potential for confusing synods, the denominational acronym is added to GS (e.g. GS-GKN 2023 = the general synod of the Reformed Churches The Netherlands held in 2023; GS-CanRC 2019 = the general synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches held in 2019).

Because various abbreviations have been used over the years, the following list has the most common English and language of origin abbreviations, with notes where church federations have changed names in the course of time.

The following list attempts to cover the abbreviations used in the *Acts* of GS 2013 through GS 2022 and in reports to GS 2025.

<b>Language of origin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Name in full</b>
ARC	ARC	American Reformed Church (part of the federation of CanRC)
ARPC	ARPC	Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
ARTS	ARTS	Association of Reformed Theological Schools
ARTS	ARTS	Australian Reformed Theological Seminary
ATS	ATS	Association of Theological Schools
ATSA	ATSA	Advanced Theological Studies Assistance



<b>Language of origin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Name in full</b>
BBK	<i>RCA</i>	<i>Betrekkingen met Buitenlandse Kerken</i> (Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of a Dutch church federation)
BC	<i>BC</i>	Belgic Confession
BoG	<i>BoG</i>	Board of Governors (of CRTS)
BPC	<i>BPC</i>	Bible Presbyterian Church
CA	<i>CA</i>	Classis Alberta
CanRC	<i>CanRC</i>	Canadian Reformed Church(es)
CanRCs	<i>CanRCs</i>	Multiple Canadian Reformed Churches
CBT	<i>CBT</i>	Committee on Bible Translations (for the CanRC)
CBTNIV	<i>CBTNIV</i>	Committee on Bible Translation for the New International Version (of the Bible)
CCCNA	<i>CCCNA</i>	Committee for Contact with Churches in North America (of the CanRC)
CCO	<i>CCO</i>	Classis Central Ontario
CCU	<i>CCU</i>	Committee for Church Unity
CCU-C	<i>CCU-C</i>	Committee for Church Unity - Coordinators
CCU-SCO	<i>CCU-SCO</i>	Committee for Church Unity – Subcommittee for Church Order
CCU-STE	<i>CCU-STE</i>	Committee for Church Unity – Subcommittee for Theological Education
CEIR	<i>CEIR</i>	Committee on Ecumenical and Interchurch Relations (of the OPC)
CECCA	<i>CECCA</i>	Committee for Ecumenical Contact with Churches Abroad (of the URCNA)
CERCU	<i>CERCU</i>	Committee for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (of the URCNA)
CGKN	<i>CRCN</i>	<i>Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland</i> (Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands)
CICR	<i>CICR</i>	Committee on Inter-Church Relations (of the ERQ)
CM	<i>CM</i>	Classis Manitoba

<b>Language of origin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Name in full</b>
CNSF	<i>CNSF</i>	Committee for Needy Students' Fund
CN	<i>CN</i>	Classis Niagara
CO	<i>CO</i>	Church Order
COW	<i>COW</i>	Classis Ontario West
CPE	<i>CPE</i>	Classis Pacific East
CPW	<i>CPW</i>	Classis Pacific West
CPTPF	<i>CPTPF</i>	Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding
CRCA	<i>CRCA</i>	Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad (of the CanRC)
CRCA-SRN	<i>CRCA-SRN</i>	Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad – Subcommittee for Relations with churches in The Netherlands
CRCAus	<i>CRCAus</i>	Christian Reformed Churches of Australia
CRCNA	<i>CRCNA</i>	Christian Reformed Church in North America
CRTS	<i>CRTS</i>	Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary
CWeb	<i>CWeb</i>	Committee for the Official Website (of the CanRC)
EF	<i>EF</i>	Ecclesiastical Fellowship
EPCI	<i>EPCI</i>	Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ireland
EPCEW	<i>EPCEW</i>	Evangelical Presbyterian Church of England and Wales
ERQ	<i>RCQ</i>	<i>Église Réformée du Québec</i> (Reformed Church of Quebec)
ESV	<i>ESV</i>	English Standard Version (of the Bible)
FCC	<i>FCC</i>	Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)
FCS	<i>FCS</i>	Free Church of Scotland
FERC	<i>FERC</i>	First Evangelical Reformed Church (Singapore)
FRCA	<i>FRCA</i>	Free Reformed Churches of Australia
FRCNA	<i>FRCNA</i>	Free Reformed Churches of North America
FRCSA	<i>FRCSA</i>	Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (English is now the preferred language; previously also known as VGKSA)

<b>Language of origin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Name in full</b>
GGRCI GGRC	<i>CRCI</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Calvini di Indonesia</i> (Reformed Calvinist Churches in Indonesia)
GGRI	<i>RCI</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia</i> (Reformed Churches in Indonesia)
GGRI-KalBar	<i>RCI-KalBar</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Kalimantan Barat</i> (Reformed Churches in Indonesia in the Province of Kalimantan Barat)
GGRI-NTT	<i>RCI-NTT</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Nusa Tenggara Timur</i> (Reformed Churches in Indonesia in the Province of Nusa Tenggara Timur)
GGRI-P	<i>RCI-Papua</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Papua</i> (Reformed Churches in Indonesia in the Province of Papua)
GGRI-T	<i>RCI-Timor</i>	<i>Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia – Timor</i> (Reformed Churches in Indonesia on the island of Timor)
GK	<i>RC</i>	Reformed Churches [The Netherlands]
GKH DGK	<i>RCR</i> <i>TRC</i>	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken – Hersteld</i> (Reformed Churches – Restored) – renamed <i>De Gereformeerde Kerken</i> (The Reformed Churches)
GKN <sub>vv</sub> GKN	<i>RCN<sub>tf</sub></i>	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (voorlopig verband)</i> – Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (temporary federation) Renamed: “ <i>Gereformeerde Kerken Nederland</i> ”
GKSA	<i>RCSA</i>	<i>Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid Afrika</i> (Reformed Churches in South Africa aka “Dopper Kerken”)
GK <sub>v</sub>	<i>RCN(l)</i>	<i>Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland – vrijgemaakt</i> (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands – liberated)
HC	<i>HC</i>	Heidelberg Catechism
HRC HRCNA	<i>HRC</i> <i>HRCNA</i>	Heritage Reformed Congregations (= Heritage Reformed Churches in North America)
ICRC	<i>ICRC</i>	International Conference of Reformed Churches
IJC	<i>JCI</i>	John Calvin Institute (of the IRB)
IPB	<i>PCB</i>	<i>Igreja Presbiteriana do Brasil</i> (Presbyterian Church of Brazil)

<b>Language of origin</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Name in full</b>
IRB	<i>RCB</i>	<i>Igrejas Reformadas do Brazil</i> (Reformed Churches in Brazil)
IRC	<i>IRC</i>	Inter-church Relations Committee (of the RPCNA)
IRCK	<i>IRCK</i>	Independent Reformed Church in Korea
KJV	<i>KJV</i>	King James Version (of the Bible)
KPCA-K	<i>KPCA-K</i>	Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin)
KPCK	<i>KPCK</i>	Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (Previously cited as PCK (Kosin))
LRCA	<i>LRCA</i>	Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford
NAPARC	<i>NAPARC</i>	North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council
NASB	<i>NASB</i>	New American Standard Bible
NGK or NeGK	<i>DRC</i>	Dutch Reformed Churches (merger of GKv and NGK)
NGK	<i>NRC</i>	<i>Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken</i> (Netherlands Reformed Churches)
NIV/NIV84	<i>NIV/NIV84</i>	New International Version – 1984 Edition (of the Bible)
NIV2011	<i>NIV2011</i>	New International Version – 2011 Edition (of the Bible)
NKJV	<i>NKJV</i>	New King James Version (of the Bible)
NRSV	<i>NRSV</i>	New Revised Standard Version (of the Bible)
OPC	<i>OPC</i>	Orthodox Presbyterian Church
PCA	<i>PCA</i>	Presbyterian Church in America
PCEA	<i>PCEA</i>	Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
PCUSA	<i>PCUSA</i>	Presbyterian Church (United States of America)
PHC	<i>PHC</i>	Psalter-Hymnal Committee (of the URCNA)
PJCO	<i>PJCO</i>	Proposed Joint Church Order (for a merged CanRC & URCNA)
PNG	<i>PNG</i>	Papua New Guinea
PRC	<i>PRC</i>	Protestant Reformed Churches (in North America)
PRCA	<i>PRCA</i>	Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia

<b>Language of origin</b>	<i>English</i>	<b>Name in full</b>
PresRC	<i>PresRC</i>	Presbyterian Reformed Church (in North America)
PRTS	<i>PRTS</i>	Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids, MI)
PTP	<i>PTP</i>	Pastoral Training Program (of CRTS)
RCK	<i>RCK</i>	Reformed Churches in Korea
RCNZ	<i>RCNZ</i>	Reformed Churches of New Zealand
RCUS	<i>RCUS</i>	Reformed Church in the United States
RPCC	<i>RPCC</i>	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada
RPCNA	<i>RPCNA</i>	Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America
RPCCEE	<i>RPCCEE</i>	Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe
RPCT	<i>RPCT</i>	Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
RSE	<i>RSE</i>	Regional Synod East (of the CanRC)
RSW	<i>RSW</i>	Regional Synod West (of the CanRC)
SCBP	<i>SCBP</i>	Standing Committee for the Publication of the <i>Book of Praise</i>
SCABP	<i>SCABP</i>	Standing Committee for the Publication of the Australian <i>Book of Praise</i>
SERK	<i>IERC</i>	Independent Evangelical Reformed Churches [Germany]
SIP	<i>SIP</i>	Statement of Institutional Purpose (of the CRTS)
SRC	<i>SRC</i>	Sudanese Reformed Churches
SRN	<i>SRN</i>	Subcommittee for Relations with churches in The Netherlands (subcommittee of the CRCA)
TPH	<i>TPH</i>	<i>Trinity Psalter-Hymnal</i> (of the URCNA and OPC)
TUK	<i>TUK</i>	<i>Theologische Universiteit Kampen</i> (Theological University in Kampen (of the RCN))
URCNA	<i>URCNA</i>	United Reformed Churches in North America

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**Day 1 — Morning Session**  
**Tuesday, May 6, 2025**

**Article 1 – Opening of Synod**

On behalf of the convening church, the Aldergrove CanRC, Rev. Rob Schouten called the meeting to order. He then read Colossians 1:1-23, and, with a focus on Colossians 1:18a, spoke some words of reflection (see Appendix 1). He then led in prayer and had the assembly sing Hymn 44. He spoke some encouraging words to the delegates regarding the work before them.

**Article 2 – Credentials**

The credentials were examined by the Aldergrove CanRC and all was found to be in good order. Twenty-two primary delegates and two alternate delegates were present and signed the attendance list.

*Delegated by Regional Synod West 2024:*

*Ministers: Hendrik Alkema, Karlo Janssen. Joe Poppe, Rob Schouten, Carl Van Dam, Ken Wieske*

*Elders: Richard J. Buist (alt.), Ken Hoeksema (alt.), Lyndon Kok, James Teitsma, Bill van Beek, Adam van den Hoven*

*Delegated by Regional Synod East 2024:*

*Ministers: Rolf den Hollander, Peter Holtvliuwer, Hilmer Jagersma, Marc Jagt, John Louwerse, Jake Torenvliet*

*Elders: Don Aasman, Gerald Boot, Ron Bremer, John Harsevoort, John Jager, Andy Jairam*

**Article 3 – Election of Officers**

The following officers were elected to serve Synod for its duration:

- Chairman: Rev. John Louwerse
- Vice-chairman: Rev. Rob Schouten
- First Clerk: Rev. Karlo Janssen
- Second Clerk: Rev. Peter Holtvliuwer

**Article 4 – Constitution of Synod**

On behalf of the convening church, Rev. Schouten declared Synod constituted. The elected officers took their places. Rev. Louwerse called for a break to give the executive the opportunity to come with proposals regarding the proceedings of Synod and the division of tasks among the various members of Synod.

*Synod was adjourned.*

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**Day 1 — Afternoon Session**  
**Tuesday, May 6, 2025**

**Article 5 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 1:00pm. The chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 82:1. He read the roll and noted all synod members were present. He thanked the assembly for the confidence expressed in the elected officers of Synod. He expressed appreciation to the convening church for all the work done in preparation for Synod. He extended a warm welcome to the fraternal delegates and observers.

**Article 6 – Housekeeping Matters**

The executive presented recommendations on housekeeping matters. Synod decided the following:

1. *Presence on the Internet:* Synod will publish the *Acts of Synod* on the federation website as they become available. However, as the *Acts* are adopted, Synod will decide whether there are any decisions which should not be immediately posted on the Internet. Confidential acts will not be posted. Only plenary sessions in which individuals address General Synod and the churches will be live streamed publicly (cf. GS 2025 art. 62).
2. *Time Schedule:*  
Monday to Friday  
morning session – 9:00 - 12:00  
afternoon session – 2:00 - 5:00  
evening session – 7:00 - 9:00  
Saturday May 10  
morning session – 9:00 – 1:00
3. *Devotions:* Synod shall begin and close each day in plenary session with Scripture reading, prayer and singing. Mealtimes will be opened with Scripture reading and prayer. A schedule will be handed out for the mealtime and evening close.
4. *Press Release:* A press release shall be published after synod has been closed.
5. *Advisory Committees:* Advisory Committees shall use the template provided by the first clerk for their proposals. These proposals shall be submitted via email to the first clerk before they are dealt with in plenary session. The first clerk will ensure distribution digitally and in print upon request.
6. *Synod Documents:* Copies of internal synod documents are available only to members of synod and fraternal delegates. Officially delegated observers will receive all non-confidential materials.
7. *Guidelines:* For all procedures the Guidelines for Synod shall apply.
8. *Travel expenses:* Expenses are to be submitted, with receipts, to the convening church using the supplied form.
9. *Roll call:* Roll call shall take place each plenary session by means of a visual check by the executive.

**Article 7 – Late Submissions**

Regarding late submissions the executive recommended the following:



- 353 1. Letters from the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) and Free Church of Scotland  
354 (Continuing) (FCC): admitted.  
355 2. Credo Christian High School re visiting GS 2025 on the morning of Monday, May 12:  
356 admitted and agreed to accommodate.  
357 3. Letter from Convening Church re confidential materials: admitted.  
358 4. Letter from the Carman East CanRC re General Fund: admitted as this was mandated  
359 by GS 2022.  
360 5. Appointment letters from various Synod committees: admitted as these were mandated  
361 by GS 2022.  
362 6. Letter re admissibility of two personal appeals: admitted as it pertains to appeals already  
363 on the agenda (listed 8.6.8).  
364 7. Letter re admissibility of appeals submitted without prior notification: admitted as it  
365 pertains to appeals already on the agenda (listed under 8.6.8).  
366 8. Letter from the Convening Church re item 7 above: admitted for information.  
367

368 **ADOPTED**  
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370 **Article 8 – Format of the Acts**

371 **1. Materials**

- 372 1.1 Letters from: Glanbrook (Trinity) (8.4.4), Hamilton (Cornerstone) (8.1.8), Flamborough  
373 (Redemption) (8.1.4), Ancaster (8.1.2), Attercliffe (8.1.3).  
374 1.2 Appeal from Chilliwack (8.6.6).

375 **2. Admissibility**

- 376 2.1 The submissions were declared admissible  
377 Grounds: These submissions interact with GS 2022 art. 7.8 and were received on time.

378 **3. Observations**

- 379 3.1 The above submissions express concern over GS 2022 art. 7.8 to change the format of  
380 synodical decisions from the traditional structure:

381 *Materials – Admissibility – Observations – Considerations – Recommendations*  
382 to the structure:

383 *Materials – Admissibility – Decisions – Grounds.*

- 384 3.2 The churches argue that the previous format:

- 385 • Better reflected the content of overtures, appeals and the thoughts of the churches  
386 through the "Observations" section.  
387 • Explained the reasoning of a Synod more fully through "Considerations".  
388 • Provided a clearer basis for accountability and understanding, especially for future  
389 assemblies and local office-bearers.

- 390 3.3 The Glanbrook (Trinity) CanRC overture notes that a similar proposal was already  
391 rejected by GS 2013, after full interaction with the churches. GS 2022 adopted the new  
392 format without reference to this prior decision and without receiving an overture from  
393 the churches.



- 394 3.4 Several submissions (Glanbrook, the Chilliwack CanRC, the Hamilton (Cornerstone)  
395 CanRC) express concern that the change in 2022 was adopted via an informal letter and  
396 motion, with no clear procedural justification or visibility for the churches.
- 397 3.5 Chilliwack notes that decisions are now harder to interpret and appeal.
- 398 3.6 The Flamborough (Redemption) CanRC and Cornerstone highlight how the  
399 observations and considerations serve a distinct ecclesiastical purpose, making  
400 synodical reasoning both transparent and logically traceable. They argue that brevity  
401 should not come at the cost of ecclesiastical clarity and accountability.
- 402 3.7 The submissions uniformly request that Synod 2025 restore the previous format and  
403 codify it in the Guidelines to ensure consistent, transparent recording of synodical  
404 decisions.

#### 405 **4. Considerations**

- 406 4.1 The churches raise valid concerns. The previous format supported an ecclesiastical  
407 manner of decision-making (CO art. 30) by:
- 408 • Summarizing the voices of the churches (Observations),
  - 409 • Articulating the logic of Synod’s evaluation (Considerations), and
  - 410 • Stating the actual action (Recommendations).
- 411 4.2 The new format lacks transparency. Without observations and considerations:
- 412 • Readers must cross-reference other documents to understand Synod’s response to  
413 the churches.
  - 414 • Churches cannot easily see whether their concerns were heard or how their  
415 arguments were weighed.
  - 416 • Future appeals become more difficult to formulate due to insufficient published  
417 reasoning.
- 418 4.3 The manner in which the GS 2022 change was adopted—via an informal letter and in-  
419 session motion—did not meet the standards normally expected for structural decisions.  
420 It also bypassed prior Synodical precedent (GS 2013).
- 421 4.4 A uniform format, clearly stipulated in the Guidelines for Synod, would serve the  
422 churches by providing consistent expectations and strengthening trust in the decision-  
423 making process.

#### 424 **5. Recommendations**

425 That Synod decide:

- 426 5.1 To return to the previously used format for all synodical decisions:  
427 *Materials – Admissibility – Observations – Considerations – Recommendation(s)*
- 428 5.2 To revise the *Guidelines for General Synod* to specify this format as the standard for all  
429 future Synods.

#### 430 **ADOPTED**

431 *For the Guidelines as revised by GS 2025, see Appendix 25.*

433 **Article 9 – Agenda**

434

435 1 OPENING ON BEHALF OF THE CONVENING CHURCH

436 2 EXAMINATION OF THE CREDENTIALS

437 2.1 Credentials Regional Synod East (RSE)

438 2.2 Credentials Regional Synod West (RSW)

439 2.3 Credentials Fraternal Delegates & Observers

440 2.3.1 Credentials Delegate: Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCSA)

441 2.3.2 Credentials Delegates: Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

442 2.3.3 Credentials Delegate: United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

443 2.3.4 Credentials Delegate: Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)

444 2.3.5 Credentials Delegate: Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

445 2.3.6 Credentials Delegate: Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

446 2.3.7 Credentials Observer: Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)

447 2.3.8 Credentials Delegate: Reformed Calvinist Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI)

448 2.3.9 Credentials Delegate: Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)

449 2.3.10 Credentials Observer: Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK)

450 2.3.11 Credentials Observer: Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)

451 *(During the course of General Synod credentials were received for observers from*  
452 *the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA) and the Heritage*  
453 *Reformed Congregations (HRC))*

454 3 ELECTION OF THE OFFICERS

455 4 CONSTITUTION OF SYNOD

456 5 INFORMATION FROM THE CONVENING CHURCH

457 6 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

458 7 SETTING OF THE TIME SCHEDULE

459 8 INCOMING MAIL

460 8.1 GENERAL MATTERS

461 8.1.1 GKN request for sister church relationship

462 8.1.2 Ancaster letter re Format of the Acts of GS

463 8.1.3 Attercliffe re Format of the Acts of GS

464 8.1.4 Flamborough (Redemption) letter re Format of the Acts of GS

465 8.1.5 Glanbrook (Trinity) re Format of Acts

466 8.1.6 Chilliwack re Format of Acts

467 8.1.7 Guelph (Emmanuel) re delegate selection for GS officers

468 8.1.8 Hamilton (Cornerstone) Overture re Housekeeping matters

469 8.1.9 Glanbrook (Trinity) letter re procedure for Liturgical Forms

470 8.1.10 Langley re procedure re CO55 see (cf. 8.3.8.1.35)

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- 471 8.1.11 FCC letter of greetings  
472 8.1.12 FCS response to invitation to attend Synod  
473 8.1.13 letter from Credo Christian High School re visit  
474 8.1.14 letter from the Correspondence Committee Aldergrove re retention of material  
475 8.2 COMMITTEE REPORTS  
476 8.2.1 Synod Guelph 2022  
477 8.2.1.1 Guelph (Emmanuel) cover letter re GS 2022  
478 8.2.1.2 Guelph (Emmanuel) re Financial Report GS 2022  
479 8.2.1.3 Guelph (Living Word) re Audit GS 2022  
480 8.2.2 Archives of GS 2022  
481 8.2.2.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) Report re inspection of Archives GS 2022  
482 8.2.2.2 Burlington (Ebenezer) Report re Archives GS  
483 8.2.3 Days of Prayer ad CO art. 54  
484 8.2.3.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) and Edmonton (Providence) re Days of  
485 Prayer  
486 8.2.4 Committee for Needy Student Fund - (CNSF)  
487 8.2.4.1 Grassie (Covenant) CNSF Report to GS 2025  
488 8.2.5 Committee for the Official Website - (CWeb)  
489 8.2.5.1 CWeb Report to GS 2025  
490 8.2.6 Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS)  
491 8.2.6.1 BoG at CRTS Report to GS 2025  
492 8.2.6.2 CRTS Supplemental Report  
493 8.2.7 Committee for Pastoral Training Program (CPTPF)  
494 8.2.7.1 CPTPF Report to GS 2025  
495 8.2.8 Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)  
496 8.2.8.1 SCBP Report to GS 2025  
497 8.2.8.2 SCBP Supplement Report re Proposed Songs  
498 8.2.8.3 SCBP Further Note on SCBP Reports  
499 8.2.8.4 SCBP additional letter re mandate  
500 8.2.9 Committee for Bible Translations (CBT)  
501 8.2.9.1 CBT Report to GS 2025  
502 8.2.10 Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER)  
503 8.2.10.1 Report 1: General Mandate  
504 8.2.10.2 Report 2: CER Study Mandate  
505 8.2.10.3 Report 3: Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)  
506 8.2.10.4 Report 4: Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ)  
507 8.2.10.5 Report 5: Free Reformed Churches in North America (FRCNA)  
508 8.2.10.6 Report 6: Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC)

- 509 8.2.10.7 Report 7: Korean Presbyterian Church in America (Kosin) (KPCA-K)  
510 8.2.10.8 Report 8: Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)  
511 8.2.10.9 Report 9: Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)  
512 8.2.10.10 Report 10: Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA)  
513 8.2.10.11 Report 11: Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada (RPCC)  
514 8.2.10.12 Report 12: United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)  
515 8.2.10.13 Report 13: Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)  
516 8.2.10.14 Report 14: Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB)  
517 8.2.10.15-17: Introduction to the Indonesia Reports  
518 8.2.10.15 Report 15: Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI)  
519 8.2.10.16 Report 16: The Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI)  
520 8.2.10.17 Report 17: Reformed Churches in Indonesia on the island of Timor (GGRI-  
521 T)  
522 8.2.10.18 Report 18: Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK)  
523 8.2.10.19 Report 19: Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK)  
524 8.2.10.20 Report 20: Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ)  
525 8.2.10.21 Report 21: Free Church of Scotland (FCS)  
526 8.2.10.22 Report 22: Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC)  
527 8.2.10.23 Report 23: Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA)  
528 8.2.10.24 Report 24: North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
529 (NAPARC)  
530 8.2.10.25 Report 25: International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC)  
531 8.2.10.26 CER supplementary report to GS 2025 (re GK)  
532 8.2.10.27 CER financial report 2022-2025  
533 8.2.10.28 Confidential submission from CER re 8.2.10.16 and 8.2.10.17  
534 8.2.11 Address Church  
535 8.2.11.1 Report from the Address Church - Burlington (Ebenezer)  
536 8.2.12 General Fund  
537 8.2.12.1 General Fund Report Carman East  
538 8.2.12.2 Carman West review of General Fund  
539 8.3 LETTERS FROM THE CHURCHES REGARDING THE REPORTS  
540 8.3.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re term 'Audit' in reports  
541 8.3.2 Calgary re GS 2022 Financial report  
542 8.3.3 Letter Regarding Days of Prayer ad CO art. 54  
543 8.3.3.1 Grassie (Covenant) re Days of Prayer report  
544 8.3.4 Letter Regarding CNSF  
545 8.3.4.1 Fergus North re CNSF  
546 8.3.4.2 Willoughby Heights re CNSF

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- 547 8.3.5 Letter Regarding CWeb - none
- 548 8.3.6 Letter Regarding CRTS
- 549 8.3.6.1 Toronto (Bethel) re CRTS 6th professor
- 550 8.3.7 Letters Regarding CPTPF
- 551 8.3.7.1 Willoughby Heights re CPTPF
- 552 8.3.8 Letters Regarding SCBP
- 553 8.3.8.1 Sub Proposed songs incl. hymn cap and general interactions
- 554 8.3.8.1.1 Aldergrove re SCBP proposed songs
- 555 8.3.8.1.2 Aldergrove Attachment #2 re proposed songs (Psalms)
- 556 8.3.8.1.3 Aldergrove Attachment #3 re proposed songs (Hymns)
- 557 8.3.8.1.4 Aldergrove Attachment #4 re proposed songs (Psalms & Hymns)
- 558 8.3.8.1.5 Aldergrove re SCBP proposed songs 2
- 559 8.3.8.1.6 Attercliffe re SCBP report points 2,3,6,7
- 560 8.3.8.1.7 Barrhead re SCBP report re Psalms and Hymns and Liturgical Forms
- 561 (cf. 8.3.8.2.3)
- 562 8.3.8.1.8 Burlington (Fellowship) SCBP report re songs
- 563 8.3.8.1.9 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re SCBP Hymns
- 564 8.3.8.1.10 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re predominance of Psalms and
- 565 RSE 2024 re CO art. 55
- 566 8.3.8.1.11 Caledonia re SCBP report Liturgical Forms and Principled View (cf.
- 567 8.3.8.2.5)
- 568 8.3.8.1.12 Calgary re SCBP report various
- 569 8.3.8.1.13 Carman East re SCBP report Principled View
- 570 8.3.8.1.14 Chilliwack re SCBP Liturgical Forms and Principled View
- 571 8.3.8.1.15 Devon re SCBP re proposed hymn
- 572 8.3.8.1.16 Edmonton (Immanuel) cover letter for 9 appendices
- 573 8.3.8.1.17 Edmonton (Immanuel) re SCBP mandate items
- 574 8.3.8.1.18 Edmonton (Immanuel) re SCBP supplement - proposed songs
- 575 8.3.8.1.19 Edmonton (Providence) re SCBP report re errata section 2 #13
- 576 8.3.8.1.20 Elm Creek re SCBP5 funding/publish model
- 577 8.3.8.1.21 Elm Creek re SCBP6 proposed psalm and hymns
- 578 8.3.8.1.22 Elm Creek re SCBP7 Principled View
- 579 8.3.8.1.23 Fergus (Maranatha) re SCBP Principled Guidelines
- 580 8.3.8.1.24 Fergus (Maranatha) re SCBP Producing an Augment
- 581 8.3.8.1.25 Fergus (Maranatha) re SCBP Proposed Hymns
- 582 8.3.8.1.26 Fergus (Maranatha) re SCBP Proposed Psalms
- 583 8.3.8.1.27 Flamborough (Redemption) re SCBP report re proposed Psalms and
- 584 Hymns

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- 585 8.3.8.1.28 Grand Rapids re SCBP report re proposed Psalms and Hymns  
586 8.3.8.1.29 Grand Valley re SCBP Liturgical Forms and Principled View (cf.  
587 8.3.8.2.12)  
588 8.3.8.1.30 Grassie (Covenant) re SCBP Principled View  
589 8.3.8.1.31 Guelph (Emmanuel) re SCBP report sect 2,3,5,6  
590 8.3.8.1.32 Hamilton (Cornerstone) re proposed songs  
591 8.3.8.1.33 Hamilton (Providence) re SCBP re publishing & funding  
592 8.3.8.1.34 Kerwood (Grace) re proposed hymn  
593 8.3.8.1.35 Langley re SCBP report re procedure, CO 55, Psalms, Hymns, cap (cf.  
594 8.1.10)  
595 8.3.8.1.36 Neerlandia re SCBP  
596 8.3.8.1.37 Nooksack Valley re SCBP report Liturgical Forms & Principled View  
597 (cf. 8.3.8.2.13)  
598 8.3.8.1.38 Orangeville re SCBP report re proposed Psalms and Hymns (cf.  
599 8.3.8.2.14)  
600 8.3.8.1.39 Ottawa (Jubilee) re SCBP report Hymns  
601 8.3.8.1.40 Owen Sound re SCBP report re proposed Psalms and Hymns  
602 8.3.8.1.41 St. Albert re SCBP report re Augment  
603 8.3.8.1.42 Taber re SCBP report  
604 8.3.8.1.43 Toronto (Bethel) re SCBP report  
605 8.3.8.1.44 Winnipeg (Grace) re SCBP proposed Psalms and Hymns  
606 8.3.8.1.45 Winnipeg (Redeemer) re SCBP report re proposed Psalms and Hymns  
607 8.3.8.1.46 Willoughby Heights re SCBP report various (cf. 8.3.8.2.17)  
608 8.3.8.2 Sub Liturgical Forms  
609 8.3.8.2.1 Aldergrove re SCBP Lord's Supper Form  
610 8.3.8.2.2 Arthur re SCBP Lord's Supper Form  
611 8.3.8.2.3 Barrhead re SCBP report re Psalms and Hymns and Liturgical Forms  
612 (cf. 8.3.8.1.7)  
613 8.3.8.2.4 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re SCBP Lord's Supper Form  
614 8.3.8.2.5 Caledonia re SCBP report Liturgical Forms and Principled View (cf.  
615 8.3.8.1.11)  
616 8.3.8.2.6 Chilliwack re SCBP Liturgical Forms and Principled View (cf.  
617 8.3.8.1.14)  
618 8.3.8.2.7 Elm Creek re SCBP2 Lord Supper form  
619 8.3.8.2.8 Elm Creek re SCBP3 proposed shorter LS forms  
620 8.3.8.2.9 Fergus (Maranatha) re SCBP Liturgical Form of Lord's Supper  
621 8.3.8.2.10 Flamborough (Redemption) re SCBP proposed shorter LS forms  
622 8.3.8.2.11 Guelph (Living Word) re 8.2.8.1 re Lord Supper form



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- 623 8.3.8.2.12 Grand Valley re SCBP Liturgical Forms and Principled View (cf.  
624 8.3.8.1.29)
- 625 8.3.8.2.13 Nooksack Valley re SCBP report Liturgical Forms and Principled View  
626 (cf. 8.3.8.1.37)
- 627 8.3.8.2.14 Orangeville re SCBP proposed shorter LS forms (cf. 8.3.8.1.38)
- 628 8.3.8.2.15 St. Albert re SCBP Liturgical Form of Lord's Supper
- 629 8.3.8.2.16 Surrey (Maranatha) re SCBP proposed shorter LS forms
- 630 8.3.8.2.17 Willoughby Heights re SCBP report various (cf. 8.3.8.1.46)
- 631 8.3.9 Letter regarding CBT Report
- 632 8.3.9.1 Calgary re CBT report
- 633 8.3.10 Letters Regarding CER Report
- 634 8.3.10.1 Ancaster re CER report 1 general mandate re licensure
- 635 8.3.10.2 Barrhead re CO art.50 and ARPC, ERQ
- 636 8.3.10.3 Brampton (Grace) re CER re CO art. 50 re Ecclesiastical Relationships
- 637 8.3.10.4 Brampton (Grace) re CER re rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship
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- 933 Classis
- 934 8.6.5 re RSE 2021 art. 15 re CO art. 55
- 935 8.6.5.1 Glanbrook (Trinity) Appeal re RSE 2021 art. 15, re CO art. 55
- 936 8.6.5.2 Glanbrook (Trinity) Appeal re RSE 2021 art. 15, appendices
- 937 8.6.6 re GS 2022 art. 7 re Format of the Acts
- 938 8.6.6.1 Chilliwack Appeal re GS 2022 art. 7 Format of the Acts
- 939 8.6.7 re GS 2022 art. 111, re SCBP modernization of language of hymns
- 940 8.6.7.1 Flamborough (Redemption) Appeal re GS 2022 art. 111, modernization of
- 941 language 3 hymns
- 942 8.6.8 Confidential Appeals
- 943 8.6.8.1 Appeal re GS 2022 (confidential acts) art.60 & 81 (Willoughby Heights)
- 944 8.6.8.2 Personal Appeal (confidential)
- 945 8.6.8.3 email re confidential appeals
- 946 8.6.8.4 Personal Appeal (confidential)
- 947 8.6.8.5 Personal Appeal (confidential)
- 948 8.6.8.6 Letter regarding appeal (confidential)
- 949 8.6.8.7 letter regarding confidential appeals
- 950 8.6.8.8 letter from the Correspondence Committee Aldergrove CONFIDENTIAL
- 951 8.6.9 Personal Appeal
- 952 8.6.9.1 incl. 13 attachments to the above
- 953 8.6.10 Appeal of GS 2022 art. 108 re length of appointments
- 954 8.6.10.1 Ancaster re GS 2022 art. 108, re length of appointments
- 955 8.6.11 Appeal of GS 2019 art. 23 and GS 2022 art. 120
- 956 8.6.11.1 Kerwood re Lord's Supper forms
- 957 9 APPOINTMENTS
- 958 9.1 Board of Governors CRTS (BoG) Academic and Finance & Property Committees
- 959 9.1.1 Nominations from RSE
- 960 9.1.2 Nominations from RSW
- 961 9.1.3 Nominations for Finance & Property Committee
- 962 9.2 CTPPF - Committee for Pastoral Training Funding
- 963 9.3 CER - Committee on Ecumenical Relations
- 964 9.3.1 CER Nominations for appointments

- 965 9.4 SCBP - Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*  
966 9.4.1 SCBP Nominations for appointments  
967 9.5 CBT - Committee on Bible Translations  
968 9.6 CWeb - Committee for the Official Website  
969 9.6.1 CWeb - Nomination for appointment  
970 9.7 CNSF - Committee for the Needy Students' Fund  
971 9.8 Churches for Days of Prayer ad CO art. 54  
972 9.8.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re Appointment re CO art. 54  
973 9.9 General Fund  
974 9.10 Financial Review of the General Fund  
975 9.11 Archive Church  
976 9.12 The Church for inspecting the Archives  
977 9.12.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re Inspection of Archives of GS  
978 9.13 Financial Review of GS 2025  
979 9.14 Address Church  
980 9.15 Committee for Publication of the Acts  
981 9.16 Convening Church for the next General Synod  
982 10 CENSURE AD ARTICLE 34 CO  
983 11 FINANCIAL MATTERS  
984 12 PREPARATION FOR NEXT GENERAL SYNOD  
985 12.1 Aldergrove re preparation considerations and recommendations  
986 13 ADOPTION OF THE ACTS  
987 14 APPROVAL OF THE PRESS RELEASE  
988 15 CLOSING

989

990 Upon a motion by Br. Boot and seconded by Rev. den Hollander the agenda was

991 **ADOPTED**

992 *See also GS 2025 art. 22.*

993

#### 994 **Article 10 – Advisory Committees**

995 The following advisory committees were appointed:

##### 996 ***Committee 1:***

997 Marc Jagt (convenor), Don Aasman, Joe Poppe, John Jager, James Teitsma

998 Materials: SCBP Report re musical section of *Book of Praise* (8.2.8), Overtures re CO 55

999 (8.4.2.2, 8.4.3.2, 8.4.3.3), Procedure re songs (8.1.10), Appeal re CO 55 (8.6.5), Appeals re

1000 Hymn Cap (8.6.1), Appeal re Hymn Language (8.6.7).

##### 1001 ***Committee 2:***



1002 Rolf den Hollander (convenor), Gerald Boot, Hilmer Jagersma, Lyndon Kok, Adam van den  
1003 Hoven

1004 Materials: Interchurch Relations (8.2.10, 8.1.1), Appeals re Guest Preachers (8.6.3), Overture re  
1005 Ecclesiastical Route (8.4.3.1).

1006 ***Committee 3:***

1007 Ken Wieske (convenor), Ron Bremer, John Harsevoort, Bill van Beek, Carl Van Dam.

1008 Materials: Board of Governors / CRTS (8.2.6), Committee for Needy Theological Students  
1009 (8.2.4), Committee for Pastoral Training Program (8.2.7), Appeal re Preparatory  
1010 Examinations (8.6.4), 6<sup>th</sup> professor (8.3.6), SCBP Report re prose sections of *Book of Praise*  
1011 & General Mandates (8.2.8, 8.1.9), Appeal re Lord's Supper Forms (8.6.11), Overture re  
1012 Apostles' Creed Footnote (8.4.2.1), Overture re a question in some Liturgical Forms (8.4.1),  
1013 Overture re Form for Infant Baptism (8.4.3.4).

1014 ***Committee 4:***

1015 Hendrik Alkema (convenor), Richard Buist, Ken Hoeksema, Andy Jairam, Jake Torenvliet.

1016 Materials: Appeals re GS 2022 confidential acts (8.6.8), Overtures re CO 49 (8.4.2.4, 8.4.2.5),  
1017 Overture re Duration of Synod (8.4.2.3), Appeal re Days of Commemoration (8.6.2).

1018 ***Committee 5 (executive):***

1019 John Louwse (convenor), Rob Schouten, Karlo Janssen, Peter Holtvlüwer.

1020 Materials: Format of Acts (8.1.2-6, 8.4.4, 8.6.6), GS 2022 reports (8.2.1), Archives (8.2.2), Days  
1021 of Prayer (8.2.3), Website (8.2.5), Bible Translation (8.2.9), Address Church (8.2.11),  
1022 General Fund (8.2.12), GS 2028 preparations (12), Appointments (8.4.5, 8.6.10), Personal  
1023 Appeal (8.6.9), Election of Synod Officers (8.1.7), Housekeeping Matters (8.1.8), Retention  
1024 of Material (8.1.14), Financial Terminology and Reports (8.3.1, 8.3.2).

1025

1026 **Article 11 – Fraternal delegates and observers**

1027 A welcome was extended to a fraternal delegate and a fraternal observer who had arrived in the  
1028 course of the day. The chairman read out the decision of GS 2022 (art. 108 dec. 3.7) regarding  
1029 the rights and privileges of fraternal delegates and observers. He noted that this evening session  
1030 will focus on fraternal relations and will be livestreamed.

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1032 *Following some further comments from the chairman and the first clerk regarding procedures,*  
1033 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 1 — Evening Session**  
**Tuesday, May 6, 2025**

**Article 12 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 7:00pm. The chairman had the meeting sing Psalm 111:1. He observed all synod members were present. He extended a special welcome to fraternal delegates, audience, and those on livestream, and noted that the business of this session would be fraternal relations.

**Article 13 – GK (Reformed Churches [The Netherlands])**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Letter from the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (*GKN confirming request to enter into sister church relationship* (Jan. 18, 2024) (8.1.1).
- 1.2 CER Report 19: *Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK)* (8.2.10.19).
- 1.3 CER Supplementary Report (8.2.10.26).
- 1.4 Letter from the following church: Fergus (Maranatha) (8.3.10.26).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The reports were declared admissible.  
Grounds: They were mandated by the previous synod and were received on time.
- 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.  
Grounds: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 148) observed:
  - [4.1] The Reformed Churches (DGK) display the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ in their preaching, worship, and governance.
- 3.2 GS 2022 (art. 148) mandated the CER:
  - [3.1] To maintain contact with The Reformed Churches (DGK);
  - [3.2] To express gratitude for how the DGK is dealing with the Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA).
  - [3.3] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
    - [3.3.1] To continue to monitor developments within this federation, paying special attention to:
      - [3.3.1.1] The relationship between the DGK and the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN);
      - [3.3.1.2] The relationship between the DGK and the LRCA;
    - [3.3.2] To be available for dialogue with the DGK;
    - [3.3.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.
- 3.3 GS 2022 (art. 149) observed:
  - [4.1] The Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN) display the marks of the true church of Jesus Christ in their preaching, worship, and governance.

- 1076 3.4 GS 2022 (art. 149) mandated the CER:  
1077 [3.1] To maintain contact with the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN);  
1078 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):  
1079 [3.2.1] To continue to monitor developments within this federation, paying special  
1080 attention to:  
1081 [3.2.1.1] The relationship between the GKN and The Reformed Churches  
1082 (DGK);  
1083 [3.2.2] To be available for dialogue with the GKN;  
1084 [3.2.2] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
1085 next general synod.  
1086 3.5 The CER Report observes:  
1087 3.5.1 The impediments to entering into sister church relations with The Reformed  
1088 Churches (DGK) and the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN) are the  
1089 continued separation of the DGK and the GKN and the DGK relationship with the  
1090 Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA).  
1091 3.5.2 The Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK) still had to take decisions  
1092 regarding ecumenical relations. It is likely that the request for Ecclesiastical  
1093 Fellowship (EF) made by the GKN to the CanRC will remain.  
1094 3.5.3 Prior to the merger, the DGK decided by a majority vote to discontinue its  
1095 relationship with the LRCA.  
1096 3.5.4 The CER delegated Rev. Janssen to attend the events marking the merger of the  
1097 DGK and the GKN on October 4, 2024, and the concurrent extraordinary synods  
1098 the following day.  
1099 3.6 The CER Report 19 recommends that Synod establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF)  
1100 Category A1 with the Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK) under the adopted  
1101 rules;  
1102 3.7 The Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN) letter says, “on December 2, 2023,  
1103 synod Kampen 2023 decided to recognize the churches of De Gereformeerde Kerken  
1104 {DGK} as churches of Christ standing on the foundation of apostles and prophets ... As  
1105 soon as the synod of DGK has made the same decision with regard to the GKN, the  
1106 churches of DGK and GKN will be in a state of union and will work towards one  
1107 church body.”

#### 1108 **4. Considerations**

- 1109 4.1 All impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship, identified by previous CanRC synods no  
1110 longer exist. Namely:  
1111 4.1.1 The Reformed Churches (DGK) has discontinued the sister church relationship  
1112 with Liberated Reformed Church at Abbotsford (LRCA);  
1113 4.1.2 The desired merger between the DGK and the Reformed Churches The  
1114 Netherlands (GKN) to form the Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK) was  
1115 confirmed on Oct 4, 2024.  
1116 4.2 The DGK agreed to honor the sister church relationships of the GKN (cf. GS 2024 DGK  
1117 art. 3 C.7);

1118 4.3 The relationship CanRC-GK is in essence a continuation of the relationships CanRC-  
1119 DGK and CanRC-GKN and, as such, in many ways a continuation of the relationship  
1120 CanRC-GKv.

## 1121 **5. Recommendations**

1122 That Synod decide:

1123 5.1 To express thankfulness to the Lord for the merger of The Reformed Churches (DGK)  
1124 and the Reformed Churches The Netherlands (GKN) into the Reformed Churches [The  
1125 Netherlands] (GK).

1126 5.2 To establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Churches  
1127 [The Netherlands] (GK) under the adopted rules.

1128 5.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

1129 5.3.1 To convey this decision to the Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK) as  
1130 soon as possible;

1131 5.3.2 As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions to promote ecclesiastical  
1132 harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in The Netherlands;

1133 5.3.3 To submit its report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior to the  
1134 convening of the next general synod.

1135

1136 **ADOPTED** unanimously.

1137

### 1138 **Article 14 – GK – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1139 Rev. Karlo Janssen introduced Rev. Rik Douma, credentialed delegate of the Reformed  
1140 Churches [The Netherlands] (GK). Rev. Douma addressed Synod and provided an overview of  
1141 the GK. He expressed gratitude for the newly established sister-church relationship. The full text  
1142 of his address can be found in Appendix 2. The chairman spoke some words in response. Rev.  
1143 Peter Holtvlüwer led in a prayer of thanksgiving and the assembly sang Psalm 124.

1144

### 1145 **Article 15 – FCC – Letter of Greetings**

1146 Rev. Karlo Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Free Church of Scotland Continuing  
1147 (FCC), declaring gratitude for our relationship and expressing regret at being unable to attend  
1148 Synod in person. The full text of the letter can be found in Appendix 3. The chairman spoke  
1149 some words in response.

1150

### 1151 **Article 16 – GGRCI – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1152 Rev. Carl Van Dam introduced Rev. Yonson Dethan, credentialed delegate of the Reformed  
1153 Calvinist Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI). Rev. Dethan addressed Synod and provided an  
1154 overview of the GGRCI. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship but wondered  
1155 if our relationship could be more fruitful with a view to the spread of the Gospel in Indonesia.  
1156 The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 4. The chairman spoke some words in  
1157 response.

1158

1159 **Article 17 – RCUS – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1160 Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. Travis Grassmid, credentialed delegate of the Reformed Church  
1161 of the United States (RCUS). Rev. Grassmid addressed Synod and provided an overview of the  
1162 RCUS. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship. He explained how the RCUS  
1163 will be celebrating its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary this summer. The full text of his address can be found in  
1164 Appendix 5. The chairman spoke some words in response.

1165

1166 **Article 18 – RCNZ – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1167 Rev. Carl Van Dam introduced Rev. David Stares, credentialed delegate of the Reformed  
1168 Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ). Rev. Stares addressed Synod and provided an overview of  
1169 the RCNZ. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship, noting how the RCNZ has  
1170 received two graduates from CRTS in recent years, and the transfer of members. The full text of  
1171 his address can be found in Appendix 6. The chairman spoke some words in response.

1172

1173 **Article 19 – OPC – Fraternal Delegate Address**

1174 Rev. Karlo Janssen introduced Rev. Robert Tarullo, credentialed delegate of the Orthodox  
1175 Presbyterian Church (OPC). Rev. Tarullo addressed Synod and provided an overview of the  
1176 OPC. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship, describing various ways in which  
1177 we work together. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 7. The chairman spoke  
1178 some words in response.

1179

1180 **Article 20 – Closing Devotions**

1181 Rev. Rolf den Hollander read John 21:15-19, led in prayer, remembering the FCC, GGRCI,  
1182 RCUS, RCNZ, and OPC. The day was closed with the singing of Hymn 56.

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1184 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 2 — Morning Session**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 2025**

**Article 21 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 9:00am. The chairman observed all synod members were present. He read Psalm 87, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 87:1,2,4.

**Article 22 – Final Agenda adopted**

A rearranged and renumbered version of the agenda was adopted as the final agenda for GS 2025.

**Article 23 – Appeals against GS 2022 art. 60 & 81**

Synod went into closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 1 of a report on the admissibility of an appeal by the Willoughby Heights CanRC against GS 2022 art. 60 and 81. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

At the request of Committee 4, a number of rounds of discussion regarding confidential appeals took place.

Synod returned to open session.

**Article 24 – Ruling re Application of CO art. 32**

Given the discussion reported in Article 23 foregoing, the Chairman made the following ruling, identical to that of GS 2019 art. 39, regarding the application of CO art. 32.

A delegate should abstain if:

1. a matter particularly involves his person or his church (CO article 32);
2. a matter pertains to the Board of Governors and he is a member of the Board (on account of his legal context);
3. a matter pertains to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise* and he is a member of the Committee (on account of his legal context);

A delegate has freedom to vote or abstain but is encouraged to keep the spirit of CO art. 32 in mind when:

4. he was a member of a minor assembly which previously decided regarding a matter being appealed;

A delegate has freedom to vote even though:

5. he was a member of a committee reporting to synod (e.g. CER).

A simple majority constitutes more than half of the votes cast, not counting the abstentions.

*Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 2 — Afternoon Session**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 2025**

**Article 25 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 2:00pm. The chairman observed all synod members were present. He had the meeting sing Hymn 6:1,2.

**Article 26 – Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2025 re CO art. 55 (Songs) – admissibility**

Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on the CO 55 overtures, seeking advice and direction regarding admissibility. The report was discussed. The committee took the matter back for further consideration.

**Article 27 – Worship Service Songs – Procedure**

Committee 1 presented an action plan, seeking advice and direction regarding the order in which various matters on Synod’s agenda regarding songs sung during worship services should be discussed. The action plan was discussed and agreed to.

**Article 28 – Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2025 re CO art. 55 (Songs) – substance**

At the request of Committee 1, an orientational round on the overtures regarding CO art. 55 took place.

*Following some comments regarding housekeeping matters, Synod adjourned for committee work.*



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**Day 2 — Evening Session**  
**Wednesday, May 7, 2025**

**Article 29 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 7:00pm. The chairman extended a welcome to all present in the building and online via the livestream. He had the meeting sing Psalm 108:1. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 30 – URCNA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

Rev. Karlo Janssen introduced Rev. Jason Vander Horst, credentialed delegate of the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). Rev. Vander Horst addressed Synod and provided an overview of the URCNA. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship, expressed in so many ways, noting that our “Phase 2” relationship looks to what comes next. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 8. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 31 – ERQ – Fraternal Delegate Address**

Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. Blaise Tsabang, credentialed delegate of the Reformed Church in Quebec (ERQ). Rev. Tsabang addressed Synod and provided an overview of the ERQ, noting the challenges faced by the congregations. He expressed gratitude for our sister-church relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 9. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 32 – ARPC – Fraternal Observer Address**

Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. Aaron De Boer, credentialed delegate of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC). Rev. De Boer addressed Synod and provided an overview of the ARPC. He expressed gratitude for our relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 10. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 33 – FCS – Letter of Greetings**

Rev. Karlo Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), declaring gratitude for our relationship. The full text of the letter can be found in Appendix 11. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 34 – Address Church**

**1. Material**

1.1 Report of the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC (8.2.11.1).

**2. Admissibility**

2.1 The report was declared admissible.

Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2.2 The letters were declared admissible.

Grounds: They interact with a report to GS 2025 and were received on time.



1291 **3. Observations**

1292 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 30) appointed the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC to serve as the Address  
1293 Church and decided:

1294 [3.3] To mandate the Address Church to report to the churches on its activities six  
1295 months prior to the next general synod.

1296 3.2 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC served as the Address Church of the CanRC during  
1297 the inter-synodical period.

1298 3.3 The Address Church submitted a brief report to GS 2025.

1299 **4. Consideration**

1300 4.1 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC has fulfilled its responsibilities as Address Church  
1301 with appropriate diligence.

1302 **5. Recommendations**

1303 That Synod decide:

1304 5.1 To receive with thankfulness the report from the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC;

1305 5.2 To thank the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC for its willingness to continue serving as the  
1306 Address Church of General Synod;

1307 5.3 To mandate the Address Church to submit a report on its activities to the churches no  
1308 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

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1310 **ADOPTED**

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1312 **Article 35 – Archives**

1313 **1. Material**

1314 1.1 Report of the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC re Archives (8.2.2.2).

1315 1.2 Report of the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC re Inspection of the Archives  
1316 (8.2.2.1).

1317 1.3 Letter from the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC re appointment (9.12.1).

1318 **2. Admissibility**

1319 2.1 The reports were declared admissible.

1320 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

1321 **3. Observations**

1322 3.1 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC submitted a report confirming that the archives of  
1323 GS 2022 have been properly filed and catalogued, and that it has fulfilled its role as the  
1324 Archive Church for general synods.

1325 3.2 The Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC submitted a report confirming that it has  
1326 inspected the archives and found the original documents to be in good order.

1327 3.3 Burlington (Rehoboth) has also communicated that due to an impending merger with  
1328 Burlington (Ebenezer), it will no longer be able to serve as the Inspecting Church. It

1329 recommends that another church in the vicinity—specifically the Burlington  
1330 (Fellowship) CanRC—be appointed to take on this task going forward.

1331 3.4 Burlington (Ebenezer) notes a discrepancy in GS 2022 art. 29 regarding the deadline for  
1332 archive reporting. One part of the article stipulates submission “six weeks” prior to  
1333 Synod, while the mandate section calls for submission “six months” prior. The Archive  
1334 Church asks Synod to update the mandate to reflect the decision.

#### 1335 **4. Considerations**

1336 4.1 The archive church and Inspecting Church have fulfilled their mandates with diligence  
1337 and care.

1338 4.2 The request to clarify the reporting deadline is appropriate but it is unclear if the error in  
1339 GS 2022 art. 29 is found in the portion called “decision” (6 weeks prior to GS) or in  
1340 “mandate” (6 months prior to GS). GS 2025 considers that since most other appointed  
1341 committees (or churches) are mandated to report to GS six-months prior, and since there  
1342 is no apparent reason for the archive church or the Inspecting Church to wait till six  
1343 weeks prior to synod, a deadline of six months prior to synod is most appropriate.

1344 4.3 With the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC no longer able to serve as  
1345 Inspecting Church and in view of its recommendation, it is fitting to appoint the  
1346 Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC to this role.

1347 4.4 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC has completed its responsibilities with respect to the  
1348 archival care of the Acts and documents of GS 2022 and should be formally discharged  
1349 of that task.

#### 1350 **5. Recommendations**

1351 That Synod decide:

1352 5.1 To receive with thankfulness the reports from the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC  
1353 (Archive Church) and the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC (Inspecting  
1354 Church).

1355 5.2 To thank the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC for its many years of faithful  
1356 service in inspecting the archives.

1357 5.3 To acknowledge that the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC has completed its  
1358 responsibilities as Archive Church with respect to GS 2022, and to discharge it of that  
1359 task with gratitude.

1360 5.4 To mandate the Archive Church and the inspecting church to submit their respective  
1361 reports no later than six (6) months prior to GS 2028.

1362 *The mandate can be found in Appendix 20.*

1363

1364 **ADOPTED**

1365

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1367 **Article 36 – CBT (Bible Translations)**

1368 **1. Material**

1369 1.1 Report of the Committee on Bible Translations (CBT) (8.2.9.1).

1370 1.2 Letter from the Calgary CanRC (8.3.9.1).

1371 **2. Admissibility**

1372 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

1373 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

1374 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.

1375 Grounds: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

1376 **3. Observations**

1377 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 158) mandated the CBT to:

1378 • Solicit, receive, and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV.

1379 • Submit worthy translation suggestions to the ESV editorial committee.

1380 • Serve as a resource for Bible translation matters.

1381 • Validate and submit expenses to the treasurer of the General Fund.

1382 • Submit a report to the churches six months prior to the next General Synod.

1383 3.2 The CBT consists of Rev. Jeff Poort and Rev. Tyler Vandergaag. No new appointments  
1384 are needed at this time.

1385 3.3 The CBT sent a letter to all churches in August 2023, inviting feedback on the ESV and  
1386 offering to serve as a translation resource.

1387 3.4 Two churches responded:

1388 • One raised general concerns about the readability of the ESV.

1389 • Another submitted detailed comments on specific texts. The CBT appreciated the  
1390 exegesis but did not find that the comments warranted forwarding to the ESV editorial  
1391 team.

1392 3.5 The ESV editorial committee reportedly met in July 2024, but no new edition or public  
1393 update has been released as of the writing of this report.

1394 3.6 The CBT has fulfilled its mandate without incurring any notable expenses.

1395 3.7 The Calgary CanRC submitted a letter in response to the CBT report. While expressing  
1396 appreciation for the CBT's work, Calgary questioned whether it remains beneficial to  
1397 renew mandate items 1.1 and 1.2, given the February 11, 2025 update from Crossway.  
1398 They also proposed adding a mandate to evaluate the World English Bible (WEB), a  
1399 copyright-free translation available in the public domain.

1400 **4. Considerations**

1401 4.1 The CBT has faithfully carried out its mandate and remains available to serve the  
1402 churches on matters of Bible translation.

1403 4.2 Although public updates to the ESV have been limited, the Crossway document  
1404 referenced by the Calgary CanRC (February 2025) indicates that changes to the ESV  
1405 are being implemented and does not preclude further revisions. Therefore, maintaining  
1406 communication and a posture of readiness to engage remains appropriate.

- 1407 4.3 The churches have shown only limited engagement with the CBT. Renewing the current  
1408 mandate continues to provide the churches with a structured channel for interaction and  
1409 support.
- 1410 4.4 Calgary's proposal to evaluate the World English Bible has been noted. However, no  
1411 compelling rationale has been provided for expanding the CBT's mandate in that  
1412 direction at this time.
- 1413 4.5 The CBT has functioned efficiently without expense and continues to provide a stable  
1414 and useful service to the churches.

## 1415 **5. Recommendations**

1416 That Synod decide:

- 1417 5.1 To thank the Committee for Bible Translations (CBT) for its faithful service to the  
1418 churches.
- 1419 5.2 To mandate the CBT:
- 1420 5.2.1 To solicit, receive, and evaluate comments from the churches on the ESV;
- 1421 5.2.2 To submit worthy translation suggestions to the ESV editorial committee;
- 1422 5.2.3 To serve the churches as a resource for Bible translation matters;
- 1423 5.2.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the  
1424 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;
- 1425 5.2.5 To prepare and distribute a report to the churches six (6) months in advance  
1426 of the next general synod.

1427

## 1428 **ADOPTED**

1429

## 1430 **Article 37 – CWeb (Official Website)**

### 1431 **1. Material**

- 1432 1.1 Report of the Committee for the Official Website (CWeb) (8.2.5.1).

### 1433 **2. Admissibility**

- 1434 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
1435 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

### 1436 **3. Observations**

- 1437 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 44) mandated the Committee for the Official Website (CWeb) to maintain  
1438 and update the federation website and email infrastructure, provide English translations  
1439 of historic Dutch Acts, and serve as administrators of the minister email list.
- 1440 3.2 GS 2022 (art. 30 dec. 3.2) also instructed the CWeb to use the canrc.org website to  
1441 direct appropriate correspondence to the Address Church.
- 1442 3.3 The CWeb reported that:
- 1443 3.3.1 It has continued regular maintenance of the website, including content updates and  
1444 posting of news items.
- 1445 3.3.2 Minor technical improvements have been made, including better formatting for  
1446 press releases and background improvements for efficiency.

- 1447 3.3.3 It is testing a new control panel to allow churches to update their own information.  
1448 3.3.4 Email forwarding via Mailgun is functioning well, though spam remains a  
1449 challenge.  
1450 3.3.5 The minister email list (via Gaggle Mail) is functioning effectively.  
1451 3.3.6 Help desk software (Help Scout) has been adopted and is proving helpful for team-  
1452 based correspondence.  
1453 3.3.7 Translation work on the Acts of Synod 1954, 1958, 1962, and 1965 is ongoing,  
1454 with the 1965 Acts near publication and the others in progress.  
1455 3.3.8 A new committee member will be needed to replace br. Jonathan Reinink.  
1456 3.4 The CWeb requests:  
1457 3.4.1 Clarification regarding compensation for translation work.  
1458 3.4.2 Approval of a \$10,900 budget for 2025–2028, covering hosting, email, and help  
1459 desk expenses.  
1460 3.4.3 Additional funding for translation work.  
1461 3.4.4 Renewal of its existing mandate.  
1462 3.5 There is no mention in the CWeb’s report of it directing appropriate correspondence to  
1463 the Address Church.

#### 1464 **4. Considerations**

- 1465 4.1 The CWeb has faithfully and effectively executed its mandate, ensuring the continued  
1466 functionality and improvement of the federation’s digital infrastructure.  
1467 4.2 The ongoing translation project is a valuable service to the churches and merits  
1468 continued support.  
1469 4.3 While the CWeb requests additional funds for this translation work, it would have been  
1470 helpful for the committee to propose a specific amount.  
1471 4.4 The proposed general budget and continuation of the current mandate are reasonable  
1472 and appropriate.  
1473 4.5 Appointing a new member will ensure continued stability and effectiveness of the  
1474 CWeb’s work.  
1475 4.6 Since Synod 2022 (art. 30, dec. 3.2) instructed the CWeb to use the canrc.org website to  
1476 direct correspondence to the Address Church, it is appropriate to include in the CWeb’s  
1477 mandate a corresponding responsibility to enable this functionality on the federation  
1478 website.

#### 1479 **5. Recommendations**

1480 That Synod decide:

- 1481 5.1 To thank the Committee for the Official Website (CWeb) for its diligent work in  
1482 maintaining and improving the federation’s digital and email infrastructure.  
1483 5.2 To approve the proposed budget of \$10,900 for the 2025–2028 period, to cover ongoing  
1484 hosting, email forwarding, minister email list, and help desk software expenses.  
1485 5.3 To approve additional funds up to a maximum of \$7,500 from the General Fund for the  
1486 translation of the Acts of Synod 1954, 1958, 1962, and 1965, and to instruct the

- 1487 committee to coordinate with the treasurer in establishing appropriate compensation  
1488 arrangements.
- 1489 5.4 To renew the CWeb’s mandate with the following tasks:
- 1490 5.4.1 To maintain the existing website and associated technical functions.
- 1491 5.4.2 To revise the content of the website as needed, including:
- 1492 5.4.2.1 Posting news items and official documents.
- 1493 5.4.2.2 Annual auditing of site content against the yearbook.
- 1494 5.4.2.3 Maintaining synodical committee pages with up-to-date information.
- 1495 5.4.2.4 Posting synod reports prior to the next general synod.
- 1496 5.4.3 To make available English translations of the Acts of Synod 1954, 1958, 1962, and  
1497 1965, and to submit related expenses to the General Fund.
- 1498 5.4.4 To provide email forwarding from @canrc.org addresses upon request.
- 1499 5.4.5 To administer the minister email list.
- 1500 5.4.6 To validate and submit all committee expenses to the treasurer of the General  
1501 Fund.
- 1502 5.4.7 To report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior to the next general  
1503 synod.
- 1504 5.4.8 To use the canrc.org website to direct appropriate correspondence to the Address  
1505 Church, in accordance with the decision of GS 2022 (art. 30 dec.3.2).
- 1506 5.5 To appoint a new member to the CWeb to replace br. Jonathan Reinink and to receive  
1507 the nomination under separate cover.

1508  
1509 **ADOPTED**

1510  
1511 **Article 38 – Days of Prayer**

1512 **1. Material**

- 1513 1.1 Report from the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC and the Edmonton  
1514 (Providence) CanRC responsible for calling Days of Prayer (CO art. 54 (8.2.3.1)).
- 1515 1.2 Letters from: Grassie (Covenant) (8.3.3.1), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (9.8.1).

1516 **2. Admissibility**

- 1517 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
1518 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.
- 1519 2.2 The letters were declared admissible.  
1520 Grounds: They interact with a report to GS 2025 and were received on time.

1521 **3. Observations**

- 1522 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 31) appointed the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC and the  
1523 Edmonton (Providence) CanRC to proclaim Days of Prayer as per CO art. 54.
- 1524 3.2 These appointed churches report that no Day of Prayer was proclaimed during their  
1525 term. They received three requests (from the Cloverdale CanRC, the Ancaster CanRC,  
1526 and the Grassie (Covenant) CanRC), all of which were declined on the grounds that the

1527 matters raised did not meet the threshold of a “general calamity or other great affliction”  
1528 as outlined in CO art. 54 and interpreted in GS 2004 art. 40.

1529 3.3 The churches explained that a Day of Prayer is not intended for general ecclesiastical  
1530 reflection or unity but is meant to be a response to acute and immediate crises with  
1531 direct impact on the churches or nation.

1532 3.4 The Grassie (Covenant) CanRC submitted a letter to GS 2025 expressing concern that  
1533 the current application of CO art. 54 may be too narrow. They argue that biblically, days  
1534 of prayer often precede calamity and are acts of priestly intercession on behalf of the  
1535 nation. They suggest that legislative changes (e.g., Bill C-4) are, in themselves, spiritual  
1536 calamities that may warrant a Day of Prayer.

1537 3.5 The Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC reports that it is in the process of  
1538 merging with the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC and suggests that the responsibility for  
1539 proclaiming Days of Prayer be transferred to the merged entity, with the consent of  
1540 Ebenezer's council.

#### 1541 **4. Considerations**

1542 4.1 The churches appointed under CO art. 54 acted within the scope of their mandate, using  
1543 precedent from previous synods and the clear language of CO art. 54 to guide their  
1544 decisions.

1545 4.2 While letter of the Grassie (Covenant) CanRC reflects a commendable zeal for prayer  
1546 and national repentance, it expands the intent of CO art. 54 beyond what the Church  
1547 Order appears to contemplate. Nonetheless, Grassie raises a valid question regarding  
1548 whether our current interpretation of “general calamities and other great afflictions”  
1549 should remain as stringent as defined in 2004.

1550 4.3 Synod notes the good cooperation between the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth)  
1551 CanRC and the Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC councils in planning for the continuity of  
1552 this task post-merger. There is no need to appoint a new church if Synod reaffirms the  
1553 task to the Rehoboth church with the understanding that it will transfer seamlessly to the  
1554 merged church.

#### 1555 **5. Recommendations**

1556 That Synod decide:

1557 5.1 To thank the Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC and the Edmonton  
1558 (Providence) CanRC for their faithful execution of their mandate under CO art. 54.

1559

### 1560 **ADOPTED**

1561

#### 1562 **Article 39 – CER (Ecumenical Relations): General Mandate**

1563 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on the Report 1: General Mandate of the Committee on  
1564 Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for  
1565 further consideration.

1566



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1567 **Article 40 – CRTS (Board of Governors): Sixth Professor**

1568 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on a letter from the Toronto (Bethel) CanRC re  
1569 considering the appointment of a sixth professor at CRTS (Canadian Reformed Theological  
1570 Seminary). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
1571 consideration. (See further, GS 2025 art. 154.)

1572

1573 **Article 41 – Closing Devotions**

1574 Rev. Hilmer Jagersma read Philippians 1:3-11, led in prayer, remembering URCNA, ERQ,  
1575 ARPC, and FCS. The day was closed with the singing of Hymn 78.

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1577 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 3 — Morning Session**  
**Thursday, May 8, 2025**

**Article 42 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The chairman observed all synod members were present. He read Psalm 2, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 2.

**Article 43 – Adoption of Acts; Publication of GS 2025 art. 10**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected. It was determined that a second review of these acts would be done prior to adoption.

It was decided that the composition of the Advisory Committees (GS 2025 art. 10) would not be made public until after General Synod was ended.

*Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 3 — Evening Session**  
**Thursday, May 8, 2025**

**Article 44 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 7:00pm. The chairman extended a welcome to all present in the building and online via the livestream. He had the meeting sing Hymn 4. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 45 – RPCNA – Fraternal Observer Address**

Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. Johnathan Kruis, credentialed delegate of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA). Rev. Kruis addressed Synod describing the RPCNA, explaining, among others, the functioning of *The Testimony* and the practice of female deacons. He expressed gratitude for our relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 12. The chairman spoke some words in response.

The chairman also spoke some words of farewell to a fraternal delegate who would be leaving during the course of this session.

**Article 46 – CER (Ecumenical Relations): General Mandate**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 CER Report 1 – General Mandate (8.2.10.1), Nominations (9.3.1).
- 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Ancaster (8.3.10.1), Grand Rapids (8.3.10.10).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.
- 2.2 The letters were declared admissible.  
Grounds: They interact with a report to GS 2025 and were received on time.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 121 dec. 3.5) mandated the CER:
  - a) To continue contact with churches with whom we are in ecumenical relations;
  - b) To send an appropriate number of delegates to represent the CanRC churches at the meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) and North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC);
  - c) To work in consultation with individual CanRC churches and classes that maintain contact with churches for which the CER also has a mandate;
  - d) Upon request, to advise CanRC churches regarding the identity of other churches and our relationship with them;
  - e) To report on any contact with a church with whom we are not in an ecumenical relationship;
  - f) To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

- 1634 g) To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of general  
1635 synod (a supplementary report can be submitted if necessary);
- 1636 h) To facilitate hospitality support for fraternal delegates and observers, in  
1637 consultation with the Convening Church, at each general synod.
- 1638 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 1639 3.2.1 The CER completed its mandate with the involvement of Br. Bos (ERQ, GGRCI,  
1640 GGRI, GGRI-T), Br. Bouwman (NAPARC, RPCNA, FCC, FCS), Br. De Boer  
1641 (DGK, FRCA, GKN), Br. Gortemaker (IRB, RCUS), Br. Schouten (URCNA, IRB,  
1642 RCNZ), Rev. Bruintjes (ARPC, FRCSA, KPCA, KPCK), Rev. Jagt (KPCA,  
1643 KPCK, FRCNA, HRCNA, NAPARC), Rev. Janssen (FRCNA, HRCNA, ICRC,  
1644 DGK, GKN), Rev. Pol (ERQ, GGRCI, GGRI, GGRI-T), Rev. Temple (FRCSA,  
1645 ARPC, ICRC, OPC), Rev. Van Dam (FCC, FCS, OPC, FRCA), Rev. Vandavelde  
1646 (RCNZ, RCUS, RPCNA, URCNA);
- 1647 3.2.2 The terms of Br. G. Bos and Br. O. Bouwman end with GS 2025. Also retiring  
1648 from the CER is Rev. S.C. Van Dam;
- 1649 3.2.3 The CER met 14 times noting that the merging of the Committee for Contact with  
1650 Churches in North America (of the CanRC) (CCCNA) and the Committee for  
1651 Relations with Churches Abroad (of the CanRC) (CRCA) has worked very  
1652 profitably;
- 1653 3.2.4 In the execution of their mandate there has been interaction with churches outside  
1654 their mandate, notably the Sudanese Reformed Churches (SRC), the Evangelical  
1655 Presbyterian Church in England and Wales (EPCEW), and the Reformed  
1656 Presbyterian Church in Central and Eastern Europe (RPCCEE);
- 1657 3.2.5 Br. Schouten was appointed to validate and submit expenses to the treasurer of the  
1658 General Fund;
- 1659 3.2.6 The CER should ideally consist of 6 ministers and 6 non-ministers;
- 1660 3.2.7 Half the members are due to retire in 2028.
- 1661 3.3 The CER recommends:
- 1662 3.3.1 Synod decide to give the CER the following general mandate:
- 1663 3.3.1.1 To continue contact with churches with whom we are in ecumenical relations  
1664 according to the adopted rules;
- 1665 3.3.1.2 To convey the relevant decisions of general synods to churches with whom  
1666 we have an ecumenical relation;
- 1667 3.3.1.3 To work in consultation with individual CanRC churches and classes that  
1668 maintain contact with churches for which the CER also has a mandate;
- 1669 3.3.1.4 Upon request, to advise CanRC churches regarding the identity of other  
1670 churches and our relationship with them;
- 1671 3.3.1.5 To report on any contact with a church with whom we are not in an  
1672 ecumenical relationship;
- 1673 3.3.1.6 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the  
1674 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

- 1675                    3.3.1.7 To submit its report on the general mandate to the churches 6 months prior to  
1676                    the convening of general synod (a supplementary report can be submitted if  
1677                    necessary);
- 1678                    3.3.1.8 To facilitate hospitality support for fraternal delegates and observers, in  
1679                    consultation with the convening church, at the next general synod.
- 1680                    3.4 The Grand Rapids ARC states that almost all the contacts and discussions took place in  
1681                    the context of either NAPARC and ICRC meetings and wonders if the sort of  
1682                    substantive discussions that on-going ecumenical contact requires can be held in that  
1683                    context.
- 1684                    3.5 The Ancaster CanRC asks what precisely the standing is of theological students from  
1685                    outside the CanRC who study at CRTS and are thus members of the CanRC, and who  
1686                    are licensed to preach among the churches of their federation of origin. Ancaster  
1687                    requests that this matter be included in some appropriate place in the mandate of the  
1688                    CER, work then be made of it and then reported to the churches ahead of GS 2028.  
1689                    They provide a proposal for implementing this.
- 1690

1691 **4. Considerations**

- 1692                    4.1 The CER has fulfilled their mandate.
- 1693                    4.2 The Grand Rapids ARC misunderstands the work of the CER delegates. At NAPARC  
1694                    and ICRC meetings, delegates of the various interchurch relationship committees will  
1695                    hold bi-lateral meetings, in addition to the plenary sessions. Further, fraternal delegates  
1696                    are regularly sent to the various assemblies.
- 1697                    4.3 The Ancaster CanRC correctly notes that theological students are not included in the  
1698                    current rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF).

1699 **5. Recommendations**

1700 That Synod decide:

- 1701                    5.1 To thank Br. G. Bos, Br. O. Bouwman and Rev. S.C. Van Dam for their years of service  
1702                    to the churches;
- 1703                    5.2 To give the CER the following general mandate:
- 1704                    5.2.1 To continue contact with churches with whom we are in ecumenical relations  
1705                    according to the adopted rules;
- 1706                    5.2.2 To convey the relevant decisions of general synods to churches with whom we  
1707                    have an ecumenical relation;
- 1708                    5.2.3 To work in consultation with individual CanRC churches and classes that maintain  
1709                    contact with churches for which the CER also has a mandate;
- 1710                    5.2.4 Upon request, to advise CanRC churches regarding the identity of other churches  
1711                    and our relationship with them;
- 1712                    5.2.5 To report on any contact with a church with whom we are not in an ecumenical  
1713                    relationship;
- 1714                    5.2.6 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the  
1715                    General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

- 1716 5.2.7 To submit its report on the general mandate to the churches no later than six (6)  
1717 months prior to the convening of general synod (a supplementary report can be  
1718 submitted if necessary);
- 1719 5.2.8 To facilitate hospitality support for fraternal delegates and observers, in  
1720 consultation with the Convening Church, at the next general synod;
- 1721 5.2.9 To pursue the proposal provided by the Ancaster CanRC (included in Appendix  
1722 21) and come with recommendations to the next general synod for how theological  
1723 students may be included in the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF).

1724

1725 **ADOPTED**

1726

1727 During proceedings, the following motion to amend was duly made and seconded:

1728 In 5.2.9 to replace the words

1729 “how theological students are to be included”

1730 With

1731 “how theological students may be included”

1732 This motion was adopted.

1733

1734 **Article 47 – CER (Ecumenical Relations): Study Mandate CO art. 50 & EF Rules**

1735 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 2: Study Mandate of the Committee on  
1736 Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for  
1737 further consideration.

1738

1739 **Article 48 – RPCNA (Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America)**

1740 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 10: RPCNA of the Committee on  
1741 Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for  
1742 further consideration.

1743

1744 **Article 49 – OPC (Orthodox Presbyterian Church)**

1745 **1. Material**

1746 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 8: Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
1747 (OPC) – Agenda Item (8.2.10.8).

1748 **2. Admissibility**

1749 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

1750 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

1751 **3. Observations**

1752 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 164) mandated the CER:

1753 [3.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Orthodox  
1754 Presbyterian Church (OPC) under the adopted rules;

- 1755 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) to submit its report to  
1756 the churches six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.
- 1757 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 1758 3.2.1 Continued engagement with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), including  
1759 attendance at its General Assembly;
- 1760 3.2.2 “At this time, there has been a long and fruitful relationship between the CanRC  
1761 and the OPC;”
- 1762 3.2.3 “Over the past number of years, our delegates have worked very closely within the  
1763 context of the ICRC. This was particularly the case as the CanRC and OPC stood  
1764 together, and worked together, in navigating the challenge of terminating the  
1765 GKv’s membership in the ICRC.”
- 1766 3.3 The CER recommends:
- 1767 3.3.1 To express our thankfulness for the blessing of enjoying a lengthy and fruitful  
1768 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Orthodox Presbyterian  
1769 Church (OPC);
- 1770 3.3.2 To continue EF category A with the OPC according to the adopted rules;
- 1771 3.3.3 To mandate the CER to:
- 1772 3.3.3.1 To send a delegation to meetings of the OPC GA at least once every two  
1773 years;
- 1774 3.3.3.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the OPC to the churches 6  
1775 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 1776 **4. Considerations**

- 1777 4.1 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) remains a confessionally Reformed church  
1778 with which the CanRC shares a long-standing relationship.
- 1779 4.2 The CER has diligently maintained contact and reported faithfully.

#### 1780 **5. Recommendations**

1781 That Synod decide:

- 1782 5.1 To express our thankfulness for the blessing of enjoying a lengthy and fruitful  
1783 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church  
1784 (OPC);
- 1785 5.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category A with the Orthodox Presbyterian  
1786 Church (OPC) [assuming Synod adopts the recommended new rules] according to the  
1787 adopted rules;
- 1788 5.3 To mandate the CER to:
- 1789 5.3.1 To send a delegation to meetings of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)  
1790 General Assembly at least once every two years;
- 1791 5.3.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the OPC to the churches six (6)  
1792 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

1793

1794 **ADOPTED**



1795 **Article 50 – Overture RSE 2024: Adding a Footnote to the Apostles’ Creed**

1796 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on RSE 2024 Overture on Adding a Footnote to the  
1797 Apostles’ Creed. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
1798 consideration.

1799

1800 **Article 51 – Appeals against GS 2022 art. 108 dec. 3.5: Successive Committee Terms**

1801 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal and an “overture” re the length of Synod  
1802 Committee Terms. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
1803 consideration.

1804

1805 **Article 52 – CTPPF (Pastoral Training Program Funding)**

1806 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the CTPPF Report. The report was discussed. The  
1807 committee took the report back for further consideration.

1808

1809 **Article 53 – Closing Devotions**

1810 Rev. Marc Jagt read Philippians 2:12-18 and led in prayer, remembering the RPCNA. The day  
1811 was closed with the singing of Hymn 28:1,3,5.

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1813 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 4 — Morning Session**  
**Friday, May 9, 2025**

**Article 54 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 122, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 122. He observed all synod members were present and made some housekeeping comments regarding pictures and this evening’s dinner. He welcomed two newly arrived fraternal observers and said a farewell to some others who would be leaving soon.

**Article 55 – Adoption of Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected. It was determined that the process for further corrections to the *Acts* would be decided to by the clerks.

**Article 56 – FRCNA – Fraternal Observer Address**

Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. John Koopman and Rev. Jack Schoeman, credentialed delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA). Rev. Schoeman addressed Synod describing the FRCNA. He expressed gratitude for our relationship, tracing its history and spending some time on the topic of the nature of preaching in the CanRC and FRCNA. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 13. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 57 – Appeal against RSW 2022 art. 12: In-person Worship**

Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal against RSW 2022 art. 12 regarding In-person Worship. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 58 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 143 dec. 3.2: Preparatory Examinations**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Appeal from Coaldale re Preparatory Examination (8.6.4.1).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.  
Grounds: It concerns a decision of the previous general synod.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 The Coaldale CanRC appeals GS 2022 art. 143 dec. 3.2 which changed the Regulations for Ecclesiastical Exams to read:

*The preparatory examination is to occur in the classis where the church that sent the student’s original attestation to the federational seminary belongs. The preparatory examination for a student not originating within the Canadian & American Reformed Churches is to occur in the classis where he lives.*

1854 3.2 Coaldale proposes to delete the word “federational”, claiming that by specifying a  
1855 federational seminary, the amendment closes any pathway for classical examination if a  
1856 man were to study at a non-federational seminary.

1857 3.3 Coaldale proposes that the Regulation Ecclesiastical Exams, GS 1958 art. 188 part I.1  
1858 (GS 2022, Appendix 23) be amended to read:

1859 *To be eligible for call in one of the churches, one must have successfully sustained the*  
1860 *preparatory examination. The preparatory examination will take place in the classis*  
1861 *where the church that sent the student’s original attestation to the seminary belongs.*  
1862 *The preparatory examination for a student not originating within the Canadian &*  
1863 *American Reformed Churches is to occur in the classis where the student resides.*

1864 3.4 Coaldale appeals GS 2022 art. 143 dec. 3.4 which amended CO art. 4B to read:

1865 *Only those shall be declared eligible for call within the churches who (1) have passed a*  
1866 *preparatory examination by classis....*

1867 3.5 Coaldale claims that this article is not clear with respect to which classis ought to  
1868 examine the student, and is open to abuse, allowing for a student to select the classis he  
1869 wishes to be examined by.

1870 3.6 Coaldale proposes CO art. 4B to be amended to:

1871 *Only those shall be declared eligible for call within the churches who (1) have passed a*  
1872 *preparatory examination by classis where the church that sent the student's original*  
1873 *attestation to the seminary belongs . . .*

#### 1874 **4. Considerations**

1875 4.1 The Coaldale CanRC is incorrect that the wording adopted by GS 2022 art. 143 dec. 3.2  
1876 closes any pathway for classical examination if a man were to study at a non-  
1877 federational seminary. GS 1968 art. 171 indicates that a student from another seminary  
1878 needs a certificate from the teaching staff of the CRTS as a condition of requesting a  
1879 preparatory examination by classis:

1880 *To be admitted to the ecclesiastical examinations candidates shall submit proof that*  
1881 *they have completed their studies at our own Theological College. Candidates who took*  
1882 *their theological training at other institutions shall present a Certificate issued by the*  
1883 *Staff of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches stating that they*  
1884 *have followed and/or complemented a course of studies conforming with the training*  
1885 *provided by the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.*

1886 4.2 The Coaldale CanRC is incorrect when it claims that CO art. 4B requires more clarity as  
1887 to which classis examines a student requesting preparatory examination. CO art. 4B  
1888 gives the general principles while the details are specified in the Regulations for  
1889 Ecclesiastical Exams (GS 2022 Appendix 23 [I.1]).

#### 1890 **5. Recommendations**

1891 That Synod decide:

1892 5.1 To deny the Coaldale CanRC appeal against GS 2022 art. 143 dec. 3.2 (*Preparatory*  
1893 *Examinations*).

1894

1895 **ADOPTED**

1896

1897 **Article 59 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 142: Days of Commemoration**

1898 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal against GS 2022 art. 142 regarding Days  
1899 of Commemoration (CO art. 53). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back  
1900 for further consideration.

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1902 **Article 60 – Report: General Fund**

1903 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on the General Fund. The report was discussed. The  
1904 committee took the report back for further consideration.

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1906 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 4 — Evening Session**

1914

**Friday, May 9, 2025**

1915 **Article 61 – Closing Devotions**

1916 Synod reopened in plenary session at 8:50pm. The Chairman made some housekeeping  
1917 comments.

1918 Rev. Jake Torenvliet spoke some devotional words, read Acts 11:19-26, had the meeting sing  
1919 Psalm 107:1,4,12, and led in prayer.

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1921 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 5 — Morning Session**  
**Saturday, May 10, 2025**

**Article 62 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 48, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 48. He observed all synod members were present and made some housekeeping comments regarding the day’s proceedings.

**Article 63 – Extra Housekeeping Matter**

*Presence on the Internet:* Only plenary sessions in which individuals address General Synod and the churches as a whole, will be live streamed publicly (cf. GS 2025 art. 6)

**Article 64 – Adoption of Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected. It was noted that the clerks had decided to a procedure for adopting the acts and had communicated that to all the delegates.

**Article 65 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 60 & 81**

Synod went into closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 2 of a report on an appeal by the Willoughby Heights CanRC against GS 2022 art. 60 and 81. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 66 – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.4**

Synod continued in closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 1 of a report on a personal appeal, agenda item 8.6.8.4. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 67 – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.2**

Synod continued in closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 1 of a report on a personal appeal, agenda item 8.6.8.2. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

Synod returned to open session.

**Article 68 – Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2024: CO art. 55 (Songs)**

Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on overtures regarding CO art. 55. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 69 – CER (Ecumenical Relations): Study Mandate CO art. 50 & EF Rules**

Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 2: Study Mandate of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

1963 Synod decided to provisionally adopt new rules for ecumenical relations. This provisional  
1964 adoption took place with a view to decisions to be taken on Monday, May 12, regarding various  
1965 churches with whom the CanRC have ecumenical relations.

1966

1967 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

1968

1969 **Article 70 – Closing Devotions**

1970 Synod reopened in plenary session at 1:00pm. The Chairman made some housekeeping  
1971 comments.

1972 Rev. Hendrik Alkema read Isaiah 6:1-8, spoke some devotional words, had the meeting sing  
1973 Psalm 133, and led in prayer.

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1975 *Synod was adjourned until Monday 9:00am.*

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**Day 6 — Morning Session**  
**Monday, May 12, 2025**

**Article 71 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 46, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 46:1,2,5. He observed all synod members were present and made some housekeeping comments regarding the day’s proceedings.

**Article 72 – Adoption of Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 73 – CER (Ecumenical Relations): Study Mandate CO art. 50 & EF Rules**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 2: Study Mandate (8.2.10.2).
- 1.2 Letters from the churches: Barrhead (8.3.10.2), Brampton (Grace) (8.3.10.4), Burlington (Fellowship) (8.3.10.5), Calgary (8.3.10.7), Carman East (8.3.10.8), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.3.10.9), Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.10.11), Hamilton (Providence) (8.3.10.12), Nooksack Valley (8.3.10.13), Attercliffe (8.3.10.14), Chilliwack (8.3.10.15), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.3.10.16), Fergus North (8.3.10.17), Grassie (Covenant) (8.3.10.18).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.
- 2.2 The letters were declared admissible.  
Grounds: They interact with a report to GS 2025 and were received on time.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 108) mandated the CER:
  - [3.8] To request the CER to further consider the mandate of GS 2019 (Art. 149 Rec. 4.1.1), specifically taking into account the input received from the churches in response to the majority and minority reports regarding the matters of:
    - [3.8.1] Categories of Ecumenical Relationships (Recommendation 1);
    - [3.8.2] Rules for Ecumenical Relationships (Recommendation 2);
    - [3.8.3] Revision of Church Order Article 50 (Recommendation 3):
      - [3.8.3.1] To consider, if a change to CO Art. 50 is deemed necessary, whether this should be initiated by a local church.
- 3.2 From the CER report, re CO art. 50, the following:
  - 3.2.1 The Church Order currently states:

***Article 50: Churches Abroad***  
*The relation with churches abroad shall be regulated by general synod. With foreign churches of Reformed confession a sister-church relationship shall be*



- 2017 *maintained as much as possible. On minor points of Church Order and*  
2018 *ecclesiastical practice churches abroad shall not be rejected.*
- 2019 3.2.2 Is the ecclesiastical route required for revision of the Church Order?
- 2020 3.2.2.1 One purpose of the ecclesiastical route is to give local churches more  
2021 opportunity to give proposed changes due attention than by way of committee  
2022 report. However, roughly half the local churches will not see a proposal  
2023 (overture) until it has been adopted by a regional synod and distributed no  
2024 less than 5 months prior to a general synod;
- 2025 3.2.2.2 The CER points to a prior decision of synod (GS 2019 art. 145 cons. 4.2.7) to  
2026 change a confession based on a committee report to justify its proposal to  
2027 change an article of the CO.
- 2028 3.2.3 The expressions “churches abroad” and “foreign churches”
- 2029 3.2.3.1 The CER points to reports and letters from the churches to GS 2022 that  
2030 answer this concern.
- 2031 3.2.4 The phrase “minor points of doctrine”
- 2032 3.2.4.1 The CER carefully weighed the concerns and determined that the confessions  
2033 of the churches express the boundaries of major and minor points.
- 2034 3.2.5 Minor points of ecclesiastical governance and practice
- 2035 3.2.5.1 In keeping with BC art. 32, which speaks “a certain order”, ecclesiastical  
2036 governance covers other orders of church government, for example,  
2037 Westminster Form of Government;
- 2038 3.2.5.2 “Ecclesiastical practice” refers to worship practices.
- 2039 3.2.6 “According to the rules adopted for this purpose by general synod” vs. “shall be  
2040 regulated by general synod”
- 2041 3.2.6.1 Confusion exists regarding the meaning and role of “regulate” in relation to  
2042 CO art. 50.
- 2043 3.2.6.2 The proposed wording maintains the principle that the churches in common  
2044 determine the *process* for ecumenical relations while clarifying that synods  
2045 and classes may participate in the *execution* of that process.
- 2046 3.2.6.3 The proposed wording clarifies, not expands, the scope of the act.
- 2047 3.2.7 “Should not be” or “shall not be”
- 2048 3.2.7.1 “Should” is rather vague;
- 2049 3.2.7.2 Using “shall” is consistent with its use elsewhere in the Church Order.
- 2050 3.3 The CER recommends:
- 2051 3.3.1 Changing CO art. 50 to read:
- 2052 ***Article 50: Ecumenical Relationships***
- 2053 *Ecumenical relationships with other churches of Reformed confession shall be*  
2054 *entered into where feasible and be maintained according to the rules adopted for*  
2055 *this purpose by general synod. On minor points of ecclesiastical governance and*  
2056 *practice churches shall not be rejected.*

- 2057 3.4 The Barrhead CanRC finds the change from “Church Order and ecclesiastical practice”  
2058 to “ecclesiastical governance and practice” to be a subjective and overly broad term.
- 2059 3.5 From the CER Report, re Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship, the following:
- 2060 3.5.1 “A survey of decisions made by past general synods will show that, as a  
2061 federation, we have not always had a clear or consistent view of what we hope to  
2062 achieve in and through our ecclesiastical relationships. This appears to be a  
2063 consequence of the apparent tension between principled desires and practical  
2064 realities.”
- 2065 3.5.2 “Differences in geography, language, culture, and history often prove to be  
2066 significant barriers to achieving a [desired] fully integrated union between faithful  
2067 federations.”
- 2068 3.5.3 “Our current rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship have been in place since 1992...  
2069 increasingly, the ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach does not mesh well with our  
2070 contemporary ecclesiastical context.”
- 2071 3.5.4 “The practice of having varied levels and/or categories of ecumenical relationships  
2072 is widely used in the Reformed/Presbyterian world.”
- 2073 3.5.5 “The CanRC exists in a context where confessionally faithful churches live side by  
2074 side in local and regional settings. Individuals in those confessionally faithful  
2075 churches quite often find themselves working collaboratively with each other in  
2076 causes related to the advancement of God’s kingdom.”
- 2077 3.5.6 “...to fulfil our LORD’s command to seek and maintain the unity of his church,  
2078 there must be acknowledgement of the possibility of the local church to interact  
2079 with other faithful churches, when, in the Lord’s providence, other faithful  
2080 churches are found in close proximity.”
- 2081 3.5.7 “To draw from the wisdom of many counsellors, local churches should ensure  
2082 classis is aware of local relations. In situations where occasional pulpit fellowship  
2083 would be desirable, involvement of classis and the deputies of regional synod  
2084 would be required.”
- 2085 3.5.8 Article 32 of the Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO), provisionally adopted by  
2086 GS 2010 (Burlington), made allowance for “preaching exchange and fellowship at  
2087 the Lord’s supper” by a local church in its ecumenical activities, on the condition  
2088 of classical approbation.
- 2089 3.6 The CER recommends:
- 2090 3.6.1 Synod adopt rules for establishing and maintaining ecclesiastical relationships as  
2091 follows:
- 2092 ***Rule 1***
- 2093 ***Level 1 – Ecclesiastical Fellowship***
- 2094 At a federative level, the following shall apply by decision of General Synod:
- 2095 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship – Category A** is with other churches of Reformed  
2096 Confession according to C.O. Art. 50. This relationship is maintained with  
2097 churches with which we have **intense contact**. This relationship is to be exercised  
2098 where possible and desirable by:

- 2099 (1) Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.  
2100 (2) The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting  
2101 Christian unity.  
2102 (3) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of  
2103 one another.  
2104 (4) Pulpit fellowship.  
2105 (5) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.  
2106 (6) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local  
2107 regulations.  
2108 (7) Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly prior to instituting  
2109 changes in doctrine, worship and governance which might affect the basis  
2110 of the fellowship.  
2111 (8) Joint action in areas of common responsibility.  
2112 (9) Exchange of relevant ecclesiastical materials, including:  
2113 a. The Minutes/Acts of major assemblies;  
2114 b. Yearbooks/Directories of the churches;  
2115 c. The most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards;  
2116 d. The most recent published edition of the Church Order;  
2117 e. The most recently published edition of an approved psalter, or psalter-  
2118 hymnal.

2119 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship - Category B** is with other churches of Reformed  
2120 Confession according to C.O. Art. 50. This relationship is maintained with  
2121 churches with whom we have **less intense contact** for geographical, linguistic, or  
2122 historical reasons. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable  
2123 by:

- 2124 (1) Welcome of fraternal observers at appropriate major assemblies.  
2125 (2) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of  
2126 one another.  
2127 (3) Pulpit fellowship.  
2128 (4) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.  
2129 (5) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local  
2130 regulations.  
2131 (6) Communication on issues of joint concern.  
2132 (7) Review relevant ecclesiastical materials and monitor faithfulness to the  
2133 Reformed confessions.

2134 Level 2 – Ecclesiastical Contact

2135 **Ecclesiastical Contact** is with other churches of Reformed Confession with which  
2136 we do not have Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Such churches may include churches  
2137 with membership in NAPARC, or the ICRC, as well as other churches as  
2138 determined by general synod. This relationship is to be exercised where possible  
2139 and desirable by:

- 2140 (1) Meetings, both formal and informal, of delegates to the meetings of  
2141 NAPARC and the ICRC and on other occasions that may arise.
- 2142 (2) Mutual labours as members of NAPARC and the ICRC in the discharge of  
2143 the purposes of the council/conference.
- 2144 (3) Welcome of fraternal observers at major assemblies.
- 2145 (4) Other duties as directed by general synod.

2146 The Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) shall periodically review our  
2147 ecumenical relationships to ensure we are honouring our commitments to each  
2148 other. Furthermore, the CER may make recommendations, without prejudice, to  
2149 General Synod regarding the optimal placement of federations within these  
2150 categories.

2151 **Rule 2**

2152 In circumstances where no Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 1, Level 1) exists,  
2153 churches may engage in ecumenical relationships with other local churches as per  
2154 CO Article 50, in accordance with the following protocols:

- 2155 (1) Pulpit fellowship may occur with the concurring advice of classis and the  
2156 deputies of regional synod. This fellowship will be implemented in a  
2157 manner determined by classis.
- 2158 (2) Reception of members at the Lord's Supper according to local regulations.
- 2159 (3) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local  
2160 regulations.
- 2161 (4) Churches shall give an account of their ecumenical activities to their  
2162 respective classis.

2163 3.7 The Brampton (Grace) CanRC raises a concern over regional synod or general synod  
2164 being able to override decisions at the classis level regarding a local context.

2165 3.8 The Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC requests the reference to deputies of regional  
2166 synod be removed from Rule 2 (1) as CO art. 4B 1&2 does not mention deputies of  
2167 regional synod nor occasional pulpit supply in the local church. Further, the inclusion of  
2168 the deputies of regional synod does not correspond to the Proposed Joint Church Order  
2169 (PJCO), provisionally adopted in 2010, nor the practice of the FRCA.

2170 3.9 The Nooksack Valley ARC believes it would be wise to stipulate that concurring advice  
2171 of classis and regional synod be given *before* entering into local ecclesiastical  
2172 relationships.

2173 3.10 The Attercliffe CanRC suggests several changes:

2174 3.10.1 To maintain the confessional language of BC art. 29, recommends qualifying the  
2175 churches we have relations with using "other true and faithful";

2176 3.10.2 To add "and whenever feasible striving for ecclesiastical unity" to the phrase  
2177 "promoting Christian unity" in keeping with John 17;

2178 3.10.3 To attach "in compliance with the Church Order" to "local regulations" to avoid  
2179 undermining the role of the Church Order;

2180 3.10.4 To move the requirement for the concurring advice of classis and the deputies of  
2181 regional synod for engaging in local ecumenical relationships under Rule 2 into the  
2182 introduction as the rule should control reception of members and Lord's supper;

2183 3.10.5 To clarify that Rule 2 applies to local ecclesiastical relations with churches not  
2184 covered by Rule 1 Level 1.

2185 3.11 The Chilliwack CanRC:

2186 3.11.1 Notes that Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B is missing "the exercise of  
2187 mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting Christian unity". They  
2188 believe we have a responsibility of mutual concern and admonition towards all  
2189 churches with whom we have EF;

2190 3.11.2 Would like Rule 2 removed in its entirety for the following reasons:

2191 3.11.2.1 Point 1 seems to conflict with CO art. 4;

2192 3.11.2.2 Point 2 seems to conflict with CO art. 61;

2193 3.11.2.3 Point 3 is completely unnecessary as churches can already receive members  
2194 into their congregations from non-sister churches by way of baptism and/or  
2195 profession of faith;

2196 3.11.2.4 Point 4 is unnecessary as this can already be implemented at the individual  
2197 classis level.

2198 3.12 The Edmonton (Immanuel) CanRC recommends Rule 2, Point 2 read "Reception of  
2199 members at the Lord's Supper according to CO Art 61".

2200 3.13 The Fergus North CanRC is concerned that Rule 2 will result in inconsistencies across  
2201 the various classes.

2202 3.14 The Grassie CanRC recommends that Rule 2 Point 1 be revised to require the minister  
2203 be "a member in good standing of an ICRC or NAPARC Church".

#### 2204 **4. Considerations**

2205 4.1 The CER sufficiently answered the concerns raised by the churches at GS 2022  
2206 regarding the suggested revision of CO art. 50.

2207 4.2 The Barrhead CanRC does not provide any compelling arguments that the broadness of  
2208 the term is not helpful.

2209 4.3 The CER fulfilled their mandate in showing the need for new rules for Ecclesiastical  
2210 Fellowship (EF).

2211 4.4 The Attercliffe CanRC and the Edmonton (Immanuel) CanRC raises valuable points  
2212 about the relationship between the Church Order and local regulations.

2213 4.5 Attercliffe is correct that the Church Order governs the reception of members at the  
2214 Lord's supper and the reception of members into local congregations, but they do not  
2215 demonstrate that these parts of church life should also be under the oversight of classis  
2216 and the deputies of regional synod.

2217 4.6 While no churches objected to the CER recommendation to the involvement of classes  
2218 in occasional pulpit fellowship, the Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC correctly observes  
2219 that CO art. 4B does not require the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod:

- 2220 4.6.1 According to CO art. 5 A1b, the deputies of regional synod provide concurring  
2221 advice at peremptory examinations. This is because the decision affects all the  
2222 churches. Rule 2 is explicitly about the local context and for that reason the role of  
2223 the deputies of regional synod in Rule 2 necessarily performs a different function.  
2224 The CER report does not state what that function is, nor why it is necessary.
- 2225 4.7 The Nooksack Valley ARC states that “it would be wise to stipulate that concurring  
2226 advice of classis and the deputies of regional synod be given *before* entering into local  
2227 ecclesiastical relationships”. However, “advice” implies prior to implementation, just as  
2228 one seeks advice prior to acting in a matter of discipline.
- 2229 4.8 The concern from the Chilliwack CanRC for “the exercise of mutual concern and  
2230 admonition with a view to promoting Christian unity” is well intended but in effect it  
2231 eliminates the value of the Category B relationship. The clause obligates an intense,  
2232 active monitoring of the life of the federation. By contrast, without this clause the  
2233 committee does not have a *lack* of concern for the federation, but that concern is  
2234 expressed reactively.
- 2235 4.9 Chilliwack does not sufficiently make the case that Rule 2 should be removed.
- 2236 4.10 The concern from the Fergus North CanRC about inconsistencies arising fails to  
2237 account for the purpose of the Rule 2 to account for differences in local context.
- 2238 4.11 The recommendation of the Grassie CanRC that Rule 2 only applies to churches in  
2239 NAPARC and ICRC is unnecessarily restrictive. The CO already provides the safety  
2240 that Grassie seeks to ensure.

## 2241 5. Recommendations

2242 That Synod decide:

- 2243 5.1 To adopt the following text for CO art. 50:

### 2244 *Article 50: Ecumenical Relationships*

2245 *Ecumenical relationships with other churches of Reformed confession shall be*  
2246 *entered into where feasible and be maintained according to the rules adopted for this*  
2247 *purpose by general synod. On minor points of ecclesiastical governance and practice*  
2248 *churches shall not be rejected.*

- 2249 5.2 To adopt the following rules:

### 2250 *Rule 1*

#### 2251 *Level 1 – Ecclesiastical Fellowship*

2252 At a federative level, the following shall apply by decision of General Synod:

2253 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship – Category A** is with other churches of Reformed  
2254 Confession according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with  
2255 churches with which we have **intense contact**. This relationship is to be  
2256 exercised where possible and desirable by:

- 2257 (1) Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.
- 2258 (2) The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting  
2259 Christian unity and whenever feasible striving for ecclesiastical unity.
- 2260 (3) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of  
2261 one another.



- 2262 (4) Pulpit fellowship.  
2263 (5) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.  
2264 (6) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local  
2265 regulations.  
2266 (7) Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly prior to instituting  
2267 changes in doctrine, worship and governance which might affect the basis  
2268 of the fellowship.  
2269 (8) Joint action in areas of common responsibility.  
2270 (9) Exchange of relevant ecclesiastical materials, including:  
2271 a. The Minutes/Acts of major assemblies;  
2272 b. Yearbooks/Directories of the churches;  
2273 c. The most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards;  
2274 d. The most recent published edition of the Church Order;  
2275 e. The most recently published edition of an approved psalter, or  
2276 psalter-hymnal.

2277 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship - Category B** is with other churches of Reformed  
2278 Confession according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with  
2279 churches with whom we have **less intense contact** for geographical, linguistic,  
2280 or historical reasons. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and  
2281 desirable by:

- 2282 (1) Welcome of fraternal observers at appropriate major assemblies.  
2283 (2) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of  
2284 one another.  
2285 (3) Pulpit fellowship.  
2286 (4) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.  
2287 (5) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to according  
2288 to local regulations.  
2289 (6) Communication on issues of joint concern.  
2290 (7) Review relevant ecclesiastical materials and monitor faithfulness to the  
2291 Reformed confessions.

2292 Level 2 – Ecclesiastical Contact

2293 **Ecclesiastical Contact** is with other churches of Reformed Confession with  
2294 which we do not have Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Such churches may include  
2295 churches with membership in NAPARC, or the ICRC, as well as other churches  
2296 as determined by general synod. This relationship is to be exercised where  
2297 possible and desirable by:

- 2298 (1) Meetings, both formal and informal, of delegates to the meetings of  
2299 NAPARC and the ICRC and on other occasions that may arise.  
2300 (2) Mutual labours as members of NAPARC and the ICRC in the discharge  
2301 of the purposes of the council/conference.  
2302 (3) Welcome of fraternal observers at major assemblies.



2303 (4) Other duties as directed by general synod.

2304 The Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) shall periodically review our  
2305 ecumenical relationships to ensure we are honouring our commitments to each  
2306 other. Furthermore, the CER may make recommendations, without prejudice, to  
2307 General Synod regarding the optimal placement of federations within these  
2308 categories.

2309 **Rule 2**

2310 In circumstances where no Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 1, Level 1) exists,  
2311 churches may engage in ecumenical relationships with other local churches as  
2312 per CO art. 50, in accordance with the following protocols:

- 2313 (1) Pulpit fellowship may occur with the concurring advice of classis.  
2314 (2) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.  
2315 (3) Reception of members into the local congregation according to local  
2316 regulations.  
2317 (4) Churches shall give an account of their ecumenical activities to their  
2318 respective classis.

2319

2320 **ADOPTED**

2321

2322 **Article 74 – ERQ (Reformed Church of Quebec)**

2323 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 4: ERQ of the Committee on Ecumenical  
2324 Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
2325 consideration.

2326

2327 *The chairman welcomed grade 11 & 12 students from Credo Christian High School. He gave  
2328 some explanation of proceedings.*

2329

2330 **Article 75 – URCNA (United Reformed Churches in North America)**

2331 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 12: United Reformed Churches in North  
2332 America (URCNA) of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was  
2333 discussed, with participation by the URCNA fraternal delegate. The committee took the report  
2334 back for further consideration.

2335

2336 **Article 76 – FRCA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

2337 Rev. Carl Van Dam introduced Rev. Wes Bredenhof and Rev. Anthon Souman, credentialed  
2338 delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA). Rev. Souman addressed Synod  
2339 and provided an overview of the FRCA. He expressed gratitude for our close sister-church  
2340 relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 14. The chairman spoke some  
2341 words in response.

2342

2343 **Article 77 – FRCA (Free Reformed Churches of Australia)**

2344 **1. Material**

2345 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 13: Free Reformed Churches of  
2346 Australia (FRCA) (8.2.10.13).

2347 **2. Admissibility**

2348 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

2349 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2350 **3. Observations**

2351 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 169) decided:

2352 [3.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free  
2353 Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) under the adopted rules;

2354 [3.2] To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing support for and  
2355 interest in the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS), including  
2356 financial support;

2357 [3.3] To encourage the Board of Governors and Senate of the CRTS to continue contact  
2358 with the deputyship for theological education in the FRCA to explore the  
2359 feasibility and benefits of delivering theological education in Australia;

2360 [3.4] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2361 [3.4.1] To maintain close contact with the deputyship of the FRCA in matters of  
2362 relations with sister-churches abroad and informing the FRCA of changes or  
2363 developments in third-party relationships;

2364 [3.4.2] To invite the various deputyships of the FRCA to seek direct contact with the  
2365 corresponding CanRC committees (e.g., our Standing Committee for the  
2366 Publication of the Book of Praise, Committee on Bible Translations) in areas  
2367 of mutual interest where the CER's mandate does not reach;

2368 [3.4.3] To communicate to the FRCA the value of the International Conference of  
2369 Reformed Churches (ICRC) and encourage them to consider membership;

2370 [3.4.4] To send a delegation to the next FRCA synod in 2024;

2371 [3.4.5] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
2372 next general synod.

2373 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

2374 3.2.1 The CanRC enjoys a close bond with the FRCA involving a very similar history  
2375 and are of mutual support.

2376 3.2.2 The FRCA send their theological students to the CRTS, contribute substantially to  
2377 its support and are thankful for the high quality of the training and its faithfulness  
2378 to Scripture.

2379 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

2380 3.3.1 To express thankfulness and appreciation for the FRCA's ongoing prayerful and  
2381 financial support for the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS);

- 2382 3.3.2 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the  
2383 Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) under the adopted rules;
- 2384 3.3.3 To express appreciation for the fact that the FRCA has decided to send observers  
2385 to the next International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and to  
2386 continue to encourage the FRCA to consider membership in the ICRC;
- 2387 3.3.4 To mandate the CER:
- 2388 3.3.4.1 To maintain close contact with the deputyships of the FRCA in matters of  
2389 common interest, such as, e.g., ecumenical relations and changes in third  
2390 party relationships;
- 2391 3.3.4.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCA to the churches  
2392 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

#### 2393 **4. Considerations**

- 2394 4.1 The Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) continues to display the marks of a  
2395 true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared recent  
2396 history, a close relationship between the CanRC and FRCA is mutually beneficial.
- 2397 4.2 As the ICRC is a forum where churches meet who profess and seek to be faithful to  
2398 Scripture as summarized in Reformed confessions, FRCA membership in the ICRC  
2399 would be of benefit to ICRC member churches and to the FRCA itself.

#### 2400 **5. Recommendations**

2401 That Synod decide:

- 2402 5.1 To express thankfulness and appreciation for the Free Reformed Churches of Australia  
2403 (FRCA)'s ongoing prayerful and financial support for the Canadian Reformed  
2404 Theological Seminary (CRTS);
- 2405 5.2 To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Free  
2406 Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) under the adopted rules;
- 2407 5.3 To express appreciation for the fact that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia  
2408 (FRCA) has decided to send observers to the next International Conference of Reformed  
2409 Churches (ICRC), and to continue to encourage the FRCA to consider membership in  
2410 the ICRC;
- 2411 5.4 To mandate the CER:
- 2412 5.4.1 To maintain close contact with the deputyships of the Free Reformed Churches of  
2413 Australia (FRCA) in matters of common interest, such as, e.g., common  
2414 ecumenical relations and changes in third party relationships;
- 2415 5.4.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCA to the churches no  
2416 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2417  
2418 **ADOPTED**

2419

2420 **Article 78 – HRC (Heritage Reformed Congregations)**

2421 **1. Material**

2422 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 6: Heritage Reformed  
2423 Congregations (HRC) (8.2.10.6).

2424 **2. Admissibility**

2425 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
2426 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2427 **3. Observations**

2428 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 162) decided:

2429 [3.1] To accept the Heritage Reformed Churches in North America (HRCNA) Level 2  
2430 relationship of “Formal Correspondence”;

2431 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2432 [3.2.1] To continue discussions with the HRCNA in an effort to work towards  
2433 Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);

2434 [3.2.2] To meet simultaneously with the HRCNA and Free Reformed Churches of  
2435 North America (FRCNA) ecumenicity committees;

2436 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
2437 next general synod.

2438 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

2439 3.2.1 The HRC is a member of both NAPARC and ICRC.

2440 3.2.2 The CER has had several interactions with the HRC since 2022, including bilateral  
2441 meetings at NAPARC.

2442 3.2.3 The HRC emphasizes Christ-centered preaching and the unconditional offer of  
2443 grace.

2444 3.2.4 The HRC have expressed to us their appreciation for the individual and  
2445 institutional collaboration between Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary  
2446 (PRTS) and our CRTS.

2447 3.2.5 The CER was unable to meet simultaneously with the FRCNA) and HRC  
2448 ecumenical committees as mandated.

2449 3.2.6 Progress towards organic unity Between the FRCNA and HRC appears to have  
2450 stalled. The FRCNA/HRC joint unity committee has not been disbanded but its  
2451 focus is now more on “grassroots” activity.

2452 3.3 The CER recommends that Synod decide:

2453 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact (EC) with the Heritage Reformed Churches in  
2454 North America (HRC) according to the adopted rules with a view to possibly  
2455 advancing this to a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);

2456 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2457 3.3.2.1 To convey this decision to the HRC;

2458 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the HRC to the churches 6  
2459 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2460 **4. Considerations**

- 2461 4.1 The CanRC shares the same Reformed confessional standards as the Heritage Reformed  
2462 Congregations (HRC).
- 2463 4.2 The CER has found the HRC to be faithful to Scripture and the gospel of Christ.
- 2464 4.3 The HRC is receptive to dialogue and discussion with the CanRC and we are already in  
2465 their “Level 2” relationship.
- 2466 4.4 The HRC work together with the CanRC on a local level as well as through our  
2467 respective seminaries, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary (PRTS) and CRTS.

2468 **5. Recommendations**

2469 That Synod decide:

- 2470 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact (EC) with the Heritage Reformed Congregations  
2471 (HRC) according to the adopted rules with a view to possibly advancing this to a  
2472 relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF).
- 2473 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 2474 5.2.1 To convey this decision to the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC);
- 2475 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the HRC to the churches no  
2476 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2477

2478 **ADOPTED**

2479

2480 **Article 79 – FRCNA (Free Reformed Churches of North America)**

2481 **1. Material**

- 2482 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 5: Free Reformed Churches in  
2483 North America (FRCNA) (8.2.10.5).
- 2484 1.2 Letter from the churches: Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.10.11).

2485 **2. Admissibility**

- 2486 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
2487 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.
- 2488 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.  
2489 Grounds: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

2490 **3. Observations**

- 2491 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 161) decided:
- 2492 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 2493 [3.1.1] To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the Free Reformed  
2494 Churches of North America (FRCNA);
- 2495 [3.1.2] To meet simultaneously with the Heritage Reformed churches in North  
2496 America (HRCNA) and FRCNA ecumenicity committees;
- 2497 [3.1.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
2498 next general synod.

- 2499 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 2500 3.2.1 The CER met with the FRCNA at NAPARC 2022 and 2023;
- 2501 3.2.2 A meeting was held in March 2023 to discuss theological emphases, particularly
- 2502 regarding covenant theology and the preaching of faith and repentance;
- 2503 3.2.3 The FRCNA expressed appreciation for the ongoing discussions and desire to
- 2504 continue dialogue;
- 2505 3.2.4 The FRCNA maintains formal contact with the CanRC and other NAPARC
- 2506 churches;
- 2507 3.2.5 The CER was unable to meet simultaneously with the FRCNA and HRC
- 2508 ecumenical committees as mandated;
- 2509 3.2.6 Progress towards organic unity between the FRCNA and HRC appears to have
- 2510 stalled. The FRCNA/HRC joint unity committee has not been disbanded but its
- 2511 focus is now more on “grassroots” activity;
- 2512 3.2.7 The FRCNA continues to closely monitor its relationship with the CGKN and has
- 2513 sent them a formal letter of concern over the matters of women in office;
- 2514 3.2.8 The CER remain convinced that discussions on covenant and appropriation of
- 2515 salvation can take place within a bond of brotherly fellowship within the bounds of
- 2516 Scripture and confession.
- 2517 3.3 The CER recommends that Synod decide:
- 2518 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact (EC) with the Free Reformed Churches in
- 2519 North America (FRCNA) according to the adopted rules with a view to possibly
- 2520 advancing this to a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);
- 2521 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 2522 3.3.2.1 To convey this decision to the FRCNA;
- 2523 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCNA to the
- 2524 churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.
- 2525 3.4 The Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC cautions against having personal and anecdotal
- 2526 experiences weigh on the federation’s ecumenical relationships, whether positively or
- 2527 negatively.

#### 2528 **4. Considerations**

- 2529 4.1 The CanRC currently enjoys a relationship with the Free Reformed Churches of North
- 2530 America (FRCNA) under their “Level 1” category (Formal Contact) as per the decision
- 2531 of GS 2019 (art. 148).
- 2532 4.2 The CanRC has good connections and relations with the FRCNA on several local levels
- 2533 in some areas.
- 2534 4.3 There is not a pressing need to meet jointly with the FRCNA and Heritage Reformed
- 2535 Congregations (HRC) committees while their unity discussions are stalled.
- 2536 4.4 The comment from the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC is noted.

#### 2537 **5. Recommendations**

2538 That Synod decide:



2539 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact (EC) with the Free Reformed Churches in North  
2540 America (FRCNA) according to the adopted rules with a view to possibly advancing  
2541 this to a relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF).

2542 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2543 5.2.1 To convey this decision to the Free Reformed Churches of North America  
2544 (FRCNA);

2545 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCNA to the churches no  
2546 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2547

2548 **ADOPTED**

2549

2550 **Article 80 – KPCA-K (Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin)**

2551 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 8: Korean Presbyterian Church in America  
2552 (Kosin) (KPCA-K) of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed.  
2553 The committee took the report back for further consideration.

2554

2555 *The chairman farewelled the grade 11 & 12 students from Credo Christian High School. Synod  
2556 broke for coffee while the grade 11 & 12 students left and the grade 9 & 10 students came in.*

2557 *Following the break, the Chairman welcomed grade 9 & 10 students from Credo Christian High  
2558 School. He gave some explanation of proceedings.*

2559

2560 **Article 81 – FRCSA – Fraternal Delegate Address**

2561 Rev. Karlo Janssen introduced the well-bearded Rev. Johan Bruintjes, credentialed delegate of  
2562 the Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA). Rev. Bruintjes addressed Synod and  
2563 provided an overview of the FRCSA. He expressed gratitude for our close sister-church  
2564 relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 15. The chairman spoke some  
2565 words in response.

2566

2567 **Article 82 – RCUS (Reformed Church in the United States)**

2568 **1. Material**

2569 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 9: Reformed Church in the United  
2570 States (RCUS) (8.2.10.9).

2571 **2. Admissibility**

2572 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

2573 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2574 **3. Observations**

2575 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 165) decided:

2576 [3.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Church in the  
2577 United States (RCUS) under the adopted rules;



2578 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) to submit its report to  
2579 the churches six months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2580 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

2581 3.2.1 Much appreciation is expressed officially and unofficially for the CanRC's  
2582 diligence in sending fraternal delegates to RCUS Classes and Synods;

2583 3.2.2 Discussions on differing church polity or practices happen as opportunities arise;

2584 3.2.3 The CanRC and the RCUS can effectively assist each other in a variety of ways.

2585 3.3 The CER recommends that Synod decide:

2586 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Church  
2587 in the United States (RCUS) according to the adopted rules;

2588 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER)

2589 3.3.2.1 To send delegates to meetings of the RCUS synod at least once every two  
2590 years;

2591 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RCUS to the churches  
2592 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

#### 2593 **4. Considerations**

2594 4.1 The Reformed Churches in the United States (RCUS) continues to display the marks of  
2595 a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction, a close  
2596 relationship between the CanRC and the RCUS is mutually beneficial.

2597 4.2 The RCUS very much appreciates the developing relationship with the CanRC. They  
2598 especially appreciate having fraternal delegates attend major assemblies.

2599 4.3 The CanRC and the RCUS can effectively assist each other via pulpit exchanges,  
2600 visiting each other's churches, participating in youth camps/conferences held by the  
2601 various churches and the exchange of articles in magazines supported by church  
2602 members.

2603 4.4 The RCUS synod takes place every year. To be present just once every three years  
2604 could give the wrong impression of how we value the relationship. To be present every  
2605 year might not be financially prudent.

#### 2606 **5. Recommendations**

2607 That Synod decide:

2608 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Church in  
2609 the United States (RCUS) according to the adopted rules;

2610 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2611 5.2.1 To send delegates to meetings of the Reformed Churches in the United States  
2612 (RCUS) synod at least once every two years.

2613 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RCUS to the churches no  
2614 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2615

2616 **ADOPTED**

2617

2618 **Article 83 – RPCC (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada)**

2619 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 11: Reformed Presbyterian Church of  
2620 Canada (RPCC) of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). Synod decided to postpone  
2621 discussion until the relationship with the RPCNA had been discussed.  
2622

2623 **Article 84 – IRB (Reformed Churches in Brazil)**

2624 **1. Material**

2625 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 14: Reformed Churches in Brazil  
2626 (IRB) (8.2.10.14).

2627 **2. Admissibility**

2628 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

2629 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2630 **3. Observations**

2631 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 124) decided:

2632 [3.1] To express gratitude for the continued desire of the IRB to grow in knowledge and  
2633 faithfulness;

2634 [3.2] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches of Brazil  
2635 (IRB) under the adopted rules;

2636 [3.3] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2637 [3.3.1] To use every opportunity to have contact with the IRB and to provide  
2638 encouragement to this federation of churches;

2639 [3.3.2] To visit the IRB at least twice before the next synod;

2640 [3.3.3] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Aldergrove CanRC and the  
2641 Hamilton-Cornerstone CanRC given their mission work in Brazil;

2642 [3.3.4] To submit its report to the churches six months before the convening of the  
2643 next general synod.

2644 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

2645 3.2.1 Observing the IRB Concílio at work gives reason for thankfulness. This young  
2646 federation demonstrates a steady focus on building up the church, and a desire to  
2647 remain faithful;

2648 3.2.2 Our relationship is very important to both the IRB and CanRC churches. The  
2649 CanRC can provide guidance, and the IRB reminds us to value and hold on to our  
2650 rich heritage;

2651 3.2.3 The IRB works hard at evangelism despite financial challenges. The churches have  
2652 spread from the northeast into the south of Brazil;

2653 3.2.4 The IRB demonstrates that they remain faithful churches. They abide by the Word  
2654 of God as the only rule for faith and life and adhere to Reformed confessions and  
2655 church order;

2656 3.2.5 Finances, manpower, and education of new believers continues to be a significant  
2657 challenge for the IRB;

- 2658 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:
- 2659 3.3.1 To express gratitude for the continued desire of the Reformed Churches in Brazil
- 2660 (IRB) to grow in knowledge and faithfulness;
- 2661 3.3.2 To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed
- 2662 Churches of Brazil (IRB) under the adopted rules;
- 2663 3.3.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 2664 3.3.3.1 To use every opportunity to have contact with the IRB and to provide
- 2665 encouragement to this federation of churches;
- 2666 3.3.3.2 To visit the IRB at least twice before the next general synod of the CanRC;
- 2667 3.3.3.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Aldergrove CanRC and the
- 2668 Hamilton (Cornerstone) CanRC given their mission work in Brazil;
- 2669 3.3.3.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the IRB to the churches 6
- 2670 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

#### 2671 **4. Considerations**

- 2672 4.1 The Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB) continues to display the marks of a true and
- 2673 faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared recent history, a
- 2674 close relationship between the CanRC and IRB is mutually beneficial.
- 2675 4.2 The IRB is a very young federation with only one sister church, the CanRC. Our
- 2676 encouragement to them is sought and very much appreciated.
- 2677 4.3 As sending churches, the Aldergrove CanRC and the Hamilton (Cornerstone) CanRC
- 2678 have a lot of insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the IRB, as well as having
- 2679 missionaries and mission aid workers on the ground.

#### 2680 **5. Recommendations**

2681 That Synod decide:

- 2682 5.1 To express gratitude for the continued desire of the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB)
- 2683 to grow in knowledge and faithfulness;
- 2684 5.2 To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Churches of
- 2685 Brazil (IRB) under the adopted rules;
- 2686 5.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 2687 5.3.1 To use every opportunity to have contact with the Reformed Churches in Brazil
- 2688 (IRB) and to provide encouragement to this federation of churches;
- 2689 5.3.2 To visit the IRB at least twice before the next general synod of the CanRC;
- 2690 5.3.3 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Aldergrove CanRC and the
- 2691 Hamilton (Cornerstone) CanRC given their mission work in Brazil;
- 2692 5.3.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the IRB to the churches no later
- 2693 than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2694

2695 **ADOPTED**

2696

2697 **Article 85 – KPCK (Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea)**

2698 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 18: Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea  
2699 (KPCK) of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The  
2700 committee took the report back for further consideration.

2701

2702 **Article 86 – RCNZ (Reformed Churches of New Zealand)**

2703 **1. Material**

2704 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 20: Reformed Churches in New  
2705 Zealand (RCNZ) (8.2.10.20).

2706 **2. Admissibility**

2707 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

2708 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2709 **3. Observations**

2710 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 146) decided:

2711 [3.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed  
2712 Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ) under the adopted rules;

2713 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

2714 [3.2.1] To express appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the RCNZ in the  
2715 mission in Papua New Guinea;

2716 [3.2.2] To send a delegation to the next RCNZ Synod;

2717 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
2718 next general synod;

2719 [3.3] To take note that the different structures of the RCNZ and the CanRC for the  
2720 material support of emeritus ministers complicates the transfer of ministers  
2721 between the CanRC and RCNZ, as it also does between the CanRC and the  
2722 FRCSA. The material support for emeritus ministers is beyond the jurisdiction of a  
2723 general synod and thus beyond the scope of the CER.

2724 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

2725 3.2.1 Synod-RCNZ 2024 decided to continue its sister church relationship with the  
2726 CanRC and to send a delegate to GS 2025.

2727 3.2.2 There continues to be good unity with the CanRC on missions, particularly in  
2728 Papua-New Guinea.

2729 3.2.3 The RCNZ demonstrates a determination to remain a faithful church within the  
2730 confines of Scripture and confessions allowing for a unity in the faith with a  
2731 diversity of practice.

2732 3.3 The CER recommends synod decide:

2733 3.3.1 To express appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the Reformed Churches  
2734 in New Zealand (RCNZ) in the mission in Papua New Guinea;

2735 3.3.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the RCNZ according  
2736 to the adopted rules;

- 2737 3.3.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):  
2738 3.3.3.1 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RCNZ to the churches  
2739 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2740 **4. Considerations**

- 2741 4.1 The Reformed Churches in New Zealand (RCNZ) continues to display the marks of a  
2742 true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared recent  
2743 history, a close relationship between the CanRC and the RCNZ is mutually beneficial.

2744 **5. Recommendations**

2745 That Synod decide:

- 2746 5.1 To express appreciation for the ongoing cooperation with the Reformed Churches in  
2747 New Zealand (RCNZ) in the mission in Papua New Guinea;  
2748 5.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Churches in  
2749 New Zealand (RCNZ) according to the adopted rules;  
2750 5.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):  
2751 5.3.1 To send a delegation to meetings of the Reformed Churches in New Zealand  
2752 (RCNZ) Synod every 3 years;  
2753 5.3.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RCNZ to the churches no  
2754 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

2755

2756 **ADOPTED**

2757

2758 *The Chairman farewelled the grade 9 & 10 students from Credo Christian High School.*

2759

2760 **Article 87 – FCS (Free Church of Scotland)**

2761 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 21: Free Church of Scotland (FCS) of the  
2762 Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The committee took the  
2763 report back for further consideration.

2764

2765 **Article 88 – FCC (Free Church of Scotland (Continuing))**

2766 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on Report 22: Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)  
2767 (FCC) of the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER). The report was discussed. The  
2768 committee took the report back for further consideration.

2769

2770 **Article 89 – CPTPF (Pastoral Training Program Funding)**

2771 **1. Material**

- 2772 1.1 Report of the Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF) (8.2.7).  
2773 1.2 Letter from the following church: Willoughby Heights (8.3.7.1).

2774 **2. Admissibility**

- 2775 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

2776 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

2777 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.

2778 Grounds: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

### 2779 3. Observations

2780 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 72) mandated the CPTPF:

2781 [3.1] To express gratitude to the Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC and its committee for the  
2782 work it has done;

2783 [3.2] To reappoint Guelph-Emmanuel as the Committee for Pastoral Training Program  
2784 Funding (CTPTF) with the following mandate:

2785 [3.2.1] To look after all internship-related funding matters;

2786 [3.2.2] To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required  
2787 for a particular summer;

2788 [3.2.3] To report about its activities to the next general synod, which report shall be  
2789 sent to all the churches at least six months prior to the next general synod.

2790 3.2 The Willoughby Heights CanRC expresses appreciation for the detailed report  
2791 submitted by the CPTPF, but notes 3 separate items for consideration:

2792 3.2.1 They find there is an imprecision in terminology where the report suggests that the  
2793 church and the committee are two different entities;

2794 3.2.2 They request GS 2025 to mandate the CPTPF to reconsider guidelines 1b and 1c  
2795 (appendix 2 of the report) and build in more financial flexibility and discretion for  
2796 students who travel outside of Ontario;

2797 3.2.3 They request that the committee updates guideline 3b (appendix 2 of the report)  
2798 regarding the timing for students to complete the program following the decision  
2799 of GS 2019 art. 85 (Recommendation 5.1.2.4).

### 2800 4. Considerations

2801 4.1 The CPTPF has done its work with dedication and accountability, and the funding  
2802 program has worked well.

2803 4.2 The Willoughby Heights CanRC is correct where it appears that the Guelph  
2804 (Emmanuel) CanRC and Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF)  
2805 are 2 separate entities. Appendix 1 of the CPTPF report incorrectly states: "*The Church  
2806 at Guelph has been charged by Synod Smithers 2007 to appoint a Committee for  
2807 Pastoral Training Program (PTP) Funding (Art. 159.2 of the Acts),*" when in fact GS  
2808 2007 appointed Guelph (Emmanuel) itself as the Committee and not that the church was  
2809 charged to appoint a committee.

2810 4.3 Willoughby Heights acknowledges that there are additional funds available for students  
2811 that travel to Western Canada for their pastoral training as indicated in the Guidelines  
2812 1b. However, they correctly state that the additional funds are insufficient taking into  
2813 account travel and accommodation expenses. Willoughby Heights encourages the  
2814 committee to reconsider their policy as stated in Guideline 1b and 1c so that smaller  
2815 churches will be more encouraged to participate and not be burdened by the additional  
2816 costs of hosting students for the PTP.



2817 4.4 Willoughby Heights correctly indicates that Guideline 3b is at odds with the decision of  
2818 GS 2019 art. 85 con. 5.1.2.4 which states: “*That in the summer immediately following*  
2819 *classical permission or licensure—whether this be after either the student’s second or*  
2820 *third year of studies—the student must follow a summer internship . . . .*”

## 2821 **5. Recommendations**

2822 That Synod decide:

2823 5.1 To express gratitude to the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC for the work it has done as  
2824 Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF);

2825 5.2 To mandate the committee with the following:

2826 5.2.1 To look after all internship-related funding matters;

2827 5.2.2 To assess the churches each year based on the anticipated funding required for a  
2828 particular summer;

2829 5.2.3 To receive and review the submission from the Willoughby Heights CanRC, make  
2830 the necessary revisions according to Consideration 4.2 and 4.4; and to reconsider  
2831 their Guidelines as indicated in Consideration 4.3;

2832 5.2.4 To submit its report on its activities to the churches 6 months prior to the  
2833 convening of the next general synod.

2834

## 2835 **ADOPTED**

2836

## 2837 **Article 90 – Appeals against GS 2022 art. 108 dec. 3.5: Successive Committee Terms**

### 2838 **1. Material**

2839 1.1 Appeal of Ancaster CanRC against the decision of GS 2022 art. 108 (8.6.10).

2840 1.2 Glanbrook’s “overture” regarding GS 2022 art. 108 (8.4.5).

2841 1.3 Letter from Attercliffe expressing support for Glanbrook’s overture (8.5.2.1).

### 2842 **2. Admissibility**

2843 2.1 The appeal from the Ancaster CanRC is admissible as it is an appeal of a decision of a  
2844 general synod and was received prior to the deadline.

2845 2.2 The “overture” from the Glanbrook CanRC is, in effect, an appeal of GS 2022 art. 108  
2846 and, since it was received on time, is thus admissible.

2847 2.3 The letter from Attercliffe comments on the matter raised by Glanbrook. Because  
2848 Glanbrook’s submission is essentially an appeal, such a submission ought not to have  
2849 been available for comment by the churches. Hence, the letter of Attercliffe is declared  
2850 inadmissible.

### 2851 **3. Observations**

2852 3.1 The Ancaster CanRC appeals GS 2022 art. 108 dec. 3.5, which set the length of  
2853 appointments to the Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) at twelve years (four  
2854 three-year terms), rather than the previously standard nine years (three three-year  
2855 terms).

2856 3.2 Ancaster points out:



- 2857 3.2.1 No reason was given by GS 2022 for the change in term length, either in its  
2858 grounds or in the committee report recommendation.
- 2859 3.2.2 Prior to GS 2022, there was no precedent for a 12-year maximum for committee  
2860 appointments in the Canadian Reformed Churches.
- 2861 3.2.3 GS 1995 (art. 116) established, as a general rule, a maximum term of nine  
2862 consecutive years for synodical committee members, balancing continuity with  
2863 regular turnover.
- 2864 3.3 Ancaster argues that:
- 2865 3.3.1 Decisions of earlier synods should be respected unless compelling reasons are  
2866 provided for change;
- 2867 3.3.2 In this case, no compelling reason was offered to justify departing from the nine-  
2868 year standard.
- 2869 3.4 Ancaster requests that GS 2025:
- 2870 3.4.1 Rescind GS 2022 art. 108 dec. 3.5;
- 2871 3.4.2 Reinstate the maximum of three, three-year terms (totaling nine years) for  
2872 appointments to the CER, in line with GS 1995.
- 2873 3.5 The Glanbrook CanRC shares the same basic concerns as Ancaster but adds the  
2874 following points:
- 2875 3.5.1 The committee appears to have recommended an increase of term length based in  
2876 part on a suggestion from only one other federation;
- 2877 3.5.2 The concern of a 12-year term was noted as a concern by some churches writing to  
2878 GS 2022 but “Synod did not interact with this concern.”;
- 2879 3.5.3 While personal relations of committee members with their counterparts is  
2880 important, “these personal relations, however, must always remain subservient to  
2881 the ecclesiastical relations themselves.” The potential is there over a longer span of  
2882 time that such personal familiarity actually “gets in the way” of ecclesiastical  
2883 relations.

#### 2884 **4. Considerations**

- 2885 4.1 Concerning Synodical Continuity and Authority:
- 2886 4.1.2 GS 1995 decided to a nine-year maximum for committee appointments to promote  
2887 both stability and healthy turnover.
- 2888 4.1.3 CO art. 31 requires respect for settled and binding decisions unless proven to be in  
2889 conflict with Scripture, the Church Order, or unless causing evident harm.
- 2890 4.1.4 GS 2022 did not provide any grounds or rationale for altering the standard to  
2891 twelve years and thus failed to meet the necessary threshold for changing  
2892 established practice.
- 2893 4.2 Concerning Transparency and Responsibility:
- 2894 4.2.1 Significant changes to standing rules or practices should be made with clear,  
2895 public reasoning.
- 2896 4.2.2 The absence of any recorded justification for extending committee terms  
2897 undermines good order and transparency in church governance.

- 2898 4.3 Concerning Good Governance Principles:
- 2899 4.3.1 Nine years already represents a significant period of service.
- 2900 4.3.2 As the Glanbrook CanRC states, a longer term runs the risk of personal relations  
2901 getting in the way of ecclesiastical relations. It also reduces opportunities for  
2902 broader participation in church governance, and diminishes the benefit of fresh  
2903 perspectives.
- 2904 4.3.3 Regular turnover helps maintain accountability, energy, and responsiveness within  
2905 committees.
- 2906 4.4 Concerning the Proper Response to Appeals:
- 2907 4.4.1 The appeal of the Ancaster CanRC rests on a previous synodical decision and  
2908 highlights real procedural deficiencies.
- 2909 4.4.2 Upholding the appeal will correct an irregular decision and restore coherence to  
2910 the church's standard practices.
- 2911 4.5 Because the CER was counting on a twelve-year term as per GS 2022, an immediate  
2912 application of the nine-year term limit would be very disruptive to the committee's  
2913 work due to a large number of immediate retirements that would need to take place. For  
2914 this reason, the CER should be exempt from the nine year limit until the next general  
2915 synod. This should be sufficient time for the CER to internally work out an equitable  
2916 retirement schedule and plan for continuity within the nine-year term limit.

## 2917 **5. Recommendations**

2918 That Synod decide:

- 2919 5.1 To uphold the appeal of the Ancaster CanRC and the appeal of the Glanbrook CanRC  
2920 regarding GS 2022 art. 108 and thus return to the decision of GS 1995 art. 116;
- 2921 5.2 To not apply the nine-year limit to the appointments to be made by this Synod to the  
2922 CER;
- 2923 5.3 To mandate the CER to work out an equitable retirement schedule and plan for  
2924 continuity within a nine-year term limit, to be sent to the churches as part of their report  
2925 at least six months in advance of the next general synod.

2926

2927 A motion to divide the question into voting on 5.1 and 5.2-3 separately was duly moved and  
2928 seconded. This motion to divide was DEFEATED.

2929

2930 The proposal as presented above was then

2931 **ADOPTED**

2932

## 2933 **Article 91 – Point of order**

2934 The Synod Executive was requested to propose to the body how the Guidelines for General  
2935 Synods should be changed to make clear that letters sent to a general synod in response to reports  
2936 and overtures should, prior to that synod, only be available to those who are delegated to that  
2937 synod.

2938

2939 **Article 92 – Appeal against RSW 2022 art. 12: In-person Worship**

2940 **1. Material**

2941 1.1 Appeal of A. & D. Doornbos of the decision of Regional Synod West 2022 (art 12)  
2942 (8.6.9).

2943 **2. Admissibility**

2944 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

2945 Ground: it is an appeal of a decision of a regional synod and was received prior to the  
2946 deadline.

2947 **3. Observations**

2948 3.1 A. and D. Doornbos appeal the decision of Regional Synod West 2022 (art 12) which  
2949 upheld a decision of Classis Alberta denying their appeal against the consistory of the  
2950 Barrhead CanRC.

2951 3.2 The original issue concerns the consistory’s temporary suspension of in-person worship  
2952 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to government health regulations, the  
2953 consistory moved services to a livestream-only format for a limited time and prohibited  
2954 in-person attendance at the church building.

2955 3.3 A. and D. Doornbos assert that:

2956 3.3.1 The consistory acted beyond its authority under CO art. 52 by suspending in-  
2957 person worship.

2958 3.3.2 The decision constituted an unscriptural binding of conscience, since they believed  
2959 God requires physical gathering and that livestreaming cannot fulfill the command  
2960 to worship corporately.

2961 3.3.3 The consistory wrongly prioritized obedience to civil authority over obedience to  
2962 God.

2963 3.3.4 RSW 2022 erred in upholding the consistory’s actions and in failing to recognize  
2964 this as a matter of moral and theological concern.

2965 3.4 RSW 2022 found the appeal admissible but denied it on several grounds, including:

2966 3.4.1 That the consistory acted within its lawful authority under CO art. 52;

2967 3.4.2 That in times of extraordinary circumstances, consistories must make prudential  
2968 judgments for the safety and spiritual care of the flock;

2969 3.4.3 That the appellants had not demonstrated that the consistory’s actions were  
2970 contrary to Scripture or confession;

2971 3.4.4 That while more could have been done pastorally, the decision to suspend in-  
2972 person worship temporarily was not a violation of conscience or of the limits of  
2973 ecclesiastical authority.

2974 **4. Considerations**

2975 4.1 The consistory acted within its lawful ecclesiastical authority when it temporarily  
2976 suspended in-person services in response to the government declaring a public health  
2977 emergency. Under CO art. 52, consistories are charged with calling the congregation to  
2978 worship and determining how this is best carried out in specific contexts. In the best

2979 judgment of the consistory, the COVID-19 pandemic and related government health  
2980 regulations constituted an extraordinary circumstance requiring prudential judgment.

2981 4.2 The decision to suspend in-person services was a temporary and circumstantial measure.  
2982 The consistory did not deny the biblical necessity of corporate worship but sought,  
2983 under exceptional conditions, to continue the ministry of the Word in the best way it  
2984 could at the time.

2985 4.3 The claim that the consistory bound the conscience of the appellants is not  
2986 substantiated. In Reformed ethics, the binding of conscience occurs when human  
2987 authorities impose practices in worship that are not grounded in Scripture and require  
2988 them as necessary acts of obedience to God (cf. Belgic Confession art. 32). In this case,  
2989 the consistory did not command anything contrary to God’s Word, nor did it elevate  
2990 livestream worship to a normative or divinely required practice. Rather, it made a  
2991 temporary and prudential decision, under extraordinary public health circumstances, to  
2992 suspend physical gatherings for a limited time. Examples of such exceptions to the  
2993 ordinary application of God’s law are found in Holy Scripture (see, e.g. 1 Samuel 21:1-  
2994 6; 2 Chronicles 30:18-20). The decision of the consistory to temporarily suspend  
2995 corporate, in-person worship did not deny or redefine the biblical obligation of  
2996 corporate worship, but sought to uphold it in a constrained form during a time of  
2997 emergency. While the appellants experienced the suspension as a burden on their  
2998 conscience, the consistory neither denied the biblical mandate to gather nor prohibited  
2999 future gathering beyond necessity. Therefore, no actual binding of conscience, in the  
3000 Reformed or confessional sense, took place.

3001 **5. Recommendation**

3002 That Synod decide:

3003 5.1 To deny the appeal of A. and D. Doornbos.

3004

3005 **ADOPTED**

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3007 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 6 — Evening Session**  
**Monday, May 12, 2025**

**Article 93 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 7:00pm. The Chairman extended a welcome to all present in the building. He had the meeting sing Hymn 84. He observed all synod members were present. He spoke some words of farewell to a fraternal delegate that would be leaving soon.

**Article 94 – Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2025: CO art. 55 (Songs)**

Committee 1 presented draft 2 of a report on Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2024 re CO art. 55. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 95 – Overture RSE 2024: Adding a Footnote to the Apostles’ Creed**

Committee 3 presented draft 2 of a report on an overture re Adding a Footnote to the Apostles’ Creed. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 96 – Overtures RSE 2024: CO art. 49, 44, 47 (Delegation to General Synod)**

Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on overtures RSE 2024 re CO art. 49 (& 44, 47). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 97 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 142: Days of Commemoration**

Committee 5 presented draft 2 of a report on an appeal against GS 2022 art. 142 regarding Days of Commemoration (CO art. 53). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 98 – Appeal against GS 2019 art. 23 & GS 2022 art. 120 dec. 3.8.1: Lord’s Supper Forms**

Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal against GS 2019 art. 23 & GS 2022 art. 120 dec. 3.8.1 regarding shorter Lord’s Supper Forms. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 99 – Closing Devotions**

Rev. Joe Poppe read Acts 15:1-2, 22-29 and led in prayer, remembering the FRCA and FRCSA. The day was closed with the singing of Psalm 16:1,3.

*Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 7 — Morning Session  
Tuesday, May 13, 2025**

**Article 100 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 125, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 125. He observed all synod members were present, except Elder Andy Jairam, who was absent with notification until this afternoon. A welcome was extended to a newly arrived fraternal observer.

**Article 101 – Adoption of acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 102 – HRC – Fraternal Observer Address**

Rev. Marc Jagt introduced Rev. John Procee, credentialed delegate of the Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC). Rev. Procee addressed Synod and provided an overview of the HRC. He expressed gratitude for our relationship. The full text of his address can be found in Appendix 16. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 103 – CNST / CNSF (Needy Students of Theology)**

Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the CNST / CNSF report. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 104 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 60 & 81**

Synod went into closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 2 of a report on an appeal against GS 2022 art. 60 & 81. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 105 – CONFIDENTIAL – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.4**

Synod continued in closed session.

*As per GS 2025 art. 189.1, this act is not being made public.*

**Article 106 – CONFIDENTIAL – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.2**

Synod continued in closed session.

*As per GS 2025 art. 189.1, this act is not being made public.*

**Article 107 – CONFIDENTIAL – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.5**

Synod continued in closed session.

Committee 4 presented draft 1 of a report on a personal appeal, agenda item 8.6.8.5. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

Synod returned to open session.

3086

3087 **Article 108 – ERQ (Reformed Church of Quebec)**

3088 **1. Material**

3089 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 4: Reformed Church of Quebec  
3090 (ERQ) (8.2.10.4).

3091 1.2 Letter from the church at Barrhead (8.3.10.2).

3092 **2. Admissibility**

3093 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

3094 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

3095 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.

3096 Grounds: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

3097 **3. Observations**

3098 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 160) decided:

3099 [3.1] To continue the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed  
3100 Churches in Quebec (ERQ) under the adopted rules;

3101 [3.2] To encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and financially in their  
3102 missionary endeavours and special projects;

3103 [3.3] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

3104 [3.3.1] To maintain contact with the ERQ according to the adopted rules;

3105 [3.3.2] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
3106 next general synod.

3107 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

3108 3.2.1 The ERQ continues to uphold the Reformed confessions and maintains a faithful  
3109 witness in a challenging cultural context;

3110 3.2.2 The CER has maintained contact with the ERQ and attended its synodical  
3111 meetings;

3112 3.2.3 The relationship remains positive and mutually encouraging.

3113 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

3114 3.3.1 To express thankfulness to the Lord for the faithfulness of the Reformed Church of  
3115 Quebec (ERQ);

3116 3.3.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Church  
3117 of Quebec (ERQ) according to the adopted rules;

3118 3.3.3 To continue to encourage the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and  
3119 financially in their missionary endeavours and special projects;

3120 3.3.4 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

3121 3.3.4.1 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the ERQ to the churches 6  
3122 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

3123 3.4 The Barrhead CanRC requests that the CER be mandated to raise the issue of women  
3124 deacons.



3125 **4. Considerations**

- 3126 4.1 The Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) remains a faithful Reformed church with  
3127 whom fellowship is both appropriate and beneficial.
- 3128 4.2 The ERQ appreciates the ongoing contributions from the CanRC both in terms of  
3129 human as well as financial resources.
- 3130 4.3 The Barrhead CanRC neglects GS 2016 art. 59 cons. 3.4 which said “Discussion of  
3131 these issues [i.e. differences that were noted and discussed prior to, but do not hinder,  
3132 EF] may take place naturally in the course of EF, but a specific mandate, identifying  
3133 particular issues, need not be given.”

3134 **5. Recommendations**

3135 That Synod decide:

- 3136 5.1 To express thankfulness to the Lord for the faithfulness of the Reformed Church of  
3137 Quebec (ERQ);
- 3138 5.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Church of  
3139 Quebec (ERQ) according to the adopted rules;
- 3140 5.3 To continue to encourage the churches to support the Reformed Church of Quebec  
3141 (ERQ) prayerfully and financially in their missionary endeavours and special projects;
- 3142 5.4 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3143 5.4.1 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the Reformed Church of  
3144 Quebec (ERQ) to the churches no later than six (6) months prior the convening of  
3145 the next general synod.

3146

3147 **ADOPTED**

3148

3149 **Article 109 – KPCA-K (Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin)**

3150 **1. Material**

- 3151 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 7: Korean Presbyterian Church in  
3152 America – Kosin (KPCA-K) (8.2.10.7).

3153 **2. Admissibility**

- 3154 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
3155 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

3156 **3. Observations**

- 3157 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 163) decided:
- 3158 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3159 [3.1.1] To continue dialogue with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America  
3160 (Kosin) (KPCA-K) where feasible, with a view to getting to know the KPCA-  
3161 K better over time;
- 3162 [3.1.2] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
3163 next general synod.
- 3164 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

- 3165 3.2.1 Geographic presence: The KPCA-K is predominantly located in the USA.  
3166 Currently, their website lists seven congregations in Canada: Toronto (3),  
3167 Waterloo (1), Edmonton (1), and New Westminster/Surrey (2). Some of these  
3168 congregations are quite small;
- 3169 3.2.2 The denomination remains predominantly Korean speaking. However, the CanRC  
3170 has been blessed with the addition of Korean-speaking ministers to our federation,  
3171 which could aid future communication;
- 3172 3.2.3 The KPCA-K is a member church of NAPARC and has close sister-church  
3173 relationships with the KPCK (“mother church” in Korea). Our relationship with  
3174 the KPCK has experienced renewed vigour (see report), which makes renewed  
3175 contact with the KPCA-K here in North America realistic.
- 3176 3.3 The CER recommends:
- 3177 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church in  
3178 America – Kosin (KPCA-K) according to the adopted rules;
- 3179 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3180 3.3.2.1 To convey this decision to the KPCA-K and attempt renewed contact with  
3181 the KPCA-K through the regular NAPARC meetings;
- 3182 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the KPCA-K to the  
3183 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 3184 **4. Considerations**

- 3185 4.1 The CER’s interactions with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America - Kosin  
3186 (KPCA-K) have been positive and constructive.
- 3187 4.2 The KPCA-K is a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
3188 (NAPARC).

#### 3189 **5. Recommendations**

3190 That Synod decide:

- 3191 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Korean Presbyterian Church in America –  
3192 Kosin (KPCA-K) according to the adopted rules;
- 3193 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3194 5.2.1 To convey this decision to the Korean Presbyterian Church in America – Kosin  
3195 (KPCA-K) and attempt renewed contact with the KPCA-K through the regular  
3196 North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) meetings;
- 3197 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the KPCA-K to the churches  
3198 no later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

3199

3200 **ADOPTED**

3201

3202 **Article 110 – KPCK (Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea)**

3203 **1. Material**

3204 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 18: Kosin Presbyterian Church in  
3205 Korea (8.2.10.18).

3206 **2. Admissibility**

3207 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

3208 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

3209 **3. Observations**

3210 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 144) decided:

3211 [3.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Kosin Presbyterian Church in  
3212 Korea (KPCK) under the adopted rules;

3213 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

3214 [3.2.1] To continue to work cooperatively with sister churches in exercising our  
3215 relationship with the KPCK in meaningful ways and to take turns visiting the  
3216 KPCK’s General Assembly;

3217 [3.2.2] To meet with their delegates at the next International Conference of  
3218 Reformed Churches (ICRC);

3219 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
3220 next general synod.

3221 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

3222 3.2.1 The relationship between the KPCK and CanRC has intensified over the last  
3223 several years.

3224 3.2.2 The transition of Rev. Park into a CanRC church went very smoothly.

3225 3.2.3 While the KPCK remains strongly orthodox in confession, the mega-church  
3226 movement has somewhat impacted their ecclesiology. Mega-churches do exist and  
3227 seem to have a strong influence over the direction of the federation.

3228 3.2.4 Many Koreans continue to immigrate to Canada. This has resulted in various  
3229 Korean families seeking membership in local Canadian Reformed Churches.

3230 3.2.5 The KPCK’s growing interaction with the OPC and FRCA, along with the CanRC,  
3231 can serve as a source for mutual blessing and evidence of Christ’s world-wide  
3232 church gathering work.

3233 3.2.6 Discussions have taken place, and will continue at opportune times, on differing  
3234 church polity or practices.

3235 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

3236 3.3.1 To express thankfulness for the new vigour in our relationship;

3237 3.3.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Kosin  
3238 Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK) according to the adopted rules;

3239 3.3.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

- 3240 3.3.3.1 To continue to work cooperatively with sister churches in exercising our  
3241 relationship with the KPCK in meaningful ways and to take turns visiting the  
3242 KPCK's General Assembly;
- 3243 3.3.3.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the KPCK to the churches  
3244 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 3245 **4. Considerations**

- 3246 4.1 The Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK) has shown increased interest in the  
3247 relationship, and we have been blessed by Korean-speaking pastors and church  
3248 members in our midst, e.g. Revs Lee, Park and Shin.
- 3249 4.2 We have a long-standing relationship with the KPCK, they remain faithful to the Word  
3250 of God, and there is a new vigour in our relationship which can be mutually beneficial.
- 3251 4.3 The growing interaction of the KPCK with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)  
3252 and Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), along with the CanRC, is useful in  
3253 exercising our relationship in a cooperative manner.

#### 3254 **5. Recommendations**

3255 That Synod decide:

- 3256 5.1 To express thankfulness for the new vigour in our relationship;
- 3257 5.2 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Kosin Presbyterian  
3258 Church in Korea (KPCK) according to the adopted rules;
- 3259 5.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3260 5.3.1 To continue to work cooperatively with sister churches, namely the Orthodox  
3261 Presbyterian Church (OPC) and Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), in  
3262 exercising our relationship with the Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK)  
3263 in meaningful ways and to take turns with them visiting the KPCK's General  
3264 Assembly;
- 3265 5.3.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the KPCK to the churches no  
3266 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 3267 **ADOPTED**

#### 3270 **Article 111 – URCNA (United Reformed Churches in North America)**

3271 Committee 2 presented draft 2 of a report on the CER Report 13: United Reformed Churches in  
3272 North America (URCNA). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for  
3273 further consideration.

#### 3274 **Article 112 – FCS (Free Church of Scotland)**

##### 3275 **1. Material**

- 3276 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 21: Free Church of Scotland (FCS)  
3277 (8.2.10.21).
- 3278 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Glanbrook (Trinity) (8.3.10.27).
- 3279

3280 **2. Admissibility**

3281 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

3282 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

3283 **3. Observations**

3284 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 134) decided:

3285 [3.1] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Free Church  
3286 of Scotland (FCS) under the adopted rules.

3287 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER).

3288 [3.2.1] To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at  
3289 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and  
3290 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches)

3291 [3.2.2] To send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years.

3292 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the  
3293 next general synod.

3294 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

3295 3.2.1 The FCS is very focused and intent on sharing the gospel throughout Scotland;

3296 3.2.2 For various reasons, relationships with other churches outside the country does not  
3297 appear to be a priority currently;

3298 3.2.3 Discussions will continue at opportune times on differing church polity or  
3299 practices. It will be appropriate to carefully observe how the FCS continues to  
3300 honor its historical legacy by remaining faithful to their confessions and church  
3301 order. It will be good to learn from their struggles in a similar secularized context.

3302 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

3303 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category B with the Free Church of  
3304 Scotland (FCS) according to the adopted rules;

3305 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

3306 3.3.2.1 To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at  
3307 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and  
3308 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches);

3309 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FCS to the churches 6  
3310 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

3311 3.4 The Glanbrook (Trinity) CanRC raises a concern that the FCS maintains a relationship  
3312 with the GKv (now NGK) and the CER does not address this.

3313 **4. Considerations**

3314 4.1 As far as can be determined, the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) continues to display the  
3315 marks of a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Although the distances are great,  
3316 financial costs are substantial, and there has been limited contact and interaction since a  
3317 relationship was established, it is appropriate to continue the relationship with the FCS  
3318 as Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B.

3319 4.2 With increased globalization, it is good to have interactions with the FCS to learn from  
3320 their struggles in a similar secularized context. Continued contact can be experienced in  
3321 bilateral exchanges in settings other than FCS General Assemblies.

3322 4.3 The concern of the Glanbrook (Trinity) CanRC is valid, however, the FCS's continuing  
3323 relationship with the Reformed Churches in the Netherland – liberated (GKv) (now  
3324 NGK) is not an endorsement, but a result of a preoccupation with the Scottish context.  
3325 Their ecumenical contact committee has acknowledged that it would be appropriate to  
3326 take another look at their various relations and probably recategorize some churches.

## 3327 **5. Recommendations**

3328 That Synod decide:

3329 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B with the Free Church of  
3330 Scotland (FCS) according to the adopted rules;

3331 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

3332 5.2.1 Raise concerns with the Free Church of Scotland (FCS) regarding its ongoing  
3333 relationship with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) (GKv)  
3334 (now NGK);

3335 5.2.2 To continue personal contact with the FCS whenever that is feasible (e.g., at  
3336 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and  
3337 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches) and express our desire to  
3338 intensify our relationship;

3339 5.2.3 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FCS to the churches no  
3340 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

3341

## 3342 **ADOPTED**

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## 3344 **Article 113 – FCC (Free Church of Scotland (Continuing))**

### 3345 **1. Material**

3346 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 22: Free Church of Scotland  
3347 (Continuing) (FCC) (8.2.10.22).

### 3348 **2. Admissibility**

3349 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

3350 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

### 3351 **3. Observations**

3352 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 135) decided:

3353 [3.1] To continue the relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Free Church  
3354 of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) under the adopted rules.

3355 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER).

3356 [3.2.1] To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is feasible (e.g., at  
3357 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and  
3358 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches).



- 3359 [3.2.2] To send a delegation to their assemblies at least once every three years.  
3360 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the  
3361 next general synod.
- 3362 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 3363 3.2.1 FCC continues to monitor developments in The Netherlands with a particular  
3364 focus on the Christian Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (CGKN);
- 3365 3.2.2 The FCC commissioners informally indicated it is not likely that our relationship  
3366 can be expected to intensify. They wondered whether continuing the triennial  
3367 visitation protocol was a stewardly use of our financial resources. Nonetheless,  
3368 they are very appreciative of the role that CanRC has played at the ICRC and look  
3369 forward to dialoguing with us again in future ICRC meetings;
- 3370 3.2.3 The FCC is thankful for the rich ecclesiastical heritage they have been given and  
3371 has a strong desire to pass that very heritage on to the next generation. It will be  
3372 good for us to continue in relationship with them as they navigate their way  
3373 forward in such a challenging context.
- 3374 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:
- 3375 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category B with the Free Church of  
3376 Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) according to the adopted rules;
- 3377 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3378 3.3.2.1 To continue personal contact with the FCC whenever that is feasible (e.g., at  
3379 meetings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and  
3380 mutual presence at assemblies of sister-churches);
- 3381 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FCC to the churches 6  
3382 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 3383 **4. Considerations**

- 3384 4.1 As far as can be determined, the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) continues  
3385 to display the marks of a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Although the distances  
3386 are great, financial costs are substantial, and there has been limited contact and  
3387 interaction since a relationship was established, it is appropriate to continue the  
3388 relationship with the FCS as Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B.
- 3389 4.2 With increased globalization, it is good to have interactions with the FCC to learn from  
3390 their struggles in a similar secularized context. Continued contact can be experienced in  
3391 bilateral exchanges in settings other than FCC General Assemblies.

#### 3392 **5. Recommendations**

3393 That Synod decide:

- 3394 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B with the Free Church of  
3395 Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) according to the adopted rules;
- 3396 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 3397 5.2.1 To continue personal contact with the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)  
3398 (FCC) whenever that is feasible (e.g., at meetings of the International Conference



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3399 of Reformed Churches (ICRC), and mutual presence at assemblies of sister-  
3400 churches) and express our desire to intensify our relationship;  
3401 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FCC to the churches no  
3402 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.  
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3404 **ADOPTED**

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3406 *Synod was adjourned.*

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**Day 7 — Evening Session**  
**Tuesday, May 13, 2025**

**Article 114 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session at 7:00pm. The Chairman extended a welcome to all present in the building. He had the meeting sing Hymn 77. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 115 – Overtures RSE 2024 and RSW 2025 re CO art. 55 (Songs)**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Overture re: CO art. 55 from RSE 2024, forwarded by Classis Central Ontario and originating from the Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC (8.4.2.2).
- 1.2 Overture re: CO art. 55 from RSW 2024 (Classis Pacific West), submitted by the Langley CanRC (8.4.3.2).
- 1.3 Overture re: CO art. 55 from RSW 2024 (Classis Pacific East), submitted by the Aldergrove CanRC (8.4.3.3).
- 1.4 Letters from the following churches: Abbotsford (Pathway) (8.5.5.1) Ancaster (8.5.5.2, 8.5.5.3, 8.5.5.4, 8.5.5.5, 8.5.5.6, 8.5.5.7, 8.5.5.8), Arthur (8.5.5.9), Attercliffe (8.5.5.10), Barrhead (8.5.5.11), Brampton (Grace) (8.5.5.12), Burlington (Fellowship) (8.5.5.13), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.5.5.14), Caledonia (8.5.5.15, 8.5.5.16, 8.5.5.17), Calgary (8.5.5.18, 8.5.5.19, 8.5.5.20), Carman East (8.5.5.21, 8.5.5.22, 8.5.5.23), Carman West (8.5.5.24, 8.5.5.25), Chilliwack (8.5.5.26), Coaldale (8.5.5.27, 8.5.5.28, 8.5.5.29), Dunnville East (8.5.5.30), Dunnville West (8.5.5.31), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.5.5.32), Edmonton (Providence) (8.5.5.33), Elm Creek (8.5.5.34, 8.5.5.35), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.5.5.36), Fergus North (8.5.5.37, 8.5.5.38, 8.5.5.39), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.5.5.40), Grand Rapids (8.5.5.41), Grand Valley (8.5.5.42), Grassie (Covenant) (8.5.5.43, 8.5.5.44, 8.5.5.45), Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.5.5.46), Guelph (Living Word) (8.5.5.47), Hamilton (Cornerstone) (8.5.5.48, 8.5.5.49, 8.5.5.50), Hamilton (Providence) (8.5.5.51), Houston (8.5.5.52, 8.5.5.53, 8.5.5.54), Lincoln (Vineyard) (8.5.5.55), Kerwood (Grace) (8.5.5.56), London (Pilgrim) (8.5.5.57), Lynden (8.5.5.58, 8.5.5.59, 8.5.5.60), Neerlandia (8.5.5.61), Niagara South (8.5.5.62, 8.5.5.63), Nooksack Valley (8.5.5.64), Orangeville (8.5.5.65), Ottawa (Jubilee) (8.5.5.66), Owen Sound (8.5.5.67), Sardis (8.5.5.68), Smithers [and Prince George (Messiah)] (8.5.5.69), Smithville (8.5.5.70), St. Albert (8.5.5.71, 8.5.5.72, 8.5.5.73), Toronto (Bethel) (8.5.5.74), Vernon (8.5.5.75), Willoughby Heights (8.5.5.76), Winnipeg (Grace) (8.5.5.77), Yarrow (8.5.5.78).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The overtures were declared admissible.  
Grounds: They were submitted by regional synods and were received on time.
- 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.  
Grounds: They interact with overtures submitted to this general synod and were received on time.
- 2.3 Although this matter was dealt with before at GS 2010 Reports vol 1 pp 136-144 (Proposed Joint Church Order (PJCO)); RSE 2018 art. 8; GS 2019 art. 130 as an appeal

3451 against the decision of RSE 2018, Synod notes that the PJCO and its supporting reports  
3452 have only been provisionally adopted (GS 2010) and are not in effect since we have not  
3453 achieved federative unity. Also, in its decision, GS 2019 art. 130 cons. 4.1, 4.2. put the  
3454 onus on the appellant to make historical arguments part of any future submission. GS  
3455 2019 also considered that this matter should be dealt with by way of an overture and not  
3456 an appeal. The current overture re: CO art. 55 (RSE 2024) includes extensive historical  
3457 arguments and has come to Synod as an overture, not an appeal.

### 3458 **3. Observations**

#### 3459 3.1 Overture to GS 2025 by RSE 2024:

3460 To amend CO art. 55 as follows:

3461 “In the churches, the 150 psalms and hymns approved by Synod shall be sung in  
3462 public worship. Hymns and alternate psalm renditions that faithfully reflect the  
3463 teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity may be sung in  
3464 public worship, provided they are approved by the Consistory.”

3465 RSE also included the following recommendations with their overture:

3466 3.1.1 That the proposed revision of CO Art. 55 include a provision that articulates the  
3467 historic emphasis of the principal place of the Psalms in corporate worship.

3468 3.1.2 That the proposed revision of CO Art. 55 include a clause directing local churches  
3469 to seek concurring advice at Classis before incorporating songs in the worship  
3470 service that are not approved by General Synod.

#### 3471 3.2 Overture to GS 2025 by RSW 2024 (CPE):

3472 To amend CO Art. 55 as follows:

3473 General Synod shall adopt metrical versions of the Psalms and shall approve Hymns for  
3474 inclusion in a song book. These Psalms and Hymns, together with their melodies, shall  
3475 have the principal place in the song of the church as it gathers for corporate worship."

#### 3476 3.3 Overture to GS 2025 by RSW 2024 (CPW):

3477 To amend CO Art. 55 as follows:

3478 The metrical Psalms adopted by general synod as well as hymns that faithfully and  
3479 fully reflect the teaching of the Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity,  
3480 and are approved by the consistory, shall be sung in the worship services.

3481 3.4 All three overtures propose that local consistories be given discretion to approve  
3482 additional songs for public worship, while retaining the *Book of Praise*.

3483 3.5 The overtures differ in wording but share a common intent: to assert the authority of the  
3484 consistory (local elders) over the song of the church. The RSE overture emphasizes the  
3485 biblical primacy of consistory's authority; RSW (CPE) proposes the *Book of Praise*  
3486 retain the “principal place” while allowing local additions; and RSW (CPW)  
3487 emphasizes that hymns need to be in harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the  
3488 Three Forms of Unity.

#### 3489 3.6. From RSE 2024 Overture (8.4.2.2), the following:

3490 3.6.1 The original overture proposes that the current wording of CO art. 55 be changed  
3491 to reflect the responsibility of the local consistory to safeguard the doctrine of the  
3492 church, to return to the historic practice of the Reformed churches, to reflect the

- 3493 church polity in many of our sister churches, and to respect the particular  
3494 challenges, demands and context of the local churches and church plants.
- 3495 3.6.2 The original overture provides the following grounds to recommend a change to  
3496 CO Art. 55.
- 3497 **3.6.2.1. To reflect the responsibility of the local consistory to safeguard the**  
3498 **doctrine of the church:**
- 3499 3.6.2.1.1 The objective of this overture is to demonstrate that the local consistory  
3500 has the primary authority and biblical responsibility for safeguarding  
3501 the doctrinal integrity of the teaching, preaching and singing in the local  
3502 church, and not to discuss which body has the greater ability.
- 3503 3.6.2.1.2 The wording of CO Art. 55 gives Synod an authority over the local  
3504 consistory that, biblically speaking, does not rightfully belong to it.
- 3505 3.6.2.1.3 According to Scripture, local elders are expected to safeguard the  
3506 doctrine of the church as men who must give an account to God  
3507 (Titus 1:9, 1 Timothy 3:2, Hebrews 13:17).
- 3508 3.6.2.1.4 The biblical responsibility for doctrinal faithfulness does certainly  
3509 include oversight over the doctrinal integrity of the songs sung in  
3510 corporate worship.
- 3511 **3.6.2.2 To return to the historic practice of the Reformed Churches:**
- 3512 3.6.2.2.1 The current wording of CO Art. 55 does not reflect the historic practice  
3513 of the church.
- 3514 3.6.2.2.2 From the mid-1500s to the 1930s, Reformed synods defended and  
3515 upheld the primary authority and biblical responsibility of the local  
3516 elders over the congregational worship and singing.
- 3517 3.6.2.2.3 These assemblies favoured exclusive Psalm singing, while consistently  
3518 recognizing the freedom of local consistories to determine which  
3519 melodies and rhymings of the psalms were sung.
- 3520 3.6.2.2.4 It was not until the Synod of Middleburg 1933 that the Church Order  
3521 was amended to include the language “approved by Synod.” Over time  
3522 the concept of synodical approval began to take root and was applied  
3523 not only to the adoption of hymns, but also to the melodies and rhyming  
3524 of the psalms used in the churches.
- 3525 **3.6.2.3. To reflect the church polity common in many of our sister churches:**
- 3526 3.6.2.3.1. The RCUS, the URCNA, and the OPC in their church orders or  
3527 directories continue to maintain the historic Reformed position that  
3528 recognizes the primary authority and biblical responsibility of the local  
3529 consistory with respect to songs sung in public worship.
- 3530 3.6.2.3.2 The practice of our sister churches has not compromised their doctrinal  
3531 integrity or the faithfulness of the songs sung in public worship.
- 3532 3.6.2.3.3 The proposed revision to CO Art. 55 would allow the Canadian  
3533 Reformed Churches to return to biblical and historical principles of  
3534 Reformed church polity consistent with our sister churches.
- 3535 3.6.2.3.4 The proposed revision would overcome obstacles to close formal unity.

- 3536 3.6.2.4. **The particular challenges, demands and context presented by the**  
3537 **overture:**
- 3538 3.6.2.4.1 By modifying the wording of CO Art. 55, the Church Order would  
3539 recognize the particular challenges faced by churches and church plants  
3540 who may be ministering in a context that would benefit from the  
3541 freedom to select certain songs outside of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3542 3.6.2.4.2 When the Canadian Reformed Churches were first established in  
3543 Canada, they wanted their worship to be understandable and accessible  
3544 within the broader North American context.
- 3545 3.6.2.4.3 GS 1965 specifically stated that the deputies for an English Calvinistic  
3546 Psalter “not be restricted to Genevan tunes but be authorised to use  
3547 other melodies which are in harmony with the purpose of  
3548 congregational singing in the church service.”
- 3549 3.6.2.4.4 In their report to GS 1968, the deputies responded by stating that they  
3550 had chosen not to avail themselves of the freedom given by GS 1965 to  
3551 consider non-Genevan melodies.
- 3552 3.6.2.4.5 Despite the repeated concerns raised by subsequent synods, the deputies  
3553 were determined to press forward with an exclusive Genevan Psalter.
- 3554 3.6.2.4.6 The concerns brought forward by the first synods remain as valid today  
3555 as when they were first raised, particularly in the setting of church  
3556 plants and mission settings.
- 3557 3.6.2.4.7 These concerns are increasingly felt by Canadian Reformed Churches  
3558 who are striving to share the gospel in major urban city centres.
- 3559 3.6.2.4.8 The current process of seeking synodical approval is tedious and overly  
3560 complicated.
- 3561 3.6.2.4.9 These concerns have led the Burlington-Fellowship consistory to  
3562 supplement their worship by allowing the selection of faithful, biblical  
3563 psalms and hymns better known in our North American context to be  
3564 used as “gathering” and “parting” songs.
- 3565 3.6.3 In addition, RSE 2024 made the following observations and considerations about  
3566 the original overture:
- 3567 3.6.3.1 RSE 2024 notes that each consistory has previously voluntarily exercised this  
3568 authority by deciding to cooperate with other churches in this matter by way  
3569 of the Church Order, including CO Art. 55.
- 3570 3.6.3.2 RSE 2024 believes that although the local elders are expected to have the  
3571 ability and are given the primary authority and biblical responsibility over  
3572 matters of corporate worship, this authority is best exercised by seeking the  
3573 wisdom of many counsellors (Prov 11:14, 15:22) by directing local churches  
3574 to seek concurring advice at Classis before incorporating songs into the  
3575 worship service.
- 3576 3.6.3.3 RSE 2024 agrees with the original overture that prior to 1933, local churches  
3577 had some freedom to choose between collections of psalms. Historically,  
3578 Synods have regulated the source texts (the 150 Psalms, various parts of  
3579 scripture, the creeds) but not the versifications or melodies.

- 3580 3.6.3.4 RSE 2024 would like GS 2025 to include a provision that emphasizes the  
3581 principal place of the Psalms in corporate worship.
- 3582 3.6.3.5 RSE 2024 recognizes that uniformity is not the same as the spiritual unity  
3583 that we enjoy in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (Revelation 7:9).
- 3584 3.6.3.6 RSE 2024 acknowledges the particular challenges faced by various churches  
3585 in their local context (church plants, diverse ethnic backgrounds, different  
3586 languages).
- 3587 3.6.3.7 RSE 2024 acknowledges that while the biblical faithfulness of the Anglo-  
3588 Genevan Psalter is respected, the tunes are not universally appreciated.
- 3589 3.7 From the RSW 2024 (Classis Pacific East) Overture (8.4.3.2), the following:
- 3590 3.7.1 RSW notes that from the beginning of their history, the Reformed churches of The  
3591 Netherlands and the Canadian Reformed churches have both considered the song  
3592 of the church a matter to be dealt with by the churches in common.
- 3593 3.7.2 RSW argues that the assumption that the song of the churches should be regulated  
3594 by the broader assemblies has not been critically examined.
- 3595 3.7.3 **RSW presented the following arguments for a common song book:**
- 3596 3.7.3.1 Having a *Book of Praise* approved by the General Synod may act as a  
3597 unifying force among the Canadian Reformed churches.
- 3598 3.7.3.2 Restricting the song of the churches to a fixed collection may contribute to  
3599 familiarity and excellence in singing.
- 3600 3.7.3.3 Having a synodically approved *Book of Praise* may provide a layer of  
3601 protection against hymns or other songs which may degrade the churches  
3602 because of deficiencies in their teaching/content or in their musical style.
- 3603 3.7.3.4 Restricting the number of hymns and other songs will likely lead to greater  
3604 familiarity with the Psalms.
- 3605 3.7.4 **RSW noted the following difficulties related to CO art. 55**
- 3606 3.7.4.1 Limiting the singing of the Psalms to settings with Genevan melodies seems  
3607 needlessly restrictive, especially in this time of increasing multiculturalism  
3608 and ecclesiastical connectivity.
- 3609 3.7.4.2 The current application of CO Art. 55 limits connectivity with North  
3610 American sister churches in congregational singing, creating a degree of  
3611 isolation.
- 3612 3.7.4.3 CO Art. 55 (and the corresponding PJCO article) might be a stumbling block  
3613 to federative unity with the URCNA.
- 3614 3.7.4.4 CO Art. 55 prevents the singing in corporate worship of many excellent,  
3615 biblically grounded, and well-known hymns and Christian songs.
- 3616 3.7.4.5 Restricting the song of the church to the Genevan Psalms and a relatively  
3617 small list of hymns approved by General Synod could make it more difficult  
3618 for people coming to the Canadian Reformed churches from other Christian  
3619 backgrounds.



- 3620 3.7.4.6 Restricting the churches to singing Psalms only with Genevan melodies may  
3621 be hindering the broader use of the Psalms in corporate worship. There are  
3622 psalms which are rarely sung because of difficulty with the Genevan melody.
- 3623 3.7.4.7 Local elders should be seen as capable of establishing guidelines for the  
3624 approval of songs for corporate worship. Leaving such matters largely to a  
3625 General Synod may discourage a strong sense of local responsibility for the  
3626 worship of the church.
- 3627 3.7.4.8 Because of the diverse membership and missional goals of some of our  
3628 churches, there should be greater local freedom in the choice of songs.
- 3629 3.7.4.9 The *Book of Praise* should not be a stumbling block for receiving other  
3630 churches into our federation (for example: Sudanese, Chinese, or Korean  
3631 churches).
- 3632 3.7.4.10 Our current process of seeking to have new songs included in a synodically  
3633 approved songbook is tedious and cost-prohibitive.
- 3634 **3.7.5 RSW listed the practices of some of our North American sister churches**
- 3635 3.7.5.1 Churches such as the RCUS, OPC, and URCNA do not mandate synodically-  
3636 limited collections of metrical Psalms and Hymns.
- 3637 3.7.5.1.1 The Constitution of the RCUS does not contain any mandates for the  
3638 song of the church. The RCUS Directory for Public Worship states:  
3639 "Since the metrical versions of the Psalms are based upon the Word of  
3640 God, they ought to be used frequently in public worship. Great care  
3641 must be taken to ensure that all the materials of song are in complete  
3642 accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture. The tunes as well as the  
3643 words should be dignified and Public Worship elevated. The stately  
3644 rhythm of the chorales is especially appropriate for public worship."
- 3645 3.7.5.1.2 Article 39 of the Church Order of the United Reformed Churches of  
3646 North America stipulates the following: "Psalms and Hymns. The 150  
3647 Psalms shall have the principal place in the singing of the churches.  
3648 Hymns which faithfully and fully reflect the teaching of the Scripture as  
3649 expressed in the Three Forms of Unity may be sung, provided they are  
3650 approved by the Consistory."
- 3651 3.7.5.1.3 In its Directory for the Public Worship of God, the OPC specifies the  
3652 following for the guidance of the churches: (1) Congregations do well  
3653 to sing the metrical versions or other musical settings of the Psalms  
3654 frequently in public worship. Congregations also do well to sing hymns  
3655 of praise that respond to the full scope of divine revelation. (2) In the  
3656 choice of song for public worship, great care must be taken that all the  
3657 materials of song are fully in accord with the Scriptures. The words are  
3658 to be suitable for the worship of God and the tunes are to be appropriate  
3659 to the meaning of the words and to the occasion of public worship. Care  
3660 should be taken to the end that the songs chosen will express those  
3661 specific truths and sentiments which are appropriate at the time of their  
3662 use in the worship service.



- 3663 3.7.5.2 RSW noted that among our sister churches in North America, there is no  
3664 evidence to suggest that the freedom the local churches enjoy in choosing  
3665 songs for worship has led to a decline in Reformed doctrine or life.
- 3666 3.7.6 RSW believes that giving the Psalms and Hymns adopted by general synod the  
3667 “principal place” in the song of the church will serve to maintain unity in public  
3668 worship throughout our federation, while allowing churches which want to include  
3669 some new songs to do so.
- 3670 3.7.7 RSW asserts that their proposal recognizes that the song of the church is a matter  
3671 for the churches in common while leaving room for diversity among the churches.
- 3672 3.7.8 RSW noted that this overture does not address the matter of the Psalms having a  
3673 predominant place in worship.
- 3674 3.8 From RSW 2024 Overture (Classis Pacific West) (8.4.3.3), the following:
- 3675 3.8.1 The overture notes that for fifty years, the metrical psalms adopted by our general  
3676 synods of 1972 and 2014 have been synonymous with the 150 Psalms in the  
3677 Anglo-Genevan Psalter.
- 3678 3.8.2 The overture argues that, given the love that remains for the Anglo-Genevan  
3679 Psalter and the unifying effect it has had, we should take care to ensure our present  
3680 psalter is preserved for the foreseeable future.
- 3681 3.8.3 The overture states that since 1965, the Canadian Reformed churches shifted from  
3682 the original polity of Dort which limited hymns to a small handful of songs of  
3683 scripture as found in the New Testament to also include hymns that are in harmony  
3684 with the Word of God. They believe this shift was warranted in light of the  
3685 apostolic command that the churches *address one another with psalms and hymns*  
3686 *and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart*  
3687 (Ephesians 5:19).
- 3688 3.8.4 The overture provides the following grounds for having consistory approve these  
3689 hymns and spiritual songs instead of General Synod:
- 3690 3.8.4.1 Local elders have oversight over all matters relating to worship, including the  
3691 song of the church.
- 3692 3.8.4.2 Requiring general synod to approve all hymns for worship places an undue  
3693 burden on some local churches and is causing tension within the federation.  
3694 Some churches are seeking more flexibility in song selection due to factors  
3695 like diverse membership, or specific mission goals, leading some to  
3696 reinterpret the “worship service” to only what happens between the greeting  
3697 and the benediction (allowing for ‘gathering’ and ‘sending’ songs). Similarly,  
3698 special days like Good Friday and Christmas are no longer classified as  
3699 worship services, simply to escape the strictures of CO Art. 55.
- 3700 3.8.5 The overture noted that just because some churches will be able to sing other  
3701 hymns if this proposal is adopted, they are by no means required to do so.
- 3702 3.8.6 The overture noted that maintaining the current CO Art. 55 prevents the singing in  
3703 corporate worship of many excellent, biblically grounded and well-known hymns  
3704 and Christian songs.

- 3705 3.8.7 The overture suggests that the addition and subtraction of hymns by General  
3706 Synod from our common songbook (Book of Praise) is not sustainable or fiscally  
3707 responsible.
- 3708 3.8.8 The overture notes that other churches in North America with whom we have  
3709 ecclesiastical fellowship and who have jointly published a psalter-hymnal (the  
3710 Trinity Psalter Hymnal) nevertheless leave the decision of what is sung in the  
3711 churches within the province of the local consistory or session.
- 3712 3.8.9 RSW notes that this overture also does not address the matter of the Psalms having  
3713 a predominant place in worship.
- 3714 3.9 From the letters of the churches concerning all three overtures, the following:
- 3715 3.9.1 **On our current practice:**
- 3716 3.9.1.1 The local consistory has the biblical responsibility and primary authority for  
3717 safeguarding the worship of the local church (Orangeville, Ottawa (Jubilee),  
3718 and others).
- 3719 3.9.1.2 CO art. 55 has been a wise way of organizing and collectively overseeing the  
3720 content of the songs used in the federation (Ancaster, Fergus North, Grand  
3721 Rapids, Hamilton (Cornerstone), Houston, London (Pilgrim), Orangeville, St.  
3722 Albert and more). The Ancaster CanRC maintains that the overtures must  
3723 argue against the wisdom of the article and demonstrate how a change would  
3724 be a better and wiser way to proceed.
- 3725 3.9.1.3 Some churches assert that adopting one of these overtures will render the  
3726 hymn cap established by GS 2004 moot (Kerwood (Grace), Ancaster). The  
3727 Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC believes that the tension and debate around  
3728 the hymn cap would be alleviated and greater unity experienced by adopting  
3729 one of these overtures.
- 3730 3.9.1.4 Some churches note there is no pressure or desire for change or for adding  
3731 more songs (Carman East, Grassie (Covenant)).
- 3732 3.9.1.5 Many churches believe that selection by general synod is a safeguard (Arthur,  
3733 Attercliffe, Barrhead, Calgary, Coaldale, Elm Creek, Fergus (Maranatha),  
3734 Grand Valley, Guelph (Living Word), Lincoln (Vineyard), Lynden,  
3735 Neerlandia, Nooksack Valley).
- 3736 3.9.1.6 Historically, hymn singing has always been governed general synods  
3737 (Orangeville).
- 3738 3.9.1.7 The Dunville East CanRC states that what the church prays (or sings) is what  
3739 the church believes.
- 3740 3.9.1.8 Ancaster argues that the current church order does not have to be changed to  
3741 allow the singing of the psalms to other melodies.
- 3742 3.9.1.9 The Carman West CanRC believes there is no scriptural reason to change CO  
3743 art. 55.
- 3744 3.9.1.10 The Caledonia CanRC states that this is a “matter for the churches in  
3745 common to seek agreement on”.
- 3746 3.9.1.11 Changing CO art. 55 would be a blessing to various churches in multi-  
3747 cultural or multi-lingual settings (Hamilton (Providence), Owen Sound,

- 3748 Toronto (Bethel)). Our current CO art. 55 has hampered mission work  
3749 (Winnipeg (Grace)).
- 3750 3.9.1.12 Other churches are not convinced that there is a cultural barrier (Lynden,  
3751 Orangeville, Willoughby Heights).
- 3752 3.9.1.13 Songs used in worship ought to “faithfully and fully reflect the teaching of  
3753 the Scriptures as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity” (Willoughby  
3754 Heights).
- 3755 **3.9.2 On a common song book:**
- 3756 3.9.2.1 The *Book of Praise* is a unifying force (Arthur, Calgary, Carman West,  
3757 Chilliwack). The churches are mutually edified by having a collective book  
3758 (Caledonia, Hamilton (Cornerstone), Lynden) built on common principles  
3759 and guidelines (Carman East).
- 3760 3.9.2.2 Some churches believe that changing CO art. 55 will cause disunity  
3761 (Chilliwack, St. Albert) or fracture the federation (Grand Rapids, Guelph  
3762 (Living Word), Niagara South, Nooksack Valley, Orangeville, Smithville,  
3763 Yarrow).
- 3764 3.9.2.3 Some churches assert that creating a collection of songs is too big a task for a  
3765 local church (Arthur, Grand Valley).
- 3766 3.9.2.4 Various churches suggest that the Standing Committee for the Publication of  
3767 the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) has more specific expertise (Carman East,  
3768 Chilliwack, Coaldale, Elm Creek, Lynden, Niagara South, Smithville,  
3769 Yarrow and more).
- 3770 3.9.2.5 Some churches (Caledonia, Carman East) agree with RSE regarding the merit  
3771 of working together with common principles and guidelines in the selection  
3772 of songs for worship. The Edmonton (Immanuel) CanRC suggests General  
3773 Synod provide parameters and principles to help guide local consistories in  
3774 the selection of songs for worship.
- 3775 3.9.2.6 The Ancaster CanRC notes that some limit on the number of songs will  
3776 always be placed on the churches, whether in principle or in practice. Also,  
3777 the overtures do not deal with the decision of 2004 re: hymn cap (Ancaster,  
3778 Attercliffe).
- 3779 3.9.2.7 Several churches note that restricting the songs used in worship leads to  
3780 familiarity and enrichment of worship (Arthur, Attercliffe, Lynden,  
3781 Neerlandia).
- 3782 3.9.2.8 The Edmonton (Providence) CanRC agrees with the overtures that changing  
3783 the *Book of Praise* is tedious, while the Carman East CanRC believes that  
3784 having the local church supervise the song of the church would be tedious.  
3785 Some believe change is happening at a slow, deliberate pace (Fergus  
3786 (Maranatha), Lincoln (Vineyard)), while others believe change is happening  
3787 too slowly (Edmonton (Providence)).
- 3788 3.9.2.9 Some churches assert that uniformity of song promotes unity of faith (Fergus  
3789 (Maranatha), Fergus North, Lincoln (Vineyard)). Other churches note that  
3790 unity of faith does not demand uniformity of song (Brampton (Grace), Sardis,

- 3791 Smithers, Toronto (Bethel), Winnipeg (Grace)). We are Canadian Reformed  
3792 out of our desire to be faithful, not out of our desire to be distinct (Smithers).  
3793 Our unity is a unity of faith and faithfulness (Winnipeg (Grace)).
- 3794 3.9.2.10 Various churches speak of the desire to allow freedom of the local church  
3795 (with some sort of oversight) (Hamilton (Providence), Edmonton  
3796 (Providence)) while the *Book of Praise* remains the songbook of the  
3797 Federation (Owen Sound).
- 3798 **3.9.3 On the authority and ability of the local church:**
- 3799 3.9.3.1 Regulating the song of the church via our broadest assembly does not negate  
3800 the primary authority of the local church (Fergus North, Kerwood (Grace),  
3801 Neerlandia). Some churches believe the overtures set up a false dilemma  
3802 between the authority of the local church and the broadest assembly (Lynden,  
3803 Niagara South). Various churches mention that the overture of RSE does not  
3804 recognize that CO art. 76 is not a matter of synod lording it over others but of  
3805 common consent (Attercliffe).
- 3806 3.9.3.2 Churches suggest that elders who supervise the preaching of the Word should  
3807 be capable of ensuring the orthodoxy of the songs of the church (Ottawa  
3808 (Jubilee), Sardis, Guelph (Living Word)).
- 3809 3.9.3.3 The Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC argues that the requirement  
3810 added by RSE 2024 to add approval by classis simply replaces the role of  
3811 General Synod with Classis and thus negates the principle of the authority of  
3812 the local church, integral to the original overture.
- 3813 3.9.3.4 The Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC believes that requiring approval of classis  
3814 for hymns sung in worship could bog down classis and suggests a lack of  
3815 trust. Other churches agree with mandating classical approval (e.g. Hamilton  
3816 (Providence)).
- 3817 3.9.3.5 The Vernon CanRC says the consistory of the local congregation is best  
3818 suited to choose the hymns sung in the local church.
- 3819 3.9.3.6 Some churches note that the overtures appropriately recognize the authority  
3820 of the local consistory (Sardis, Smithers).
- 3821 **3.9.4 On the singing of the psalms:**
- 3822 3.9.4.1 Some churches note that the overtures show no consideration for the principle  
3823 of the predominance of psalm singing (Ancaster, Attercliffe, Caledonia,  
3824 Chilliwack, Coaldale and more).
- 3825 3.9.4.2 Many churches insist that the psalms are to have the principal place (Elm  
3826 Creek, Grand Valley, London (Pilgrim), Owen Sound, and more).  
3827 Historically, the Reformed church has been a predominantly psalm-singing  
3828 church (St. Albert, Willoughby Heights).
- 3829 3.9.4.3 The Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC argues that RSE 2024's  
3830 recommendation to add that "the psalms are to have the principal place in the  
3831 worship of the church" is not germane to the original overture.

- 3832 3.9.4.4 Some churches note that the language of “principal place,” either for the  
3833 psalms or a song book, is imprecise and open to interpretation (Burlington  
3834 Waterdown (Rehoboth), Edmonton (Immanuel)).
- 3835 3.9.4.5 Some churches suggest that singing the psalms would be encouraged if there  
3836 were a variety of melodies available to the churches (Brampton (Grace),  
3837 Fergus North).
- 3838 3.9.4.6 Reformed churches have had the freedom to select alternate renditions of the  
3839 psalms (Burlington (Fellowship)).
- 3840 3.9.4.7 The Dunnville East CanRC wonders if it is appropriate to regulate that the  
3841 majority of the church’s praises should be from the Old Covenant.
- 3842 3.9.4.8 The Guelph (Living Word) CanRC believes that singing more hymns may  
3843 result in less psalm singing.
- 3844 3.9.4.9 The Edmonton (Providence) CanRC asserts there is a shortage of hymns to  
3845 respond fully to the work of our Triune God.
- 3846 **3.9.5 On the Anglo-Genevan Psalter:**
- 3847 3.9.5.1 Some churches state that the Genevan tunes are high quality and well-suited  
3848 for singing the psalms (Carman East, Fergus (Maranatha), Neerlandia).
- 3849 3.9.5.2 The Niagara South CanRC says the Anglo-Genevan psalter has historic and  
3850 traditional significance and changing this practice could erode the shared  
3851 heritage and identity of the federation. Other churches note that while the  
3852 *Book of Praise* is valuable and unique, we ought not to hold it out as a  
3853 cultural distinctive that separates us from other true churches in North  
3854 America (Winnipeg (Grace), Smithers, and more).
- 3855 3.9.5.3 GS 1962 and GS 1965 mandated the deputies for an English Psalter not to  
3856 restrict themselves to the Genevan melodies (Burlington (Fellowship)).
- 3857 3.9.5.4 Some churches share that newcomers find the Genevan tunes a challenge  
3858 (Abbotsford (Pathway), Smithers) while others did not have this experience  
3859 (Willoughby Heights). The difficulty of the Genevan tunes is a subjective  
3860 matter (Grand Rapids).
- 3861 **3.9.6 On other federations with whom we have ecclesiastical fellowship:**
- 3862 3.9.6.1 Some churches assert that changing CO art. 55 is not necessary for federative  
3863 unity (Fergus (Maranatha), Grand Rapids, Lincoln (Vineyard), Lynden),  
3864 while others assert that CO art. 55 in its current form is a barrier (Sardis).
- 3865 3.9.6.2 The Winnipeg (Grace) CanRC notes that our sister churches, the Reformed  
3866 Church in the United States (RCUS), Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC),  
3867 United Reformed Church in North America (URCNA), all recommend the  
3868 use of a synodically sanctioned song book, but none mandate its  
3869 exclusiveness.
- 3870 3.9.6.3 The Kerwood (Grace) CanRC notes that, according to representatives of the  
3871 OPC and URCNA, there are benefits in having a common songbook.



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**3872 4. Considerations**

- 3873 4.1 The song of the church ought to be glorifying to God and in harmony with the Word of  
3874 God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. Scripture, however, does not prescribe  
3875 whether the choosing of songs is to be done by the local consistory or by the churches  
3876 together. There is no scriptural mandate to maintain CO art. 55 as is, nor is there a  
3877 scriptural mandate to change it.
- 3878 4.2 RSE 2024 and RSW 2024 correctly note that consistory has the primary authority,  
3879 biblical responsibility, and oversight over all matters relating to corporate worship  
3880 (Titus 1:9; 1 Timothy 3:2). Churches rightly recognize that elders who supervise the  
3881 preaching of the Word should be capable of ensuring the orthodoxy of the songs of the  
3882 church.
- 3883 4.3 Historically, each consistory has “voluntarily exercised its authority in deciding to  
3884 cooperate with its sister churches by way of the Church Order” (Acts of GS 2022, art.  
3885 110 cons. 4.1.2). In the context of CO art. 55, however, a growing number of churches  
3886 have expressed persistent dissatisfaction with both the pace and scope of the song  
3887 approval process, as well as with the structure of CO art. 55 itself. The volume and  
3888 consistency of recent overtures and letters suggest that a change to CO art. 55 may be  
3889 beneficial (cf. GS 2022, RSW 2021, RSE 2021, GS 2019, RSE 2018, RSW 2018, and  
3890 more). CO art. 76 states that if the interest of the churches demands such, the articles of  
3891 the Church Order may and ought to be changed, augmented, or diminished.
- 3892 4.4 While consistories are given the primary authority and biblical responsibility over  
3893 matters of corporate worship, they can be helped by seeking the wisdom of many  
3894 counsellors (Proverbs 11:14, 15:22). If individual churches feel that they would benefit  
3895 from the advice of neighboring churches or other individuals, they are free to seek it.  
3896 Consistories can also refer to the “Principles and Guidelines for the selection of music  
3897 in the church” found in the *Acts of GS 2004* (Appendix 2B). RSE 2024 and many  
3898 churches (Ancaster, Attercliffe, and more) suggest that consistories seek concurring  
3899 advice at Classis before incorporating additional songs in the worship service. However,  
3900 for many matters governed by the Church Order, the process of mutual oversight  
3901 involves church visitation and appeals to classis. CO art. 46 mandates that church  
3902 visitors are “to inquire whether ... the adopted order is being observed and maintained  
3903 in every respect.” That would apply to CO art. 55 as well.
- 3904 4.5 RSW 2024 notes that from the beginning of their history, the Reformed churches in The  
3905 Netherlands and the Canadian Reformed Churches have both considered the song of the  
3906 church to be a matter to be dealt with by the churches in common. RSW 2024 argues  
3907 that the assumption that the song of the church should be regulated by the churches in  
3908 common has not been critically examined. RSE 2024 correctly observes that, prior to  
3909 1933, consistories had the freedom to choose which psalter to use (melodies, rhymings),  
3910 but they gloss over the fact that general synods significantly restricted which hymns  
3911 could be sung.
- 3912 4.6 It is important for the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches to have a common  
3913 song book (*Book of Praise*) that includes all 150 Psalms as well as hymns approved for  
3914 use in the churches because it serves as a unifying force, it contributes to familiarity and  
3915 excellence in singing, and promotes the foundational role of psalms in the singing of the

- 3916 church. The *Book of Praise* should not be changed frequently because doing so is not  
3917 sustainable or fiscally responsible.
- 3918 4.7 These overtures correctly avoid mentioning the hymn cap, since the hymn cap applied  
3919 only to the work of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*  
3920 (SCBP) in the context of the *Book of Praise*.
- 3921 4.8 RSW correctly notes that for fifty years, the psalms adopted by our general synods have  
3922 been synonymous with the 150 Psalms of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter. Given the love  
3923 that remains for the Anglo-Genevan Psalter and the unifying effect it has had, we should  
3924 take care to ensure our present Psalter is preserved.
- 3925 4.9 Since 1965, the Canadian Reformed Churches shifted from the original church polity of  
3926 Dort, which limited hymns to a small handful of scriptural songs, to include many  
3927 hymns that are in harmony with the Word of God (Ephesians 5:19). There are many  
3928 excellent, biblically grounded, and well-known hymns and Christian songs which could  
3929 be sung in corporate worship that are not part of the *Book of Praise*. The Dunville East  
3930 CanRC correctly states that what the church prays (or sings) is what the church believes.  
3931 Deformation often goes hand-in-hand with a proliferation of unscriptural songs.
- 3932 4.10 The local consistories/sessions of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS),  
3933 the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), and the Orthodox  
3934 Presbyterian Church (OPC) have the freedom to choose songs for worship outside those  
3935 approved by their synods/general assemblies. Many of our sister churches recognize the  
3936 use of a synodically-sanctioned songbook, but most do not mandate its exclusiveness.  
3937 There is no evidence to suggest that the freedom enjoyed by these churches has  
3938 compromised their doctrinal integrity or faithfulness, nor has it led to disunity.
- 3939 4.11 Changing CO art. 55 as proposed might remove a perceived impediment to unity with  
3940 the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). It would also allow for  
3941 joint worship services between federations in special circumstances or for special  
3942 events. It would maintain the freedom currently enjoyed by local churches in the  
3943 URCNA. Synod URCNA 2007 (art. 65 rec. 8) expressed its “strong preference” for the  
3944 version of the PJCO article titled “Psalms and Hymns” which reads: “*The 150 Psalms*  
3945 *shall have the principal place in the singing of the churches. In the worship services, the*  
3946 *congregation shall sing faithful musical renderings of the Psalms, and hymns which*  
3947 *faithfully and fully reflect the teaching of Scripture in harmony with the Three Forms of*  
3948 *Unity, provided they are approved by the consistory in accord with a synodically*  
3949 *adopted standard.*”
- 3950 4.12 Giving a common song book the principal place in the worship of the church serves the  
3951 unity of the federation.
- 3952 4.13 The church of our Lord is made up of people from all tribes and peoples and languages  
3953 (Revelation 7:9). The increasing presence of church plants, ethnic diversity, and even  
3954 different languages used in worship among the Canadian Reformed Churches  
3955 demonstrates the need for local freedom in choosing songs for worship. For example,  
3956 the Toronto (Bethel) CanRC translates sermon summaries into 8 different languages  
3957 each worship service, the Brampton (Grace) CanRC has some members and many  
3958 visitors from an East Indian background, most mission plants have membership from  
3959 diverse cultural backgrounds, some of our churches support outreach in Sudanese,



3960 Korean, Chinese, Urdu, Karen (Myanmar), and other languages within Canada. Some  
3961 established churches have increasing numbers of members who come from non-  
3962 churched or non-Reformed backgrounds. The suggestion that the *Book of Praise* should  
3963 have the principal place in worship may not work in contexts such as these. Singing  
3964 scripturally faithful Psalms and Hymns should produce praise to God. That happens best  
3965 when the words and melodies are accessible and familiar, and the selections which work  
3966 best will vary by congregation. For those reasons, CO art. 55 should include a phrase  
3967 like “as a rule” to make it clear that the *Book of Praise* will usually, but not always,  
3968 have the principal place.

3969 4.14 While for a large part of its history, the Canadian Reformed Churches experienced  
3970 significant uniformity, we are now experiencing greater diversity while remaining  
3971 united. There is a difference between uniformity of practice and unity of faith. We have  
3972 always recognized that our unity is found in our Lord Jesus Christ and is based on the  
3973 Word of God as summarized in the Reformed confessions.

3974 4.15 The Reformed church, from its inception, has been a psalm-singing church and has  
3975 recognized the gift the Triune God has given us in the psalms to richly and deeply praise  
3976 him. Various churches, assemblies, and overtures therefore speak of the primacy or  
3977 principal place of the psalms in corporate worship.

3978 4.16 Some churches, however, question the primacy or principal place of the psalms. The  
3979 Dunville East CanRC notes that RSE 2021 and RSW 2021 denied overtures to amend  
3980 CO art. 55 to include this principle and wonders if it is appropriate that the majority of  
3981 the church’s songs come from the old covenant.

3982 4.17 Dunnville East also asserts that this principle of the primacy of the psalms was stated by  
3983 past assemblies but never substantiated. Various churches argue that the words  
3984 “principal place” in reference to psalm singing sets an arbitrary metric that is essentially  
3985 unenforceable (Hamilton Providence, Guelph Living Word).

3986 4.18 The Willoughby Heights CanRC insists there ought not to be a distinction between the  
3987 psalms and rhymed portions of other scripture passages, and both should be given  
3988 priority.

3989 4.19 The SCBP, in their “Principles and Guidelines for the selection of music in the church”  
3990 GS 2004 (Appendix 2B Guideline 2), describes the psalms as “foundational.” Dunnville  
3991 East proposes that this word “foundational” best describes the place of the psalms in the  
3992 corporate worship of the church.

3993 4.20 The Lord has given the psalms to his church to praise his name. The psalms themselves  
3994 command their use, e.g. “Sing praises with a psalm (maskil)” (Psalm 47:7). The Psalms  
3995 reveal the Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44). For this reason, the New Testament church is  
3996 commanded to sing the Psalms (Ephesians 5:19) and church members are commanded  
3997 to teach and admonish one another in part by singing the Psalms (Colossians 3:16).

## 3998 **5. Recommendations**

3999 That Synod decide:

4000 5.1 To amend CO art. 55 to read:

4001 ***The 150 Psalms of the Bible are foundational to the church’s worship, and are to be***  
4002 ***sung frequently in the worship services. General Synod shall adopt metrical versions***

4003 *of the psalms and shall approve hymns for inclusion in a song book which shall, as a*  
4004 *rule, have the principal place in the worship of the church. The Consistory may also*  
4005 *approve the singing of alternate settings of the psalms and additional hymns, provided*  
4006 *they are in harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.*

4007

4008 **ADOPTED**

4009

4010 **Article 116 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 105: Hymn Cap**

4011 Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal against GS 2022 art. 105 (Hymn Cap).  
4012 The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

4013

4014 **Article 117 – CRTS (Board of Governors)**

4015 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary  
4016 (CRTS). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

4017

4018 **Article 118 – Overture RSE 2024: Adding a Footnote to the Apostles’ Creed**

4019 **1. Material**

- 4020 1.1 Overture from RSE 2024 re Footnote for Apostles’ Creed (8.4.2.1).  
4021 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Attercliffe (8.5.1.1), Barrhead (8.5.1.2), Caledonia  
4022 (8.5.1.3), Calgary (8.5.1.4), Carman East (8.5.1.5), Carman West (8.5.1.6), Chilliwack  
4023 (8.5.1.7), Cloverdale (8.1.5.8), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.5.1.9), Elm Creek (8.5.1.10),  
4024 Fergus (Maranatha) (8.1.5.11), Fergus North (8.1.5.12), Edmonton (Providence)  
4025 (8.5.1.13), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.5.1.14), Houston (8.5.1.15), Neerlandia  
4026 (8.5.1.16), Willoughby Heights (8.5.1.17).

4027 **2. Admissibility**

- 4028 2.1 The overture was declared admissible.  
4029 Grounds: It was submitted by regional synod and was received on time.  
4030 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.  
4031 Grounds: They interact with an overture submitted to this general synod and were  
4032 received on time.

4033 **3. Observations**

- 4034 3.1 RSE 2024 proposes to append an explanatory footnote to “he descended into hell” in the  
4035 Apostles’ Creed. This phrase has a long history of disputed interpretation. Since this  
4036 phrase can be easily misunderstood, for example, to mean that Christ went to a specific  
4037 physical place called hell for three days after he died, the overture seeks to bring clarity  
4038 by adding a footnote which reads, “These words are not to be understood as if Christ,  
4039 upon entering death, went to the place of eternal torment called hell. See Heidelberg  
4040 Catechism Lord’s Day 16, Q/A 44.”  
4041 3.2 Many churches agree with this overture and support adding this proposed footnote.

- 4042 3.3 Other churches support a footnote in principle but desire to edit the proposed footnote,  
4043 while another church (Carman-East) doubts the need for a footnote (and finds it clunky)  
4044 but also proposes an edit to the footnote if that idea is adopted by GS 2025. The  
4045 following edits are proposed:
- 4046 3.3.1 The Calgary CanRC would like to delete the first sentence of the footnote since it  
4047 explicitly rules out one interpretation.
- 4048 3.3.2 The Carman-East CanRC finds the proposed footnote to be confusing which would  
4049 defeat the purpose of adding a footnote. This church proposes the following  
4050 footnote instead, “This phrase is intended as a summary of Christ’s humiliation,  
4051 emphasizing the depth and lowest point of Christ’s suffering.”
- 4052 3.3.3 The Edmonton (Immanuel) CanRC would prefer that the footnote affirms what the  
4053 phrase means instead of only what it doesn’t mean.
- 4054 3.3.4 The Edmonton (Providence) CanRC would like to add to the footnote a reference  
4055 to the Canons of Dort chapter 2, article 4 as done by the URCNA in the Trinity  
4056 Psalter Hymnal. The text of that footnote reads, “See Heidelberg Catechism, Q&A  
4057 44; Canons of Dort, 2.4; Westminster Larger Catechism, Q&A 50.”
- 4058 3.3.5 The Fergus (Maranatha) CanRC offers the following alternate footnote, “that is, on  
4059 the cross Jesus suffered the agony of hell which our sins deserve (HC, Q/A 44).”
- 4060 3.3.6 The Fergus North CanRC offers the following alternate footnote, “that is, he  
4061 descended into the realm of the dead.”
- 4062 3.4 The Barrhead CanRC and the Neerlandia CanRC are opposed to the overture for four  
4063 reasons:
- 4064 3.4.1 There has been no footnote for many years and during all those years the need was  
4065 never felt to add a footnote. Rather “the Church simply taught what this part of the  
4066 Creed meant. We believe this is how things ought to continue taking place.”
- 4067 3.4.2 The Apostles’ Creed is broadly accepted and no other church has added a footnote.
- 4068 3.4.3 This footnote would create an inconsistency within the creeds since the Athanasian  
4069 Creed also mentions descending into hell, but no footnote is proposed to explain  
4070 the descent there.
- 4071 3.4.4 The Creeds are not meant for visitors but for believers; if visitors have questions, it  
4072 is a good opportunity for the Church to teach its doctrine.

#### 4073 **4. Considerations**

- 4074 4.1 The phrase “he descended into hell” has had a long history of challenging interpretation  
4075 in the church. Also in our time, some church members can struggle with the meaning of  
4076 this phrase, as reflected in some of the letters from the churches. It is good to help them  
4077 with these struggles in the best way possible. The overture seeks to bring clarity by  
4078 adding a footnote which reads, “These words are not to be understood as if Christ, upon  
4079 entering death, went to the place of eternal torment called hell. See Heidelberg  
4080 Catechism Lord’s Day 16, Q/A 44.”
- 4081 4.2 The letters from the churches propose a multiplicity of alternative suggestions for the  
4082 content of the footnote, indicating that the adoption of a footnote may result in  
4083 disagreement among the churches.

- 4084 4.3 The Barrhead CanRC is incorrect that no other churches have added a footnote since the  
4085 Trinity Psalter Hymnal, used by the United Reformed Churches in North America  
4086 (URCNA) and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), has added a very brief  
4087 footnote, as noted in 3.3.4 (the word “catholic” is also footnoted).
- 4088 4.4 In the life of the church, there are sometimes statements in our creeds and confessions  
4089 which can be difficult to understand upon first reading. When this happens, it is good  
4090 for the church to provide more instruction in these matters of faith to help everyone to  
4091 make progress in their understanding.
- 4092 4.5 It is neither desirable nor feasible to add footnotes to everything which may be difficult  
4093 to understand upon first reading. There are more expressions in the Apostles’ Creed  
4094 which might need further explanation such as “catholic” or “only-begotten.”
- 4095 4.6 If a believer has difficulty understanding or accepting the teaching of the Church in LD  
4096 16 Q/A 44, the addition of a footnote referring to this confessional explanation will not  
4097 resolve the issue. The appropriate way to deal with this is through instruction which  
4098 comes in the preaching, teaching, catechesis, and pastoral work of the Church.
- 4099 4.7 Adding a footnote to one of the most foundational statements and summaries of the  
4100 Christian faith could convey doubt by the church and create doubt in the reader. The  
4101 fundamental articles of the Christian faith should be affirmed without qualification or  
4102 reservation, as reflected by the common practice of the Church of all times and places.

## 4103 **5. Recommendation**

4104 That Synod decide:

- 4105 5.1 Not to adopt the overture.

4106

## 4107 **ADOPTED**

4108

## 4109 **Article 119 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 142: Days of Commemoration**

### 4110 **1. Material**

- 4111 1.1 Appeal of Dunnville West against the decision of GS 2022 art. 142 (8.6.2).

### 4112 **2. Admissibility**

- 4113 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

4114 Ground: it is an appeal of a decision of a general synod and was received prior to the  
4115 deadline.

### 4116 **3. Observations**

- 4117 3.1 The Dunnville West CanRC is appealing the decision of GS 2022 (art. 142) which  
4118 sustained the appeals of the Flamborough (Redemption) CanRC and the Toronto  
4119 (Bethel) CanRC and overturned the judgement of RSE 2019 regarding commemorative  
4120 services.
- 4121 3.2 Dunnville West asserts that the reasoning of GS 2022 — that CO art. 52 and 53 must be  
4122 read as “distinct for a reason” — is unconvincing and creates a false dilemma. They  
4123 argue that these articles, being in the same section of the Church Order (“Worship,

- 4124 Sacraments and Ceremonies”), must be read in conjunction and seen as complementary  
4125 rather than isolated from one another.
- 4126 3.3 The appeal highlights the historical context and usage of these articles, noting that the  
4127 broader Reformed tradition does not distinguish between “commemorative services”  
4128 and “worship services,” and often refers to special services (e.g., Good Friday) simply  
4129 as worship services.
- 4130 3.4 Dunnville West objects to the implication of GS 2022 that a commemorative service is  
4131 not an official worship service but rather an informal gathering, stating that if such were  
4132 actually the case it would no longer be an ecclesiastical matter under the authority of the  
4133 consistory (see CO art 30). Dunnville West also cites as an example of the  
4134 commemorative service being long considered the equivalent of a formal worship  
4135 service the Church Order of the Reformed Churches of The Netherlands (1905) art. 67  
4136 which states, “the congregations shall keep besides Sunday, also Christmas, Easter,  
4137 Pentecost and Ascension Day.”
- 4138 3.5 Dunnville West maintains that distinguishing a commemorative service from a worship  
4139 service is disingenuous because “the sacrament of baptism and the celebration of the  
4140 Lord’s Supper can and have been held in a commemorative service.” This “. . .  
4141 underscores the fact that they are official services.”
- 4142 3.6 The appellants argue that the reasoning of GS 2022 relies too heavily on semantics (e.g.,  
4143 “shall call” vs. “invite,” “worship” vs. “commemorate”) rather than the broader  
4144 ecclesiological and liturgical context.
- 4145 3.7 They express concern that the practice of Flamborough (Redemption) Church “inviting”  
4146 members and visitors to a commemorative service rather than “calling” them to worship  
4147 undermines the authority of the consistory and creates confusion about the nature of the  
4148 gathering. This, in their view, sets a precedent that weakens the Reformed principle of  
4149 worship and the simplicity of Reformed liturgy.
- 4150 3.8 The appellants therefore request GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 erred in sustaining the  
4151 appeals of Flamborough (Redemption) and Toronto (Bethel) and that RSE 2019’s  
4152 original decision be upheld.

#### 4153 **4. Considerations**

- 4154 4.1 The appeal correctly emphasizes that CO art. 52 and 53 belong to the same section of  
4155 the Church Order and must be interpreted in relation to one another. While the articles  
4156 are distinct, their proximity and shared focus on public worship indicate a  
4157 complementary, not disjunctive, function. CO art. 1 also indicates that CO art. 52 and  
4158 53 both fall under the heading of “worship, sacraments and ceremonies.”
- 4159 4.2 The CanRC have historically understood the “days of commemoration” stipulation of  
4160 CO art. 53 in the context of worship services. This understanding is supported by the  
4161 reference supplied by the appellant to the 1905 Church Order of the Reformed Churches  
4162 of The Netherlands. A commentary on the Church Order states: “The first category  
4163 mentioned Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost. These are all  
4164 days or events which stand related to events of Christ’s life and activity. Some of these  
4165 events always fall on Sunday. But whether they fall on Sunday or not, the Church Order  
4166 here specifies that worship services shall be held in observance of these days or events.  
4167 Such as fall on Sunday shall be remembered in the Sunday sermon. Such as fall on

4168 weekdays call for a special worship service in commemoration of the day or event” (M.  
4169 Monsma, *The New Revised Church Order Commentary*, 1967, p.201-2).

4170 4.3 The appeal highlights that services which include the elements of public worship are  
4171 generally understood to be worship services under consistory oversight (cf. Lord’s Day  
4172 38, Heidelberg Catechism; see also CO art. 52). When such services are referred to by  
4173 alternate terminology, this can lead to uncertainty about how they are governed and  
4174 what expectations apply.

4175 4.4 The Dunnville West CanRC has not provided evidence that the sacraments were  
4176 administered during commemorative events other than worship services.

4177 4.5 Churches are free to organize events for the commemoration of Christ’s birth, death,  
4178 resurrection, ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. However, if such events  
4179 are not worship services, they do not, in themselves, satisfy the directions of CO art. 53.  
4180 Strictly speaking, they are not ecclesiastical matters (CO art. 30; see also art. 65). As an  
4181 example, a church might have a “lessons and carols” event to commemorate and  
4182 celebrate the birth of Christ. Such an event, however beneficial, would not fulfill the  
4183 expectations of CO art. 53.

## 4184 **5. Recommendations**

4185 That Synod decide:

4186 5.1 To sustain the appeal of the Dunnville West CanRC.

4187

### 4188 **ADOPTED**

4189 G. Boot, R. Bremer, and J. Torenvliet abstained as per CO art. 32.

4190

## 4191 **Article 120 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 111: Modernization of Hymn Language**

### 4192 **1. Material**

4193 1.1 Flamborough (Redemption) appeal re: GS 2022 Art. 111 (8.6.7).

### 4194 **2. Admissibility**

4195 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

4196 Ground: the appeal is against a decision of a general synod and it was received on time.

### 4197 **3. Observations**

4198 3.1 The Flamborough (Redemption) CanRC appeals the decision of GS 2022 (art. 111) to  
4199 approve modernized wording for three hymns:

4200 3.1.1 “Come, Thou Almighty King” (changed to “Come, O Almighty King”);

4201 3.1.2 “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing” (changed to “Come, O Fount of Every  
4202 Blessing”);

4203 3.1.3 “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus” (changed to “Come, O Long Expected Jesus”).

4204 3.2 Flamborough (Redemption) argues that:

4205 3.2.1 The traditional wording of these hymns remains standard and beloved in widely  
4206 used hymnals across the English-speaking world;

4207 3.2.2 Changing the wording unnecessarily disrupts the common memory and classic  
4208 status of these hymns;



- 4209 3.2.3 The Standing Committee’s own guidelines suggest that archaisms should be left  
4210 intact when they do not hinder understanding and when they preserve a hymn’s  
4211 classic status;
- 4212 3.2.4 Other hymns with traditional language (“Be Thou My Vision,” “How Great Thou  
4213 Art”) have retained their original wording, showing that retaining traditional  
4214 phrasing is both possible and appropriate.
- 4215 3.3 Flamborough (Redemption) requests that Synod 2025 overturn the decision of GS 2022  
4216 and restore the classic traditional wording of the three hymns in question.

#### 4217 **4. Considerations**

- 4218 4.1 Concerning Liturgical Stability and Common Memory:
- 4219 4.1.1 Retaining traditional, widely recognized wording helps maintain unity of worship  
4220 across generations and churches.
- 4221 4.1.2 Familiarity with the classic wording aids congregational singing and allows  
4222 believers to join more easily with the broader Christian community when singing  
4223 these hymns.
- 4224 4.2 Concerning the Standing Committee’s Guidelines:
- 4225 4.2.1 The Standing Committee itself advised that archaisms should be retained if they do  
4226 not significantly hinder understanding and if they preserve a hymn’s classic nature.
- 4227 4.2.2 The minor use of “Thou” in these hymns does not create misunderstanding and  
4228 contributes to their dignified, historic character.
- 4229 4.3 Concerning Precedent and Consistency:
- 4230 4.3.1 Other beloved hymns, such as “Be Thou My Vision”, have preserved their  
4231 traditional wording.
- 4232 4.3.2 Inconsistency in handling different hymns undermines the credibility of the editing  
4233 process.
- 4234 4.4 Concerning the Desirability of Change:
- 4235 4.4.1 Changing familiar texts introduces unnecessary disruption to congregational  
4236 worship.
- 4237 4.4.2 There must be compelling reasons to alter historic texts, and no sufficient cause  
4238 has been demonstrated in this case.

#### 4239 **5. Recommendations**

4240 That Synod decide:

- 4241 5.1 To sustain the appeal of the Flamborough (Redemption) CanRC re GS 2022 art. 111;
- 4242 5.2 To restore the traditional wording of
- 4243 5.2.1 “Come, Thou Almighty King”
- 4244 5.2.2 “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”
- 4245 5.2.3 “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

4246

4247 **ADOPTED**

4248 J. Torenvliet and R. Bremmer abstained as per CO art. 32.



4249

4250 **Article 121 – Overtures RSE 2024: CO art. 49, 44, 47 (*Delegation to General Synod*)**

4251 **1. Material**

4252 1.1 Overture of RSE 2024 regarding Article 49, 44, 47 CO (CCO) (8.4.2.4).

4253 1.2 Overture of RSE 2024 regarding Article 49, 44, 47 CO (CNO) (8.4.2.5).

4254 1.3 Letters from the following churches: Ancaster (8.5.4.1), Brampton (Grace) (8.5.4.2),

4255 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.5.4.3), Caledonia (8.5.4.4), Calgary (8.5.4.5,

4256 8.5.4.6), Carman East (8.5.4.7, 8.5.4.8), Chilliwack (8.5.4.9), Cloverdale (8.5.4.10,

4257 8.5.4.11), Coaldale (8.5.4.12, 8.5.4.13), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.5.4.14, 8.5.4.15),

4258 Edmonton (Providence) (8.5.4.16), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.5.4.17), Fergus North

4259 (8.5.4.18), Grand Rapids (8.5.4.19), Lincoln (Vineyard) (8.5.4.20), Neerlandia

4260 (8.5.4.21), Niagara South (8.5.4.22), Orangeville (8.5.4.23, 8.5.4.24), Ottawa (Jubilee)

4261 (8.5.4.25), Sardis (8.5.4.26), St. Albert (8.5.4.27, 8.5.4.28), Willoughby Heights

4262 (8.5.4.29), and Winnipeg (Redeemer) (8.5.4.30).

4263 **2. Admissibility**

4264 2.1 The overtures were declared admissible.

4265 Grounds: They were submitted by regional synod and were received on time.

4266 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

4267 Grounds: They interact with overtures submitted to this general synod and were

4268 received on time.

4269 **3. Observations**

4270 3.1 The Overtures

4271 3.1.1 Two overtures, one from Classis Central Ontario (via Flamborough (Redemption))  
4272 and one from Classis Northern Ontario (via Brampton (Grace)), propose revisions  
4273 to CO art. 49 to broaden representation at general synod.

4274 3.1.2 Both overtures request that the current regional synod-based delegation (6  
4275 ministers and 6 elders from each region) be replaced with classis-based delegation:  
4276 each of the eight classes would delegate two ministers and two elders, increasing  
4277 the total from 24 to 32 delegates.

4278 3.1.3 The overtures cite the growth of the federation (16 net new churches since 2004),  
4279 geographic dispersion, lack of familiarity among delegates, and concerns over  
4280 equitable classis-based representation.

4281 3.2 Supporting Grounds of the Overtures

4282 3.2.1 The current system may result in entire classes being overlooked and the new  
4283 system would ensure “that each classical region is represented at general synod”  
4284 (p. 4) which in turn would lead to “representing the concerns of a classis region at  
4285 general synod” (p. 5).

4286 3.2.2 Delegates are often unfamiliar with candidates, potentially compromising voting  
4287 quality.

4288 3.2.3 Classis-based selection would reduce overlap between regional synod and general  
4289 synod delegates, especially in appeals.

- 4290 3.2.4 Broader local input would foster a greater sense of ownership of general synod  
4291 decisions and ecclesiastical unity.
- 4292 3.2.5 Other federations (URCNA, OPC) already use proportionally broader or classis-  
4293 based systems.
- 4294 3.3 Churches Supporting the Overtures  
4295 (Brampton (Grace), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth), Caledonia, Chilliwack,  
4296 Edmonton (Providence), Fergus North, Lincoln (Vineyard), Ottawa (Jubilee), Sardis,  
4297 Willoughby Heights)
- 4298 3.3.1 Key themes include improved engagement, stronger representation of all regions,  
4299 greater sense of commitment to synod decisions, and the principle that  
4300 involvement breeds ownership.
- 4301 3.4 Churches Opposing the Overtures  
4302 (Ancaster, Calgary, Carman East, Cloverdale, Coaldale, Edmonton (Immanuel), Fergus  
4303 (Maranatha), Grand Rapids, Neerlandia, Niagara South, Orangeville, St. Albert, and  
4304 Winnipeg (Redeemer).
- 4305 3.4.1 Objections include: perceived shift to proportional representation, risk of  
4306 regionalism, lack of compelling benefit, potential logistical and financial burdens,  
4307 strain on small classes with limited personnel, departure from deliberative  
4308 assembly ethos, and lack of evidence that the current system is broken.
- 4309 3.4.2 Others point out logistical burdens (e.g., travel, costs, facilities) or note that any  
4310 issues with familiarity could be resolved via improved communication (e.g., bios  
4311 of nominees).
- 4312 3.5 Churches Offering Qualified Support or Nuanced Views
- 4313 3.5.1 The Willoughby Heights CanRC and the St. Albert CanRC affirm the need for  
4314 broader representation but are hesitant about abandoning regional synod as the  
4315 delegating body.
- 4316 3.5.2 Willoughby Heights rejects a six-month delegation requirement; the Winnipeg  
4317 (Redeemer) CanRC echoes concerns about small classis limitations.

#### 4318 **4. Considerations**

- 4319 4.1 *The overtures do not demonstrate that the current system is in need of improvement.*  
4320 No examples are given of classes being overlooked in choosing delegates to general  
4321 synod. No compelling evidence is provided that the present system of regional  
4322 delegation has failed to serve the churches well in either principle or practice.
- 4323 4.2 *The overtures shift the nature of delegation toward proportional representation.*  
4324 Historic Continental Reformed polity works with the principle of delegation—not of  
4325 direct representation. Those delegated are appointed to represent *all* the churches. Each  
4326 general synod is convened not to replicate much less to promote regional interests but to  
4327 exercise delegated judgment on behalf of the federation as a whole. The shift to classis-  
4328 based delegation moves toward a model where every classical region has its own  
4329 “voice” at general synod. This approach subtly imports a narrow representative  
4330 expectation foreign to the historic Continental Reformed understanding of delegated,  
4331 deliberative assemblies.

- 4332 4.3 *Numerical growth of churches does not materially affect the concept of delegation.*
- 4333 4.4 *The concern about delegates voting for unfamiliar candidates is exaggerated.*
- 4334 Ecclesiastical delegation has never assumed necessary personal acquaintance with every
- 4335 delegate. Nonetheless, bios, ecclesiastical records, and recommendations are possible
- 4336 means for more informed voting. Minor assemblies are free to establish their own
- 4337 procedures for these matters.
- 4338 4.5 *The overtures minimize the practical burdens their proposal would impose.*
- 4339 A small classis forced to rely repeatedly on a handful of ministers and elders is a
- 4340 realistic concern.
- 4341 4.6 *Expanding the number of delegates may weaken—not strengthen—the deliberative*
- 4342 *character of Synod.*
- 4343 Increasing numbers do not automatically improve deliberation. Larger bodies often
- 4344 become less nimble, more procedural, and leave less time for contributions by each
- 4345 delegate.
- 4346 4.7 *Every church already has the greatest reason to take ownership of general synod*
- 4347 *decisions.*
- 4348 By means of the Church Order, every church has entered into a covenant with all the
- 4349 other churches in the federation, pledging also to consider as “settled and binding” all
- 4350 decisions of the broader assemblies (under the condition of Art 31 CO). Keeping one’s
- 4351 promises is a sacred duty commanded by the Lord (3<sup>rd</sup> Comm; see LD 37).
- 4352 4.8 *The overtures draw inexact analogies with the URCNA and OPC.*
- 4353 These federations operate under different ecclesiastical assumptions, particularly
- 4354 concerning the representative nature of assemblies. Their practices are coherent within
- 4355 their systems but can’t be readily transplanted into the CanRC structures of governance.

4356 **5. Recommendation**

4357 That Synod decide:

- 4358 5.1 Not to adopt the overtures.

4359

4360 **ADOPTED** with one abstention.

4361

4362 **Article 122 – URCNA (United Reformed Churches in North America)**

4363 **1. Material**

- 4364 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 12: United Reformed Churches in
- 4365 North America (URCNA) (8.2.10.12).
- 4366 1.2 Letter from the following church: Tintern Spring Creek (8.3.10.23).

4367 **2. Admissibility**

- 4368 2.1 The report was declared admissible.
- 4369 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.
- 4370 2.2 The letter from the church was declared admissible.

4371 Grounds: It interacts with an overture submitted to this general synod and was received  
4372 on time.

4373 **3. Observations**

4374 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 167) decided:

4375 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4376 [3.1.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the United Reformed  
4377 Churches in North America (URCNA) according to the adopted rules;

4378 [3.1.2] To encourage the churches to continue to foster relationships with local  
4379 URCNA churches; these activities could include, but are not limited to, pulpit  
4380 exchanges, joint community and mission projects, and study opportunities;

4381 [3.1.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
4382 next general synod.

4383 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

4384 3.2.1 "...moving towards greater unity requires further grassroots movement building  
4385 contact and trust." Various challenges to building contact and trust exist within the  
4386 CanRC and URCNA.

4387 3.2.2 "Since there is a substantial amount of interaction among our respective classes  
4388 and local churches, the CER has begun to reach out to the CanRC classes to get a  
4389 better idea of all that is presently happening between local CanRC and URCNA  
4390 churches. Some classes have appointed committees to liaise with CER."

4391 3.2.3 "URCNA Synod Escondido 2024 entertained a recommendation from [Committee  
4392 for Ecumenical Relations and Church Unity (CERCU)] to set aside funds to  
4393 remove financial hinderances for the pulpit exchanges between distant URC and  
4394 CanRC. For various reasons the recommendation was not adopted."

4395 3.2.4 "Discussions have taken place, and will continue at opportune times, on differing  
4396 church polity or practices. The important determination is to remain a faithful  
4397 church within the confines of Scripture and confessions allowing for a unity in the  
4398 faith with a diversity of practice."

4399 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

4400 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category A with the United Reformed  
4401 Churches in North America (URCNA) according to the adopted rules;

4402 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4403 3.3.2.1 To encourage the churches to continue to foster relationships with local  
4404 URCNA churches. These activities could include, but are not limited to,  
4405 pulpit exchanges, joint community and mission projects, and study  
4406 opportunities;

4407 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the URCNA to the  
4408 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4409 3.4 The Tintern Spring Creek CanRC raises concerns about specific comments in the  
4410 CERCU report to Synod Escondido 2024, and requests CER clarify their position on  
4411 these comments.

4412 **4. Considerations**

4413 4.1 The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) continues to display the  
4414 marks of a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a  
4415 shared recent history, a close relationship between the CanRC and URCNA is mutually  
4416 beneficial.

4417 4.2 Given the continued desire on our part for the highest expression of unity with the  
4418 URCNA and given the proximity of most CanRC churches to many URCNA churches,  
4419 it is appropriate to encourage maximum interaction. The CER is well-positioned to  
4420 repeatedly facilitate this encouragement.

4421 4.3 The concern, observed by Tintern Spring Creek, about an “identity crisis” in the CanRC  
4422 reflects tensions acknowledged by the CER regarding internal changes; while the  
4423 wording may have been unhelpful, it was meant to candidly express those challenges  
4424 within a close relationship. Importantly, this does not present an impediment to  
4425 continued growth in unity with the URCNA.

4426 **5. Recommendations**

4427 That Synod decide:

4428 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the United Reformed  
4429 Churches in North America (URCNA) according to the adopted rules.

4430 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4431 5.2.1 To encourage the churches to continue to foster relationships with local United  
4432 Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) churches. These activities could  
4433 include, but are not limited to, pulpit exchanges, joint community and mission  
4434 projects, and study opportunities.

4435 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the URCNA to the churches no  
4436 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4437

4438 **ADOPTED**

4439

4440 **Article 123 – Point of Order: CER financial report**

4441 Advisory Committee 2 moved that the CER expense report be included as an appendix to the  
4442 General Fund report.

4443 **ADOPTED**

4444

4445 **Article 124 – NAPARC (North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council)**

4446 **1. Material**

4447 1.1 CER Report 24: North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC)  
4448 (8.2.10.1.24).

4449 **2. Admissibility**

4450 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4451 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

4452 **3. Observations**

4453 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 159) decided the following:

4454 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4455 [3.1.1] To represent the CanRC at the North American Presbyterian and Reformed  
4456 Council (NAPARC) and to continue active involvement in it;

4457 [3.1.2] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
4458 next general synod;

4459 [3.1.3] To consider including relevant information about ecumenical conferences in  
4460 the report to general synod.

4461 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

4462 3.2.1 The CER participated in meetings in 2022 & 2023

4463 3.2.1.1 During these meetings CER held bilateral meetings with delegates from  
4464 RCUS, URCNA, ERQ, HRC, FRCNA, OPC, RPCNA, and ARP.

4465 3.2.2 The CER continues to see the benefit of being involved in NAPARC.

4466 3.2.3 NAPARC meetings provide opportunities for CER to fulfill other parts of its  
4467 mandate.

4468 3.2.4 The CER is willing to assist the local churches in regard to NAPARC issues.

4469 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

4470 3.3.1 To continue membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed  
4471 Council (NAPARC);

4472 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4473 3.3.2.1 To continue to represent the CanRC at NAPARC and to continue its active  
4474 involvement in it.

4475 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to NAPARC to the churches  
4476 6 months prior to the convening of the next General Synod.

4477 **4. Considerations**

4478 4.1 With thankfulness to the Lord, the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
4479 (NAPARC) continues to be a useful forum to promote harmony and unity among  
4480 Reformed and Presbyterian churches within Canada and the USA.

4481 **5. Recommendations**

4482 That Synod decide:

4483 5.1 To continue membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
4484 (NAPARC);

4485 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4486 5.2.1 To continue to represent the CanRC at the North American Presbyterian and  
4487 Reformed Council (NAPARC) and to continue its active involvement in it.

4488 5.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to NAPARC to the churches no  
4489 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

4490

4491 **ADOPTED**



4492

4493 **Article 125 – ICRC (International Conference of Reformed Churches)**

4494 **1. Material**

4495 1.1 CER Report 25: International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) (8.2.10.1.25).

4496 **2. Admissibility**

4497 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4498 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

4499 **3. Observations**

4500 3.1 GS 2022 (Art. 145) decided:

4501 [3.1] To continue the membership of the CanRC in the ICRC;

4502 [3.2] Regarding membership of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated)  
4503 (GKv) in the ICRC:

4504 [3.2.1] To propose to the tenth ICRC to be held, the Lord willing, in Windhoek,  
4505 Namibia during October 2022, that the membership of the GKv be  
4506 terminated, as its decision on women in office no longer qualifies it for  
4507 membership in the ICRC;

4508 [3.2.2] To express agreement with a similar proposal decided to by the 87<sup>th</sup> (2021)  
4509 General Assembly (GA) of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC);

4510 [3.2.3] To convey this proposal by means of a letter from General Synod 2022 via  
4511 the second clerk to the ICRC as soon as possible;

4512 [3.3] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4513 [3.3.1] To ensure appropriate CanRC participation in ICRC activities;

4514 [3.3.2] To attend the next ICRC with a delegation of two voting members and two  
4515 advisory members.

4516 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

4517 3.2.1 The ICRC continues to serve the 5 purposes listed in its constitution well. Those  
4518 purposes are:

4519 1. to express and promote the unity of faith that the Member Churches have in Christ;

4520 2. to encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the Member Churches;

4521 3. to facilitate and promote cooperation among the Member Churches in such areas as  
4522 missions, theological education, and ministries of mercy;

4523 4. to study the common problems and issues that confront the Member Churches;

4524 5. to present a Reformed testimony to the world.

4525 3.2.2 In line with the decision of GS 2022, the CanRC moved that the membership of  
4526 the Reformed Churches (liberated) (GKv) be terminated. This motion carried  
4527 without opposition.

4528 3.2.3 “The CanRC have always played a big role in the ICRC and are positioned to  
4529 continue to do so in the future.”



- 4530 3.2.4 “The ICRC has also been instrumental in helping build close personal ties with  
4531 those in other churches serving on interchurch committees and coordinating  
4532 activities among member churches.”
- 4533 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:
- 4534 3.3.1 To continue the membership of the CanRC in the International Conference of  
4535 Reformed Churches (ICRC);
- 4536 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 4537 3.3.2.1 To ensure appropriate CanRC participation in ICRC activities;
- 4538 3.3.2.2 To attend the next ICRC with a delegation of two voting members and two  
4539 advisory members.
- 4540 3.3.2.3 To meet bi-laterally with as many delegations as possible from churches with  
4541 whom the CanRC have ecumenical relations, prioritizing those who are not  
4542 members of NAPARC;
- 4543 3.3.2.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the ICRC to the churches  
4544 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

#### 4545 **4. Considerations**

- 4546 4.1 With thankfulness to the Lord, the International Conference of Reformed Churches  
4547 (ICRC) continues to be a useful forum to promote harmony and unity among Reformed  
4548 and Presbyterian churches worldwide.
- 4549 4.2 “Having four members of the CRCA attend the ICRC was beneficial in the past and this  
4550 practice should be maintained.” (GS 2013 art. 167 cons. 3.2)
- 4551 4.3 It may not be possible, timewise, to meet with all churches with whom we have  
4552 ecumenical relations. Since bi-laterals occur at every NAPARC, which takes place  
4553 annually, prioritizing bi-laterals with non-NAPARC members at the ICRC, which takes  
4554 place once every four years, is stewardly use of opportunity.

#### 4555 **5. Recommendations**

4556 That Synod decide:

- 4557 5.1 To continue the membership of the CanRC in the International Conference of Reformed  
4558 Churches (ICRC);
- 4559 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 4560 5.2.1 To ensure appropriate CanRC participation in the International Conference of  
4561 Reformed Churches (ICRC) activities;
- 4562 5.2.2 To attend the next ICRC with a delegation of two voting members and up to two  
4563 advisory members.
- 4564 5.2.3 To meet bi-laterally with as many delegations as possible from churches with  
4565 whom the CanRC have ecumenical relations, prioritizing those who are not  
4566 members of NAPARC;
- 4567 5.2.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the ICRC to the churches no  
4568 later than six (6) months prior to the convening of the next general synod.

4569  
4570 **ADOPTED**

4571

4572 **Article 126 – FRCSA (Free Reformed Churches in South Africa)**

4573 **1. Material**

4574 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 23: Free Reformed Churches in  
4575 South Africa (FRCSA) (8.2.10.23).

4576 **2. Admissibility**

4577 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4578 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

4579 **3. Observations**

4580 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 147) decided:

4581 [3.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Free Reformed Churches in  
4582 South Africa (FRCSA) under the adopted rules;

4583 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4584 [3.2.1] To send a delegation to the next synod of the FRCSA;

4585 [3.2.2] To continue involvement in discussions regarding financial requests from the  
4586 FRCSA and provide coordination assistance where possible;

4587 [3.2.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
4588 next synod.

4589 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

4590 3.2.1 While the FRCSA is a relatively small federation, they have a disproportionately  
4591 large number of theological students.

4592 3.2.2 The FRCSA has officially ended their relationship with the GKv and has extended  
4593 ecclesiastical fellowship to the newly formed GK.

4594 3.2.3 There are various formal arrangements between our churches and their federation.  
4595 This includes most notably the training of their theological students at CRTS and  
4596 arranged support through the Foreign Student Bursary Fund (FSBF), the work of  
4597 Rev. Ryan Kampen (Dunnville East) at the Reformational Study Centre, and the  
4598 support of the Timothy Project by Lincoln Canadian Reformed Church.

4599 3.2.4 There remains a need for financial support. Between theological education, local  
4600 mission, needy churches, and needy students the financial situation is tenuous.

4601 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

4602 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category A with the Free Reformed  
4603 Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) according to the adopted rules;

4604 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4605 3.3.2.1 To continue involvement in discussions involving financial requests from the  
4606 FRCSA and provide coordination assistance where possible;

4607 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCSA to the  
4608 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4609 **4. Considerations**

4610 4.1 The Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) continues to display the marks  
4611 of a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared  
4612 recent history, a close relationship between the CanRC and FRCSA is mutually  
4613 beneficial.

4614 4.2 Reduced funding from The Netherlands for missions, coupled with many opportunities  
4615 for missions and the increasing financial needs of theological education warrants  
4616 financial support where feasible.

4617 **5. Recommendations**

4618 That Synod decide:

4619 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Free Reformed  
4620 Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) according to the adopted rules;

4621 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4622 5.2.1 To continue involvement in discussions involving financial requests from the Free  
4623 Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) and provide coordination assistance  
4624 where possible;

4625 5.2.2 To send a delegation to meetings of the FRCSA Synod at least once every three  
4626 years.

4627 5.2.3 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the FRCSA to the churches no  
4628 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4629

4630 **ADOPTED**

4631

4632 **Article 127 – RPCNA (Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America)**

4633 **1. Material**

4634 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 10: Reformed Presbyterian Church  
4635 of North America (RPCNA) (8.2.10.10).

4636 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Fergus (Maranatha) (8.3.10.22), Grand Rapids  
4637 (8.3.10.10).

4638 **2. Admissibility**

4639 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4640 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

4641 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

4642 Grounds: They interact with a report to general synod and were received on time.

4643 **3. Observations**

4644 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 166) decided:

4645 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4646 [3.1.1] To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the Reformed Presbyterian  
4647 Church in North America (RPCNA), particularly at meetings of the North

- 4648 American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC), and when  
4649 appropriate, to discuss the matters that hinder Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF);
- 4650 [3.1.2] To take up dialogue and contact with the new Reformed Presbyterian Church  
4651 of Canada (RPCC) once it is formed;
- 4652 [3.1.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
4653 next general synod.
- 4654 [4.1] Re 3.1.1:
- 4655 [4.1.1] While GS 2016 (Art. 90) acknowledged that the RPCNA can be recognized  
4656 for their faithfulness to the Word of God and their strong Reformed  
4657 convictions, it also noted that their practice and exegetical defense of  
4658 ordaining female deacons, as well as GS 2016's reservations about the place  
4659 and function of *The Testimony*, hinders the establishment of EF
- 4660 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 4661 3.2.1 Continued contact with the RPCNA, including attendance at its Synod.
- 4662 3.2.2 Appreciation for the RPCNA's confessional integrity and commitment to  
4663 Reformed doctrine.
- 4664 3.2.3 Notable distinctives in worship and practice, including exclusive psalmody and  
4665 head coverings, which are not considered obstacles to fellowship.
- 4666 3.2.4 "At NAPARC 2023, the CER sought clarity about what category of EF the  
4667 RPCNA had offered the CanRC. The CER learned it was not our understanding of  
4668 Ecclesiastical Fellowship (as reported to GS 2016 by the CCCNA) but of contact,  
4669 with elements from both our Ecclesiastical Fellowship Category B and our  
4670 proposed Ecclesiastical Contact."
- 4671 3.2.5 "In its report to GS 2022, the CCCNA published the observation that the RPCNA  
4672 has historically allowed for women deacons, but their trend has been to distance  
4673 themselves from this practice."
- 4674 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:
- 4675 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in  
4676 North America (RPCNA) according to the adopted rules;
- 4677 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 4678 3.3.2.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the RPCNA, particularly at  
4679 NAPARC;
- 4680 3.3.2.2 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RPCNA to the  
4681 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 4682 3.4 The Fergus (Maranatha) CanRC asks that the CER be mandated to engage in continued  
4683 dialogue with the RPCNA on the issues of women deacons and the place and function  
4684 of *The Testimony*, and to seek resolution on both.
- 4685 3.5 The Grand Rapids CanRC raises concerns about *The Testimony* and whether it is  
4686 consonant with the Three Forms of Unity.

4687 **4. Considerations**

- 4688 4.1 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) is a true and faithful  
4689 church of Jesus Christ.
- 4690 4.2 The RPCNA is receptive to dialogue and discussion with the CanRC and have requested  
4691 that the CanRC reopen consideration about entering into fraternal relations. Both  
4692 Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) and Ecclesiastical Contact contain elements of what the  
4693 RPCNA requested. Ecclesiastical Contact is consistent with the decision taken by GS  
4694 2016 (art. 90).
- 4695 4.3 The RPCNA is a member of the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council  
4696 (NAPARC) and the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).
- 4697 4.4 *The Testimony* was identified by GS 2022 as a hindrance to the establishing EF.
- 4698 4.4.1 The CER has not addressed whether it remains a hindrance to EF.
- 4699 4.5 The ordination of women deacons was identified by GS 2022 as a hindrance to  
4700 establishing EF.
- 4701 4.4.1 The CER has not addressed whether it remains a hindrance to EF.
- 4702 4.4.2 For GS 2016, the CCCNA (now the CER) investigated in detail the matter of  
4703 women’s deacons within the RPCNA and concluded the RPCNA does not  
4704 consider deacons to have ruling authority within the church. This view is the same  
4705 as the Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) with whom it was not an impediment to  
4706 entering EF (cf. GS 2016 art. 59 cons. 3.4). Within the RPCNA, the office of  
4707 deacon is necessarily different in nature and essence from the office of deacon  
4708 within the CanRC, contra GS 2016 art. 90 cons. 3.2.3.
- 4709 4.4.2.1 The CER report notes that “In its report to GS 2022, the CCCNA published  
4710 the observation that the RPCNA has historically allowed for women deacons,  
4711 but their trend has been to distance themselves from this practice”. The  
4712 fraternal observer from the RPCNA confirmed this and noted that it will be  
4713 discussed at their next synod.

4714 **5. Recommendations**

4715 That Synod decide:

- 4716 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North  
4717 America (RPCNA) according to the adopted rules;
- 4718 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 4719 5.2.1 To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the Reformed Presbyterian  
4720 Church in North America (RPCNA), particularly at the North American  
4721 Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC);
- 4722 5.2.2 To work towards entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B with the  
4723 RPCNA by resolving outstanding issues identified by GS 2022 and by creating  
4724 more awareness within the CanRC about the RPCNA practices (e.g. the nature and  
4725 ordination of deacons within the RPCNA);
- 4726 5.2.3 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the RPCNA to the churches no  
4727 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 4728

4729 **ADOPTED**

4730

4731 **Article 128 – Closing Devotions**

4732 Rev. Carl Van Dam read Ephesians 3 and led in prayer. The day was closed with the singing of  
4733 Psalm 108:1,2.

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4735 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 8 — Morning Session**  
**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

**Article 129 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 133, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 133. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 130 – Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 131 – Recording a unanimous vote**

Given a request from the floor of Synod, it was determined that the *Acts of GS 2025* will only record that a recommendation was adopted unanimously where it regards entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK), to parallel a decision taken by GS 2019 (art. 41) regarding ending EF with the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) (GKv).

**Article 132 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 60 & 81**

Synod went into closed session.

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Appeal from Willoughby Heights (8.6.8.1).
- 1.2 Letter from Lincoln (Vineyard) (8.6.8.5).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 Synod declared the appeal from Willoughby Heights admissible.

Grounds:

- 2.1.1 Willoughby Heights complains that it has been wronged by a decision of GS 2022 which they assert has compromised the welfare of the churches.
- 2.1.2 A church has a right to appeal a decision of an ecclesiastical assembly and is not limited to cases of personal injury but may also properly include the welfare of the churches (CO art. 31).

- 2.2 Synod declared the letter from Lincoln (Vineyard) admissible.

Grounds: Lincoln (Vineyard) urges GS 2025 not to entertain the appeal from Willoughby Heights, citing previous deliberations and the passage of time in which their congregation has found peace and former members have moved on. They suggest that re-opening this matter will not serve the cause of justice or peace and suggest that “a more beneficial approach would be for Synod to consider an overture aimed at reforming the appeals process.”



4775 **3. Observations**

4776 3.1 Willoughby Heights appeals the decisions of GS 2022 (Confidential Acts, Articles 60 &  
4777 81) alleging that GS 2022 failed to judge the substance of appeals of GS 2019 submitted  
4778 by Lincoln (Vineyard) and Dunnville.

4779 3.2 Willoughby Heights maintains that GS 2022, by refusing to address the content of  
4780 Article 98 and 141 of GS 2019, compounded injustice and left the appellants “in the  
4781 dark” concerning future procedural steps.

4782 3.3 Willoughby Heights is concerned that in this matter the Canadian Reformed Churches  
4783 are failing in exercising mercy, justice and faithfulness.

4784 3.4 Willoughby Heights alleges that the failure to examine all sides at the various  
4785 assemblies led to decisions which were considered procedurally improper by GS 2022  
4786 (cf. Proverbs 18:17).

4787 3.5 The appeal of Willoughby Heights is focused on the procedural pathway, not the  
4788 original discipline cases, and it builds its case on perceived irregularities in the handling  
4789 of appeals from 2017 to 2022.

4790 3.6 Lincoln (Vineyard) in a letter to GS 2025 acknowledges the procedural breakdowns but  
4791 urges GS 2025 not to reopen the matter, advocating instead for reform.

4792 3.7 The appeal of Willoughby Heights does not include the full original appeals to GS  
4793 2022. Willoughby Heights could not do so as the original appeals were not fully  
4794 archived (see GS 2022 art. 154).

4795 3.8 GS 2022 sustained the jurisdictional concerns raised by Lincoln (Vineyard) and  
4796 Dunnville, but declined to judge the remaining grounds, citing the compounded  
4797 irregularities.

4798 3.9 GS 2022 explicitly stated that a judgement on the merits was not possible due to the  
4799 procedural confusion and incomplete record.

4800 3.10 Willoughby Heights offers no clear path forward except to demand that GS 2025 issue a  
4801 substantive ruling, even though key documents and parties are absent.

4802 3.11 Currently, there are no regulations or guidelines to guide the appeals process at general  
4803 synods.

4804 **4. Considerations**

4805 4.1 The appeal of Willoughby Heights raises valid concerns about procedural errors. Done  
4806 in human weakness, these errors have, at times, created confusion and hindered the  
4807 pursuit of justice, mercy and faithfulness. Such failures give rise to sorrow and humble  
4808 reflection.

4809 4.2 The appeal of Willoughby Heights underestimates the difficulty GS 2022 faced in trying  
4810 to resolve such a tangled matter.

4811 4.3 GS 2022 acted within its rights under the Church Order to refrain from issuing a  
4812 judgment in a situation where jurisdiction, evidence and appeal pathways were unclear.

4813 4.4 The absence of key materials and the withdrawal or silence of primary parties means GS  
4814 2025 would face similar if not worse constraints than GS 2022.

4815 4.5 Reopening the case at this stage risks further instability, confusion, and harm to those  
4816 who have since moved on.

- 4817 4.6 While highlighting problems, the appeal does not offer a constructive solution other  
4818 than critiquing GS 2022.
- 4819 4.7 The best response at this stage is not to re-judge but to reform: to acknowledge systemic  
4820 weaknesses and take steps to prevent such failures in future appeal processes.
- 4821 4.8 The record shows multiple procedural failures at various levels, but GS 2022 exercised  
4822 caution, not indifference to the pursuit of mercy, justice and faithfulness.
- 4823 4.9 GS 2025 should focus instead on learning from the procedural breakdowns and  
4824 improving its process moving forward.

## 4825 **5. Recommendation**

4826 That Synod decide:

- 4827 5.1 To deny the appeal of the Willoughby Heights CanRC re GS 2022 (art. 60 & 81);
- 4828 5.2 To appoint a three-member ad hoc committee (including one alternate) with the  
4829 following mandate:
- 4830 5.2.1 To analyze the procedural failures surrounding previous appeals to general synod,  
4831 using the events highlighted by the appeal of the Willoughby Heights CanRC as a  
4832 case study;
- 4833 5.2.2 To study existing appeal protocols used both within the Canadian Reformed  
4834 Federation and other federations with whom we have Ecclesiastical Fellowship  
4835 (EF), as well as further resources the committee deems relevant;
- 4836 5.2.3 To propose establishing a General Synod Appeals Committee, including  
4837 regulations for consistent standards of admissibility, rules for evidence,  
4838 jurisdiction, and record handling in the future processing of appeals to general  
4839 synod;
- 4840 5.2.4 To include in its proposal guidelines on how confidential acts should be distributed  
4841 to consistories and how consistories should deal with these;
- 4842 5.2.5 To submit its report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior to the  
4843 convening of the next general synod.
- 4844 5.2.6 This committee shall be known as the Committee to Propose Guidelines for  
4845 Appeals at General Synods (CPGA).

4846

## 4847 **ADOPTED**

4848 K. Janssen abstained as per CO art. 32.

4849

## 4850 **Article 133 – CONFIDENTIAL – Personal Appeal 8.6.8.5**

4851 Synod continued in closed session.

4852 *As per GS 2025 art. 189.1, this act is not being made public.*

4853 Synod returned to open session.

4854

4855 **Article 134 – RPCC (Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada)**

4856 **1. Material**

4857 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 11: Reformed Presbyterian Church  
4858 of Canada (RPCC) (8.2.10.11).

4859 1.2 Letter from Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.10.11).

4860 **2. Admissibility**

4861 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4862 Ground: It was mandated by the previous synod and received on time.

4863 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.

4864 Ground: It interacts with a report to GS 2025 and was received on time.

4865 **3. Observations**

4866 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 166) decided:

4867 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4868 [3.1.2] To take up dialogue and contact with the new Reformed Presbyterian Church  
4869 of Canada (RPCC) once it is formed;

4870 [3.1.3] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
4871 next general synod.

4872 [3.2] To not be a sponsoring church for the RPCC if it applies for membership in  
4873 NAPARC.

4874 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

4875 3.2.1 There has only been limited success to formal and informal efforts to become  
4876 acquainted.

4877 3.2.2 Since the RPCC formed, their initial administrative loads have hindered their  
4878 ecumenical contact.

4879 3.2.3 The grassroots fellowship formerly enjoyed with the RPCNA now continues with  
4880 the RPCC.

4881 3.2.4 The RPCC has no plans to make use of *The Testimony*, nor to allow for women  
4882 deacons.

4883 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

4884 3.3.1 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4885 3.3.1.1 To pursue discussion and further exploration with the Reformed Presbyterian  
4886 Church of Canada (RPCC);

4887 3.3.1.2 To investigate thoroughly in order to make an appropriate recommendation  
4888 regarding ecumenical relations with the RPCC;

4889 3.3.1.3 To submit its report on its findings with respect to the RPCC to the churches  
4890 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4891 3.4 Guelph (Emmanuel) requests that the same relationship status as with the RPCNA be  
4892 adopted.

4893 **4. Considerations**

4894 4.1 Considering our previous history with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North  
4895 America (RPCNA), and the decisions of GS 2022 to mandate the CER “To take up  
4896 dialogue and contact with the new Reformed Presbyterian Church of Canada (RPCC)  
4897 once it is formed” (GS 2022 art. 166 dec. 3.1.2) continuing discussion and exploration  
4898 with the RPCC with a view to making a recommendation makes sense. This is in line  
4899 with the thinking of Guelph (Emmanuel).

4900 **5. Recommendations**

4901 That Synod decide:

4902 5.1 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

4903 5.1.1 To pursue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of  
4904 Canada (RPCC);

4905 5.1.2 Make an appropriate recommendation regarding ecumenical relations with the  
4906 RPCC;

4907 5.1.3 To submit its report on its findings with respect to the RPCC to the churches 6  
4908 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

4909

4910 **ADOPTED**

4911

4912 **Article 135 – ARPC (Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church)**

4913 Committee 2 presented a majority report (draft 1) and a minority report (draft 1) re CER Report  
4914 3: Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC). The Chairman read the Guidelines for  
4915 General Synods regarding procedures when there is a majority and minority report from an  
4916 advisory committee. The reports were discussed. The fraternal observer of the ARPC  
4917 participated in the discussion. The majority report was voted on first (as per Guidelines for  
4918 General Synods III.A.5).

4919

4920 **1. Material**

4921 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 3: Associate Reformed Presbyterian  
4922 Church (ARPC) (8.2.10.3).

4923 1.2 Letters from the churches: Barrhead (8.3.10.2), Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.10.11), Fergus  
4924 North (8.3.10.19), Grassie (Covenant) (8.3.10.20), Hamilton (Providence) (8.3.10.21).

4925 **2. Admissibility**

4926 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

4927 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

4928 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

4929 Grounds: They interact with a report to general synod and were received on time.

4930 **3. Observations**

4931 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 168) mandated the CER:

4932 [3.1] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

- 4933 [3.1.1] To engage in continued dialogue and contact with the ARPC;
- 4934 [3.1.2] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the
- 4935 next general synod.
- 4936 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 4937 3.2.1 The relationship with the ARPC continues to develop organizationally as well as
- 4938 organically.
- 4939 3.2.2 The ARPC has become known as a denomination that is sincerely committed to
- 4940 being confessionally Reformed.
- 4941 3.2.3 While the ARPC has taken a strong position against the ordination of women to
- 4942 the office of pastor and elder, a provision has been made in their Form of
- 4943 Government which allows local sessions to install women as deacons... with the
- 4944 understanding that their work was to be carried out under the supervision and
- 4945 authority of the session. At this time, at a rough estimate, less than 10% of sessions
- 4946 within the ARPC have elected to make use of this provision. Furthermore, the
- 4947 number of sessions making use of this provision appears to be declining.
- 4948 3.2.4 The existence of a local option which allows for women to serve as deacons has
- 4949 not proven to be a barrier to entering into EF with the Reformed Church in Quebec
- 4950 (ERQ).
- 4951 3.3 The CER recommends:
- 4952 3.3.1 To receive with thankfulness the offer of Fraternal Fellowship extended to the
- 4953 CanRC by the General Synod of the ARPC (2023).
- 4954 3.3.2 To enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) category B with the Associate
- 4955 Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) according to the adopted rules and to
- 4956 communicate that decision to the next meeting of the General Synod of the ARPC
- 4957 (2025).
- 4958 3.3.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 4959 3.3.3.1 To convey this decision to the ARPC as soon as possible;
- 4960 3.3.3.2 To establish contact with the Canadian denomination of the ARPC when it
- 4961 comes into existence in 2025;
- 4962 3.3.3.3 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the ARPC to the churches
- 4963 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 4964 3.4 The Barrhead CanRC objects to granting EF Category B to ARPC on the grounds that
- 4965 we rejected EF with the RPCNA in GS 2016 on account of women deacons.
- 4966 3.5 Guelph (Emmanuel) cautions against having personal and anecdotal experiences weigh
- 4967 on the federation's ecumenical relationships, whether positively or negatively.
- 4968 3.6 Fergus North deems it imprudent to enter into EF while the ARPC retains provisions for
- 4969 allowing women deacons.
- 4970 3.7 Grassie (Covenant) suggests remaining in Ecclesiastical Contact to see how things
- 4971 progress with the ARP Canadian Presbytery. Waiting would also allow more clarity on
- 4972 the findings of their Synod on the work and scope of the diaconal office.
- 4973 3.8 Hamilton (Providence) observes among other things:

- 4974 3.8.1 The ARPC has given abundant evidence of its commitment to remaining faithful to  
4975 the Word of God and to the Reformed confessions;
- 4976 3.8.2 Within southwestern Ontario there are a number of CanRC congregations that are  
4977 enjoying regular, and increasing, contact with the ARPC congregations. This  
4978 occurs both organically between members of our congregations and  
4979 organizationally with our respective assemblies. These experiences are evidence of  
4980 a real and growing mutual affection between our respective denominations.

#### 4981 **4. Considerations**

- 4982 4.1 The CER has fulfilled its mandate.
- 4983 4.2 The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) has given ample evidence of  
4984 sincere and continued faithfulness to both God’s Word and the Reformed confessions.  
4985 This is evidenced by:
- 4986 4.2.1 The faithful manner in which the fathers and brothers of ARPC have conducted  
4987 themselves within the higher courts of the church;
- 4988 4.2.2 The sincerity of their Reformed conviction can also be seen in the  
4989 doctrinal/positional statements which have been adopted by their general synod;
- 4990 4.2.3 The way that the ARPC has steadily divested itself of ecclesiastical relationships  
4991 with denominations that have progressed down theologically ‘liberal’ pathways;
- 4992 4.2.4 The ARPC has intentionally endeavoured to strengthen and establish ecclesiastical  
4993 relationships with denominations/federations of strong historic Reformed  
4994 conviction, including the OPC, the CanRC and the URCNA.
- 4995 4.3 There has been meaningful contact between our respective churches at both grassroots  
4996 and at a federative level. That contact warrants formalizing our relationship in this way.
- 4997 4.4 A relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B is intended to function in  
4998 circumstances where there is good reason for recognizing another  
4999 federation/denomination as a true church of the Lord Jesus Christ, while simultaneously  
5000 acknowledging that culture, distance and history may limit the intensity with which that  
5001 relationship can be exercised. Such is the case here. The bulk of the ARPC is located in  
5002 the Southern US and the relative distance between our people will necessarily limit the  
5003 degree of our regular interaction. Nevertheless, it would be a blessing to be able to  
5004 demonstrate our unity in Christ when such occasions arise. As such, EF Category B  
5005 would be the best ‘fit’ for our relationship with the ARPC.
- 5006 4.5 Establishing EF has immediate consequences (e.g. table and pulpit fellowship); the  
5007 ARPC should be aware of its existence as soon as possible.
- 5008 4.6 At the current time, the area of greatest contact between the CanRC and the ARPC is in  
5009 Southwest Ontario. When the new Canadian denomination comes into existence, it  
5010 would be a blessing to be able to continue that relationship. We may also be able to be  
5011 of encouragement to our Canadian brothers and sisters as they undertake the hard work  
5012 of instituting as a new synod.
- 5013 4.7 The issue of women deacons raised by the Barrhead CanRC and the Fergus North  
5014 CanRC is adequately answered in the CER report.
- 5015 4.7.1 In *Women In The Life of the Church* (Section VI – What May Women Do?), the  
5016 ARP assert, “*Scripture does not permit women to serve in the office of elder, and*



5017 *that the role of spiritually authoritative teaching and discipline in the church is*  
5018 *reserved for male leadership”. As such the situation in the ARPC is unlike the*  
5019 *situation with the GKv who employ a non-biblical hermeneutic.*

5020 4.7.2 Sessions are permitted to ordain women deacons but are not required to do so.  
5021 Relatively few sessions make use of this freedom.

5022 4.7.3 The ARPC states that deacons do not hold an authoritative or governing position.  
5023 This view is the same as the ERQ with whom it was not an impediment to entering  
5024 EF (cf. GS 2016 Art 59 Consideration 3.4). Within the ARPC, the office of deacon  
5025 is necessarily different in nature and essence from the office of deacon within the  
5026 CanRC, contra GS 2016 Article 90 Consideration 3.2.3.

5027 4.8 The Grassie (Covenant) CanRC does not adequately show what new information might  
5028 come out that would substantially impact a decision to extend EF to the ARPC by  
5029 waiting until a future synod.

## 5030 **5. Recommendations**

5031 That Synod decide:

5032 5.1 To receive with thankfulness the offer of Fraternal Fellowship extended to the CanRC  
5033 by the General Synod of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) (2023);

5034 5.2 To enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category B with the Associate Reformed  
5035 Presbyterian Church (ARPC) according to the adopted rules and to communicate that  
5036 decision to the next meeting of the General Synod of the ARPC (2025);

5037 5.3 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

5038 5.3.1 To convey this decision to the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC)  
5039 as soon as possible;

5040 5.3.2 To establish contact with the Canadian denomination of the ARPC when it comes  
5041 into existence in 2025;

5042 5.3.3 To create more awareness within the CanRC about the ARPC practices (e.g. the  
5043 nature of deacons within the ARPC);

5044 5.3.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the ARPC to the churches no  
5045 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

5046

## 5047 **ADOPTED**

5048

5049 Rev. Rob Schouten read Ephesians 2:18-22 and led in prayer.

5050

## 5051 **Article 136 – GGRI (Reformed Churches in Indonesia)**

5052 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on the GGRI (Reformed Churches in Indonesia). The  
5053 report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

5054



5055 **Article 137 – GGRCI (Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia)**

5056 **1. Material**

5057 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 16: The Calvinist Reformed  
5058 Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI) (8.2.10.16).

5059 **2. Admissibility**

5060 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

5061 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

5062 **3. Observations**

5063 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 126) decided:

5064 [3.1] To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) with the Calvinist Reformed Churches  
5065 in Indonesia (GGRCI);

5066 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

5067 [3.2.1] To try to send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at  
5068 the next national synod of the GGRCI;

5069 [3.2.2] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of  
5070 Australia (FRCA) and United Reformed Churches in North America  
5071 (URCNA) in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRCI in their  
5072 efforts to grow in Reformed doctrine and polity;

5073 [3.2.3] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC given  
5074 their mission work in Timor;

5075 [3.2.4] As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions with a view to  
5076 promoting ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful Reformed  
5077 churches in Indonesia;

5078 [3.2.5] To submit its report to the churches six months prior to the convening of the  
5079 next general synod.

5080 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

5081 3.2.1 “GGRCI Synod took place in an orderly way in good brotherly harmony.”

5082 3.2.2 New government regulations are pushing the GGRCI and the GGRI toward closer  
5083 cooperation.

5084 3.2.3 GGRCI is experiencing challenges around theological training.

5085 3.2.4 GGRCI terminated the relationship with the Reformed Churches in The  
5086 Netherlands (liberated) (GKv).

5087 3.2.5 “There are numerous reasons for the CanRC to continue to maintain a meaningful  
5088 relationship with the GGRCI. The Toronto-Bethel CanRC and the Smithville  
5089 CanRC have (had) mission fields in Indonesia. Across Canada, many CanRC  
5090 members are involved with work among impoverished children and families in  
5091 Timor and Sumba; the organizations Word & Deed and Canadian Reformed World  
5092 Relief Fund (CRWRF) have played key roles in this.”

5093 3.2.6 “The recent visit of members of the CER to GS-GGRCI 2022 demonstrates the  
5094 importance of continuing EF and of being available for offering input,  
5095 encouragement, and support where needed.”

5096 3.2.7 “By working together with the FRCA and URCNA, CanRC will be able to support  
5097 the GGRCI and foster unity among Reformed churches in Indonesia. Given the  
5098 mission work of Smithville in Indonesia, which impacts both the GGRI and the  
5099 GGRCI, it is important for the CER to share information concerning its findings  
5100 with Smithville.”

5101 3.3 The CER recommends that synod decide:

5102 3.3.1. To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) category A with the Reformed Calvinist  
5103 Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI);

5104 3.3.2. To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

5105 3.3.2.1 To send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at the  
5106 next synod of the GGRCI;

5107 3.3.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of  
5108 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America  
5109 (URCNA) in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRCI in their  
5110 efforts to grow in Reformed doctrine and polity;

5111 3.3.2.3 As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions to promote  
5112 ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in  
5113 Indonesia;

5114 3.3.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC;

5115 3.3.2.5 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRCI to the  
5116 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 5117 **4. Considerations**

5118 4.1 The Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI) continue to display the marks  
5119 of a true and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared  
5120 recent history, a close relationship between the CanRC and the Reformed Churches in  
5121 Indonesia (GGRI) is mutually beneficial.

5122 4.2 Sending delegates to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at their major assemblies is  
5123 essential for maintaining a well-functioning ecclesiastical relationship in this cultural  
5124 context.

5125 4.3 Given that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) are closer to Indonesia  
5126 than the CanRC, it is prudent that the CER share information with these churches and  
5127 work in close conjunction with them, as well as with the United Reformed Churches in  
5128 North America (URCNA).

5129 4.4 By working together with the FRCA and URCNA, CanRC will be able to support the  
5130 GGRCI and foster unity among Reformed churches in Indonesia.

5131 4.5 Given the mission work of the Smithville CanRC in Indonesia, which impacts both the  
5132 GGRI and the GGRCI, it is important for the CER to share information concerning its  
5133 findings with Smithville.

#### 5134 **5. Recommendations**

5135 That Synod decide:

5136 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Calvinist Reformed  
5137 Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI);

- 5138 5.2. To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5139 5.2.1 To send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at the next
- 5140 synod of the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI);
- 5141 5.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of
- 5142 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)
- 5143 in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRCI in their efforts to grow
- 5144 in Reformed doctrine and polity;
- 5145 5.2.3 As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions to promote ecclesiastical
- 5146 harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in Indonesia;
- 5147 5.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC;
- 5148 5.2.5 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRCI to the churches no
- 5149 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 5150

5151 **ADOPTED**

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5153 **Article 138 – GGRI-T (Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Timor)**

5154 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on GGRI-T. The report was discussed. The committee

5155 took the report back for further consideration.

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5157 **Article 139 – Synod Guidelines re Officers of General Synods**

5158 **1. Material**

- 5159 1.1 Letter from Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.1.7).

5160 **2. Admissibility**

- 5161 2.1 The letter was declared admissible.
- 5162 Ground: It pertains to the operations of a general synod and was received on time.

5163 **3. Observations**

- 5164 3.1 The Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC has submitted a letter expressing appreciation for the
- 5165 work of general synod and offering a recommendation regarding the election of officers.
- 5166 3.2 Guelph (Emmanuel) affirms the value of having new voices at general synod and
- 5167 cautions against perceptions of entrenched leadership by repeatedly appointing the same
- 5168 brothers as officers.
- 5169 3.3 The letter does not question the character or objectivity of those who have served but
- 5170 emphasizes the importance of preserving broad trust and avoiding the appearance of
- 5171 synodical hierarchy.
- 5172 3.4 Guelph (Emmanuel) proposes an amendment to Section I, Point H of the Guidelines for
- 5173 General Synod, encouraging Synod to “consider avoiding the reappointment of the same
- 5174 officers for more than two consecutive synods.”

5175 **4. Considerations**

- 5176 4.1 The submission of Guelph (Emmanuel) aligns with the long-standing Reformed concern
- 5177 to avoid hierarchical patterns in church governance.

5178 4.2 While continuity of experience has value, the suggested amendment is worded as a  
5179 consideration rather than a binding rule and therefore maintains the autonomy of each  
5180 general synod to elect its officers freely.

5181 4.3 Including such a guideline would encourage a healthy pattern of rotation, avoid the  
5182 appearance of “synod rulers,” and foster wider participation without disrupting Synod’s  
5183 orderly functioning.

## 5184 **5. Recommendations**

5185 5.1 That Synod accede to the proposal of the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC and amend  
5186 Section I, Point H of the Guidelines for General Synods to read as follows:

5187 “Officers of Synod shall be chosen by ballot in this order: chairman, vice-  
5188 chairman, first clerk, and second clerk, with consideration made to avoid the  
5189 reappointment of the same individuals to the same position for more than two (2)  
5190 consecutive synods. Election to office is to be by majority of valid votes cast.”

5191

### 5192 **ADOPTED**

5193 K. Janssen had his abstention recorded.

5194 *Note: The Synod Guidelines as last revised by GS 2025 can be found in Appendix 25.*

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5196 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 8 — Evening Session**  
**Wednesday, May 14, 2025**

**Article 140 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 7:1,3. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 141 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 105 (*Hymn Cap*)**

Committee 1 presented draft 2 of a report on an appeal against GS 2022 art. 105 (*Hymn Cap*). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 142 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Parts 4, 5, and 7**

Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on the SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Parts 4, 5, and 7. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 143 – Overture CCO Jun 2020: phrase “summarized in the *confessions*”**

Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on an overture adopted by Classis Central Ontario (CCO) Jun 2020 and submitted by the Hamilton (Blessings) CanRC regarding the phrase “summarized in the *confessions*” in several Liturgical Forms. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 144 – Closing Devotions**

Rev. Ken Wieske spoke some devotional words, read Zechariah 4:6-10b, spoke some more devotional words, had the meeting sing Psalm 127:1,2, and led in prayer.

*Synod was adjourned until 9:00am.*

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**Day 9 — Morning Session**  
**Thursday, May 15, 2025**

**Article 145 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 126, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 126. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 146– Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 147 – KPCK – Letter of Greetings**

Rev. Karlo Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Kosin Presbyterian Church of Korea (KPCK), declaring gratitude for our relationship. The full text of the letter can be found in Appendix 17. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 148 – IRB – Letter of Greetings**

Rev. Karlo Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB), declaring gratitude for our relationship and expressing regret at being unable to attend Synod in person. The full text of the letter can be found in Appendix 18. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 149 – Overture RSE 2024: Shortening Duration of General Synod**

Committee 4 presented draft 1 of a report on an overture from RSE 2024 regarding shortening the duration of a general synod. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 150 – Appeal Burlington (Fellowship) against GS 2022 art. 155: Pulpit Access**

Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal by the Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC against GS 2022 art. 155 regarding pulpit access. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 151 – GGRI (Reformed Churches in Indonesia)**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 15: Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI) (8.2.10.15).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

Grounds: It was mandated by the previous synod and was received on time.

5267 **3. Observations**

5268 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 125) decided:

5269 [3.1] To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches in  
5270 Indonesia (GGRI);

5271 [3.2] To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):

5272 [3.2.1] To try to send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at  
5273 the next national synod of the GGRI;

5274 [3.2.2] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of  
5275 Australia (FRCA) and United Reformed Churches in North America  
5276 (URCNA) in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRI in their  
5277 efforts to grow in Reformed doctrine and polity;

5278 [3.2.3] To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC given  
5279 their mission work in Timor;

5280 [3.2.4] As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions with a view to  
5281 promoting ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful reformed  
5282 churches in Indonesia;

5283 [3.2.5] To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the  
5284 next general synod.

5285 3.2 From the CER report, the following:

5286 3.2.1 The CER continues to provide advice in dealing with practical matters, for  
5287 example the difficulties when dealing with government and theological education.

5288 3.2.2 The GGRI is looking at the possibility of establishing a relationship with the  
5289 GGRI-T.

5290 3.2.3 The GGRI is investing time into ecumenical relations beyond the CanRC.

5291 3.2.4 The churches within the GGRI inform each other about decisions made in their  
5292 respective Regional Synods and help each other navigate various challenges and  
5293 theological matters.

5294 3.2.5 There are strong reasons to maintain our relationship with the GGRI. The CanRC  
5295 has historical mission fields in Indonesia and continues to support churches in  
5296 Papua. Across Canada, CanRC members are involved in aiding impoverished  
5297 children and families in Timor and Sumba, with organizations like Word & Deed  
5298 and CRWRF playing significant roles. As the Netherlandish Reformed Churches  
5299 (NGK) withdraw from Indonesia, the GGRI look to the CanRC and the Free  
5300 Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) for support, appreciating the input from  
5301 CanRC's fraternal delegates.

5302 3.2.6 The GGRI is increasingly concerned about the direction of the GKv (now NGK).

5303 3.2.7 The GGRI show they remain faithful churches.

5304 3.2.7.1 "By working together with the FRCA and URCNA, the CanRC will be able  
5305 to support the GGRI and foster unity among Reformed churches in Indonesia.  
5306 Given the mission work of Smithville in Indonesia, which impacts both the  
5307 GGRI and the GGRCI, it is important for the CER to share information  
5308 concerning its findings with Smithville."



- 5309 3.3 The CER recommends that Synod decide:
- 5310 3.3.1 To continue ecclesiastical fellowship (EF) category A with the Reformed Churches
- 5311 in Indonesia (GGRI);
- 5312 3.3.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5313 3.3.2.1 To send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at the
- 5314 next national synod of the GGRI;
- 5315 3.3.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of
- 5316 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America
- 5317 (URCNA) in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRI in their
- 5318 efforts to grow in Reformed doctrine and polity;
- 5319 3.3.2.3 As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions to promote
- 5320 ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in
- 5321 Indonesia;
- 5322 3.3.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC;
- 5323 3.3.2.5 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRI to the churches
- 5324 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.

#### 5325 **4. Considerations**

- 5326 4.1 The Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI) continue to display the marks of a true
- 5327 and faithful church of Jesus Christ. Given frequent interaction and a shared recent
- 5328 history, a close relationship between the CanRC and GGRI is mutually beneficial.
- 5329 4.2 Sending delegates to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at their major assemblies is
- 5330 essential for maintaining a well-functioning ecclesiastical relationship in this cultural
- 5331 context.
- 5332 4.3 Given that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) are very involved in
- 5333 Indonesia, it is prudent that the CER share information with these churches and work in
- 5334 close conjunction with them as well as with the United Reformed Churches in North
- 5335 America (URCNA).
- 5336 4.4 By working together with the FRCA and the URCNA, the CanRC will be able to
- 5337 support the GGRI and foster unity among Reformed churches in Indonesia.
- 5338 4.5 Given the mission work of Smithville in Indonesia, which impacts both the GGRI and
- 5339 the Calvinist Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI), it is important for the CER to
- 5340 share information concerning its findings with the Smithville CanRC.

#### 5341 **5. Recommendations**

5342 That Synod decide:

- 5343 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) Category A with the Reformed Churches in
- 5344 Indonesia (GGRI);
- 5345 5.2 To mandate the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5346 5.2.1 To send a delegation of brothers to Indonesia to represent the CanRC at the next
- 5347 national synod of the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI);
- 5348 5.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of
- 5349 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)

- 5350 in encouraging and supporting the churches of the GGRI in their efforts to grow in  
5351 Reformed doctrine and polity;
- 5352 5.2.3 As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions to promote ecclesiastical  
5353 harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in Indonesia;
- 5354 5.2.4 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Smithville CanRC;
- 5355 5.2.5 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRI to the churches no  
5356 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

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5358 **ADOPTED**

5359

5360 **Article 152 – GGRI-T (Reformed Churches in Indonesia – Timor)**

5361 **1. Material**

- 5362 1.1 Committee for Ecumenical Relations (CER) Report 17: Reformed Churches in  
5363 Indonesia – Timor (GGRI-T) (8.2.10.17).
- 5364 1.2 Letter from the following church: Smithville (8.3.10.25).
- 5365 1.3 Confidential letter from CER re 8.3.10.25 (8.2.10.28).

5366 **2. Admissibility**

- 5367 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
5368 Grounds: The report was requested by the previous synod and arrived on time.
- 5369 2.2 The letter from Smithville was declared admissible.  
5370 Grounds: The letter interacts with a report and was received on time.
- 5371 2.3 The letter from the CER was declared admissible.  
5372 Grounds: The letter was received on time, and pertained to matters raised by Smithville.

5373 **3. Observations**

- 5374 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 127) decided:
- 5375 [3.1] To instruct the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5376 [3.1.1] In conjunction with the Smithville Canadian Reformed Church to provide  
5377 assistance within the normal ambit of CER work that would be of benefit to  
5378 the Reformed Churches in Indonesia Timor (GGRI-Timor);
- 5379 [3.1.2] As opportunity arises, to be available for discussions with a view to  
5380 promoting ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful reformed  
5381 churches in Indonesia;
- 5382 [3.1.3] To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the  
5383 next general synod.
- 5384 3.2 From the CER report, the following:
- 5385 3.2.1 The CER “were thankful for a face-to-face meeting in September, 2022.  
5386 Additional effort via email has been made to engage, but we have not heard back.”
- 5387 3.2.2 Since 2019, CRCA and then CER have been available to help resolve the  
5388 differences between the GGRI-T and GGRCI.

- 5389 3.2.2.1 “So far there has been no positive response in regard to this from the  
5390 GGRI-T.”
- 5391 3.2.2.2 “Until all parties are willing to engage in peaceful, open communication with  
5392 the goal of brotherly unity and cooperation according to the Word of God, no  
5393 positive progress can be expected.”
- 5394 3.2.3 “...the mandate with respect to the GGRI-Timor can be continued with some  
5395 modification. It is important to continue to show willingness to interact with  
5396 deputies of the GGRI-T.”
- 5397 3.2.4 “As the GGRI-T have arisen as a result of mission work undertaken by the  
5398 Smithville CanRC and still maintain contact with this church, it makes sense for  
5399 the CER to keep lines of communication with the Mission Board of the Smithville  
5400 church open concerning the GGRI-T.”
- 5401 3.2.5 “The CER also is grateful for having been able to periodically connect with  
5402 Smithville Mission Board during the past few years.”
- 5403 3.3 The CER recommends that Synod decide:
- 5404 3.3.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact with the Reformed Churches in Timor,  
5405 Indonesia (GGRI-T) according to the adopted rules;
- 5406 3.3.2 To instruct the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5407 3.3.2.1 To maintain open lines of communication with the Smithville CanRC to be  
5408 aware of opportunities within the normal ambit of CER work to benefit the  
5409 GGRI-T;
- 5410 3.3.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of  
5411 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America  
5412 (URCNA) as we interact with the GGRI-T;
- 5413 3.3.2.3 To continue to communicate to the GGRI-T a willingness to be available for  
5414 discussions with a view to promoting ecclesiastical harmony and unity  
5415 between faithful Reformed churches in Indonesia;
- 5416 3.3.2.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRI-T to the  
5417 churches 6 months prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 5418 3.4 Smithville expresses concern with a statement made in the CER GGRCI report  
5419 regarding STAKRI. They would have appreciated being consulted prior to this being  
5420 published in the report.
- 5421 3.4.1 The CER provided background material in a confidential letter.
- 5422 3.5 Smithville feels that the CER has not interacted with them enough and feel “it would be  
5423 helpful for us to be included in dialogue with the committee.”
- 5424 3.6 Smithville has “witnessed the faithfulness, dedication and growth of the GGRI-T over  
5425 the past 20 years”, and questions whether it is “wise for us to withhold the right hand of  
5426 fellowship from this federation and judge them at arm’s length when they are striving to  
5427 be faithful to God’s Word within their immediate cultural and ecclesiastical context”.

5428 **4. Considerations**

- 5429 4.1 The Reformed Churches in Indonesia - Timor (GGRI-T) have arisen as a result of  
5430 mission work undertaken by the Smithville CanRC and still maintain contact with this  
5431 church.
- 5432 4.2 It is important to continue to show willingness to assist the GGRI-T in promoting  
5433 ecclesiastical harmony and unity between faithful Reformed churches in Indonesia  
5434 according to the Word of God.
- 5435 4.3 Given that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) are closer to Indonesia  
5436 than the CanRC, it is prudent that the CER share information with these churches and  
5437 work in close conjunction with them as well as with the United Reformed Churches in  
5438 North America (URCNA) (the latter because of their close connection to the Calvinist  
5439 Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI)).
- 5440 4.4 The CER recognizes the need for ongoing dialogue with Smithville on issues regarding  
5441 ecclesiastical relationships in Indonesia and has recommended including this in the  
5442 mandate.
- 5443 4.5 The witness of Smithville to the faith of the GGRI-T is commendable, but the CER  
5444 report indicates that the deputies from the GGRI-T themselves minimally engage with  
5445 the synodically appointed committee despite repeated attempts.

5446 **5. Recommendations**

5447 That Synod decide:

- 5448 5.1 To continue Ecclesiastical Contact (EC) with the Reformed Churches in Indonesia -  
5449 Timor (GGRI-T) according to the adopted rules;
- 5450 5.2 To instruct the Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 5451 5.2.1 To maintain open lines of communication with the Smithville CanRC to be aware  
5452 of opportunities within the normal ambit of CER work to benefit the Reformed  
5453 Churches in Indonesia – Timor (GGRI-T);
- 5454 5.2.2 To work in consultation and cooperation with the Free Reformed Churches of  
5455 Australia (FRCA) and the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA)  
5456 as we interact with the GGRI-T;
- 5457 5.2.3 To continue to communicate to the GGRI-T a willingness to be available for  
5458 discussions with a view to promoting ecclesiastical harmony and unity between  
5459 faithful Reformed churches in Indonesia;
- 5460 5.2.4 To submit its report on its activities with respect to the GGRI-T to the churches no  
5461 later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

5462

5463 **ADOPTED**

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5465 **Article 153 – Overture RSW 2024: Infant Baptism Form**

5466 Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on an overture from RSW 2024 regarding the  
5467 Liturgical Form for the Baptism of Infants. The report was discussed. The committee took the  
5468 report back for further consideration.

5469

5470 **Article 154 – CRTS (Board of Governors)**

5471 **1. Material**

5472 1.1 Report of the Board of Governors at CRTS Report to GS 2025 (8.2.6.1).

5473 1.2 CRTS Supplemental Report to GS 2025 (8.2.6.2).

5474 1.3 Letter from Toronto (Bethel) CanRC re CRTS sixth professor (8.3.6.1).

5475 **2. Admissibility**

5476 2.1 The report from the CRTS Board of Governors was declared admissible.

5477 Ground: They were mandated by the previous synod and arrived on time

5478 2.2 The letter from Toronto CanRC was declared admissible.

5479 Ground: It is in response to the report of the CRTS BoG and arrived on time.

5480 **3. Observations**

5481 3.1 The report of the Board of Governors (hereafter “the Board”) provides an overview of  
5482 its effort to ensure the continued operation of the Theological College in Hamilton  
5483 (CRTS). With the faithful support of the churches the work, training, and instruction at  
5484 CRTS has continued without interruption since GS 2022. The Board appreciates the  
5485 contribution of non-teaching staff to the smooth running of CRTS. Since GS 2022,  
5486 19 students have graduated with an MDiv degree.

5487 3.2 From the CRTS Report, the following:

5488 3.2.1 Synod 2022 appointed to the Board of Governors brs. A. Bartels and H. Post, and  
5489 Revs. J. Temple and J. VanSpronsen with their terms to continue to 2031.

5490 3.2.2 The following brothers have completed their terms as governors: Revs. John  
5491 Louwerse, Joe Poppe, James Slaa, brs. Peter Vandersluis, Kasper VanVeen.

5492 3.2.3 Our Lord took to himself Dr. N.H. Gootjes on August 20, 2023.

5493 3.2.4 Dr. Bredenhof began his work at the seminary in January 2023. He began his  
5494 teaching responsibilities as Professor of Ministry and Mission in the fall of 2023  
5495 and took on the role of Pastoral Training Program Director in June 2024.

5496 3.2.5 The Board decided to make the position of teaching assistant permanent starting in  
5497 the 2022-2023 academic year, helping the faculty up to 20 hours per week.  
5498 Currently the position is held by CRTS graduate Raoul Kingma.

5499 3.2.6 The matter of faculty succession has had the attention of the Board and Senate in  
5500 recent years. The board notes that five professors will retire within a few years of  
5501 each other (around the year 2035).

5502 3.2.7 As decided by Synod 2022, Dr. J. VanVliet was appointed as Principal of the  
5503 seminary for a three-year term from 2022 to 2025. The Board recommends to  
5504 General Synod 2025 to give leave to the Board to re-appoint Dr. VanVliet to  
5505 Principal of the seminary for another three-year term, from academic years 2025 to  
5506 2028.

5507 3.2.8 At its meeting on January 12, 2023, the Board of Governors approved the Mature  
5508 Student Policy to be used on a trial-basis for two years. This policy allows mature

- 5509 students over the age of 30 to enroll in the MDiv program at CRTS without a  
5510 bachelor's degree, while still maintaining the academic integrity of the program.
- 5511 3.2.9 The 2022, 2023 and 2024 Annual Reports of the Finance and Property Committee  
5512 along with audited Annual Financial Reports for the fiscal years ending December  
5513 31 for 2021, 2022, and 2023 are included in the report.
- 5514 3.2.10 Regarding support from the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA), the  
5515 Board of Governors request General Synod 2025 to take note of the following:
- 5516 3.2.10.1 The FRCA continues to express deep appreciation for CRTS and the training  
5517 their students receive. Their exploration of a domestic seminary (Australian  
5518 Reformed Theological Seminary – ARTS) does not stem from dissatisfaction  
5519 but from a desire to fulfill CO-FRCA art. 19 in a more direct, geographically  
5520 appropriate way, including providing accredited theological education within  
5521 Australia.
- 5522 3.2.10.2 Four options for a seminary were outlined by Synod-FRCA 2024: (1)  
5523 Affiliate of CRTS; (2) Accredited via Australian College of Theology; (3)  
5524 Independently accredited ARTS; (4) A phased approach starting with 1).  
5525 While options 2 and 3 present significant challenges, Option 1 is more  
5526 attainable and allows for ongoing collaboration between CRTS and the  
5527 FRCA, without creating unhealthy competition for faculty or students.
- 5528 3.2.10.3 Given the focus on Option 1, governance became a central issue. Both the  
5529 CRTS Act and ATS standards require a single governing board over any  
5530 affiliate campus. Two governance models were discussed:
- 5531 **Model 1:** Appointing FRCA members to the CRTS Board, which would  
5532 require amending the Act via the Ontario legislature. The CRTS Board  
5533 has ruled this out, due to the risks of reopening the Act, which has  
5534 served the seminary well since 1981.
- 5535 **Model 2:** A standing *advisory committee* of FRCA members that provides  
5536 input on affiliate-related matters. The CRTS Board supports further  
5537 discussion of this model, and the FRCA Synod 2024 has confirmed  
5538 that they would accept this advisory model if offered.
- 5539 3.2.10.4 Synod-FRCA 2024 emphasized the need to consider faculty and student  
5540 numbers, finances, and the potential impact on local churches before  
5541 launching a seminary. They referenced CRTS's suggestion that a new  
5542 seminary should only proceed when CRTS approaches 50 students and at  
5543 least eight suitable professors are available across the CanRC and FRCA.
- 5544 3.2.10.5 Looking ahead, the FRCA will consult further on the four models and explore  
5545 support from Asia-Pacific churches. Deputies have been mandated to develop  
5546 a long-term, specific, and affordable plan toward an ARTS by 2040,  
5547 including:
- 5548 • consultations with Asia-Pacific churches;
  - 5549 • steps and timelines for each seminary model;
  - 5550 • cost estimates (establishment and operation for 12 students and 4  
5551 professors);
  - 5552 • church support levels; and



5553 • monitoring key challenges.

5554 The CRTS Board remains committed to working closely with the FRCA deputies,  
5555 seeking the Lord's wisdom as we continue serving his church together.

5556 3.2.11 The Board of Governors is proposing significant changes to the bylaws of the  
5557 seminary.

5558 In summary, the changes to the bylaws fall within one of four categories:

- 5559 1. Change required to be in compliance with ONCA (Ontario Not-for-Profit  
5560 Corporations Act);
- 5561 2. Change required to reflect actual practice;
- 5562 3. Removal of bylaws which are no longer necessary to keep in the bylaws  
5563 since we have clear Board-approved policies in place on those topics;
- 5564 4. Clean up language.

5565 There are two additions and one change to the Bylaw that the Board would like to  
5566 draw to the attention of Synod:

- 5567 1. In article 3.02 Qualifications (of Governors), the following was added for  
5568 clarity: "No person shall be a Governor unless he is eligible to serve as an  
5569 officer bearer in his local Church." While the Board has always assumed all  
5570 governors must be male (given their supervisory role over Ministers of the  
5571 Word), this was not explicitly stated. The Academic Committee is already  
5572 restricted to ministers (and thus male), but this had not been clarified for the  
5573 Finance and Property Committee.

5574 In light of discussions on the ATS Diversity Report, the Board reaffirmed its  
5575 position that all governors, including on the Finance and Property  
5576 Committee, must be male. To reflect this while minimizing legal risk, the  
5577 Board adopted wording proposed by lawyer Karl Veldkamp.

- 5578 2. A new membership section was added to meet ONCA requirements. While  
5579 the churches could be defined as members, this would require annual  
5580 meetings and direct appointment of governors. Since synods already appoint  
5581 governors and oversee CRTS, the Bylaw now defines the governors  
5582 themselves as members. This preserves current practice while satisfying  
5583 legal obligations.

- 5584 3. The Bylaw now clarifies substitute appointments. Previously, it required six  
5585 substitutes for ministerial governors and said nothing about non-ministerial  
5586 ones, leading to inconsistent synod decisions. The revised Bylaw reduces  
5587 ministerial substitutes to one per regional synod and adds two substitutes for  
5588 non-ministerial governors, making the process clearer and more manageable.

5589 3.3 The Board of Governors recommends:

5590 3.3.1 To receive this report and all its appendices;

5591 3.3.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of Revs. J. Louwse, J.  
5592 Poppe and J. Slaa as well as brothers P. Vandersluis and K. VanVeen and to  
5593 express gratitude for their contributions to the work of the Board;

5594 3.3.3 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 13 to appoint, elect,  
5595 or re-appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next general synod and to  
5596 appoint at least two substitutes, one from each regional synod area, keeping in



- 5597 mind that the Bylaws prohibit anyone from serving more than three consecutive  
5598 terms and keeping in mind that:
- 5599 a. The following brother was appointed by Synod 2019 and is eligible for  
5600 reappointment for one more term: from Regional Synod East, Rev. C.  
5601 VanderVelde;
  - 5602 b. The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2022 and are eligible for  
5603 reappointment for two more terms: from Regional Synod East, Rev. J.  
5604 Temple and from Regional Synod West, Rev. J. VanSpronsen;
  - 5605 c. Along with the reappointments, Synod needs to appoint two active  
5606 ministers from Regional Synod West and one active minister from Regional  
5607 Synod East to hold the office of governor, along with one substitute from  
5608 each regional synod area.
- 5609 3.3.4 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 13, to appoint, elect,  
5610 or re-appoint five non-ministerial governors and to appoint at least two substitutes,  
5611 keeping in mind that the Bylaws prohibit anyone from serving more than three  
5612 consecutive terms and keeping in mind that:
- 5613 a. The following brother was appointed by Synod 2019 and is eligible for  
5614 reappointment for one more term: br. A. Datema;
  - 5615 b. The following brothers were appointed by Synod 2022 and are eligible for  
5616 reappointment for two more terms: brs. A. Bartels and H. Post;
  - 5617 c. Along with the reappointments, Synod needs to appoint two non-ministerial  
5618 governors. The Board's recommendation for these appointments will be  
5619 found in a separate letter which will also contain *curricula vitae*. In  
5620 addition, General Synod should appoint two substitutes for the non-  
5621 ministerial governors.
- 5622 3.3.5 To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs.  
5623 G. Deddens, Mrs. M. DeJong, Mrs. D. Gootjes, Dr. and Mrs. Van Dam, Dr. and  
5624 Mrs. Visscher, and Dr. and Mrs. De Visser;
- 5625 3.3.6 To give leave to the Board to appoint Dr. J. Van Vliet as Principal for the  
5626 academic years 2025- 2028;
- 5627 3.3.7 To approve the changes to the Bylaws described in this report;
- 5628 3.3.8 To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for  
5629 the years 2022, 2023, and 2024 until the date of this report;
- 5630 3.3.9 To mandate the Board to express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed  
5631 Churches in Australia;
- 5632 3.3.10 To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditor for the  
5633 previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities  
5634 for these fiscal periods; to support and recommend the reappointment of DBK  
5635 Accounting as Auditor until the next General Synod, subject to the discretion and  
5636 direction of the Board;
- 5637 3.3.11 To acknowledge with gratitude the financial contributions of the Women's Savings  
5638 Action to the well-being of the seminary.
- 5639 3.4 From the CRTS Supplemental Report, the following:

- 5640 3.4.1 In the 2024 Report of the Finance and Property Committee the 2025 assessment  
5641 was set at \$100 per communicant member. Since that time the Board decided to  
5642 increase the assessment by \$1 for 2025 to cover some additional expenses.
- 5643 3.4.2 The Board of Governors request that General Synod approve two additional bylaw  
5644 changes below:
- 5645 1. Bylaw 13 section 1.01 defines an Adjunct Professor as “*someone who holds*  
5646 *a doctorate degree, is a professor at another institution of learning, and who*  
5647 *instructs a course or courses.*” *The Board proposes to change this definition*  
5648 *of an Adjunct Professor to “someone who holds a doctorate degree or an*  
5649 *appropriate master’s degree, is a professor at another institution of learning,*  
5650 *and who instructs a course or courses.*” This brings the minimum  
5651 qualification of an adjunct professor in line with that of a full-time professor.
  - 5652 2. Bylaw 13 section 14.06c currently states: “*Credits obtained in any course*  
5653 *leading to a diploma or a degree should only remain valid for a period of five*  
5654 *(5) years unless the diploma or degree is obtained, or an extension has been*  
5655 *granted by the Senate.*” Upon further review, the Board proposes to change  
5656 this to: “*The maximum time limit to complete a diploma or degree is seven*  
5657 *years (including any leave of absence or withdrawal period) unless an*  
5658 *extension has been granted by Senate.*” This new formulation is in line with  
5659 commonly accepted academic standards.
- 5660 3.4.3 The BoG considered the matter of a bursary fund for those who pursue advanced  
5661 studies beyond the MDiv degree. Generally speaking, those who pursue advanced  
5662 studies fall into one of two categories:
- 5663 1. Students who pursue advanced studies immediately after the completion of  
5664 their studies at CRTS and *before* becoming eligible for call.
  - 5665 2. Ministers who pursue advanced studies after some time in the ministry while  
5666 continuing to hold their office as Minister of the Word.
- 5667 The BoG would like to propose a bursary fund for those students who fall into the  
5668 first category, namely those who have not been declared eligible for call but rather  
5669 pursue advanced studies first.
- 5670 3.4.3.1 **Bursary Proposal for Graduating Students Pursuing Advanced Studies**
- 5671 Graduating CRTS students with strong academic potential and faculty  
5672 prospects may be eligible for a \$15,000 bursary to support further theological  
5673 studies. Eligibility is determined by the Academic Committee (AC), with  
5674 Senate input and an interview with the applicant. The bursary, called the  
5675 Advanced Theological Studies Assistance (ATSA) Bursary, can be renewed  
5676 annually based on continued study and reassessment. It is intended as partial  
5677 support, not full coverage of living expenses, and differs from current CRTS  
5678 student funding.
- 5679 Funds would be distributed through the existing Needy Students Fund (NSF),  
5680 avoiding the need for a new fund or structure. The NSF may slightly increase  
5681 assessments to accommodate this bursary and has confirmed it has no  
5682 objection. Synod should update the mandate for the NSF [*sic* – should be of  
5683 the CNST] if the proposal is adopted. An application form will be created

5684 using the NSF's current format, gathering details on study plans and financial  
5685 need. Reapplicants must resubmit each year, with progress and financial  
5686 updates. Support may extend up to two years for MTh and five years for PhD  
5687 studies.

5688 3.4.3.2 Precise wording of criteria would be established by Senate and the Academic  
5689 Committee and would include matters such as:

- 5690 1) exceptionally strong academic performance;
- 5691 2) strong work ethic and time management, particularly demonstrating  
5692 the ability to stay focussed on large projects;
- 5693 3) evident spiritual maturity and a disposition to work well with others;
- 5694 4) financial need of the applicant;
- 5695 5) the long-term needs of the seminary, looking toward potential future  
5696 professors for each department.

5697 3.4.3.3 Summary Steps of ATSA Bursary Process.

5698 The applicant submits an application to the AC and copies the Senate. The  
5699 AC, using established criteria and Senate input, determines eligibility and  
5700 issues a written recommendation. If approved, the student forwards the  
5701 form and recommendation to the NSF, which issues the bursary as a lump  
5702 sum. Repeat applicants must begin the process anew each year.

5703 For ministers already serving, who are not eligible for this bursary, support  
5704 for advanced studies should come from their local church, potentially  
5705 assisted by classis. This support should include financial assistance and  
5706 possibly reduced pastoral workload to enable study without undue strain on  
5707 the minister and his family.

5708 3.5 Toronto (Bethel) recommends that GS 2025 instruct the CRTS Board of Governors to  
5709 consider adding a sixth professor, dividing the current portfolio of the Professor of  
5710 Ministry into two portfolios: Professor of Mission and Professor of Ministry. It states  
5711 the following considerations:

5712 3.5.1 The workload of the current professor as the student body continues to grow.

5713 3.5.2 The increasing amount of Foreign Mission and Home Mission activity in the  
5714 Canadian Reformed churches.

5715 3.5.3 As the mission field comes to our local churches, there are many cultural practices  
5716 that Pastors and Elders are dealing with. Training in this would be beneficial.

5717 3.5.4 Missionaries for both foreign and domestic Mission projects will be better  
5718 prepared for these specialized ministries.

5719 3.5.5 Two portfolios would create opportunities for more focus on each discipline.

#### 5720 **4. Considerations**

5721 4.1 Synod notes with thankfulness that the work of the Theological College in Hamilton  
5722 (CRTS) could continue without interruption between GS 2022 and GS 2025.

5723 4.2 Synod notes with the sadness the passing away of Dr. N.H. Gootjes into glory.

- 5724 4.3 Synod is grateful to the Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) for their  
5725 continued involvement in CRTS, as well as their prayerful and significant financial  
5726 support.
- 5727 4.4 Synod notes with gratitude that the Pastoral Training Program continues to be beneficial  
5728 for the students and the churches.
- 5729 4.5 The Board's request to approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and its  
5730 committees is a legal requirement in accordance with the College Act.
- 5731 4.6 It is wise that the BoG has the foresight to make provision to support the training of  
5732 potential future professors of theology. With respect to the development of criteria for  
5733 the proposed Graduating Students Pursuing Advanced Studies Bursary, it is important to  
5734 include a clear commitment to the Reformed confessions.
- 5735 4.7 While the recommendation of Toronto (Bethel) may have merit, it is not mentioned or  
5736 alluded to in the Board of Governors' Report and has not been considered or discussed  
5737 by the churches at the minor assemblies.

5738 **5. Recommendations**

5739 That Synod decide:

- 5740 5.1 To receive this report and all its appendices;
- 5741 5.2 To acknowledge the expiration of the terms of office of Revs. J. Louwense, J. Poppe and  
5742 J. Slaa as well as brothers P. Vandersluis and K. VanVeen and to express gratitude for  
5743 their contributions to the work of the Board;
- 5744 5.3 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 13 to appoint, elect, or re-  
5745 appoint six active ministers to hold office until the next general synod and to appoint at  
5746 least two substitutes, one from each regional synod area, keeping in mind that the  
5747 Bylaws prohibit anyone from serving more than three consecutive terms;
- 5748 5.4 To appoint two active ministers from Regional Synod West and one active minister  
5749 from Regional Synod East to hold the office of governor, along with one substitute from  
5750 each regional synod area;
- 5751 5.5 Pursuant to Section 5(2) of the Act and Section 3.04 of Bylaw 13, to appoint, elect, or  
5752 re-appoint five non-ministerial governors and to appoint at least two substitutes, keeping  
5753 in mind that the Bylaws prohibit anyone from serving more than three consecutive  
5754 terms;
- 5755 5.6 To request the churches to continue to remember in their prayers the needs of Mrs. G.  
5756 Deddens, Mrs. M. DeJong, Mrs. D. Gootjes, Dr. and Mrs. Van Dam, Dr. and Mrs.  
5757 Visscher, and Dr. and Mrs. De Visser;
- 5758 5.7 To give leave to the Board to appoint Dr. J. Van Vliet as Principal for the academic  
5759 years 2025- 2028;
- 5760 5.8 To approve the changes to the Bylaws described in this report;
- 5761 5.9 To approve all other decisions and actions of the Board and of its committees for the  
5762 years 2022, 2023, and 2024 until the date of this report;
- 5763 5.10 To mandate the Board to express gratitude for the support from the Free Reformed  
5764 Churches in Australia (FRCA);

- 5765 5.11 To consider the audited financial statements and the report of the Auditor for the  
5766 previous fiscal periods; to relieve the Treasurer of the Board of all responsibilities for  
5767 these fiscal periods; to support and recommend the reappointment of DBK Accounting  
5768 as Auditor until the next general synod, subject to the discretion and direction of the  
5769 Board;
- 5770 5.12 To acknowledge with gratitude, the financial contributions of the Women’s Savings  
5771 Action to the well-being of the seminary;
- 5772 5.13 To accept the Bursary Proposal for Graduating Students Pursuing Advanced Studies as  
5773 found in Observation 3.4.3.1;
- 5774 5.14 To instruct the Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST) to collect and  
5775 distribute the funds for the Bursary Proposal and to adjust Synod’s mandate to the  
5776 CNST accordingly (cf. GS 2025 art. 167 rec. 5.4.2);
- 5777 5.15 To not adopt the recommendation of the Toronto (Bethel) CanRC at this time.
- 5778 5.16 To mandate the Board of Governors to submit its report on its activities to the churches  
5779 no later than six (6) months prior the convening of the next general synod.

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5781 **ADOPTED**

5782 Revs. J. Louwse and J. Poppe abstained as members of the Board of Governors.

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5784 **Article 155 – Overture RSW 2024: CO art. 30 (Ecclesiastical Route)**

5785 Committee 2 presented draft 1 of a report on an overture from RSW 2024 re CO art. 30  
5786 (*Ecclesiastical Route*). The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
5787 consideration.

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5789 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 9 — Evening Session**  
**Thursday, May 15, 2025**

**Article 156 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman had the meeting sing Hymn 52:1,2. He observed all synod members were present.

**Article 157 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Parts 8-12 and Three Parts 15, 16**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*, Section One, Parts 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and Section Three, Parts 15, 16 (8.2.8.1).
- 1.2 SCBP Appendix 3 – Protocol for making changes to the Australian *Book of Praise*. (8.2.8.1).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The report Section One Parts 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12, along with Appendix 3, as well as Section Three Parts 15, 16 were declared admissible.  
Grounds: The report is from a standing synodical committee and was received on time.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 120) gave the following mandate:
  - 3.1.1 To continue maintaining its archives (at CRTS) and website [www.bookofpraise.ca](http://www.bookofpraise.ca).
  - 3.1.2 To maintain good contact with the Standing Committee for the Australian *Book of Praise* (SCABP).
  - 3.1.3 To maintain its corporate status for the purpose of protecting the interests of the Canadian Reformed Churches in matters concerning the *Book of Praise*.
  - 3.1.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work.
  - 3.1.5 To submit its report to the churches 6 months prior to the convening of the next general synod.
- 3.2 The SCBP provided the churches with its permanent mailing address:  
Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP)  
c/o Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary  
110 West 27th Street  
Hamilton, Ontario,  
L9C 5A1
- 3.3 The SCBP provided the churches with its email address: [bookofpraise@canrc.org](mailto:bookofpraise@canrc.org).

**4. Considerations**

- 4.1 GS 2025 acknowledges with thankfulness the work of the SCBP in executing the mandate it received from GS 2022 with respect to Section One items 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and Section Three items 15 and 16.



5831 **5. Recommendations**

5832 That Synod decide:

5833 5.1 To thank the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) for  
5834 its work over the last 3 years in maintaining contact with the Standing Committee for  
5835 the Australian *Book of Praise* (SCABP) and for agreeing to their draft proposal for a  
5836 protocol agreement for making changes to the Australian *Book of Praise* (cf. Appendix  
5837 3 of the SCBP report to GS 2025);

5838 5.2 To give thanks that Synod-FRCA 2024 notes to maintain good contact with the SCBP;

5839 5.3 To thank the SCBP for maintaining its status as a corporation, ensuring all necessary  
5840 documents are kept up to date;

5841 5.4 To thank the SCBP for maintaining archives in the CRTS library and for conducting the  
5842 triennial inspection of the archives;

5843 5.5 To thank the SCBP for continuing to maintain its website in support of the efforts of  
5844 promotion and awareness for the *Book of Praise*;

5845 5.6 To thank the SCBP for appointing Mr. Brian Vanderhout to validate and submit to the  
5846 treasurer of the General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

5847 5.7 To thank the members of the SCBP for their commitment and the work they have  
5848 accomplished over the last three years. Synod especially notes with thankfulness the  
5849 work and dedication of the following brothers who are retiring from the committee:  
5850 Rev. D. Agema and Mr. M. Jongsma;

5851 5.8 To express appreciation to the following brothers who provided expert advice to the  
5852 SCBP in their respective areas of expertise: Mr. A. den Hollander, Dr. J. Smith, and  
5853 Rev. D. Wynia;

5854 5.9 To mandate the SCBP:

5855 5.9.1 To maintain good contact with the Standing Committee for the Australian *Book of*  
5856 *Praise*;

5857 5.9.2 To continue maintaining its archives (at CRTS) and website:  
5858 [www.bookofpraise.ca](http://www.bookofpraise.ca);

5859 5.9.3 To maintain its corporate status for the purpose of protecting the interests of the  
5860 Canadian Reformed Churches in matters concerning the *Book of Praise*;

5861 5.9.4 To appoint one of its members to validate and submit to the treasurer of the  
5862 General Fund all expenses being submitted for committee work;

5863 5.9.5 To submit its report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior to the  
5864 convening of the next general synod.

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5866 **ADOPTED**

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5868 **Article 158 – Appeals against GS 2022 art. 105: Hymn Cap**

5869 **1. Material**

5870 1.1 Appeal from Brampton (Grace) re GS2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.1).

5871 1.2 Appeal from Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) re GS 2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.2).

5872 1.3 Appeal from Flamborough (Redemption) re GS 2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.3).



5873 1.4 Appeal from Glanbrook (Trinity) re GS 2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.4).

5874 1.5 Appeal from Sardis re GS 2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.5).

5875 1.6 Appeal from Toronto (Bethel) re GS 2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.6, 8.6.1.7, 8.6.1.8).

5876 1.7 Appeal from Vernon re GS2022 art. 105 (8.6.1.9).

5877 **2. Admissibility**

5878 2.1 The appeals were declared admissible.

5879 Grounds: The appeals were received on time and they address a decision of a previous  
5880 general synod

5881 **3. Observations**

5882 3.1 Brampton (Grace), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth), Flamborough (Redemption),  
5883 Glanbrook (Trinity), Sardis, Toronto (Bethel), and Vernon appeal the decision of GS  
5884 2022 (art. 105) not to adopt the overture from RSE 2020 to remove the current hymn  
5885 cap and the overture from RSW 2021 to rescind the decision of GS 2004 art. 115.

5886 3.2 GS 2022 art. 105 decided:

5887 [3.2] To deny the recommendation of both overtures to remove the cap of 100 hymns  
5888 regarding the *Book of Praise*.

5889 3.3 GS 2022 art. 105 included the following grounds for its decision:

5890 3.3.1 GS 2004 (Art. 115 Obs. 6.1.1, Cons. 6.2.1, Rec. 6.3) expressed the principle that  
5891 Psalms have a predominant place in the liturgy of the Reformed churches, and on  
5892 that basis, set a limit. Any decision to rescind the conclusion of GS 2004 should  
5893 demonstrate that the basis of that decision is erroneous. [4.2.1]

5894 3.3.2 Although RSE 2020 acknowledged the unique, privileged, and predominant role of  
5895 the singing of Psalms in the liturgy of the churches, and that they should be  
5896 retained as such, it then concluded that limiting the number of hymns in the *Book*  
5897 *of Praise* is not an effective way of achieving this goal. Many of the churches,  
5898 however, appreciated how the hymn cap flows from the principle of the  
5899 predominance of Psalms in Reformed liturgy. [4.2.2]

5900 3.3.3 Additionally, RSW 2021 argued that “it is clear from the Preface of the *Book of*  
5901 *Praise* that the hymns are not less desirable” (Cons. 2.5). This argument is a  
5902 round-about way of stating that, when it comes to the selection of songs to sing in  
5903 the worship services, there is to be no distinction between hymns and Psalms. This  
5904 is not the Reformed principle held since the Reformation, and stated time and  
5905 again by our general synods (e.g., GS 2004 Art. 44 Cons. 4.3; GS 2007 Art. 133  
5906 Cons. 4.2; GS 2013 Art. 173 Cons. 3.6). RSW 2021 did not treat the Preface from  
5907 the *Book of Praise* forthrightly, specifically where it states, “Although in  
5908 Reformed liturgy the Psalms have a predominant place, our churches have not  
5909 excluded the use of scriptural hymns.” [4.2.3]

5910 3.3.4 Although RSW 2021 argued that a limit of 100 hymns makes it likely that there  
5911 would be less room for hymns that are traditionally sung during specific seasons of  
5912 the Christian calendar, such a claim is unsubstantiated. In fact, as one church  
5913 argued, for hymns to be useful to the churches, they would largely centre around  
5914 the days of commemoration and would leave out many other hymns of praise,

- 5915 adoration, supplication, petition, etc. since there are Psalms which do the same.  
5916 [4.2.4]
- 5917 3.3.5 Although RSE 2020 and RSW 2021 suggested that the hymn cap needlessly limits  
5918 the churches in their choice of other Christian songs, limiting the churches'  
5919 selection is exactly the purpose of CO Art. 55, and therefore, does not serve as an  
5920 argument for additional hymns. [4.2.5]
- 5921 3.3.6 Although RSE 2020 and RSW 2021 argued that a hymn cap does not guarantee the  
5922 primacy of Psalm singing, numerous churches, both in favour and against  
5923 removing the hymn cap, have argued for a change to CO Art. 55 that includes a  
5924 statement re the primacy of Psalm singing as a way to maintain the practice of this  
5925 principle. [4.2.6]
- 5926 3.3.7 It is true that RSE 2020 and RSW 2021 argued that the specified limit of 100  
5927 hymns is arbitrary and has no other function than to force the churches to choose  
5928 from among the best hymns for inclusion in the *Book of Praise* rather than allow  
5929 for the consideration of all best hymns, also as they continue to be written. [4.2.7].  
5930 This implies, however, that the *Book of Praise* will never be a completed book,  
5931 and that it needs to include an unlimited number of hymns. [4.2.7.1]
- 5932 3.3.8 Although RSW 2021 argued that a limit on the hymns means that the churches will  
5933 have to struggle with the process of removing good hymns to make room for better  
5934 hymns, this process has benefits since it continuously forces us to evaluate the  
5935 strength of new hymns by comparing them to existing ones. Without the limit on  
5936 hymns, the churches may well resort to a default practice of simply adding new  
5937 hymns without deciding if they are an improvement on existing hymns. A hymn  
5938 cap helps the churches to be careful when adding hymns. [4.2.8]
- 5939 3.4 Glanbrook (Trinity) and Sardis note that GS 2022 (art. 105 gr. 4.2.2) uses a statement  
5940 from one church that a greater number of psalms than hymns is a visible testimony that  
5941 psalms are predominant. Glanbrook (Trinity) argues that this 'visible' predominance  
5942 could be achieved by other means. Sardis asserts that the basis for a hymn cap does not  
5943 flow from the principle of predominance of the Psalms in Reformed liturgical practice.
- 5944 3.5 Brampton (Grace), Glanbrook (Trinity), Toronto (Bethel), and Vernon argue that GS  
5945 2022 (art. 105) gr. 4.2.1 incorrectly required churches to demonstrate that the decision  
5946 to adopt a hymn cap was erroneous. Glanbrook (Trinity) notes that in GS 2022 art. 62  
5947 (gr. 4.2), GS 2022 stated that a previous decision can be revisited as proposals  
5948 substantiated by new grounds. As the matter before GS 2022 were proposals with new  
5949 grounds they did not have to demonstrate the decision of GS 2004 was erroneous.
- 5950 3.6 Brampton (Grace) and Sardis argue that GS 2022 inconsistently denied the overtures to  
5951 remove the hymn cap of 100 but then approved provisional hymns for testing and use in  
5952 the worship service that exceeded the cap it had just endorsed.
- 5953 3.7. Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) and Flamborough (Redemption) argue that:
- 5954 3.7.1 GS 2022 did not interact substantively with the point that removing the hymn cap  
5955 is to increase the *selection* of hymns that may be sung, not to increase the *amount*  
5956 of hymns sung [*emphasis in the original*] and that it is a fallacy to reason that the  
5957 number of available hymns need to be limited to maintain the predominance of  
5958 psalms in the liturgy [see GS 2022 art. 105 gr. 4.2.1, 4.2.1.1, 4.2.1.2, 4.2.2].

- 5959 3.7.2 It is a fallacy to state that limiting the churches' selection is exactly the purpose of  
5960 CO art. 55. Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) and Flamborough (Redemption)  
5961 argue that the point of CO art. 55 is to limit the churches to what has been  
5962 approved by general synods, but it does not limit general synods from expanding  
5963 the approved hymns [see GS 2022 rt. 105 gr. 4.2.5].
- 5964 3.8 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth), Flamborough (Redemption), and Glanbrook  
5965 (Trinity) argue that GS 2022 incorrectly conflated the overtures from RSE 2020 and  
5966 RSW 2021 regarding the hymn cap with statements from churches who wanted a  
5967 statement in CO art. 55 regarding the primacy of psalms [see GS. 2022 art. 105 gr.  
5968 4.2.6].
- 5969 3.9 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) and Vernon argue that GS 2022 improperly  
5970 concluded that the removal of the hymn cap means the *Book of Praise* will never be  
5971 completed.
- 5972 3.10 Flamborough (Redemption) and Sardis note that the overture from RSW 2021 addresses  
5973 how the hymn cap was established in 2004. They believe it did not originate from a  
5974 matter brought forward by the churches and, therefore, it should not have been put in  
5975 place in 2004.
- 5976 3.11 GS 2001 (art. 97) provided the following mandate to the Standing Committee for the  
5977 Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP): "That this Committee receive submissions  
5978 and proposals for additional hymns from the churches with the reasons for their  
5979 suitability, evaluate them in accordance with the requirements set out by General Synod  
5980 Edmonton, 1965, and submit a selection to the churches prior to subsequent General  
5981 Synods". As the SCBP sought to fulfil its mandates to expand and review the song  
5982 book, it adopted additional principles and guidelines. These were shared with the  
5983 churches and the general synods throughout the years and functioned within the  
5984 committee's work.
- 5985 3.12 Sardis and Vernon believe it is questionable that one of the goals of a church songbook  
5986 is to make the congregation know it well, memorize it, and make it part of everyday life.

#### 5987 **4. Considerations**

- 5988 4.1 GS 2022 correctly noted (1) that an appeal to rescind the decision of GS 2004 would  
5989 need to demonstrate that the basis of that decision was erroneous and, (2) that a decision  
5990 could be revisited as proposals substantiated by new grounds (GS 2022 art. 62).  
5991 The two overtures before GS 2022 (art. 105 gr. 4.2) were **proposals substantiated by**  
5992 **new grounds**, not appeals of a GS 2004 decision.  
5993 Therefore, GS 2022 erred in art. 105 gr. 4.2.1 by requiring the overtures to demonstrate  
5994 that the basis for a previous decision was erroneous. There is no burden of proof for  
5995 proposals like these.
- 5996 4.2 Brampton (Grace) and Sardis are wrong in criticizing GS 2022 for approving hymns for  
5997 testing that exceeded the hymn cap. Provisional approval and testing does not equate to  
5998 inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
- 5999 4.3 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) and Flamborough (Redemption) correctly argue that  
6000 GS 2022 did not interact substantively with the point that removing the hymn cap is to  
6001 increase the selection of hymns that may be sung, not to increase how often hymns are

- 6002 sung. For example, adding many Christmas hymns would not result in them being sung  
6003 frequently.
- 6004 4.4 It is a fallacy to reason that the number of available hymns necessarily needs to be  
6005 limited to maintain the predominance of psalms in the liturgy. The principle of the  
6006 foundational role of the Psalms ought not to be confused with the practice of applying a  
6007 hymn cap.
- 6008 4.5 GS 2022 (art. 105 gr. 4.2.5) erred in stating that the “exact purpose of CO Art 55” was  
6009 to limit the churches’ selection. CO art. 55 (as it was at that time) only ensured the  
6010 songbook was common to all churches. A general synod could significantly increase the  
6011 number of hymns with no change to CO art. 55 if it chose to do so.
- 6012 4.6 Although there would be “a limit”, that does not mean that the purpose of CO art. 55 (as  
6013 it was at that time) was “to limit” the selection of hymns. Its purpose was to ensure that  
6014 the churches were singing only psalms and hymns approved by general synod,  
6015 regardless of the number of approved hymns.
- 6016 4.7 GS 2022 (art. 105 gr. 4.2) incorrectly conflated the overtures from RSE 2020 and RSW  
6017 2021 regarding the hymn cap with statements from churches that wanted a statement in  
6018 CO art. 55 regarding the primacy of psalms. Neither removing nor maintaining a hymn  
6019 cap conflicts with the principle of the primacy of the Psalms.
- 6020 4.8 GS 2022 (art. 105, gr. 4.2.7.1) believed that removing the hymn cap will necessarily  
6021 mean that the *Book of Praise* will never be a completed book. This may or may not be  
6022 true, depending on decisions of subsequent general synods, but this should not be  
6023 considered a basis for maintaining a hymn cap. Not only that, but elsewhere GS 2022  
6024 (art. 105 gr. 4.2.8) stated that “the process of removing good hymns to make room for  
6025 better hymns” will happen “continuously”.
- 6026 4.9 To have the congregation know the common song book well, to memorize it, and to  
6027 make it part of everyday life is a laudable goal. Adding additional hymns beyond the  
6028 hymn cap does not necessarily prevent this goal from being achieved.
- 6029 4.10 Flamborough (Redemption) and Sardis correctly note that the hymn cap established in  
6030 2004 did not originate from a matter brought forward by the churches. It was suggested  
6031 by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) as part of  
6032 their proposed guidelines in the process of increasing the number of hymns from 65 to  
6033 what became 85 (2014) and was applied throughout the process. When initially brought  
6034 forward in the SCBP Report to GS 2004, there was no concern expressed by any of the  
6035 churches, and those few that did interact with it were supportive of the hymn cap of 100.
- 6036 4.11 When churches began considering the expansion of hymns beyond the 85 approved by  
6037 GS 2013, a limit of 100 quickly became the subject of concern and criticism. RSE 2017  
6038 and RSW 2018 dealt with proposals to adopt the Trinity Psalter-Hymnal, which would  
6039 have been a “quick way to satisfy the desire for ... a greater variety of hymns”.  
6040 (GS 2019 art. 142 cons. 3.3). Appeals (GS 2022 art. 62) and overtures (GS 2022 art.  
6041 105) arose from the churches, the latter via RSE 2020 and RSW 2021, to eliminate the  
6042 hymn cap. The matter of increasing or eliminating the hymn cap has been alive in the  
6043 churches ever since GS 2013 authorized the *Book of Praise* (2014).
- 6044 4.12 Synod judged it reasonable to deal with the appeals from Brampton (Grace), Burlington  
6045 Waterdown (Rehoboth), Flamborough (Redemption), Glanbrook (Trinity), Sardis,

6046 Toronto (Bethel), and Vernon together because all seven of them appealed the same  
6047 decision of GS 2022 (art. 105), all did so by questioning the grounds for the decision, all  
6048 identified the issue cited above in cons. 4.1 as supporting evidence, and nearly all  
6049 specifically requested that GS 2025 remove the hymn cap.

## 6050 **5. Recommendations**

6051 That Synod decide:

- 6052 5.1 To sustain the appeals of the Brampton (Grace) CanRC, the Burlington Waterdown  
6053 (Rehoboth) CanRC, the Flamborough (Redemption) CanRC, the Glanbrook (Trinity)  
6054 CanRC, the Sardis CanRC, the Toronto (Bethel) CanRC, and the Vernon CanRC.  
6055 5.2 To affirm that the hymn cap is null and void.

6056

## 6057 **ADOPTED**

6058 G. Boot and A. Jairam abstained as per CO art. 32.

6059

## 6060 **Article 159 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Part 4 (*Awareness*)**

### 6061 **1. Material**

- 6062 1.1 SCBP report to GS 2025 (8.2.8.1).  
6063 1.2 Letters from the following church: Aldergrove (8.3.8.1.1).

### 6064 **2. Admissibility**

- 6065 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
6066 Grounds: The report is from a standing synodical committee and arrived on time.  
6067 2.2 The letter was declared admissible.  
6068 Grounds: This letter interacts with this part of the SCBP report and arrived on time.

### 6069 **3. Observations**

- 6070 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 120) mandated the SCBP to “To foster an increased awareness of the  
6071 existence of the *Book of Praise* among others in the English-speaking world.”  
6072 3.2 The SCBP notes with gratitude the many expressions of interest in our *Book of Praise*.  
6073 3.3 The SCBP requests that GS 2025 continue the mandate to foster an increased awareness  
6074 of the *Book of Praise*.  
6075 3.4 Aldergrove suggests investigating the open-source option to add the *Book of Praise* to  
6076 [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org).

### 6077 **4. Considerations**

- 6078 4.1 The SCBP has fulfilled its mandate to foster awareness of the *Book of Praise*.  
6079 4.2 Adding all or most (due to copyright issues) of the *Book of Praise* to  
6080 [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org), [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org), and [www.bookofpraise.ca](http://www.bookofpraise.ca) may increase awareness  
6081 by making the riches of the *Book of Praise* available for Christians to use worldwide.  
6082 4.3 The funding model should not inhibit the distribution and availability of the *Book of*  
6083 *Praise*.



6084 **5. Recommendations**

6085 That Synod decide:

- 6086 5.1 To mandate the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP)  
6087 to foster awareness of the *Book of Praise* among others in the English-speaking world;
- 6088 5.2 To mandate the SCBP to publish as many of the songs in the *Book of Praise* as possible  
6089 on the federational websites (www.canrc.org, and www.bookofpraise.ca), noting:
- 6090 5.2.1 This should include all non-copyrighted songs, all songs for which the SCBP holds  
6091 copyright, and all songs the SCBP can gain permission to publish freely and  
6092 broadly;
- 6093 5.2.2 This may require negotiations with and financial compensation for the publisher,  
6094 Premier Printing (see GS 2025 art. 160 rec. 5.4);
- 6095 5.3 To mandate the SCBP to investigate the possibility of adding the *Book of Praise* to  
6096 [www.hymnary.org](http://www.hymnary.org) and return to the next general synod with a recommendation.

6097

6098 **ADOPTED**

6099

6100 **Article 160 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Part 5 (*Publishing and Funding*)**

6101 **1. Material**

- 6102 1.1 SCBP report to GS 2025 (8.2.8.1).
- 6103 1.2 Letters from the churches: Aldergrove (8.3.8.1.1), Elm Creek (8.3.8.1.20), Fergus  
6104 (Maranatha) (8.3.8.1.24), Grassie (Covenant) (8.3.8.1.30), Guelph (Immanuel)  
6105 (8.3.8.1.31), Hamilton (Providence) (8.3.8.1.33), St. Albert (8.3.8.1.41), Willoughby  
6106 Heights (8.3.8.1.46).

6107 **2. Admissibility**

- 6108 2.1 The report was declared admissible.  
6109 Grounds: The report is from a standing synodical committee and was received on time.
- 6110 2.2 Letters from the churches were declared admissible.  
6111 Grounds: The letters from the churches interact with this part of the SCBP report and  
6112 were received on time.

6113 **3. Observations**

- 6114 3.1 The SCBP was mandated to survey the churches to determine the priority/relative  
6115 importance regarding types of availability (digital, open-source, print), formatting (e.g.,  
6116 four-part harmony), and other publication variables (including copyright) regarding the  
6117 *Book of Praise*, as listed in the SCBP report:
- 6118 To review the input of the churches, and on that basis, propose a publishing and  
6119 funding model to GS 2025.
- 6120 3.2 The SCBP surveyed the churches and discovered:
- 6121 3.2.1 **Layout:** There is a strong appreciation for the current print editions of our *Book of*  
6122 *Praise*. The SCBP is hoping to assist the churches with a digital version with full  
6123 notation. While a small number of churches would like an authorized four-part

- 6124 version of the songs in our *Book of Praise* either alongside or instead of the current  
6125 version, the large majority prefer to keep the *Book of Praise* as is.
- 6126 3.2.2 **Copyright:** The SCBP is moving forward with the recommendation that the use of  
6127 copyrighted songs is a possibility and preference. The SCBP were encouraged to  
6128 perhaps make available, as an open-source document, a digital version of the non-  
6129 copyrighted content of our psalms and hymns for anyone to use. This and other  
6130 decisions about what might be made available will have to be determined,  
6131 depending on funding considerations.
- 6132 3.3.3 **Funding considerations:** Many churches suggest the publication of an authorized  
6133 augment. There is a strong sentiment that we should not publish a new version of  
6134 the *Book of Praise* too quickly, especially in light of potential revisions to  
6135 liturgical forms. There is a general consensus that the costs for the layout and  
6136 publication should be shared by the churches rather than by the publisher. The  
6137 publisher could then charge a fair price for printing only.
- 6138 3.3 On the matter of funding, the SCBP has been unable to complete the discussion with the  
6139 publisher. Therefore, the SCBP asks that this mandate be renewed for another three  
6140 years.
- 6141 3.4 The SCBP believes that the publication of an authorized augment with the layout and  
6142 publication costs borne by the churches in common would be the most stewardly  
6143 approach at this time. Most churches that responded to the report agree.
- 6144 3.5 Elm Creek wonders if analysis has been done considering the difference between  
6145 printing a small augment or an updated *Book of Praise*.
- 6146 3.6 Willoughby Heights suggests that the SCBP be given a mandate to remind the churches  
6147 annually of their obligations with a view to copyright law, and clear instructions as to  
6148 how these obligations might be met.
- 6149 3.7 In their report (Section One Part 6), the SCBP requested that the mandate to renew  
6150 copyrights where necessary be extended.

#### 6151 4. Considerations

- 6152 4.1 The SCBP fulfilled their mandate to survey the churches.
- 6153 4.2 The churches request (and the SCBP desires) to have a digital version of the *Book of*  
6154 *Praise* with full notations (including all additions and modifications approved by  
6155 General Synod 2025) made available to the churches as soon as possible.
- 6156 4.3 To make available a digital version of the non-copyrighted content of our psalms and  
6157 hymns for anyone to use as an open-source document, the SCBP will need to negotiate a  
6158 fair agreement with the publisher to compensate them for the costs of layout and  
6159 publication, including existing stock. Doing that would also make it possible to produce  
6160 a low-cost digital version of the entire *Book of Praise*.
- 6161 4.4 The SCBP is correct to recognize that, in light of potential revisions to liturgical forms,  
6162 we should not publish a new version of the *Book of Praise* too quickly. Publishing an  
6163 authorized augment that includes all revised and additional psalms and hymns would be  
6164 the most stewardly path forward at this time.



- 6165 4.5 Having the churches in common bear the costs of layout and pre-press preparations of  
6166 an authorized augment is prudent and will make both print and digital versions available  
6167 at the lowest possible cost.
- 6168 4.6 If general synod approves hymns that are dependent on four-part harmony (e.g. *When*  
6169 *Peace Like a River*), the SCBP could continue to publish them in four-part harmony. All  
6170 other hymns should be published in unison like the rest of the *Book of Praise*.
- 6171 4.7 It is important for the SCBP and the churches to comply with copyright laws.

6172 **5. Recommendations**

6173 That Synod decide:

- 6174 5.1 To thank the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) for  
6175 their work with respect to the publishing and funding model;
- 6176 5.2 To mandate the SCBP to publish an authorized augment that includes the melody and  
6177 text of new hymns and alternative psalms approved by GS 2025 and the previously  
6178 approved changes to Hymns 1, 55, and 58. Any approved alternate psalms or additional  
6179 hymns that are dependent on four-part harmony should be published in four-part  
6180 harmony;
- 6181 5.3 To mandate the SCBP to produce digital versions of the *Book of Praise* and the  
6182 authorized augment with full notations (including all additions and modifications  
6183 approved by GS 2025) and make these available to the churches as soon as possible;
- 6184 5.4 To mandate the SCBP to negotiate a fair agreement with the publisher to compensate  
6185 them for the costs of layout and publication (including existing stock) as soon as  
6186 possible and make available a digital version of the royalty-free content of our psalms  
6187 and hymns for anyone to use as an open-source document, free of charge and also make  
6188 available a lower-cost digital version of the entire *Book of Praise*;
- 6189 5.5 To mandate the SCBP to renew copyrights where necessary;
- 6190 5.6 To mandate the SCBP to remind the churches of their obligations with a view to  
6191 copyright law and provide clear instructions as to how these obligations might be met.

6192

6193 **ADOPTED**

6194

6195 **Article 161 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Part 7 (“*Principled View*”)**

6196 **1. Material**

- 6197 1.1 SCBP report to GS 2025 (8.2.8.1).
- 6198 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Attercliffe (8.3.8.1.6), Burlington Waterdown  
6199 (Rehoboth) (8.3.8.1.9, 8.3.8.1.10), Caledonia (8.3.8.1.11), Calgary (8.3.8.1.12), Carman  
6200 East (8.3.8.1.13), Chilliwack (8.3.8.1.14), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.3.8.1.16), Fergus  
6201 (Maranatha) (8.3.8.1.23), Grassie (Covenant) (8.3.8.1.30), Langley (8.3.8.1.35),  
6202 Nooksack Valley (8.3.8.1.37), Winnipeg (Grace) (8.3.8.1.44), Willoughby Heights  
6203 (8.3.8.1.46).

6204 **2. Admissibility**

- 6205 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

6206 Grounds: The report is from a standing synodical committee and was received on time.

6207 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

6208 Grounds: The letters from the churches interact with this part of the SCBP report and  
6209 were received on time.

### 6210 **3. Observations**

6211 3.1 Langley suggests that Section One Part 7 of the SCBP report titled “Proposal for a  
6212 principled view of the *Book of Praise*” should not be received for consideration by  
6213 GS 2025. Langley and Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) note that this part of the  
6214 SCBP report does not reflect the mandate of GS 2022. Langley further argues that the  
6215 SCBP should restrict their activities to their mandate and that proposals such as these  
6216 must come from one or more of the churches.

6217 3.2 Many other churches interacted with this part of the SCBP report.

### 6218 **4. Considerations**

6219 4.1 The SCBP has introduced a new mandate for itself beyond the one given to it by  
6220 GS 2022. The SCBP should restrict itself to the mandate given.

6221 4.2 Proposals like this one should come from one or more of the churches.

6222 4.3 A general synod should only deal with matters that come to it legitimately.

### 6223 **5. Recommendations**

6224 That Synod decide:

6225 5.1 Not to consider Section One Part 7 of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the  
6226 *Book of Praise* (SCBP) report or any parts of the letters from the churches that engage  
6227 with it.

6228 5.2 To remind the SCBP that it should only deal with the matters mandated to it by a  
6229 general synod.

6230

## 6231 **ADOPTED**

6232

### 6233 **Article 162 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section Two Parts 13, 14 (*Corrections*)**

#### 6234 **1. Material**

6235 1.1 SCBP report to GS 2025 (8.2.8.1).

6236 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Aldergrove (8.3.8.1.1), Edmonton (Providence)  
6237 (8.3.8.1.19), Willoughby Heights (8.3.8.1.46).

#### 6238 **2. Admissibility**

6239 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

6240 Grounds: The report was mandated by GS 2022 and was received on time.

6241 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

6242 Grounds: These interact with a report and were received on time.

6243

6244 **3. Observations**

- 6245 3.1 The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) recommends  
6246 the following minor corrections for a future printing of the *Book of Praise*:
- 6247 [13.1] Psalm 47:1.4 – The syllable division needs correction: “humb-ling” should be  
6248 “hum-bling.”
- 6249 [13.2] Psalm 52:1.5 – A semicolon is missing at the end of the line. Also, there should be  
6250 a hyphen preceding “sharp”: ra - zor - sharp.
- 6251 [13.3] Psalm 103:3.3 – A period is missing at the end of the line.
- 6252 [13.4] Psalm 113:1.1 – The first exclamation mark should be in regular font (not small  
6253 caps font).
- 6254 [13.5] Hymn 30 – Regarding the missing time signature, add the little half-note with the  
6255 one on top of it (tactus minor symbol) as is found in Hy. 17 and 18.
- 6256 [13.6] Hymn 48:1.1 – A comma should be inserted after “Come.”
- 6257 [13.7] Athanasian Creed – Article 6, incorrectly has the archaic term “Godhead.” In the  
6258 prose section of the 1984 *Book of Praise*, this term was replaced with “divinity,” as  
6259 in Q&A 48 of the Heidelberg Catechism and in articles 33 and 35 of the  
6260 Athanasian Creed. Its continued use in article 6 of the latter is an oversight in need  
6261 of correction.
- 6262 [13.8] Belgic Confession – In Art. 23, 3rd paragraph, “judgement” in the quote from Ps.  
6263 143 should be “judgment,” per the ESV. This error is also in Canons of Dort, I.18,  
6264 second paragraph, and III/IV, Rejection of Errors 1.
- 6265 [13.9] Belgic Confession – Art. 24, 2nd paragraph, Luke 17:10 is incorrectly included  
6266 within the 4 quotation marks.
- 6267 [13.10] Heidelberg Catechism – Lord’s Day 10, q/a 28, footnote 1 needs to be changed  
6268 from Psalm 39:10 to Psalm 39:9.
- 6269 [13.11] Heidelberg Catechism – Lord’s Day 50, footnote 4 needs to be changed from  
6270 “Ps...62” to “Ps...62:10,” and from “Ps...146” to “Ps...146:3.”
- 6271 [13.12] “Prayer for All the Needs of Christendom” (p. 636) and “A Closing Prayer for  
6272 Ecclesiastical Assemblies” (p. 642), – The reference to “our Queen and her house”  
6273 needs to be changed to “our King and his house.”
- 6274 3.2 Willoughby Heights notes that the list of corrections found in section 13 are only those  
6275 since the last print run. They observe that this list does not include changes made by the  
6276 decision of a general synod and ask that the SCBP be mandated to supply a list of all the  
6277 changes that need to be made to the current printed version of the *Book of Praise*,  
6278 including any to be made to Confessions, Liturgical Forms, and the Church Order, as  
6279 per decisions of general synods since GS 2013.
- 6280 3.3 Aldergrove notes that there are some items missing from this list of corrections that  
6281 should be made to the current *Book of Praise* Hymn 38 (page 421) and Hymn 66 (page  
6282 466): the footnotes regarding authorship etc. are a page too early and should be moved  
6283 to the next page, after the last stanza. Aldergrove recommends that these corrections be  
6284 added to the list submitted to Synod 2025.

- 6285 3.4 Edmonton (Providence) opines that Hymn 45 stanza 2, line 2 contains a spelling error in  
6286 which the phrase “The prisoners leap to lose their chains” should read “the prisoners  
6287 leap to loose their chains.”
- 6288 3.5 The SCBP submits the following proposals with respect to the *Book of Praise*:
- 6289 3.5.1 The SCBP recommends restoring Hymn 17:1 to its 2009 version, since GS 2013  
6290 unintentionally replaced it with the 1984 rendition without consulting the  
6291 copyright holder.
- 6292 3.5.2 The SCBP recommends modifying one line in the liturgical forms for baptism  
6293 from the present reading, “He adopts us *for his* children and heirs” to “He adopts  
6294 us as his children and heirs” to cohere with the language of Ephesians 1:5 and  
6295 Galatians 4:5 (ESV, NASB, and NKJV), and Romans 8:23 (ESV, NASB).
- 6296 3.5.3 The SCBP addresses one line in the liturgical form for the Lords Supper. It  
6297 compares the wording of the 1984 *Book of Praise* “by his perfect obedience he has  
6298 fulfilled for us all the righteousness of God’s law” to the version adopted by GS  
6299 2007 “by his perfect obedience he has for us fulfilled the righteousness of God’s  
6300 law” but recommends a further change to ““by his perfect obedience he has  
6301 fulfilled the righteousness of God’s law for us.” The SCBP suggests that the  
6302 recommended update is more readable and textually clear.
- 6303 3.5.4 The SCBP recommends changing a Scripture reference in Belgic Confession Art.  
6304 5, footnote 3 from 1 John 5:7 to the more straightforward 1 John 5:6b noting that  
6305 the footnote pointing to 1 John 5:7 by itself does not make much sense.

#### 6306 4. Considerations:

- 6307 4.1 Re Observation 3.1: the SCBP correctly identifies errors or omissions that require  
6308 correction prior to publication of the new *Book of Praise*.
- 6309 4.2 Re Observation 3.2: Willoughby Heights correctly observes that future revisions to the  
6310 *Book of Praise* will need to include revisions to the Confessions, Liturgical Forms and  
6311 Church Order.
- 6312 4.3 Re Observation 3.3: Aldergrove is correct in noting the inconsistent use of footnotes for  
6313 Hymn 38 (page 421) and Hymn 66 (page 460).
- 6314 4.4 Re Observation 3.5: the concern of Edmonton (Providence) was addressed at GS 2013  
6315 (art. 159 obs. 2.4.1 and cons. 3.3) in support of the current wording.
- 6316 4.5 Re Observation 3.6.1: the current wording in Hymn 17:1 (“my soul does magnify”) is to  
6317 be preferred over the 1984 wording (“my soul will magnify”) as the original Greek  
6318 employs the present tense. It would be helpful if the SCBP could gain permission from  
6319 the copyright holder to maintain the current wording.
- 6320 4.6 Re Observation 3.6.2: the proposed correction better reflects the language of the  
6321 Scriptural references.
- 6322 4.7 Re Observation 3.6.3: the proposed amendment (“by his perfect obedience he has  
6323 fulfilled the righteousness of God’s law *for us*”) is grammatically inconsistent with the  
6324 preceding sentence (“he bore *for us* the wrath of God”). The 1984 version referenced by  
6325 the SCBP presents a more consistent phrasing and superior readability.
- 6326 4.8 Re Observation 3.6.4: the proposed correction is more accurate.

6327 **5. Recommendations**

6328 That Synod decide:

- 6329 5.1 To note the corrections identified by the Standing Committee for the Publication of the  
6330 *Book of Praise* (SCBP) in Observation 3.1;
- 6331 5.2 To forward Considerations 4.2, 4.3, and 4.5 to 4.8 to the SCBP for implementation;
- 6332 5.3 To instruct the SCBP to submit as an appendix in their report to the next general synod  
6333 a full list of corrigenda to the current printed version of the *Book of Praise*;
- 6334 5.4 That consideration 4.4 serves as an answer to the Edmonton (Providence) CanRC.

6335

6336 **ADOPTED**

6337

6338 **Article 163 – Appeal against GS 2019 art. 23 & GS 2022 art. 120 dec. 3.8.1: Lord’s Supper**  
6339 **Forms**

6340 **1. Material**

- 6341 1.1 Appeal from Kerwood (Grace) (8.6.11.1).

6342 **2. Admissibility**

- 6343 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.  
6344 Grounds: It is an appeal against decisions of GS 2019 and 2022 and was received on  
6345 time.

6346 **3. Observation**

- 6347 3.1 Kerwood (Grace) requests GS 2025 to find that: GS 2019 and GS 2022 erred in giving  
6348 the Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP) the mandate  
6349 “to study and propose appropriate changes as per consideration 3.1, 3.2” (GS 2019 art.  
6350 23; Synod 2022 art. 120 dec. 3.8.1) to the Lord’s Supper forms without considering the  
6351 historical and scriptural implications.
- 6352 3.2 GS 2019 art. 23 mandated the SCBP “to study and propose appropriate changes as per  
6353 Considerations 3.1, 3.2.” The text of these considerations are as follows:
- 6354 [3.1] “RSE Nov. 2018 makes a valid point that the English language has changed and  
6355 therefore the use of masculine pronouns in the forms for Lord’s Supper could  
6356 make them liable to misinterpretation.”
- 6357 [3.2] “General Synod has been served by SCBP in matters of linguistic changes to the  
6358 liturgical forms (see GS 2013 Art. 101). It would be advisable to ask the  
6359 committee to study this and propose appropriate changes to the Lord’s Supper  
6360 forms giving special attention to the personal nature of self-examination. In this  
6361 process the churches would have opportunity to interact with any proposed  
6362 changes.”

6363 **4. Considerations**

- 6364 4.1 A general synod has the authority to issue a mandate to any duly appointed committee.
- 6365 4.2 Kerwood (Grace) fails to prove that the content of the mandate itself is not in  
6366 accordance with Scripture or the Church Order (see CO art. 31).

6367 4.3 The content in the appeal from Kerwood (Grace) is irrelevant to the mandate and  
6368 assumes a particular outcome of the mandate.

6369 4.4 If Kerwood (Grace) wishes to respond to the results of the mandated study, this can be  
6370 done by sending a letter to interact with the SCBP report.

## 6371 **5. Recommendation**

6372 That Synod decide:

6373 5.1 To deny the appeal.

6374

## 6375 **ADOPTED**

6376

### 6377 **Article 164 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 155: Pulpit Access**

#### 6378 **1. Material**

6379 1.1 Appeal from Burlington (Fellowship) regarding GS 2022 art. 155 (8.6.3.1).

#### 6380 **2. Admissibility**

6381 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

6382 Grounds: It is appealing the decision of a previous general synod and it was received on  
6383 time.

#### 6384 **3. Observations**

6385 3.1 Burlington (Fellowship) introduces its appeal by stating that “by denying these appeals  
6386 [in Art 155], GS Guelph (2022) has bound Fellowship Church beyond the plain reading  
6387 of the CO. . .” (p. 1). Burlington (Fellowship) goes on to state that it “believes that there  
6388 are certain axioms, or self-evident truths, which form the foundation for how the  
6389 churches should understand and apply the Church Order. These are:

- 6390 • “Axiom 1. We affirm that the CO regulates matters that affect the churches in  
6391 common.
- 6392 • Axiom 2. We affirm that the Word of God binds us and that we bind ourselves to  
6393 the common consent given in CO 76.
- 6394 • Axiom 3. We affirm that the literal reading of the CO expresses the intent of the  
6395 articles.
- 6396 • Axiom 4. We affirm that the articles are separated as individual articles for a  
6397 reason” (p. 3).

6398 3.2 Burlington (Fellowship) continues to introduce its appeal by discussing how the  
6399 aforementioned axioms appear to be evidenced in a series of past general synod  
6400 decisions (pp. 4–11).

6401 3.3 In discussing the decision of GS 2022 (art. 155), Fellowship notes an “explicit argument  
6402 made by RSE [2019] that GS made implicitly. RSE 2019 Article 11, in its Consideration  
6403 1, claimed that: ‘The central issue is “how to read and work with the CO.” The CO  
6404 explicitly states matters and has principles at work.’ But these types of arguments have  
6405 no basis. We do not bind ourselves to perceived principles or to implied intent but to the  
6406 plain reading of the CO (Axiom 3)” (p. 9).



- 6407 3.4 GS 2004 observed that agreement was reached between the Church Order  
6408 Subcommittee (CanRC) and their counterparts in the United Reformed Churches in  
6409 North America (URCNA) to “include an extensive introduction to the Church Order,  
6410 which introduces: 1. Biblical and Confessional Basis, 2. Historical Background, 3.  
6411 Foundational Principles, and 4. Broad Divisions” (GS 2004 art. 76 obs. 3.5). GS 2004  
6412 decided to charge the Subcommittee to “continue in the evaluation of the differences  
6413 between the current church orders of the federations in the light of the scriptural and  
6414 confessional principles and patterns of church government of the Church Order of Dort”  
6415 (GS 2004 art. 76 rec. 5.3.2.)
- 6416 3.5 Burlington (Fellowship) appeals to GS 2025 to judge:
- 6417 3.5.1 “that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it gave as Ground 4.2: ‘Our  
6418 current practice that grants pulpit access has been determined collectively by the  
6419 churches is based on synodical decisions as expressed in the rules for EF.’ The  
6420 Synod failed to show that the rules for EF (CO 50) exclusively regulate whom the  
6421 consistory may or may not invite to preach (CO 15) (Axiom 1);
- 6422 3.5.2 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it acknowledged in Ground 4.3  
6423 that ‘Our current CO does not have a specific provision regarding pulpit access for  
6424 guest ministers from non-sister churches.’ Calling on ‘our current practice’ is not  
6425 sufficient grounds to bind the local consistory (Axiom 2);
- 6426 3.5.3 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it ignored the literal reading of  
6427 the CO 4 in favour of its perception of the CO’s intent or its determination of some  
6428 underlying principle (Axiom 3);
- 6429 3.5.4 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it acknowledged that ‘Our  
6430 current CO does not have a specific provision regarding pulpit access for guest  
6431 ministers from non-sister churches’ and yet judged that if a local consistory wanted  
6432 to regain its authority and responsibility over the local pulpit, it could always seek  
6433 to have that freedom defined by proposing a change to the CO. GS Dunnville  
6434 (2016) correctly judged that where there was no explicit regulation in the CO, the  
6435 churches had the freedom and competence as well as the authority and  
6436 responsibility to draft their own regulations (Axiom 1);
- 6437 3.5.5 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it judged in Article 48 in  
6438 Grounds 4.1, ‘According to the CO, Classis has a role in giving advice concerning  
6439 requests that have to do with temporary pulpit access’ and ruled that the appellants  
6440 ignored ‘the relevant principle of classical involvement in granting access to the  
6441 pulpit (e.g. CO Article 4.B.1 & 2) that can give guidance concerning the matter of  
6442 giving pastors of non-sister churches temporary access to the pulpit.’ The Synod  
6443 erred because it found its authority in what it determined to be a relevant principle  
6444 and failed to show how the literal reading of CO Art 4 regulates whom the  
6445 consistory may invite to preach (Axiom 3);
- 6446 3.5.6 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 when it gave as Grounds 4.1 that there  
6447 are relevant principles in CO Articles 44 and 76 where the churches agree to  
6448 honour the decisions of the major assemblies (Axiom 3). It did not demonstrate  
6449 that the appellants were not honouring the decisions of the broader assemblies or

6450 that they were not observing the adopted order when, in fact, they acknowledged  
6451 that no decision had been made (Axiom 1);  
6452 3.5.7 that GS Guelph (2022) erred in Article 155 because it failed to demonstrate how  
6453 the regulation for eligibility for the call should be read into rules for EF regulated  
6454 by Art 50 and thus, in some creative way, superseded CO 15, limiting the authority  
6455 of the consistory has over the local pulpit. (Axiom 4).”

#### 6456 **4. Considerations**

- 6457 4.1 The core issue in the appeal of Burlington (Fellowship) is how one is to interpret the  
6458 Church Order. On the one hand Burlington (Fellowship) objects to GS 2022’s implicit  
6459 use of the argument that there are principles at work behind what the Church Order  
6460 explicitly states, and that such principles have to be borne in mind when understanding  
6461 and applying the Church Order. On the other hand, Burlington (Fellowship) insists on a  
6462 “plain reading” of the Church Order and then proceeds to state, elaborate on, and judge  
6463 the decision of GS 2022 (art. 155) by means of four axioms drawn up by itself. These  
6464 axioms are essentially four principles of how to interpret the Church Order. This is both  
6465 ironic and an admission by Burlington (Fellowship) that there are inevitably some  
6466 principles (stated or otherwise) that are at work whenever anyone interprets the Church  
6467 Order. In principle, therefore, Burlington (Fellowship) cannot object to general synods  
6468 using principles to interpret the Church Order since it does so itself. The issue comes  
6469 down to: which principles of interpretation are deemed appropriate and acceptable by  
6470 the churches? The proposed axioms of Burlington (Fellowship) have not been seen  
6471 much less tested by the churches in the ecclesiastical way and thus the federation is not  
6472 bound by these axioms. The entire federation, however, has agreed to a set of  
6473 foundational principles which undergird the Church Order (see GS 2004 art. 76 obs. 4);  
6474 further, the principles used by our ecclesiastical assemblies to understand and apply the  
6475 Church Order have been seen in the acts of those assemblies, duly reviewed and even  
6476 refined by the churches over many decades by way of appeals and overtures.
- 6477 4.2 Burlington (Fellowship) finds fault with GS 2022 pointing to “Our current practice” as  
6478 “not sufficient grounds to bind the local consistory” (GS 2022 art. 155 dec. 3.5.2).  
6479 However, GS 2022 was not merely pointing to the historic practice of our churches but  
6480 rather to the “synodical decisions as expressed in the rules for EF.” In other words, the  
6481 CanRC *practice* in question is the outworking of the *principles* which are given  
6482 expression in various Church Order articles. The resulting practice is that the pool of  
6483 ministers from which a consistory may invite a man to preach is established by the  
6484 federation through its broader assemblies.
- 6485 4.3 Burlington (Fellowship) finds fault with GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.2 for failing “to show  
6486 that the rules for EF (CO 50) exclusively regulate whom the consistory may or may not  
6487 invite to preach (CO 15) (Axiom 1).” Burlington (Fellowship) incorrectly refers to CO  
6488 15 as regulating whom a consistory may invite to preach. In reality, CO 15 is set in the  
6489 context of regulations concerning a minister within our federation (Articles 4–21) and as  
6490 such forbids a minister from taking it upon himself to preach (or administer the  
6491 sacraments) in “another church” without the consent of that church’s consistory.  
6492 Further, GS 2022 did not need to show that the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF)  
6493 “exclusively” regulate whom the consistory may or may not invite to preach, but rather  
6494 that said rules inherently restrict a consistory’s choice of invitee to ministers from

- 6495 churches with whom we have EF. GS 2022 was correct that this is an implication of our  
6496 (then) current rules for EF (CO 50) for if it was understood that local consistories could  
6497 already invite any minister from any church they wished, there would be no need to  
6498 have such a rule for the churches in common.
- 6499 4.4 Burlington (Fellowship) faults the reasoning of GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.3 as being “not  
6500 sufficient grounds to bind the local consistory.” However, ground 4.3 works together  
6501 with ground 4.2 in which it is pointed out that rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF)  
6502 (CO 50) implicitly restrict a consistory’s choice of ministers to those churches with  
6503 whom we have EF (see 4.3). This logical implication was a sufficient ground for the  
6504 decision of GS 2022 to deny the appeals.
- 6505 4.5 Burlington (Fellowship) faults GS 2022 for ignoring “the literal reading of the CO 4 in  
6506 favour of its perception of the CO’s intent or its determination of some underlying  
6507 principle (Axiom 3).” However, Burlington (Fellowship) does not show how GS 2022  
6508 does this. In fact, GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.1 simply communicates that there are principles  
6509 of church governance at work throughout the Church Order (a truth our federation has  
6510 long worked with as per observation 3.4 above), one of which is “classical involvement  
6511 in granting access to the pulpit,” and then mentions the example of CO art 4.b.1. & 2. It  
6512 would be inherently contradictory for the Church Order to carefully regulate access to  
6513 the pulpit via classical examination in the case of students as well as in the case of  
6514 ministers coming into the federation from a non-sister church (both in CO 4) and to also  
6515 carefully develop rules for when pulpits may be open to ministers of churches we are  
6516 developing ecclesiastical relationships with (via the rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship  
6517 (EF) per CO art. 50) to then leave it in the freedom of each local consistory to invite any  
6518 minister from any church they wished. Logical consistency dictates that under our  
6519 (then) current Church Order and adopted rules for EF, local consistories had bound  
6520 themselves to wait until the churches together as a federation have chosen to regulate  
6521 this matter differently.
- 6522 4.6 Burlington (Fellowship) faults GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.4 for judging that a local church  
6523 could seek to propose a change to the Church Order in order to make provision  
6524 regarding pulpit access for guest ministers from non-sister churches, believing that local  
6525 consistories have this freedom already because it is not explicitly regulated in the  
6526 Church Order. However, when one factors in the principle of supervising access to the  
6527 pulpits of the federation by the broader assemblies of the federation (classis and general  
6528 synod, as per Considerations 4.3 and 4.5 above) as expressed in CO art. 4 and the Rules  
6529 for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) adopted by general synod (per CO art. 50), then  
6530 implicitly this matter is regulated by means of the Church Order and decisions of  
6531 general synod. At the time of GS 2022, the churches had implicitly agreed that this  
6532 matter rests with those broader assemblies, not the local consistory.
- 6533 4.7 The fifth request of Burlington (Fellowship) for judgment is in substance much the  
6534 same as the third request and has been answered in consideration 4.3 above.
- 6535 4.8 Burlington (Fellowship) finds fault with the statement in GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.1 that  
6536 “there are relevant principles in CO Art 44 and 76 where the churches agree to honour  
6537 the decisions of the major assemblies,” when in fact the appellants acknowledged that  
6538 no decision had been made. While the Church Order does not regulate every possible  
6539 scenario, it applies principles to common situations of church governance. Such

6540 principles must be kept in mind when interpreting and applying the Church Order in  
6541 uncommon or unusual situations. GS 2022 was correct to point out that the principles  
6542 undergirding past decisions of a general synod regarding the Rules for Ecclesiastical  
6543 Fellowship (EF) (thus CO art. 44 and 50), coupled with the principle of classical  
6544 involvement regarding in-coming ministers from non-sister churches (CO art. 4.b.2)  
6545 have a bearing on how the matter of guest minister from non-sister churches should be  
6546 handled. The clear implication of these principles and regulations (current in 2022) is  
6547 that this matter is to be handled by the broader assemblies and not independently by the  
6548 local consistory.

6549 4.9 Burlington (Fellowship) finds fault with GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.1 for “failing to  
6550 demonstrate how the regulation for eligibility for the call [CO 4] should be read into the  
6551 rules of EF by Art. 50 and thus, in some creative way, supersede CO 15.” However, GS  
6552 2022 did not “read” CO art. 4 “into” CO art. 50 but rather pointed to the underlying  
6553 “principle of classical involvement in granting access to the pulpit” in CO art. 4 and  
6554 lined that up with the “relevant principles” in CO art. 44 and the synodical decisions  
6555 concerning Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF). This led GS 2022 art. 155 gr. 4.2  
6556 to state, “Our current practice that pulpit access has been determined collectively by the  
6557 churches is based on synodical decisions as per CO 50.” It was legitimate for GS 2022  
6558 to reason on the basis of the principles underlying the Church Order as they are given  
6559 expression in the given articles.

## 6560 **5. Recommendations**

6561 That Synod decide:

6562 5.1 To deny the appeal.

6563

### 6564 **ADOPTED**

6565 J. Torenvliet, H. Jagersma, J. Jager, M. Jagt, G. Boot, and R. Bremer abstained as per CO art. 32.

6566

### 6567 **Article 165 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 155: Pulpit Access**

6568 Committee 5 presented draft 1 of a report on an appeal by the Ottawa (Jubilee) CanRC against  
6569 GS 2022 art. 155. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further  
6570 consideration.

6571

### 6572 **Article 166 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 155: Pulpit Access**

#### 6573 **1. Material**

6574 1.1 Appeal from Coaldale (8.6.3.2).

#### 6575 **2. Admissibility**

6576 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

6577 Grounds: It was submitted before the deadline and is against a decision of a previous  
6578 general synod.

**6579 3. Observations**

6580 3.1 The Coaldale CanRC supports the decision of GS 2022 found in art.155 but appeals the  
6581 validity of art. 155 gr. 4.4 which reads:

6582 [4.4] Re 3.2: Our current church order does not have a specific provision regarding  
6583 pulpit access for guest ministers from non-sister churches. Toronto-Bethel  
6584 acknowledges this in Consideration 6, speaking of this as a “gap.” At the same  
6585 time, it argues in Consideration 7 that the onus for closing that “gap” lies with  
6586 those who desire to ensure that present practice is codified. The other appellants  
6587 make similar statements about where the onus lies, while RSE 2019 in turn places  
6588 the onus on those who wish to change current practices. In line with the practices  
6589 of our sister-churches (see 4.3 above), the churches could decide to adopt an article  
6590 or provision in the church order specifically regulating local pulpit access. In this  
6591 way our practices will explicitly reflect our church order.

6592 3.2 Coaldale provides four grounds for their appeal

6593 3.2.1 When GS 2022 writes, “In line with the practices of our sister-churches (see 4.3  
6594 above), the churches could decide to adopt an article or provision in the church  
6595 order specifically regulating local pulpit access”, it effectively is giving advice  
6596 where none is sought.

6597 3.2.2 It understands the phrase, “In this way our practices will explicitly reflect our  
6598 church order” to be saying that our practices determine our church order rather  
6599 than our church order determining our practices.

6600 3.2.3 It considers that Synod’s even making the suggestion that churches could adopt an  
6601 article or provision in the church order regulating local pulpit access undermines  
6602 the grounds articulated in GS 2022 Art.155 dec. 4.1 and 4.2.

6603 3.2.4 It believes that rather than we conforming to how other federations “apply the first  
6604 mark of the true church (Belgic Confession Art.29)”, we need to be influencing  
6605 these other federations.

**6606 4. Considerations**

6607 4.1 Re 3.2.1: Coaldale argues that GS 2022 gave advice where none was sought. However,  
6608 the contested remark in GS 2022 art. 155 dec. 4.4 (“the churches could decide...”) was  
6609 not unsolicited guidance but an observation arising directly from the appeals placed  
6610 before GS 2022. GS 2022 was responding to the appellants themselves, who had  
6611 identified a “gap” in the Church Order and proposed contrasting ways of addressing it.  
6612 GS 2022 did not initiate this subject independently; it responded to what was properly  
6613 before it. Therefore, the reference to a potential Church Order provision was  
6614 procedurally legitimate and does not violate CO art. 30.

6615 4.2 Re 3.2.2: Coaldale reads the phrase “in this way our practices will explicitly reflect our  
6616 church order” as if it reverses the normative relationship between Church Order and  
6617 practice. This is a misreading. GS 2022 did not say that practice should *determine* the  
6618 Church Order, but that a Church Order provision could *clarify* and formalize the basis  
6619 for current practice. The statement assumes that Church Order should govern our  
6620 practices and suggests a path to bring greater consistency (see CO art. 76).



6621 4.3 Re 3.2.3: The suggestion of GS 2022 that the churches could adopt an article or  
6622 provision in the Church Order regulating local pulpit access is in keeping with CO art.  
6623 76, that if the interest of the churches demand such, these articles can be “changed,  
6624 augmented or diminished.”

6625 4.4 Re 3.2.4: The blessing of enjoying Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with other federations  
6626 is that there can be a mutual influencing of each other, not simply one influencing the  
6627 other.

## 6628 **5. Recommendation**

6629 That Synod decide:

6630 5.1 To deny the appeal.

6631

## 6632 **ADOPTED**

6633 G. Boot abstained as per CO art. 32.

6634

## 6635 **Article 167 – CNST (Needy Students of Theology)**

### 6636 **1. Material**

6637 1.1 Report of the Committee for Needy Student Fund (CNSF) (8.2.4).

6638 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Fergus North (8.3.4.1), Willoughby Heights  
6639 (8.3.4.2).

### 6640 **2. Admissibility**

6641 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

6642 Ground: It was mandated by GS 2022 and received on time.

6643 2.2 The letters regarding the report were declared admissible.

6644 Ground: These interact with a report and were received on time.

### 6645 **3. Observations**

6646 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 157) mandated the CNSF:

6647 [3.9.1] To assess the churches annually as per the number of communicant members in  
6648 the current Yearbook based on the anticipated funding for the new year ahead;

6649 [3.9.2] To report annually to each church of the federation on its activities, and to report  
6650 triennially to each general synod on the same and to include appropriate  
6651 recommendations in its report to General Synod.

6652 Further, GS 2022 instructed the CNSF:

6653 [3.7] To provide GS 2025 with recommendations, supported by clear grounds, for any  
6654 changes to the bylaws of the CNSF, which must be made in order to be in  
6655 compliance with the ITA and the CRA, as well as with CO Art. 20 & 75.

6656 3.2 From the CNSF report, the following:

6657 3.2.1 The report covers the period 2021-2023.



- 6658 3.2.2 The committee financially supported a total of 12 students, with a total of  
6659 \$293,249 being disbursed for costs relative to student grants and administrative  
6660 costs.
- 6661 3.2.3 This total represents an increase of \$161,033 from the previous three years  
6662 (\$132,216 for 2018-2020), due to a higher number of students, students with larger  
6663 families, and higher living costs in Ontario.
- 6664 3.2.4 At the end of 2020 / early 2021, after the fund supported fewer students than  
6665 anticipated, \$40,000 from the fund was invested with Christian Stewardship  
6666 Services (CSS) to accrue interest on the surplus amounts in the fund. This  
6667 investment was withdrawn in early 2023 when the fund did not have sufficient  
6668 funds in the chequing account to cover expenses during the period when  
6669 assessment cheques were coming in from the churches. Since the withdrawal, the  
6670 funds have again grown and the investment was replenished back to an appropriate  
6671 balance with CSS, and more recently, has increased the funds in CSS because the  
6672 transfer of funds between the chequing account and CSS is quick and efficient.
- 6673 3.2.5 The committee endeavours to maintain an account surplus to address emergent or  
6674 unexpected expenditures from students, while keeping all funds in either a  
6675 chequing account with the Meridian Credit Union or an investment account with  
6676 CSS. Fiscal accountability is maintained by means of dual signatories, and audits  
6677 are performed on annual year-end financial statements and reported by the  
6678 committee to the Council of the Grassie (Covenant) CanRC.
- 6679 3.2.6 The churches continued to be assessed annually based on projected enrollment and  
6680 anticipated expenditures, according to the agreed upon formula in the committee's  
6681 mandate. This upcoming year, the rate is expected to be \$7-8 per communicant  
6682 member; to avoid large swings up and down in the rate, the committee is  
6683 attempting to keep a more even rate. With thankfulness, the churches have been  
6684 able to meet their financial assessments during this triennial period.
- 6685 3.2.7 A defined process is in place for students who are eligible for financial assistance  
6686 to follow; after securing appropriate forms and contact information for the CNSF,  
6687 they submit a request for financial aid, visits are conducted to ensure that aid is  
6688 given in a spirit of humility and brotherly love. The Committee reports that, with  
6689 thankfulness, there has been good cooperation and harmony between students and  
6690 members of the CNSF.
- 6691 3.2.8 In response to GS 2022 [3.7], the Committee asked Teresa Douma of *Douma Law*  
6692 to review the bylaws of the CNSF and determine if the CNSF is in compliance  
6693 with the Income Tax Act (ITA) and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), and CO  
6694 Article 20 & 75. The lawyer's opinion is documented in a letter dated September  
6695 30, 2024, to Grassie (Covenant) CanRC and reviewed by Rev. John Louwerse and  
6696 Dr. William den Hollander.
- 6697 Conclusions of this review can be summarized:
- 6698 3.2.8.1 For purposes of complying with the Income Tax Act and charity law in  
6699 general, in accepting the responsibility and role as the Committee for Needy  
6700 Theological Students, the Church had/has to ensure that this activity falls  
6701 under the umbrella of its purposes and that it has sufficient direction and

- 6702 control over it, so as to be able to say the activity is its own activity. The  
6703 Church annually demonstrates appropriateness of disbursements through its  
6704 financial reporting to the churches of the federation, its ‘audit’ and the annual  
6705 Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) T3010 filing.
- 6706 3.2.8.2 Based on a plain reading of the Church Order it is not clear on what grounds  
6707 the current manner in which the Church operates the CNSF would bring it  
6708 into non-compliance with Church Order Articles 20 or 75.
- 6709 3.2.9 With thanks for God’s providing hand, the CNSF continues to be blessed with the  
6710 requisite financial means to support students preparing for ministry in our Lord’s  
6711 church.
- 6712 3.3 The Fergus North CanRC expresses concern that if the CNSF records are audited by a  
6713 government agency or reviewed in court, a “plain reading” of the Church Order may not  
6714 be taken, and instead a more in-depth review may be used and could potentially expose  
6715 some legal issues. Fergus North requests synod to mandate the CNSF to follow up on  
6716 the legal review to determine if the Church Order should be updated based on the  
6717 observations in the legal review.
- 6718 3.4 The Willoughby Heights CanRC expresses ongoing concerns with the Needy Students’  
6719 Fund (CNSF) reporting and structure.
- 6720 3.4.1 Willoughby Heights expresses appreciation for the work done but reiterates  
6721 concerns raised in letters to GS 2019 and GS 2022, which they believe remain  
6722 unresolved.
- 6723 3.4.1.1 Terminological Confusion (CNST vs. CNSF):
- 6724 3.4.1.1.1 Historically, Synods have used inconsistent terminology for the  
6725 committee tasked with managing support for needy theological  
6726 students.
- 6727 3.4.1.1.2 The Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST) is appointed  
6728 by a general synod.
- 6729 3.4.1.1.3 The CNST, in turn, appoints the CNSF (the fund management team).
- 6730 3.4.1.1.4 This distinction has been blurred in reports and decisions (e.g., GS  
6731 2016, GS 2019, GS 2022), causing administrative and ecclesiastical  
6732 confusion.
- 6733 3.4.1.2 Ownership of Activity and Compliance with Church Order:
- 6734 3.4.1.2.1 According to Church Order Article 20, the churches must provide  
6735 financial aid to needy theological students.
- 6736 • This is currently done via a committee appointed by general synod.  
6737 • This committee is given control over its own money flow.  
6738 • This committee is a church which has charitable status.
- 6739 3.4.1.2.2 Willoughby Heights argues that, if having charitable status implies  
6740 having “direction and control” over funds, a church appointed as a  
6741 committee in control of its own money is in contravention of CO Art.  
6742 74 (no lording it over others) and 75 (church property in common).
- 6743 • Re CO art. 75: “All property ... which belongs to the churches  
6744 comprised in ... general synods ... in common, shall be held in trust ...

6745 by deputies or trustees ... and such trustees shall be bound by the terms  
6746 of their ... instruction.” Willoughby Heights believes this to imply that  
6747 “direction and control” is never in the hands of the deputies  
6748 (=committee) but always remains in the hands of general synods.  
6749 • Re CO art. 74: “No church shall in any way lord it over other churches.”  
6750 Willoughby Heights believes that if a single church has “direction and  
6751 control” over property of the churches in common, that church is  
6752 lording it over other churches.

6753 3.4.1.3 Implications for other Synod-Appointed Churches:

6754 3.4.1.3.1 If Synod accepts Grassie’s claim of legal ownership as a model, it sets a  
6755 precedent affecting other churches tasked with Synodical mandates  
6756 (e.g., Guelph-Emmanuel for the Pastoral Training Program, Carman-  
6757 East for the General Fund).

6758 3.4.1.3.2 This could undermine ecclesiastical principles of shared responsibility  
6759 and compliance with the Church Order.

6760 3.4.2 Willoughby Heights requests Synod to:

6761 3.4.2.1 Insist on precise use of terminology as acknowledged by GS 2019;

6762 3.4.2.2 Clarify and ensure proper ecclesiastical ownership of synodical activities;

6763 3.4.2.3 Protect the federation’s integrity by ensuring all synod-appointed churches  
6764 comply with Church Order principles.

#### 6765 **4. Considerations**

6766 4.1 The Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST) has faithfully completed its  
6767 mandate.

6768 4.2 For the period 2021-2023:

6769 4.2.1 The CNST diligently assessed the churches on an annual basis and distributed  
6770 funds to theological students in need with care.

6771 4.2.2 As good stewards, the CNST managed their funds wisely, including the investment  
6772 of funds to generate interest on surplus amounts not needed in the operating fund  
6773 at that particular time.

6774 4.2.3 The CNST provided annual financial statements and reported to the Council of  
6775 Grassie (Covenant) for their oversight.

6776 4.2.4 The committee fulfilled its mandate (GS 2022 art. 157 dec.3.7) with a legal review  
6777 as a first step to provide General Synod with recommendations concerning ITA  
6778 and CO art. 20 & 75.

6779 4.3 Fergus North and Willoughby Heights rightly point out that a more in-depth review still  
6780 needs to be done to determine if our current structures and practices for funding needy  
6781 students of theology are in compliance with Canadian tax law and CO art. 20, 74 & 75.

6782 4.3.1 Fergus North requests Synod to mandate the committee to follow up with a more  
6783 in-depth review to determine if the Church Order needs to be updated based on the  
6784 observations in the legal review.

6785 4.3.2 Willoughby Heights requests Synod to appoint a study committee to research its  
6786 concerns and to report to the next general synod whether their concerns are

6787 founded and, if they are, how they might best be resolved. Willoughby Heights  
6788 also requests that this committee consist of at least three individuals with expertise  
6789 in accounting practices, Canadian tax law, and CanRC church policy, and that all  
6790 members of this study committee have experience in the practice of our church  
6791 government.

## 6792 **5. Recommendations**

6793 That Synod decide:

- 6794 5.1 To thank the Grassie (Covenant) CanRC for their work as Committee for Needy  
6795 Students of Theology (CNST);
- 6796 5.2 To discharge the CNST for the duties completed during the period 2021-2023;
- 6797 5.3 To reappoint the Grassie (Covenant) CanRC as the CNST to look after extending  
6798 financial aid to those students of theology who are in need of it;
- 6799 5.4 To mandate the Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST):
- 6800 5.4.1 To assess the churches annually as per the number of communicant members in  
6801 the current *Yearbook* based on the anticipated funding required for the new year  
6802 ahead;
- 6803 5.4.2 To collect and distribute the funds for the Bursary Proposal of the CRTS (cf. GS  
6804 2025 art. 154 rec. 5.14);
- 6805 5.4.3 To submit its report on its activities to the churches no later than six (6) months  
6806 prior the convening of the next general synod.
- 6807 5.5 To appoint a study committee of at least three members as per consideration 4.3.2 and  
6808 give this committee the following mandate:
- 6809 5.5.1 To investigate whether there are conflicts between the Canadian Tax Law and  
6810 CanRC governance structures and practices (including but not limited to the  
6811 Church Order, Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST) bylaws, and  
6812 general synod decisions regarding CNST) as per the concerns raised with respect  
6813 to the function of CO art. 20, 74, & 75, using resources such as Canadian Centre  
6814 for Christian Charities (cccc.org);
- 6815 5.5.2 To recommend how any detected conflicts might best be resolved;
- 6816 5.5.3 To advise whether their conclusions with respect to the CNST also apply to other  
6817 general synod appointed committees that consist of individual churches (CPTPF,  
6818 General Fund);
- 6819 5.5.4 To submit its report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior the  
6820 convening of the next general synod.

6821

6822 **ADOPTED**

6823

## 6824 **Article 168 – Audit / Review**

### 6825 **1. Material**

- 6826 1.1 Letter from Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.2.2.1)

6827 **2. Admissibility**

6828 2.1 The letter was declared admissible

6829 Grounds: The letter pertains to reports submitted to GS 2025 and was received on time.

6830 **3. Observations**

6831 3.1 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) expresses concern about the use of the term “audit”  
6832 in several reports to GS 2025.

6833 3.2 The submission notes that some committees describe financial reviews as “audits” or  
6834 refer to reviewers as “auditors,” although no audit was conducted according to  
6835 professional or legal standards.

6836 3.3 Examples cited include:

- 6837 • The Committee for Needy Students’ Fund Report (top of p. 4 and p. 15);
- 6838 • The Guelph-Emmanuel Pastoral Training Program Funding Committee Report  
6839 (top of p. 2).

6840 3.4 The letter contrasts this with the Board of Governors of the Seminary, which uses the  
6841 term “audit” properly and provides supporting documentation (pp. 7, 27, 28 of its  
6842 report).

6843 3.5 Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) urges synod to instruct reporting committees to use  
6844 financial terminology that accurately reflects the nature of the review performed.

6845 **4. Considerations**

6846 4.1 The term “audit” carries specific professional and legal meaning. Using it for informal  
6847 or non-professional financial reviews risks confusion and may create inappropriate  
6848 expectations about the level of scrutiny applied.

6849 **5. Recommendations**

6850 That Synod decide:

6851 5.1 To acknowledge as legitimate the concern of Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth)  
6852 regarding the imprecise use of the term audit in some reports.

6853 5.2 To instruct all committees and reporting bodies to use terminology in financial reporting  
6854 that accurately reflects the procedures performed. The term “audit” should be used only  
6855 when a professional audit has been conducted. Other forms of review should be  
6856 described using terms such as “examination,” “inspection,” or “review,” as appropriate.

6857

6858 **ADOPTED**

6859

6860 **Article 169 – Closing Devotions**

6861 The Chairman made some housekeeping announcements regarding the sprint to the finish line.

6862 Rev. Rolf den Hollander read Psalm 19:5,6, spoke some devotional words, read Psalm 19:7-14,  
6863 led in prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 19:1,2.

6864

6865 *Synod was adjourned until 9:00am for committee work and nightly rest.*

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**Day 10 — Morning Session**  
**Friday, May 16, 2025**

**Article 170 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. The Chairman read Psalm 134, spoke some devotional words, led in opening prayer, and had the meeting sing Psalm 134. He observed all synod members were present and made some housekeeping announcements as the finish line comes into view.

**Article 171 – Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 172 – GGRI – Letter of Greetings**

Rev. Karlo Janssen read a letter of greeting sent by the Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI), declaring gratitude for our relationship and expressing regret at being unable to attend Synod in person. The full text of the letter can be found in Appendix 19. The chairman spoke some words in response.

**Article 173 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One – 6 (*Expansion Book of Praise*)**

Committee 1 presented draft 1 of a report on the report of the SCBP regarding expansion of the *Book of Praise* with alternate Psalms and additional Hymns. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 174 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One – 1,2,3 (*Shorter LS Forms*)**

Committee 3 presented draft 1 of a report on the report of the SCBP regarding shorter Forms for the Celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The report was discussed. The committee took the report back for further consideration.

**Article 175 – Overture RSW 2024: Infant Baptism Form**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Overture from RSW 2024 (proposed originally by Aldergrove, and submitted via CPE) (8.4.3.4).
- 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Arthur (8.5.9.1), Attercliffe (8.5.9.2), Barrhead (8.5.9.3), Calgary (8.5.9.4), Carman East (8.5.9.5), Coaldale (8.5.9.6), Dunnville West (8.5.9.7), Edmonton (Providence) (8.5.9.8), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.5.9.9), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.5.9.10), Houston (8.5.9.11), Kerwood (Grace) (8.5.9.12), Langley (8.5.9.13), Neerlandia (8.5.9.14), Niagara South (8.5.9.15), Ottawa (Jubilee) (8.5.9.16), St. Albert (8.5.9.17), Tintern Spring Creek (8.5.9.18), Willoughby Heights (8.5.9.19).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The overture was declared admissible



6907 Grounds: It was submitted on time and is placed on the agenda of GS 2025 by a  
6908 regional synod.

6909 2.2. The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

6910 Grounds: They were submitted in time and interact with an overture.

### 6911 3. Observations

6912 3.1 The overture originates from the Aldergrove CanRC, submitted via Classis Pacific East  
6913 to RSW 2024, and forwarded with recommendations by RSW 2024 to GS 2025.

6914 3.2 The overture proposes a revision to the Form for the Baptism of Infants, citing several  
6915 concerns with the existing form as currently found in the *Book of Praise*:

6916 3.2.1 Many of the sentences are long and contain multiple clauses.

6917 3.2.2 The Form is too lengthy, particularly in the case of churches where many baptisms  
6918 take place annually.

6919 3.2.3 The language of the Form is overly formal and does not sound like anything else  
6920 spoken in the worship service.

6921 3.2.4 There is in some cases a lack of clarity, a problem with the logical flow or a  
6922 clumsiness from offering a series of Scripture quotations.

6923 3.2.5 There are some phrases and sentences which could communicate incorrect ideas.

6924 3.2.6 The prayer before baptism is awkward as a way of addressing God.

6925 3.2.7 Other churches with whom we have fellowship have revised our form in use.

6926 3.3 RSW 2024 in their recommendations to GS 2025 recommend appointing a committee  
6927 for the purpose of proposing to the churches a revised Form for the Baptism of Infants.

6928 3.4 From the correspondence, the following:

6929 3.4.1 Arthur opposes the overture indicating that they had seven baptisms and the  
6930 previous two years they had around fourteen baptisms per year. Not once during  
6931 this time did a member of the congregation make any mention of the form being  
6932 “not conducive to public reading”, or “stilted” or anything alike. They also find  
6933 that the reasons given in the overture are subjective in nature.

6934 3.4.2 Most of the churches who responded to this overture were opposed to the adoption  
6935 of this proposed new Baptism Form. Some of the churches opposed wrote that if a  
6936 new form was to be considered, it should be a product of the work of a committee.  
6937 Only a few churches wrote in favour of the proposed revision of the form.

6938 3.4.3 Some churches point out the importance of maintaining the historic language of  
6939 the Form, which connects us to the catholicity of the Church through time.

6940 3.5 The overture includes a proposed revised text for the Form for the Baptism of Infants  
6941 and indicates the possibility of a separate proposal for a shorter form in the future.

### 6942 4. Considerations

6943 4.1 Synod notes the concerns raised by Aldergrove (via CPE and RSW) regarding the  
6944 existing Form for the Baptism of Infants. Some of the concerns regarding sentence  
6945 structure, clarity, and potentially outdated language appear to have merit and warrant  
6946 careful consideration.

- 6947 4.2 While the original Aldergrove overture already provides a proposed revised text, the  
6948 process for revising Liturgical Forms within our federation has historically involved  
6949 careful study and deliberation by a committee mandated by a general synod, followed  
6950 by review and feedback from the churches. This process ensures that any changes  
6951 reflect the collective wisdom and consensus of the churches and are faithful to Scripture  
6952 and the Confessions.
- 6953 4.3 The concerns raised in the overture regarding language, clarity, and length would  
6954 certainly apply to the Form for the Baptism of Adults as well, given its similar structure  
6955 and wording in many parts. A review should therefore encompass both forms.
- 6956 4.4 Given that Liturgical Forms are interconnected and may reference or allude to one  
6957 another, any proposed changes to the Baptism Forms should be reviewed for their  
6958 potential impact on other liturgical forms (e.g., the Form for the Celebration of the  
6959 Lord's Supper, which sometimes alludes to the promises made in baptism).
- 6960 4.5 Appointing a dedicated committee, as recommended by RSW 2024 and supported by  
6961 various churches, would provide the necessary time and expertise for a thorough review  
6962 of the Forms for Infant and Adult Baptism, allowing for careful analysis of the existing  
6963 text, evaluation of the overture's suggestions and input from the churches, and the  
6964 development of a proposed revised text.
- 6965 4.6 Such a committee should be comprised of individuals with sensitivity to pastoral needs,  
6966 expertise in biblical languages, theology, church history (particularly concerning the  
6967 development of the baptism forms), and the use of the English language in worship.

## 6968 **5. Recommendations**

6969 That Synod decide:

- 6970 5.1 To thank the Aldergrove CanRC, Classis Pacific East, and Regional Synod West 2024  
6971 for the work done in studying and proposing possible improvements to the Form for the  
6972 Baptism of Infants and proposing a way forward towards defining and implementing  
6973 these improvements;
- 6974 5.2 To appoint a three-person committee to review the existing Forms for the Baptism of  
6975 Infants and Adults as found in the *Book of Praise*. This committee should be comprised  
6976 of individuals with sensitivity to pastoral needs, expertise in biblical languages,  
6977 theology, church history (particularly concerning the development of the Baptism  
6978 Forms), and the use of the English language in worship;
- 6979 5.3 To mandate the committee to:
- 6980 5.3.1 Study the Forms for the Baptism of Infants and Adults in light of the concerns  
6981 raised in the overture and any other input from the churches regarding clarity,  
6982 language, length, and logical flow, while ensuring faithfulness to Scripture and the  
6983 Confessions;
- 6984 5.3.2 Consider the relationship between the Baptism Forms and other liturgical forms,  
6985 particularly the Form for the Celebration of the Lord's supper, and assess any  
6986 potential impact of proposed revisions;
- 6987 5.3.3 Propose revisions to the text of the Forms for the Baptism of Infants and Adults;
- 6988 5.3.4 Submit a first draft to the churches for feedback to the committee, no less than 15  
6989 months before the next general synod;

6990 5.3.5 Submit its report and proposed revised text to the churches no later than six (6)  
6991 months prior to the next general synod.

6992 (See further GS 2025 art. 183)

6993

6994 **ADOPTED**

6995

6996 **Article 176 – Overture RSW 2024: CO art. 30 (Ecclesiastical Route)**

6997 **1. Material**

6998 1.1 Overture RSW 2024 Overture re CO art. 30 (8.4.3.1).

6999 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Arthur (8.5.3.1), Barrhead (8.5.3.2), Burlington  
7000 Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.5.3.3), Caledonia (8.5.3.4), Calgary (8.5.3.5), Carman East  
7001 (8.5.3.6), Carman West (8.5.3.7), Dunnville West (8.5.3.8), Elm Creek (8.5.3.9), Elora  
7002 (8.5.3.10), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.5.3.11), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.5.3.12), Grand  
7003 Rapids (8.5.3.13), Grand Valley (8.5.3.14), Grassie (Covenant) (8.5.3.15), Houston  
7004 (8.5.3.16), Lincoln (Vineyard) (8.5.3.17), Neerlandia (8.5.3.18), Niagara South  
7005 (8.5.3.19), St. Albert (8.5.3.20), Toronto (Bethel) (8.5.3.21), Willoughby Heights  
7006 (8.5.3.22).

7007 **2. Admissibility**

7008 2.1 The overture was declared admissible.

7009 Grounds: It followed the very ecclesiastical route it is trying to change and was received  
7010 on time.

7011 2.2 The letters were declared admissible.

7012 Grounds: The letters interact with an overture to general synod and were received on  
7013 time.

7014 **3. Observations**

7015 3.1 From the overture:

7016 3.1.1 Timeline of changes to CO Art 30, and guidelines:

7017 3.1.1.1 GS 1983 added to CO Article 30 the following, “A new matter which has not  
7018 previously been presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda  
7019 only when the minor assembly has dealt with it.” This now caused the  
7020 ecclesiastical route to apply to new matters.

7021 3.1.1.2 GS 2010 added the following to the guidelines: “For **all** [emphasis added]  
7022 matters of the churches in common, individual churches may address  
7023 proposals or other significant submissions directly to general synod with the  
7024 requirement that all such submissions are sent also to each church in the  
7025 federation no later than six months prior to general synod” (GS 2010 Art. 62).

7026 3.1.1.3 GS 2013 rescinded the previous guidelines as they were at odds with CO Art  
7027 30. Instead, it adopted the following guideline, “Since matters on the agenda  
7028 of general synod involve the churches in common, regional synods shall  
7029 distribute copies of adopted overture to all the churches in the federation no

- 7030 later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod” (GS 2013  
7031 Art 99).
- 7032 3.1.2 Two competing interpretations of CO Art. 30 have existed in the churches. The  
7033 “older view” is that churches may submit overtures directly to general synod if the  
7034 matter is common to all churches. The “newer view” requires all overtures first be  
7035 processed through the ecclesiastical route, regardless of their nature. GS 2010  
7036 attempted to blend these views by allowing direct submissions with safeguards  
7037 (e.g., six-month notice), but GS 2013 rejected this compromise, reinforcing the  
7038 newer, stricter interpretation.
- 7039 3.1.3 There have been inconsistencies in the application and interpretation of the  
7040 ecclesiastical route since the addition of the relevant sentence to CO Art. 30 in  
7041 1983. For example, GS 2007 admitted an overture directly from a church,  
7042 bypassing the ecclesiastical route, on the grounds that it dealt with a matter  
7043 common to the churches. This resulted in a back-and-forth as synods created a  
7044 “battle of opinions” (GS 2010 art. 62 cons. 3.4), which GS 2010 itself described as  
7045 “extremely unhelpful in establishing equity and fairness among the churches”.
- 7046 3.1.4 Despite the formal requirement of the ecclesiastical route, synods have not always  
7047 enforced it consistently. Some overtures that bypassed the route were accepted.  
7048 Others that followed the route were rejected for procedural or substantive reasons.  
7049 This inconsistency has led to confusion among churches about what is required for  
7050 an overture to be considered admissible.
- 7051 3.1.5 The inconsistency undermines trust in the fairness and transparency of synodical  
7052 processes. Churches are left uncertain about how to proceed with overtures,  
7053 leading to frustration and inefficiency. This confusion is not merely theoretical—it  
7054 has had real consequences in recent synods (e.g., GS 2016, GS 2019, GS 2022),  
7055 where overtures were inconsistently handled despite following the prescribed  
7056 route.
- 7057 3.1.6 While this process is intended to involve the churches and ensure broad support it  
7058 often fails to achieve either. For example, GS 2022 rejected an overture that had  
7059 been approved by both regional synods (GS 2022 art. 105), showing that even  
7060 when an overture has passed through all the prescribed steps and *appears* to have  
7061 broad support, it can still be denied at the final stage. Two reasons might explain  
7062 this:
- 7063 3.1.6.1 Each assembly is a deliberative body that makes its own decision. An  
7064 overture does not gain legitimacy simply by passing through multiple stages,  
7065 but by the strength of the arguments presented.
- 7066 3.1.6.2 Churches might not engage early in the process for a variety of reasons.  
7067 Some churches only respond to overtures once they reach general synod,  
7068 even if they had opportunities to do so earlier at classis or regional synod,  
7069 showing that the overture may not have broad support.
- 7070 3.1.7 The ecclesiastical route can undermine fairness when a classis or regional synod  
7071 can prevent an overture from reaching general synod, even if the matter is of  
7072 concern to churches outside their jurisdiction. This creates a situation where  
7073 churches are subject to decisions made by assemblies they do not belong to.

- 7074 3.1.8 Appeals complicates the process. If an overture is denied, a church can appeal the  
7075 decision. If that appeal is upheld, the overture may still reach general synod—but  
7076 now through a more convoluted and delayed process.
- 7077 3.1.9 When considering the efficiency of handling overtures, from the perspective of an  
7078 individual church, the existing process is not always efficient as many churches  
7079 will need to deal with the same matter multiple times as it moves through the  
7080 assemblies to which it belongs, even if it fails along the way. Considering the  
7081 number of overtures that are denied at regional and general synods, classes and  
7082 regional synods may not be efficient at filtering out weak overtures, which are then  
7083 dealt with by assemblies, and churches responding to them.
- 7084 3.2 RSW 2024 requests that synod:
- 7085 3.2.1 Change CO art. 30 to read: “A new matter which has not previously been  
7086 presented to that major assembly and is common to its churches may be put on the  
7087 agenda by one of its churches.”;
- 7088 3.2.2 Remove synod guideline I.F;
- 7089 3.2.3 Adopt a new guideline that reads, “For new matters common to the churches of the  
7090 general synod, individual churches may address overtures directly to general synod  
7091 with the requirement that all such submissions are sent also to each church in the  
7092 federation no later than six months prior to general synod.”
- 7093 3.3 From the churches:
- 7094 3.3.1 The current process ensures that only overtures which have won the support of  
7095 many churches reaches the broadest assembly (Arthur, Fergus (Maranatha), Grand  
7096 Rapids, Neerlandia, Niagara South).
- 7097 3.3.2 Failures to apply CO art. 30 properly in the past does not imply a need change the  
7098 CO today (Arthur, Houston, Lincoln (Vineyard)).
- 7099 3.3.3 The overture will increase the workload of our general synods (Arthur, Barrhead,  
7100 Carman West, Dunville West, Elora, Grand Valley, Grassie (Covenant), Lincoln  
7101 (Vineyard), Niagara South, Toronto (Bethel)).
- 7102 3.3.4 The current process allows minor assemblies to filter out weak overtures  
7103 (Barrhead, Calgary, Fergus (Maranatha), Lincoln (Vineyard), Niagara South).
- 7104 3.3.5 Relying on the wisdom of minor assemblies is a benefit (Barrhead, Calgary,  
7105 Dunville West, Elm Creek, Fergus (Maranatha), Grand Valley, Neerlandia, St.  
7106 Albert, Toronto (Bethel)).
- 7107 3.3.6 If a request to forward an overture has been denied, and an appeal sustained by  
7108 general synod, the overture can be submitted directly to general synod (Calgary).
- 7109 3.3.7 The current process provides more checks and balances (Carman East, Niagara  
7110 South).
- 7111 3.3.8 The current process is cumbersome, complicated, and frustrating (Burlington  
7112 Waterdown (Rehoboth), Willoughby Heights).
- 7113 3.3.9 The current process results in altered and adulterated overtures landing on the table  
7114 of General Synod (Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth)).



7115 3.3.10 Each church should have a direct voice in matters of concern and interest to it  
7116 (Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth)).

#### 7117 **4. Considerations**

7118 4.1 The historical development of CO art. 30 and its associated guidelines (obs. 3.1.1  
7119 above) indicates that the current formulation is not foundational but open to  
7120 reconsideration.

7121 4.2 The existence of two competing interpretations of CO art. 30 (obs. 3.1.2 above)—the  
7122 “older view” allowing direct submissions and the “newer view” requiring the  
7123 ecclesiastical route—demonstrates a lack of consensus historically. GS 2010 attempted  
7124 to reconcile these views, but GS 2013 reversed that effort as it was in conflict with the  
7125 Church Order. The ongoing tension suggests the need to either fix the current process or  
7126 change the church order.

7127 4.2.1 The process involves all the broader assemblies, their regulations and guidelines. It  
7128 is beyond the ambit of general synod to dictate how the minor assemblies regulate  
7129 themselves.

7130 4.2.2 A general synod, may rightfully change the Church Order, if the interest of the  
7131 churches demand it (CO art. 76).

7132 4.3 The inconsistency in how general synods have applied the ecclesiastical route (obs.  
7133 3.1.3–3.1.5 above) has led to confusion and potentially undermines trust in the process.  
7134 A Church Order provision that is not applied consistently fails to serve its intended  
7135 purpose and should be reconsidered.

7136 4.3.1 At GS 2025 two virtually identical overtures were received from RSE 2024  
7137 (agenda items 8.4.2.4 & 8.2.4.5) and another virtually identical overture was  
7138 denied by RSW 2024. This suggests that the originating church believed that by  
7139 sharing the overture with multiple churches in other classes that it would increase  
7140 the likelihood that the matter would land on the agenda of general synod.

7141 4.4 The ecclesiastical route does not reliably ensure church involvement or support (obs.  
7142 3.1.6 & 3.3.1 above). The overture correctly points out, “since broader assemblies are  
7143 assemblies of churches, churches should be aware of proposals being considered by the  
7144 broader assemblies to which they belong and should have the opportunity to present  
7145 their considerations on those proposals to the major assembly considering the proposal.”

7146 4.5 The language of “lording it over”, is an overstatement. Nevertheless, when a classis or  
7147 regional synod blocks an overture from reaching general synod, it does indirectly affect  
7148 churches outside their jurisdiction (obs. 3.1.7 above). In practice, this is minimal given  
7149 the frequency with which churches communicate with each other on these matters.  
7150 Further, these matters may end up on the agenda of a broader assembly by way of  
7151 appeal (cf. obs. 3.3.6 above).

7152 4.6 The appeals process (obs. 3.1.8 above) reveals an inherent inconsistency with the  
7153 current process. When an appeal against a decision not to adopt a particular overture is  
7154 sustained, it raises the question of what to do with the overture.

7155 4.6.1 If the overture is to go, for example, to the next general synod (obs. 3.3.6 above),  
7156 then it must do so in violation of the guideline as a *church* is putting a new matter  
7157 on the agenda of a general synod and not the minor assembly.



- 7158 4.6.2 If the overture is to go to the assembly that denied the overture, it would violate  
7159 the Church Order as a major assembly cannot set the agenda of a minor assembly  
7160 (CO art 30).
- 7161 4.6.3 Requiring the overture to go back through the ecclesiastical route, that is  
7162 resubmitting it to classis, would be frustrating and burdensome.
- 7163 4.7 The arguments of efficiency and workload (obs. 3.1.9 & 3.3.3 above) are not definitive  
7164 and somewhat subjective. It depends greatly on whether one is looking at all the  
7165 churches or general synod alone.
- 7166 4.7.1 Multiple churches argue (obs. 3.3.4 above) that current process allows weak  
7167 overtures to be filtered out before reaching general synod. The overture  
7168 demonstrates that the “pass rate” of the broader minor assemblies does not bear  
7169 this out (obs. 3.1.9 above).
- 7170 4.8 The overture’s proposed changes (obs. 3.2 above) aim to address these issues by  
7171 allowing churches to submit overtures directly to general synod, provided all churches  
7172 are notified 6 months in advance. Since the churches normally receive many synod  
7173 reports 6 months in advance, it would be better to have overtures submitted 12 months  
7174 in advance.
- 7175 4.8.1 To ensure that general synods are not overloaded with weak overtures and to  
7176 benefit from the wisdom of minor assemblies, churches could seek the judgement  
7177 and help of classis (as per CO art. 44) in preparing overtures (obs. 3.3.5 above).
- 7178 4.9 Another way to address the practical issues (obs. 3.3.2 above), would be to change the  
7179 regulations of the broader minor assemblies such that they filter weak overtures more  
7180 efficiently (obs. 3.3.4 above). Doing so is outside the ambit of general synod (CO art.  
7181 30).

## 7182 5. Recommendation

7183 That Synod decide:

- 7184 5.1 To adopt the overture;
- 7185 5.2 To change the last line of CO art. 30 from: *A new matter which has not previously been*  
7186 *presented to that major assembly may be put on the agenda only when the minor*  
7187 *assembly has dealt with it.” To: **A new matter which has not previously been presented***  
7188 *to that major assembly and is common to its churches may be put on the agenda by*  
7189 *one of its churches.*
- 7190 5.3 To remove Guideline 1.F from the Guidelines for Synod;
- 7191 5.4 To add to the Guideline for Synod the following Guideline 1.F: ***For matters common to***  
7192 ***the churches of the general synod, whether “new” (CO article 30) or “once decided***  
7193 ***upon” (CO article 33), individual churches may address proposals directly to general***  
7194 ***synod with the requirement that all such submissions are sent also to each church in***  
7195 ***the federation no later than twelve (12) months prior to general synod.***

## 7197 **ADOPTED**

7198 *For the Guidelines as revised by GS 2025, see Appendix 25.*

7199

7200 **Article 177 – PCA (Presbyterian Church in America)**

7201 **1. Material**

7202 1.1 Letter from Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.10.11).

7203 **2. Admissibility**

7204 2.1 The letter was declared admissible.

7205 Grounds: It was received on time and the letter pertains to the CER report to GS 2025.

7206 **3. Observations**

7207 3.1 In its letter, the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC:

7208 3.1.1 Expresses surprise that the CER has no contact with the Presbyterian Church in  
7209 America (PCA);

7210 3.1.2 Notes that Hamilton (Cornerstone) and Flamborough (Redemption) brought this to  
7211 the attention of GS 2013 and GS 2019 respectively;

7212 3.1.3 Requests GS 2025 mandate the CER to take up contact with the PCA.

7213 **4. Considerations**

7214 4.1 A similar request was made by Hamilton (Cornerstone) to GS 2013 (art. 81), and the  
7215 consideration of GS 2013 stated:

7216 While Hamilton-Cornerstone’s suggestion may have merit, it would be  
7217 appropriate and also helpful for Hamilton (or some other congregation so  
7218 inclined) to first investigate the PCA further. If after investigation and evaluation  
7219 of the PCA there is an apparent potential for fruitful ecclesiastical contact, the  
7220 issue should be brought from the minor assemblies to the broader, where it may be  
7221 placed on the agenda of the CCCNA for its attention. This course of action would  
7222 be similar to that taken, e.g., by the church of Aldergrove with respect to the Free  
7223 Reformed Churches of North America (see Acts of Synod Fergus 1998, Article  
7224 98, Consideration III.A).

7225 4.2 GS 2025 has changed CO art. 30 to read, “A new matter which has not previously been  
7226 presented to that major assembly and is common to its churches may be put on the  
7227 agenda by one of its churches.” It is no longer required to bring the matter through the  
7228 minor broader assemblies in order to put it on the agenda a general synod.

7229 4.3 It is incumbent on the local church to do an investigations and evaluation of any other  
7230 church before approaching general synod.

7231 **5. Recommendation**

7232 That Synod decide:

7233 5.1 That the above consideration serves as answer to the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC.

7234

7235 **ADOPTED**

7236

7237 **Article 178 – Appeal against GS 2022 art. 155: Pulpit Access**

7238 **1. Material**

7239 1.1 Appeal from Ottawa (Jubilee).

7240 **2. Admissibility**

7241 2.1 The appeal was declared admissible.

7242 Grounds: It is an appeal against a decision of GS 2022, and it was received on time.

7243 **3. Observations**

7244 3.1 The Ottawa (Jubilee) CanRC states at the outset of its appeal that its is committed “to a  
7245 literal interpretation of the Church Order and our responsibility to oversee our  
7246 congregation’s practices not expressly regulated by it.” It then articulates the following  
7247 four points:

7248 3.1.1 “We did not agree to bind ourselves to follow the traditions of men or to uphold  
7249 the common practices of a plurality of churches. (See Belgic Confession Art 7.)

7250 3.1.2 We gave our “yes” only to a literal reading of the church order.

7251 3.1.3 We use the articles within the church order as individual articles. We do not seek  
7252 to interpret or read into an article what is already regulated by another article.

7253 3.1.4 We take full responsibility to oversee our congregation’s local practices for  
7254 anything not expressly regulated in the church order.”

7255 3.2 Ottawa (Jubilee) appeals GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 (art. 155) erred by combining  
7256 three separate appeals regarding RSE 2019 art. 11 into one judgement, “thereby failing  
7257 to consider Ottawa-Jubilee’s unique circumstances of geographic isolation.” They  
7258 explain further that because of its geographical isolation from its sister churches, it is  
7259 “difficult to arrange consistent pulpit exchanges.” They state that this has been an issue  
7260 since 2018 and that their “pastor had/has a young family and found himself traveling  
7261 over 1000kms per month to make exchanges work with pastors in Southern Ontario.”

7262 3.2.1 Ottawa (Jubilee) offers the following grounds:

7263 3.2.1.1 Since its unique circumstances were not considered, it was not heard and  
7264 thereby justice was not rendered.

7265 3.2.1.2 Its motives were impugned when GS 2022 denied its appeal based on  
7266 arguments presented in the appeals of the other two churches which were not  
7267 germane to its own appeal (specifically about inviting three specific men to  
7268 preach on Ottawa (Jubilee)’s pulpit with the concurring advice of Classis  
7269 Central Ontario (CCO).

7270 3.3 Ottawa (Jubilee) appeals GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 (art. 155 gr. 4.4.1) erred by  
7271 denying their appeal based on the need for classis involvement in granting pulpit access.

7272 3.3.1 Ottawa (Jubilee) offers the following grounds:

7273 3.3.1.1 While said Article used as grounds to deny Ottawa (Jubilee)’s appeal stated  
7274 that classis should be involved in granting pulpit access, Ottawa (Jubilee) had  
7275 demonstrated that it had already sought the advice of CCO and church  
7276 visitors appointed by CCO thereby fulfilling the requirements outlined.

- 7277 3.4 Ottawa (Jubilee) appeals GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 (art. 155 gr. 4.4.2 ) erred in  
7278 regarding the impact of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) rules on local consistory  
7279 authority.
- 7280 3.4.1 Ottawa (Jubilee) offers the following grounds:
- 7281 3.4.1.1 By drawing implications from the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship and  
7282 using them to interpret the Church Order, GS 2022 took away all authority  
7283 from the local consistory over its own pulpit and dictated who may and who  
7284 may not be invited to preach (cf. CO Art.15).
- 7285 3.4.1.2 Ottawa (Jubilee)’s decision to invite 3 specific men to preach on its pulpit  
7286 with concurring advice of CCO does not open the door to any preacher from  
7287 the respective federations of these men invited.
- 7288 3.5 Ottawa (Jubilee) appeals GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 (art. 155 gr. 4.4.3) erred by  
7289 judging against Ottawa (Jubilee)’s appeal based on the contents of appeals submitted by  
7290 other churches.
- 7291 3.5.1 Ottawa (Jubilee) offers the following ground:
- 7292 3.5.1.1 This article refers to arguments made by the other churches and contains  
7293 nothing germane to their own appeal.
- 7294 3.6 Ottawa (Jubilee) appeals GS 2025 to judge that GS 2022 (art. 155 gr. 4.4.4) erred by  
7295 offering a suggestion instead of providing lawful grounds for the decision.
- 7296 3.6.1 Ottawa (Jubilee) offers the following grounds:
- 7297 3.6.1.1 Since as GS 2022 acknowledges, “our current church order does not have a  
7298 specific provision regarding pulpit access for guest ministers from non-sister  
7299 churches,” guided by a literal reading of the Church Order, Ottawa (Jubilee)  
7300 has the responsibility to guard its own pulpit;
- 7301 3.6.1.2 GS 2022 uses circular reasoning to defend “present practices”;
- 7302 3.6.1.3 A general synod has no task to offer suggestions to the churches, only to  
7303 deliver judgements based on lawful grounds;
- 7304 3.5.1.4 GS 2022’s assertion that the onus to update the church order is on the church  
7305 deviating from “present practices” should be the exact reverse: the onus  
7306 should be on those who believe something is missing in the church order.

#### 7307 **4. Considerations**

- 7308 4.1 Re Observation 3.1: Ottawa (Jubilee) identifies for itself four principles of interpreting  
7309 the Church Order. However, the self-identified principles of Ottawa (Jubilee) are not of  
7310 themselves binding on the rest of the federation because such principles have never  
7311 been proposed to or evaluated by much less agreed upon by the churches at general  
7312 synod. The Canadian Reformed Churches have recognized various principles which lie  
7313 underneath the articles of our Church Order and which are given expression therein;  
7314 these have been articulated clearly at GS 2004 art. 76. Further, the principles used by  
7315 our ecclesiastical assemblies to understand and apply the Church Order have also been  
7316 observed in the acts of those assemblies, duly reviewed and even refined by the  
7317 churches over many decades by way of appeals and overtures. Ottawa (Jubilee) has not  
7318 proven how these principles are in error and so it remains these principles that the  
7319 churches make use of when interpreting the Church Order.

- 7320 4.2 Re Observation 3.2: GS 2022 was presented with three appeals of the same decision of  
7321 RSE 2019. It is the prerogative of synod to decide to deal with all three together.  
7322 Nevertheless, it is incumbent upon a broader assembly to ensure that the decision  
7323 rendered clearly takes into account all the arguments made by the appellants, factoring  
7324 in the unique circumstances of each. GS 2022 failed to take into account all the unique  
7325 arguments presented by Ottawa (Jubilee).
- 7326 4.3 *Re: Observation 3.3* – GS 2022 (art. 155 gr. 4.1) also spoke of the “relevant principle of  
7327 classical involvement in granting access to the pulpit (e.g. CO Art. 4.B.1 & 2) that can  
7328 give guidance concerning the matter of giving pastors of non-sister churches temporary  
7329 access to the pulpit.” However, Ottawa (Jubilee) demonstrated that it worked with the  
7330 principle of CO art. 4 by seeking and receiving concurring advice from classis. In this  
7331 Ottawa (Jubilee) followed the appropriate ecclesiastical route available to them.
- 7332 4.4 Re Observation 3.4: Ottawa (Jubilee) incorrectly refers to CO 15 as regulating whom a  
7333 consistory may invite to preach. In reality, CO 15 is set in the context of regulations  
7334 concerning a minister within our federation (art. 4–21) and as such forbids a minister  
7335 from taking it upon himself to preach (or administer the sacraments) in “another  
7336 church” without the consent of the consistory of that church. Further, GS 2022 was  
7337 correct to refer to the Rules for Ecclesiastical Fellowship (CO 50) and to draw  
7338 implications from them for if it was understood that local consistories could already  
7339 invite any minister from any church they wished, there would be no need to have such a  
7340 rule for the churches in common.
- 7341 4.5 Re Observation 3.5: Although it is true that the arguments of GS 2022 cited here are not  
7342 a specific response to the appeal of Ottawa (Jubilee), the grounds presented still provide  
7343 helpful considerations for Ottawa (Jubilee).
- 7344 4.6 Re Observation 3.6: Ottawa (Jubilee) is correct that it is not the first role of general  
7345 synod to provide suggestions or advice but simply to render judgement. Nevertheless, it  
7346 can be beneficial to the churches when a general synod, in rendering judgement, at  
7347 times provide some direction for how things might be done “decently and in good  
7348 order.”

7349 **5. Recommendations**

7350 That Synod decide:

- 7351 5.1 To sustain the appeal.

7352

7353 **ADOPTED**

7354 G. Boot abstained as per CO 32.

7355

7356 **Article 179 – Overture RSE 2024: Shortening Duration of General Synod**

7357 **1. Material**

- 7358 1.1 Overture of RSE 2024 (8.4.2.3).
- 7359 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Ancaster (8.5.6.1), Attercliffe (8.5.6.2), Brampton  
7360 (Grace) (8.5.6.3), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.5.6.4), Caledonia (8.5.6.5),  
7361 Calgary (8.5.6.6), Carman West (8.5.6.7), Chilliwack (8.5.6.8), Coaldale (8.5.6.9),

7362 Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.5.6.10), Edmonton (Providence) (8.5.6.11), Elm Creek  
7363 (8.5.6.12, 8.5.6.13), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.5.6.14, 8.5.6.15), Fergus (North) (8.5.6.16),  
7364 Grand Rapids (8.5.6.17), Grassie (Covenant) (8.5.6.18, 8.5.6.19), Neerlandia (8.5.6.20),  
7365 Niagara South (8.5.6.21), Ottawa (Jubilee) (8.5.6.22), Smithville (8.5.6.23), St. Albert  
7366 (8.5.6.24), Willoughby Heights (8.5.6.25).

## 7367 2. Admissibility

- 7368 2.1 The overture was declared admissible.  
7369 Grounds: The overture was submitted by RSE 2024 and was received on time.  
7370 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.  
7371 Ground: These letters interact with an overture to GS 2025 and were received on time.

## 7372 3. Observations

- 7373 3.1 The overture notes that the duration of general synod poses a challenge for working  
7374 elders and tends to favour participation by retired or independently wealthy elders.
- 7375 3.2 Appealing to the principle of equity implicit in CO art. 49, the overture suggests that  
7376 equitable access should extend not only to ministers and elders alike, but also to elders  
7377 across different ages, occupations, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The overture  
7378 presents two practical proposals to address these concerns:
- 7379 3.2.1 **Proposal One:** The first proposal is to adopt a hybrid model for synod meetings,  
7380 combining virtual and in-person sessions. The overture cites online ecclesiastical  
7381 meetings during COVID-19 pandemic and a hybrid model used by Synod 2024 of  
7382 the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA). Specifically, it  
7383 proposes convening synod virtually at least one month in advance of in-person  
7384 meetings to elect officers and assign advisory committees, thereby reducing the  
7385 length of time delegates must be physically present.
- 7386 3.2.2 **Proposal Two:** The second proposal addresses the time-consuming nature of  
7387 drafting, editing and reviewing the daily acts. To improve efficiency, the overture  
7388 proposes that the convening church hire a clerical support team.
- 7389 3.3 From the letters from the churches:
- 7390 3.3.1 A number of churches express unqualified support for Proposal One while others,  
7391 though supportive, provide the following comments:
- 7392 3.3.1.1 The deliberative nature of synods must be maintained.  
7393 3.3.1.2 Hybrid sessions should be limited to the election of officers and the  
7394 appointment of advisory committee members.  
7395 3.3.1.3 The proposal may not improve the availability of delegates.  
7396 3.3.1.4 The importance of testing the hybrid model prior to implementation.
- 7397 3.3.2 A number of churches do not support Proposal One for the following reasons:
- 7398 3.3.2.1 Adopting a hybrid model would change the deliberative character of our  
7399 assemblies.  
7400 3.3.2.2 Comparisons to the CRCNA model are not helpful, citing differences in the  
7401 character and frequency of their assemblies.  
7402 3.3.2.3 Pre-populating the advisory committees could adversely affect delegate  
7403 readiness to interact with all synod material.



- 7404 3.3.2.4 There is insufficient evidence that current synod length is limiting elder  
7405 participation.
- 7406 3.3.2.5 Concerns are expressed about confidentiality and fairness, particularly the  
7407 risk of lobbying or undue influence if advisory committees are announced in  
7408 advance.
- 7409 3.3.2.6 Concerns are expressed about technical and logistical impediments, including  
7410 the additional burden on the convening church, effective online engagement,  
7411 and reliable internet access.
- 7412 3.3.2.7 Skepticism is expressed that a hybrid model will reduce the duration of  
7413 synod.
- 7414 3.3.3 A number of churches express unqualified support for Proposal Two. Others,  
7415 though supportive, provide the following comments:
- 7416 3.3.3.1 Decisions about clerical support should be left to the convening church.
- 7417 3.3.3.2 Clerical support should be enlisted from the vicinity of the convening church.  
7418 Individuals must be trustworthy and qualified to deal with confidential  
7419 material.
- 7420 3.3.4 A number of churches do not support Proposal Two for the following reasons:
- 7421 3.3.4.1 Concerns are expressed about materials of a sensitive nature being accessed  
7422 by non-delegates.
- 7423 3.3.4.2 They remain unconvinced by the proposal's assertion about the time spent  
7424 preparing and reviewing the Acts.
- 7425 3.3.4.3 The convening church already has the option of hiring a non-delegate for  
7426 clerical support or, alternatively, a Deputy Clerk could be considered.

#### 7427 **4. Considerations**

- 7428 4.1 Both the overture and many of the letters are right to express concern about lengthy  
7429 meetings of general synods and their consequences on the availability of certain elders  
7430 to serve as delegates.
- 7431 4.2 Changes to the current general synod procedure will require thoughtful engagement on  
7432 many of the issues raised by the churches.
- 7433 4.3 The overture fails to present any meaningful details concerning the practical  
7434 implications of changes to the present system, nor does it engage with the existing  
7435 guidelines for general synod. It is incumbent on the local church to put forward a  
7436 proposal that provides the details necessary for consideration by general synod. Such an  
7437 overture may still be presented at a future general synod.

#### 7438 **5. Recommendations**

7439 That Synod decide:

- 7440 5.1 Not to adopt the overture.

7441

7442 **ADOPTED**

7443

7444 *Synod was adjourned for committee work.*

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**Day 10 — Afternoon Session**

**Friday, May 16, 2025**

**Article 180 – Reopening**

Synod reopened in plenary session. He had the meeting sing Psalm 113:1,2. He observed all synod members were present and made some housekeeping announcements.

**Article 181 – Acts**

The prepared articles of the *Acts* were corrected and adopted.

**Article 182 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Part 6 (*Expansion Book of Praise*)**

**1. Material**

- 1.1 Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise*, Section One, Part 6 (8.2.8.1).
- 1.2 SCBP Supplement Report re Proposed Songs (8.2.8.2).
- 1.3 SCBP Further Note on SCBP Reports (8.2.8.3).
- 1.4 SCBP additional letter re mandate (re: wording of Hymn 1) (8.2.8.4).
- 1.5 Letters from the churches: Aldergrove (8.3.8.1.1, 8.3.8.1.2, 8.3.8.1.3, 8.3.8.1.4, 8.3.8.1.5), Attercliffe (8.3.8.1.6), Barrhead (8.3.8.1.7), Burlington (Fellowship) (8.3.8.1.8), Calgary (8.3.8.1.12), Devon (8.3.8.1.15), Elm Creek (8.3.8.1.21, 8.3.8.1.22), Fergus (Maranatha) (8.3.8.1.25 8.3.8.1.26), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.3.8.1.27), Grand Rapids (8.3.8.1.28), Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.8.1.31), Hamilton (Cornerstone) (8.3.8.1.32), Kerwood (Grace) (8.3.8.1.34), Langley (8.3.8.1.35), Neerlandia (8.3.8.1.36), Orangeville (8.3.8.1.38), Ottawa (Jubilee) (8.3.8.1.39), Owen Sound (8.3.8.1.40), Taber (8.3.8.1.42), Toronto (Bethel) (8.3.8.1.43), Winnipeg (Grace) (8.3.8.1.44), Winnipeg (Redeemer) (8.3.8.1.45), Willoughby Heights (8.3.8.1.46).

**2. Admissibility**

- 2.1 The SCBP report Section One Part 6, the SCBP Supplement Report re Proposed Songs, the SCBP Further Note on SCBP reports, and the SCBP additional letter re mandate were all declared admissible.

Grounds: This material is from a standing synodical committee and was received on time.

- 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.

Grounds: The letters interact with the SCBP report and were received on time.

**3. Observations**

- 3.1 The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) was mandated by GS 2022 to:

- 3.1.1 Continue the process of reviewing the proposed songs according to the Guidelines for the Selection of Music in the Church, as printed in Appendix 2B of the *Acts of GS 2004* (GS 2022 art. 120 dec. 3.8.4);

- 3.1.2 Provide the churches with a single file of the updated and recommended songs (GS 2022 art. 111);

- 7486 3.1.3 Receive for evaluation those churches' letters to GS 2022 that engage the SCBP's  
7487 Supplement Reports 1 and 2 – Psalms and Hymns; to encourage the churches to  
7488 send responses directly to the SCBP before March 1, 2024. Individual church  
7489 members were asked to send their responses through their consistory or council;
- 7490 3.1.4 Review the suitability of individual hymns which we already have in our *Book of*  
7491 *Praise* for possible change, deletion, or improvement;
- 7492 3.1.5 Evaluate additional input from the churches and prepare a report for the churches  
7493 with recommendations no less than 6 months prior to the next general synod.
- 7494 3.2 The SCBP provided the churches with a single file of the updated and recommended  
7495 songs. They requested feedback to the SCBP before March 1, 2024.
- 7496 3.3 The SCBP categorized the 43 letters submitted by the churches to GS 2022 and  
7497 consolidated their observations to incorporate them into their final report to GS 2025.
- 7498 3.4 The SCBP developed a three-step approach to evaluate the proposed songs. They  
7499 weighed various factors, such as the wording of the song, its clarity, suitability for  
7500 worship, and whether the contents are already covered in other songs in the *Book of*  
7501 *Praise*.
- 7502 3.5 The SCBP notes that the feedback from the churches was helpful. Some feedback,  
7503 however, was more an opinion than an argued position.
- 7504 3.6 The SCBP notes that there appears to be a shift away from alternate psalm renditions in  
7505 favour of the Genevan settings.
- 7506 3.7 After testing, feedback and evaluation, the SCBP proposes nine alternate psalms for  
7507 adoption. It is to be noted that these are not replacements of the Genevan settings, but  
7508 additional or alternative renditions.
- 7509 The list is as follows:
- 7510 1. Alternate Psalm 4 – Give Ear, God of My Righteousness (text copyright)
  - 7511 2. Alternate Psalm 13 – How Long Will You Forget Me? (text copyright)
  - 7512 3. Alternate Psalm 19 – The Heavens Above Declare (text copyright)
  - 7513 4. Alternate Psalm 22 – Amid the Thronging Worshipers
  - 7514 5. Alternate Psalm 23 – The Lord's My Shepherd
  - 7515 6. Alternate Psalm 41 – Blessed Is the One Who Helps the Weak and Poor (text  
7516 copyright)
  - 7517 7. Alternate Psalm 103 – Come, My Soul, and Bless the LORD (text/melody  
7518 copyright)
  - 7519 8. Alternate Psalm 112 – O Praise the LORD! The Man Is Blest (text/melody  
7520 copyright)
  - 7521 9. Alternate Psalm 149 – Give Praise to the LORD (text copyright)
- 7522 3.8 To review the current hymn section, the SCBP reviewed a previous survey of the  
7523 ministers (conducted prior to GS 2022). The SCBP concluded from this that no change  
7524 was necessary to the hymn section in the *Book of Praise*.
- 7525 3.9 Regarding the proposed hymns, the SCBP proposes for adoption:
- 7526 1. Abide with Me

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- 7527 2. All Creatures of Our God and King  
7528 3. Amazing Grace!  
7529 4. Christians, Awake  
7530 5. Come, Thou Almighty King  
7531 6. Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus  
7532 7. Crown Him with Many Crowns  
7533 8. Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer  
7534 9. Hark! the Herald Angels Sing  
7535 10. How Deep the Father’s Love for Us (text & melody copyright)  
7536 11. How Great Thou Art (text & melody copyright)  
7537 12. In Christ Alone (text & melody copyright)  
7538 13. Let All Things Now Living (melody copyright)  
7539 14. May the Mind of Christ, My Saviour  
7540 15. My Lord, I Did Not Choose You  
7541 16. O Christ, Our Hope, Our Heart’s Desire  
7542 17. O Come, All Ye Faithful  
7543 18. O Sacred Head, Now Wounded  
7544 19. Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above  
7545 20. Speak, O Lord (text & melody copyright)  
7546 21. Take My Life, and Let It Be  
7547 22. When I Survey the Wonderous Cross  
7548 23. Your Law, O God, Is Our Delight (text copyright)  
7549 3.10 The SCBP also recommended a subset of 15 of these hymns if the hymn cap remained  
7550 in place.  
7551 3.11 Observations from the letters of the churches:  
7552 3.11.1 Aldergrove requests that a greater number of alternate psalm tunes (more than the  
7553 9 proposed) and additional hymns (not limited to 100) be available.  
7554 3.11.2 Aldergrove also summarized the responses from the churches in an effort to  
7555 identify the levels of support for each alternate psalm and additional hymn.  
7556 3.11.3 Some churches showed their support with the hymn cap while others registered  
7557 their dissatisfaction.  
7558 3.11.4 Some churches feel that the time of changing the *Book of Praise* should “come to a  
7559 halt” (Barrhead, Fergus (Maranatha), Neerlandia, Taber). They also urge GS 2025  
7560 to refrain from adding alternate versions of the psalms (or place them in their own  
7561 section) as it undermines the unity of this collection (Taber, Calgary). Elm Creek  
7562 and Fergus (Maranatha) prefer that no change be made to the existing hymn  
7563 section of the *Book of Praise*, and Neerlandia maintains that many of the proposed  
7564 songs have ambiguous phrasing, archaic language, or “tunes that do not align well  
7565 with the Reformed tradition.” Elm Creek questions the need for the alternate psalm

- 7566 renditions. Fergus (Maranatha) supports only the addition of proposed Alternate  
7567 Psalms 4, 13, 23, and 41.
- 7568 3.11.5 Burlington (Fellowship) believes the evaluation of songs and feedback from the  
7569 churches is subjective. They maintain that such considerations as whether the topic  
7570 of a hymn is already sufficiently covered or whether a church has an organ should  
7571 not be decisive in rejecting a song for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
- 7572 3.11.6 Flamborough (Redemption) expresses its frustration with the current process to  
7573 approve and adopt new songs for worship. They make clear their disappointment  
7574 in the rejection of many alternate psalms and additional hymns that they have  
7575 grown to love. Ottawa (Jubilee) and Winnipeg (Redeemer) express a similar  
7576 thought.
- 7577 3.11.7 Flamborough (Redemption) identifies historical bias in the final selection,  
7578 disagrees with the rejection of hymns and alternate psalms with strong church  
7579 support, and points out the low participation in the feedback process. They also  
7580 question the preference for whole psalms over partial psalms and whether hymns  
7581 are “individualistic.” They disagree with the principle of rejecting hymns because  
7582 their substance is already found in the *Book of Praise*.
- 7583 3.11.8 Flamborough (Redemption) and Langley have concerns with the criterion that  
7584 additional hymns should “fill a gap.” Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the idea that  
7585 additional hymns should “fill a gap” directly contradicts the mandate the SCBP  
7586 received from GS 2022 to propose the deletion of hymns. Many churches note that  
7587 the SCBP did not appear to review existing hymns used in worship.
- 7588 3.11.9 Grand Rapids notes that a church songbook can never be an exhaustive  
7589 compendium of every song suitable for worship. They believe the SCBP should  
7590 have insisted that the churches first have a discussion about their expectations for a  
7591 songbook. They point out that there are inconsistencies with the use of archaic  
7592 language. They are surprised that four-part harmony is being recommended when  
7593 the Reformed churches, from their inception, have stressed the importance of  
7594 singing in unison. On the other hand, Winnipeg (Grace) believes that if a hymn is  
7595 meant to be sung in harmony, that is no reason to exclude it, and if approved, it  
7596 should be published with the harmony included.
- 7597 3.11.10 Guelph (Emmanuel) notes that it is best that the proposed change to Hymn 58,  
7598 which involves a new melody, be included in the proposed augment.
- 7599 3.11.11 Langley notes its renewed appreciation for the Genevan settings.
- 7600 3.11.12 The Neerlandia CanRC asserts that, as the Supplemental Report notes in places,  
7601 many of the proposed hymns do not add significant theological depth beyond what  
7602 is already available in our hymn section.
- 7603 3.12 The letters from the churches recommended approving the following specific alternate  
7604 psalms and additional hymns in addition to those recommended by the SCBP:
- 7605 3.12.1 *Alternate Psalm 11*
- 7606 3.12.2 *Alternate Psalm 32*
- 7607 3.12.3 *Alternate Psalm 39*
- 7608 3.12.4 *Alternate Psalm 51*

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- 7609 3.12.5 *Alternate Psalm 59*
- 7610 3.12.6 *Alternate Psalm 84*
- 7611 3.12.7 *Alternate Psalm 90*
- 7612 3.12.8 *Alternate Psalm 95*
- 7613 3.12.9 *Alternate Psalm 100*
- 7614 3.12.10 *Alternate Psalm 104*
- 7615 3.12.11 *Alternate Psalm 150*
- 7616 3.12.12 *Angels, from the Realms of Glory*
- 7617 3.12.13 *Before the Throne of God Above*
- 7618 3.12.14 *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*
- 7619 3.12.15 *Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come*
- 7620 3.12.16 *Man of Sorrows! What a Name*
- 7621 3.12.17 *Threefold Amen*
- 7622 3.12.18 *When Peace Like a River*
- 7623 3.12.19 *Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me*
- 7624 3.13 The letters from the churches expressed concerns about including the following specific
- 7625 alternate psalms and additional hymns, even though recommended by the SCBP:
- 7626 3.13.1 *Alternate Psalm 4*
- 7627 3.13.2 *Alternate Psalm 13*
- 7628 3.13.3 *Alternate Psalm 22*
- 7629 3.13.4 *All Creatures of Our God and King*
- 7630 3.13.5 *Christians, Awake*
- 7631 3.13.6 *Come, Thou Almighty King*
- 7632 3.13.7 *Guide Me, O My Great Redeemer*
- 7633 3.13.8 *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*
- 7634 3.13.9 *O Come, All Ye Faithful*
- 7635 3.13.10 *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*
- 7636 3.13.11 *Take My Life, and Let It Be*
- 7637 3.13.12 *How Deep the Father's Love for Us*
- 7638 3.14 The letters from the churches recommended changes to the lyrics of the following
- 7639 recommended alternate psalms:
- 7640 3.14.1 *Alternate Psalm 23*
- 7641 3.14.2 *Alternate Psalm 112*
- 7642 3.14.3 *Alternate Psalm 149*
- 7643 3.15 Willoughby Heights requests that GS 2025 make a clear statement on the status of the
- 7644 principles and guidelines. They also question the value of some of these guidelines.
- 7645 Winnipeg (Grace) also questions these guidelines, their origin and character, and points
- 7646 out that these guidelines appear to be followed inconsistently.



- 7647 3.16 Winnipeg (Grace) proposes that all the alternate psalms and additional hymns that  
7648 receive support from a majority of the churches be included in an augment and that,  
7649 should synod approve an overture on CO art. 55, the churches be solicited for additional  
7650 psalms and hymns.
- 7651 3.17 The SCBP was also given a letter received by GS 2022 from the church of Ancaster re  
7652 Hymn 1 and mandated to evaluate it. The SCBP did not duly consider it and asks that  
7653 this mandate be renewed by GS 2025.
- 7654 3.18 Flamborough (Redemption) suggests that, because the SCBP appears inclined to act  
7655 independently of their mandate, GS 2025 should take a serious look at the composition  
7656 of SCBP. Winnipeg (Grace) asks that GS 2025 remind the SCBP that they are to serve  
7657 and represent the interests of churches, not the interests or opinions of individual  
7658 committee members. They suggest a more representative and transparent approach to  
7659 choosing committee members by involving the minor assemblies.

#### 7660 4. Considerations

- 7661 4.1 The Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) has done  
7662 substantial work in facilitating and evaluating input in order to propose additional  
7663 alternate psalms and additional hymns for inclusion in the *Book of Praise*. They should  
7664 be thanked for their work.
- 7665 4.2 Many churches participated in the survey and sent letters in response to the report of the  
7666 SCBP. Their feedback is appreciated.
- 7667 4.3 Some churches correctly note that continual changes to the *Book of Praise* are not  
7668 desirable. Our goal as churches should be to produce a *Book of Praise* that will last for  
7669 decades.
- 7670 4.4 Some churches correctly observed that the SCBP did not diligently fulfill their mandate  
7671 to consider whether some hymns could be deleted from the *Book of Praise*.
- 7672 4.5 Hymns with four-part harmony were included when the SCBP distributed the alternate  
7673 psalms and additional hymns and were well received by the churches. Winnipeg (Grace)  
7674 correctly observes that when a hymn is meant to be sung in harmony, it should be  
7675 published with that harmony. The Principles and Guidelines used by the SCBP rightly  
7676 observe that the “melodies and **harmonies** [emphasis added] of church music must be  
7677 suitable for congregational singing”.
- 7678 4.6 Several churches question the status and value of the Principles and Guidelines. As the  
7679 SCBP sought to fulfil its mandates to expand and review the song book, it adopted  
7680 various principles and guidelines. These were shared with the churches and general  
7681 synods throughout the years and had a function within the committee’s work to improve  
7682 and amend the songbook. These principles and guidelines are not binding but are  
7683 beneficial, though they were sometimes followed inconsistently.
- 7684 4.7 The SCBP rightly requested that their mandate to review and evaluate a letter given to  
7685 them by GS 2022 from Ancaster regarding Hymn 1 needs to be renewed.
- 7686 4.8 Based on the feedback from the churches and the contents of the SCBP report, Synod  
7687 considers it appropriate to include the following specific alternate psalms and additional  
7688 hymns (see Appendix A-1 to this GS 2025 article for more details):

- 7689 Alternate Psalms 32, 39, 51, 59, 84, 90, 95, 100, 104, 150 and additional hymns  
7690 “Angels, from the Realms of Glory” (excluding stanza 4), “Before the Throne of  
7691 God Above”, “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing”, “Joy to the World! The Lord  
7692 Is Come”, “Man of Sorrows! What a Name”, “Threefold Amen”, “When Peace  
7693 Like a River”, “Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me.”
- 7694 4.9 Based on the feedback from the churches and the contents of the SCBP report, Synod  
7695 considers it appropriate to include all the alternate psalms and additional hymns  
7696 recommended by the SCBP in Observation 3.7 and Observation 3.9, with no exclusions.  
7697 See Appendix A-2 to this GS 2025 article for more details.
- 7698 4.10 Based on the feedback from the churches and the SCBP report, Synod considers it  
7699 appropriate to make the following changes to the following specific alternate psalms  
7700 (see Appendix A-3 to this GS 2025 article for more details):
- 7701 4.10.1 *Alternate Psalm 23* – modernize the first line of stanza 4 from “A table thou hast  
7702 furnish-ed.” to “A table thou hast furnished me.”
- 7703 4.10.2 *Alternate Psalm 112* – to change stanza 4 from “he his desire will see” to “he looks  
7704 in victory”, provided copyright permission can be obtained.
- 7705 4.11 The new wording proposed by Fergus (Maranatha) for Alternate Psalm 149 should be  
7706 reviewed by the SCBP.
- 7707 4.12 The unified collection of the 150 Psalms of the Anglo-Genevan Psalter is a treasure.

## 7708 **5. Recommendations**

7709 That Synod decide:

- 7710 5.1 To thank the members of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of*  
7711 *Praise* (SCBP) for their work in proposing alternate psalms and additional hymns for  
7712 inclusion in the *Book of Praise*.
- 7713 5.2 To approve all alternate psalms and additional hymns as outlined in Considerations 4.8  
7714 and 4.9, along with the edits listed in Consideration 4.10.
- 7715 5.3 To mandate the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP):
- 7716 5.3.1 To publish an authorized augment that includes the melody and text of the  
7717 alternate psalms and additional hymns approved above, along with approved  
7718 changes to Hymns 1, 55, and 58. Approved alternate psalms or additional hymns  
7719 that are dependent on four-part harmony should be published in four-part harmony.  
7720 Any liturgical forms updated by GS 2025 should also be included;
- 7721 5.3.2 To review and evaluate the letter given to them by GS 2022 from the Ancaster  
7722 CanRC regarding Hymn 1;
- 7723 5.3.3 To evaluate the new wording proposed for Alternate Psalm 149 and make a  
7724 recommendation to the next general synod. The current text should be included in  
7725 the authorized augment. If the next general synod approves new wording, it may  
7726 be included in the next complete version of the *Book of Praise*;
- 7727 5.3.4 To review the structure of the *Book of Praise*, especially the hymn section, and  
7728 propose a structure (including updated hymn numbering) to the next general  
7729 synod.

7730 **Article 182 - APPENDIX A-1**

7731 **Suggestions from the churches to approve specific alternate psalms and additional hymns**

7732 **1. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 11**

7733 1.1 Observations:

7734 1.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7735 from the churches surveyed.

7736 1.1.2 The SCBP notes that the text seeks to be faithful, but there are several textual  
7737 concerns with the lyrics.

7738 1.2 Considerations:

7739 1.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7740 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. There  
7741 are textual concerns with the lyrics of Psalm 11.

7742 1.3 Recommendation: To not approve Alternate Psalm 11 for inclusion.

7743 **2. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 32**

7744 2.1 Observations:

7745 2.1.1 Owen Sound believes the variety this setting provides is valuable.

7746 2.1.2 The SCBP had no concerns about the faithfulness of the lyrics to the text.

7747 2.1.3 The SCBP recommended exclusion because it is a partial rendering of the Psalm,  
7748 and the tune was deemed inferior to the Genevan Psalm 32.

7749 2.2 Considerations:

7750 2.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7751 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7752 psalm is such.

7753 2.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Partial  
7754 renderings of psalms can still be faithful to the text. Further, it is a common  
7755 practice in the churches to sing just part of a psalm during worship. Evaluation of  
7756 melodies is a largely subjective exercise.

7757 2.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 32 for inclusion.

7758 **3. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 39**

7759 3.1 Observations:

7760 3.1.1 Owen Sound notes that the lyrics are faithful to the original text.

7761 3.1.2 The SCBP had no concerns about the faithfulness of the lyrics to the text.

7762 3.1.3 The SCBP recommended exclusion because it believed it was not more singable  
7763 than the current Genevan melody.

7764 3.2 Considerations:

7765 3.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7766 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7767 psalm is such.

7768 3.2.2 Evaluation of melodies is a largely subjective exercise.

7769 3.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 39 for inclusion.

7770 **4. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 51**

7771 4.1 Observations:

7772 4.1.1 Owen Sound notes that the strength of this setting is offering the other side of the  
7773 Psalm's message, making it more fully biblical.

7774 4.1.2 The SCBP recommended exclusion because it is a partial rendering of the Psalm,  
7775 and the Genevan tune better conveys the mood of penitence.

7776 4.2 Considerations:

7777 4.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7778 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7779 psalm is such.

7780 4.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Partial  
7781 renderings of psalms can still be faithful to the text. Further, it is a common  
7782 practice in the churches to sing just part of a psalm during worship. Evaluation of  
7783 melodies is a largely subjective exercise.

7784 4.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 51 for inclusion.

7785 **5. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 59**

7786 5.1 Observations:

7787 5.1.1 Owen Sound believes that the more familiar melody in this setting will encourage  
7788 greater use.

7789 5.1.2 Owen Sound notes that while it is not a full versification, it does convey the  
7790 imprecatory nature of the Psalm.

7791 5.1.3 The SCBP recommended exclusion because it is a paraphrase of the Psalm, and  
7792 they believe the melody does not improve the singing of the psalm.

7793 5.2 Considerations:

7794 5.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7795 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7796 psalm is such.

7797 5.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Partial  
7798 renderings of psalms can still be faithful to the text. Further, it is a common  
7799 practice in the churches to sing just part of a psalm during worship. Evaluation of  
7800 melodies is a largely subjective exercise.

7801 5.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 59 for inclusion.

7802 **6. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 84**

7803 6.1 Observations:

7804 6.1.1 Owen Sound believes that this setting is well-loved and will be frequently sung.

7805 6.1.2 Owen Sound notes that while it contains older language, that is not necessarily a  
7806 flaw.

7807 6.1.3 The SCBP notes that archaic language has been removed in their recommendation  
7808 to GS 2022.

7809 6.1.4 The SCBP believes that since Genevan Psalm 84 is well-loved, there is no need for  
7810 an alternative.

- 7811 6.2 Considerations:
- 7812 6.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7813 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7814 psalm is such.
- 7815 6.2.2 The reason the SCBP recommended exclusion is unconvincing. Having an  
7816 additional setting of an already loved Psalm will likely increase the singing of this  
7817 Psalm.
- 7818 6.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 84 for inclusion.
- 7819 **7. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 90**
- 7820 7.1 Observations
- 7821 7.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7822 from the churches surveyed.
- 7823 7.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 70% of churches surveyed recommended  
7824 inclusion.
- 7825 7.1.3 The SCBP notes that the lyrics are a faithful summary of the text.
- 7826 7.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because the melody uses the melody of a  
7827 hymn from the TPH (*Faith of our Fathers*). Also, Psalm 90 is already covered in  
7828 Hymn 54.
- 7829 7.2 Considerations
- 7830 7.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7831 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7832 psalm is such.
- 7833 7.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. The melody  
7834 mentioned is not included in our *Book of Praise* and only makes this setting easier  
7835 to sing.
- 7836 7.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 90 for inclusion.
- 7837 **8. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 95**
- 7838 8.1 Observations:
- 7839 8.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7840 from the churches surveyed.
- 7841 8.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 70% of churches surveyed recommended  
7842 inclusion.
- 7843 8.1.3 The SCBP notes that the lyrics are good, faithful, and biblical.
- 7844 8.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they prefer the melody of Genevan  
7845 Psalm 95.
- 7846 8.2 Considerations
- 7847 8.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7848 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7849 psalm is such.
- 7850 8.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Evaluation of  
7851 melodies is a largely subjective exercise.

7852 8.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 95 for inclusion.

7853 **9. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 100**

7854 9.1 Observations:

7855 9.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7856 from the churches surveyed.

7857 9.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 75% of churches surveyed recommended  
7858 inclusion.

7859 9.1.3 The SCBP notes that the lyrics are a faithful rendition of the Psalm.

7860 9.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the melody is associated  
7861 with another song (Crown Him with Many Crowns).

7862 9.2 Considerations:

7863 9.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7864 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7865 psalm is such.

7866 9.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Evaluation of  
7867 melodies is a largely subjective exercise. High levels of support from the churches  
7868 suggest an appreciation for this setting.

7869 9.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 100 for inclusion.

7870 **10. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 104**

7871 10.1 Observations:

7872 10.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7873 from the churches surveyed.

7874 10.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 75% of churches surveyed recommended  
7875 inclusion.

7876 10.1.3 The SCBP notes that the lyrics faithfully reflect the text of the Psalm.

7877 10.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the melody is associated  
7878 with another song (*Book of Praise* Hymn 84). Shorter stanzas than the Genevan  
7879 version stunt the flow of thought in the song.

7880 10.2 Considerations:

7881 10.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7882 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7883 psalm is such.

7884 10.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Evaluation of  
7885 melodies is a largely subjective exercise. High levels of support from the churches  
7886 suggest an appreciation for this setting.

7887 10.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 104 for inclusion.

7888 **11. Suggestion to approve Alternate Psalm 150**

7889 11.1 Observations:

7890 11.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Psalm received more support than opposition  
7891 from the churches surveyed.



7892 11.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 65% of churches surveyed recommended  
7893 inclusion.

7894 11.1.3 The SCBP notes that the lyrics faithfully convey the text of the Psalm.

7895 11.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the melody is associated  
7896 with another song (All Creatures of Our God and King). They also note that the  
7897 Genevan Psalm 150 is well-loved.

7898 11.2 Considerations:

7899 11.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7900 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7901 psalm is such.

7902 11.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Evaluation of  
7903 melodies is a largely subjective exercise. High levels of support from the churches  
7904 suggest an appreciation for this setting.

7905 11.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 150 for inclusion.

7906 **12. Suggestion to approve *Angels, from the Realms of Glory***

7907 12.1 Observations:

7908 12.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that this hymn received more support than opposition  
7909 from the churches surveyed.

7910 12.1.2 Winnipeg (Redeemer) was disappointed to see this song omitted.

7911 12.1.3 The SCBP notes difficulties with stanza 4 “saints before the altar bending...the  
7912 Lord descending in his temple”. It is unlikely a congregation would make sense of  
7913 these references, and therefore, recommended exclusion.

7914 12.2 Considerations:

7915 12.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7916 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7917 hymn is such.

7918 12.2.2 The liturgical needs of the church indicate that more hymns relating to Christ’s  
7919 birth, death, and resurrection would be beneficial.

7920 12.2.3 The concerns of the SCBP would be addressed by removing stanza 4.

7921 12.3 Recommendation: To approve *Angels, from the Realms of Glory* for inclusion,  
7922 excluding stanza 4.

7923 **13. Suggestion to approve *Before the Throne of God Above***

7924 13.1 Observations:

7925 13.1.1 Flamborough (Redemption) believes this hymn powerfully articulates the  
7926 intercessory work of Christ and highlights the doctrine of justification and  
7927 assurance of salvation – essential truths which are notably underrepresented in our  
7928 current *Book of Praise* Hymn section.

7929 13.1.2 Owen Sound notes the lyrics are meaningful and the melody is beautiful.

7930 13.1.3 The SCBP notes that the text is scriptural and the melody acceptable.

7931 13.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the topic of this hymn is  
7932 covered sufficiently in *Book of Praise* Hymns (Hymns 38, 40, 42).

7933 13.2 Considerations:

7934 13.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7935 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and this  
7936 hymn is such.

7937 13.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. The message of  
7938 this song is quite different from the hymns referenced.

7939 13.3 Recommendation: To approve *Before the Throne of God Above* for inclusion.

7940 **14. Suggestion to approve *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing***

7941 14.1 Observations:

7942 14.1.1 Flamborough (Redemption) notes that this hymn is rich in doctrinal truth.

7943 14.1.2 Flamborough (Redemption) objects to the SCBP recommendation to exclude this  
7944 hymn because they deemed it individualistic (c.f. Psalms 42, 51, 116, and more).

7945 14.1.3 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that this hymn received more support than opposition  
7946 from the churches surveyed.

7947 14.1.4 Aldergrove notes that more than 70% of churches surveyed recommended  
7948 inclusion.

7949 14.1.5 The SCBP notes that the text does not derive directly from a passage in Scripture.

7950 14.1.6 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believed the lyrics are somewhat  
7951 individualistic.

7952 14.2 Considerations:

7953 14.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7954 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. The  
7955 SCBP did not express any concerns with the doctrine expressed in the lyrics.

7956 14.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Flamborough  
7957 (Redemption) correctly noted that this hymn is no more individualistic than many  
7958 psalms and hymns (e.g. Psalm 42, 88, 116, and others). High levels of support  
7959 from the churches suggest an appreciation for this hymn.

7960 14.3 Recommendation: To approve *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* for inclusion.

7961 **15. Suggestion to approve *Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come***

7962 15.1 Observations:

7963 15.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that this hymn received more support than opposition  
7964 from the churches surveyed.

7965 15.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 75% of churches surveyed recommended  
7966 inclusion.

7967 15.1.3 The SCBP notes that the text derives from Psalm 98 and is familiar and well-  
7968 known.

7969 15.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the repetition at the end  
7970 of each stanza limited the message of the song and because it is known as a  
7971 Christmas carol even though it accents the kingship of Christ.

7972 15.2 Considerations:

- 7973 15.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7974 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. The  
7975 SCBP did not express any concerns with the doctrine expressed in the lyrics.
- 7976 15.2.2 Repetition of a particular line is not a reason to exclude a song (e.g. Psalm 136).
- 7977 15.2.3 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. High levels of  
7978 support from the churches suggest an appreciation for this hymn.
- 7979 15.3 Recommendation: To approve *Joy to the World! The Lord is Come* for inclusion.

7980 **16. Suggestion to approve *Man of Sorrows! What a Name***

7981 16.1 Observations:

7982 16.1.1 Owen Sound believes that the objections against this hymn re: awkward wording  
7983 and a perceived lack of reverence are highly subjective.

7984 16.1.2 The SCBP notes that the hymn highlights scriptural truths related to the atonement  
7985 of Christ.

7986 16.1.3 The SCBP recommended exclusion because the melody is short and repetitive,  
7987 further emphasized by the recurring end phrase “Hallelujah! what a Saviour”.

7988 16.2 Considerations:

7989 16.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
7990 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity, and  
7991 these lyrics are such.

7992 16.2.2 The reasons for which the SCBP recommended exclusion are subjective.

7993 16.3 Recommendation: To approve *Man of Sorrows! What a Name* for inclusion.

7994 **17. Suggestion to approve *Threefold Amen***

7995 17.1 Observations:

7996 17.1.1 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the song received more support than opposition from  
7997 the churches surveyed.

7998 17.1.2 Aldergrove notes that more than 65% of churches surveyed recommended  
7999 inclusion.

8000 17.1.3 The SCBP notes that this is not really a hymn but a liturgical response to the  
8001 blessing at the end of the service.

8002 17.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because approval by synod is not required in  
8003 their opinion.

8004 17.2 Considerations:

8005 17.2.1 Many churches in our federation make use of this song in their worship services.

8006 17.2.2 It would be helpful for those churches and others to include this song in the *Book*  
8007 *of Praise*.

8008 17.2.3 Because this is not a hymn, it is not clear if it requires a separate hymn number.

8009 17.3 Recommendation: To approve *Threefold Amen* for inclusion.

8010 **18. Suggestion to approve *When Peace Like a River***

8011 18.1 Observations:

- 8012 18.1.1 Edmonton (Immanuel) notes that this hymn has strong support from the churches,  
8013 is used often throughout the year, and the language of the hymn is well-known.
- 8014 18.1.2 Langley notes this hymn is beloved in their congregation and is concerned it was  
8015 excluded for purely subjective reasons.
- 8016 18.1.3 Owen Sound was surprised to see this hymn questioned. They believe its richness  
8017 and the depth of emotion and comfort it brings their congregation make it a  
8018 valuable addition to the *Book of Praise*.
- 8019 18.1.4 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the Hymn received overwhelmingly positive support  
8020 from the churches. They note that claims that the hymn is individualistic are  
8021 questionable and that the SCBP is inconsistent in applying this measurement.
- 8022 18.1.5 Winnipeg (Grace) believes that the fact that this hymn is meant to be sung in  
8023 harmony is not a good reason to exclude it. If an approved hymn is meant to be  
8024 sung in harmony, it should be published with the harmony included.
- 8025 18.1.6 Winnipeg (Redeemer) pleads that this hymn be adopted because it is one of the  
8026 well-known and well-loved songs of Christendom.
- 8027 18.1.7 Aldergrove notes that more than 85% of churches surveyed recommended  
8028 inclusion.
- 8029 18.1.8 Winnipeg (Grace) notes that the SCBP's assumption that additional hymns must  
8030 "fill a gap" directly contradicts the mandate given by GS 2022 to consider the  
8031 deletion of existing hymns.
- 8032 18.1.9 The SCBP recommended exclusion because, in their opinion, this hymn does not  
8033 'fill a gap' in the *Book of Praise* and raises concerns about individualism, archaic  
8034 language, repetitiveness, sentimentality, and four-part harmony. They are also  
8035 concerned it may be sung too often.
- 8036 18.2 Considerations:
- 8037 18.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
8038 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. The  
8039 SCBP did not express any concerns with the doctrine expressed in the lyrics.
- 8040 18.2.2 Repetition of a particular line is not a reason to exclude a song (e.g. Psalm 136).  
8041 Individualism, archaic language, and sentimentality are subjective measures that  
8042 appear not to be consistently applied by the SCBP.
- 8043 18.2.3 High levels of support from the churches suggest an appreciation for this hymn.
- 8044 18.2.4 Winnipeg (Grace) correctly notes that songs should not be rejected out of hand by  
8045 the SCBP simply because they do not 'fill a gap'.
- 8046 18.3 Recommendation: To approve *When Peace Like a River* for inclusion.
- 8047 **19. Suggestion to approve *Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me***
- 8048 19.1 Observations:
- 8049 19.1.1 Flamborough (Redemption) believes this hymn is rich in doctrinal truth and ought  
8050 not to be rejected on a subjective measure of 'individualism'.
- 8051 19.1.2 Langley notes this hymn is beloved in their congregation and is concerned it was  
8052 excluded for purely subjective reasons.
- 8053 19.1.3 The SCBP notes that many of the churches found the words to be biblical.

8054 19.1.4 The SCBP recommended exclusion because they believe the style and arrangement  
8055 of the melody is not suitable for congregational singing, and the lyrics are  
8056 somewhat individualistic.

8057 19.2 Considerations:

8058 19.2.1 The most important principle when evaluating songs is whether the lyrics are in  
8059 harmony with the Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.

8060 19.2.2 The reasons the SCBP recommended exclusion are unconvincing. Many  
8061 congregations sing this hymn well. The evaluation of individualism by the SCBP  
8062 is subjective and inconsistently applied.

8063 19.3 Recommendation: To approve *Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me* for inclusion.

## 8064 **Article 182 - APPENDIX A-2**

### 8065 **Suggestions from the churches not to approve specific alternate psalms and additional** 8066 **hymns that were recommended for approval by the SCBP**

#### 8067 **1. Suggestion not to approve Alternate Psalm 4**

8068 1.1 Observations:

8069 1.1.1 The Orangeville CanRC believes the melody is not an improvement and not  
8070 suitable for congregational singing.

8071 1.1.2 The SCBP notes that the text provides a complete rendition of the Psalm, and the  
8072 melody is unique to our current collection.

8073 1.2 Considerations:

8074 1.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it  
8075 recommends including this song.

8076 1.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 4 for inclusion as per the SCBP's  
8077 recommendation.

#### 8078 **2. Suggestion not to approve Alternate Psalm 13**

8079 2.1 Observations:

8080 2.1.1 Orangeville says that because this psalm speaks about enemies and because there  
8081 is relative peace and prosperity in Canada, the occasions for singing this psalm are  
8082 few.

8083 2.1.2 Orangeville asserts the proposed song is not thoroughly biblical. It fails to present  
8084 the uniqueness of this song as the lament of the oppressed.

8085 2.1.3 The SCBP notes that the text captures the main truths of this song and that the  
8086 melody is appropriate.

8087 2.2 Considerations:

8088 2.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it  
8089 recommends including this song.

8090 2.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 13 for inclusion as per the SCBP's  
8091 recommendation.

#### 8092 **3. Suggestion not to approve Alternate Psalm 22**

8093 3.1 Observations:

- 8094 3.1.1 Orangeville objects to the fact that the proposed version only represents Psalm 22:  
8095 22 -28 and that the joyful lyrics do not fit the contents of the psalm.
- 8096 3.1.2 The SCBP notes that this song is only a partial versification of Psalm 22 and is not  
8097 intended to replace the current rendition of Psalm 22, and that this song will allow  
8098 the churches to sing the last part of Psalm 22 in a cheerful tune.
- 8099 3.2 Considerations:
- 8100 3.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it  
8101 recommends including this song.
- 8102 3.3 Recommendation: To approve Alternate Psalm 22 for inclusion as per the SCBP's  
8103 recommendation.
- 8104 **4. Suggestion not to approve *All Creatures of our God and King***
- 8105 4.1 Observations:
- 8106 4.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) believes this hymn has some biblical inaccuracies. They  
8107 question whether the sun, wind, clouds... "need" to lift up their voices and sing or  
8108 if it is more accurate to say that these do already lift up their voices, but we  
8109 humans do not. Fergus (Maranatha) asserts there is very little biblical depth in this  
8110 hymn.
- 8111 4.1.2 This hymn like many of the psalms calls on inanimate objects to praise the Lord.
- 8112 4.2 Considerations:
- 8113 4.2.1 The objections noted by Fergus (Maranatha) are invalid.
- 8114 4.2.2 The SCBP recommends this hymn.
- 8115 4.3 Recommendation: To approve *All Creatures of our God and King* for inclusion as per  
8116 the SCBP's recommendation.
- 8117 **5. Suggestion not to approve *Christians, Awake***
- 8118 5.1 Observations:
- 8119 5.1.1 Orangeville notes that the melody is challenging and that there are other Christmas  
8120 hymns being proposed.
- 8121 5.2 Considerations:
- 8122 5.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it  
8123 recommends including this song.
- 8124 5.3 Recommendation: To approve *Christians, Awake* for inclusion as per the SCBP's  
8125 recommendation.
- 8126 **6. Suggestion not to approve *Come Thou, Almighty King***
- 8127 6.1 Observations:
- 8128 6.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) opposes the archaic language of this hymn. It suggests there  
8129 are enough songs celebrating Christ's birth. It asserts that this hymn adds details to  
8130 the angel's song that are not recorded in scripture.
- 8131 6.1.2 With respect to archaic language the SCBP notes that this classic hymn ought not  
8132 to be changed. Many of the churches have specifically requested the addition of  
8133 songs celebrating Christ's birth. Fergus (Maranatha) does not show how this hymn  
8134 adds details that are not recorded in scripture.



- 8135 6.2 Considerations:
- 8136 6.2.1 The SCBP recommends including this song.
- 8137 6.3 Recommendation: To approve *Come Thou, Almighty King* for inclusion as per the
- 8138 SCBP's recommendation.
- 8139 **7. Suggestion not to approve *Guide Me O My Great Redeemer***
- 8140 7.1 Observations:
- 8141 7.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) says that this hymn has no clear association to the Apostles'
- 8142 Creed; it tries to bring OT details into modern life like the spirituals; it deals
- 8143 mainly with personal anxiety that so hinders one from relying on God.
- 8144 7.1.2 Kerwood (Grace) has concerns that the Old Testament imagery could be difficult
- 8145 to understand, that this hymn is not suited to the New Testament church.
- 8146 7.1.3 The adoption of the hymn does not depend on fitting it into a structure based on
- 8147 the Apostles' Creed. The SCBP acknowledges that although the imagery used in
- 8148 this hymn may not be totally clear, it uses biblical imagery referring to the
- 8149 pilgrim's journey.
- 8150 7.2 Considerations:
- 8151 7.2.1 The SCBP already received and dealt with the feedback provided and it
- 8152 recommends including this Hymn.
- 8153 7.3 Recommendation: To approve *Guide Me O My Great Redeemer* for inclusion as per the
- 8154 SCBP's recommendation.
- 8155 **8. Suggestion not to approve *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing***
- 8156 8.1 Observation:
- 8157 8.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) suggest that details of the song are not scriptural.
- 8158 8.2 Consideration:
- 8159 8.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it
- 8160 recommends including this song.
- 8161 8.3 Recommendation: To approve *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*, for inclusion as per the
- 8162 SCBP's recommendation.
- 8163 **9. Suggestion not to approve *O Come, All Ye Faithful***
- 8164 9.1 Observation:
- 8165 9.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) states this hymn includes archaic language. It asserts there are
- 8166 enough songs celebrated Christ's birth. It also adds details to the angels' song that
- 8167 are not recorded in Scripture.
- 8168 9.2 Consideration:
- 8169 9.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it
- 8170 recommends including this song.
- 8171 9.3 Recommendation: To approve *O Come, All Ye Faithful*, for inclusion as per the SCBP's
- 8172 recommendation.
- 8173 **10. Suggestion not to approve *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded***
- 8174 10.1 Observation:

8175 10.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) suggests that “I claim you as my own” is not a biblical  
8176 concept. They state that “dearest Friend” is not used appropriately.

8177 10.2 Consideration:

8178 10.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback provided, and it  
8179 recommends including this song.

8180 10.3 Recommendation: To approve *O Sacred Head Now Wounded* for inclusion as per the  
8181 SCBP’s recommendation.

8182 **11. Suggestion not to approve *Take My Life and Let It Be***

8183 11.1 Observations:

8184 11.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) states this hymn includes archaic language. They state that this  
8185 hymn has no clear association to the Apostles’ Creed.

8186 11.1.2 The adoption of the hymn does not depend on fitting it into a structure based on  
8187 the Apostles’ Creed.

8188 11.2 Consideration:

8189 11.2.1 The SCBP has already received and dealt with the feedback about archaic  
8190 language, and it recommends including this song.

8191 11.3 Recommendation: To approve *Take My Life and Let It Be* for inclusion as per the  
8192 SCBP’s recommendation.

8193 **12. Suggestion not to approve *How Deep the Father’s Love for Us***

8194 12.1 Observations:

8195 12.1.1 Devon expresses concern about the line, “the Father turns his face away,”  
8196 suggesting that it may imply an ontological change within the Trinity or promote a  
8197 misunderstanding of the atonement.

8198 12.1.2 Devon maintains that the Father never ceased to love the eternal Son and warns  
8199 that many members may misinterpret the line as implying divine displeasure with  
8200 Christ’s person rather than with the sin he bore.

8201 12.1.3 Devon appeals to Psalm 22:24 (“he has not hidden his face from him”) to argue  
8202 that Christ’s cry of dereliction should not be understood as literal abandonment.

8203 12.2 Considerations:

8204 12.2.1 The phrase “the Father turns his face away” is a poetic expression conveying  
8205 Christ’s experience of divine forsakenness as he bore the full weight of sin and  
8206 judgment on the cross. “To turn the face” either toward or away is a biblical way  
8207 to express whether favour/help is granted or not (cf. Ps. 27:9, 102:2).

8208 12.2.2 The Word of God makes it clear that on the cross Christ took upon himself our sin  
8209 and all its just consequences. “It pleased the LORD to crush him.” (Isaiah 53:10)  
8210 “For our sake he made him who knew no sin to be sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21).  
8211 “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us”  
8212 (Galatians 3:13).

8213 12.2.3 The Reformed confessions affirm that Christ suffered the wrath of God in both  
8214 body and soul (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 15,16). This suffering included  
8215 real covenantal abandonment—not a rupture in the Trinity, but the judicial

8216 withdrawal of divine favor as Christ bore our guilt. The phrase in question seeks to  
8217 express that truth in devotional language.

8218 12.2.4 The concern that the line could be misunderstood is pastorally understandable.  
8219 However, the possibility of misinterpretation does not render the line theologically  
8220 inaccurate. Many faithful expressions in Scripture and song require instruction to  
8221 be rightly understood. This is a normal aspect of catechesis and worship  
8222 leadership.

8223 12.2.5 Psalm 22:24 (“he has not hidden his face”) expresses the ultimate vindication and  
8224 deliverance of the Sufferer, not the absence of forsakenness. Psalm 22 includes  
8225 both real abandonment and real restoration. Jesus’ quotation of the opening verse  
8226 on the cross must not be reduced to a mere signal of hope—it was also a genuine  
8227 cry of desolation under wrath.

8228 12.2.6 The line in question does not assert a change in the eternal relation of the divine  
8229 persons, but rather depicts the redemptive moment in which the sinless Son bore  
8230 divine judgment in the place of sinners. That distinction between Christ’s divine  
8231 person and his mediatorial office is upheld in Reformed theology and is preserved  
8232 in this line when read with confessional care.

8233 12.3 Recommendation: To approve *How Deep the Father’s Love for Us* for inclusion as per  
8234 the SCBP’s recommendation.

## 8235 **Article 182 - APPENDIX A-3**

### 8236 **Suggestions from the churches to change the lyrics for alternate psalms recommended by** 8237 **the SCBP**

#### 8238 **1. Suggestion to keep Psalm 23 as it was**

##### 8239 1.1 Observations:

8240 1.1.1 The SCBP proposes to modernize the first line of stanza 4 to “A table thou hast  
8241 furnished me” from “A table thou hast furnish-ed.”

8242 1.1.2 Winnipeg (Grace) argues that this “glaring anachronism” has been retained by the  
8243 majority of modern hymnals, including the Trinity Psalter-Hymnal used by the  
8244 United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) and the Orthodox  
8245 Presbyterian Church (OPC).

##### 8246 1.2 Consideration:

8247 1.2.1 The SCBP already received and dealt with the feedback provided. They suggest to  
8248 follow the 1912 Psalter and the version which is also in the new songbook of the  
8249 Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ).

8250 1.3 Recommendation: To adopt the modernization proposed by the SCBP to the first line of  
8251 stanza 4.

#### 8252 **2. Suggestion to tweak the lyrics of Psalm 112**

##### 8253 2.1 Observations:

8254 2.1.1 Hamilton (Cornerstone) believes the second half of stanza 4 needs improvement;

8255 Current: *until upon his enemies, he his desire will see.*

8256 Proposed: *until upon his enemies, he looks in victory.*

- 8257 2.1.2 The SCBP notes that there is some “awkwardness” in the text, here and in other  
8258 places.
- 8259 2.1.3 Changing this psalm will require interaction with the copyright holder. The TPH  
8260 successfully obtained permission to do something similar.
- 8261 2.2 Consideration:
- 8262 2.2.1 These words are an improvement.
- 8263 2.3 Recommendation: To adopt the changes proposed by Hamilton (Cornerstone), provided  
8264 copyright permission can be obtained.

8265 **3. Suggestion to overhaul the lyrics of Psalm 149**

8266 3.1 Observations:

- 8267 3.1.1 Fergus (Maranatha) proposes new wording to this psalm and asks the SCBP to  
8268 review it before adopting the present version. The proposed text is as follows:

8269 **Give Praise to the LORD**

8270 1. Give praise to the Lord and sing a new song.  
8271 Amid all his saints, his praises prolong.  
8272 The praise of their Maker, his people shall sing.  
8273 Let children of Zion rejoice in their King.

8274  
8275 2. With timbrel and harp and joyful acclaim,  
8276 with dancing and song, give praise to his name,  
8277 for God in his people, his pleasure will seek,  
8278 with robes of salvation adorning the meek.

8279  
8280 3. Let saints now break out in jubilant song,  
8281 exulting in glory all the night long.  
8282 Let praises of God from their lips be outpoured  
8283 as they in their hands wield a double-edged sword.

8284  
8285 4. They'll punish the nations, put them to shame,  
8286 bind nobles and kings with fetters and chains,  
8287 for God has decreed this to be their reward.  
8288 So all saints gain glory. Give praise to the Lord!

8289  
8290 The Psalter, 1912; revised

8291 3.2 Considerations:

- 8292 3.2.1 This proposal seems to be an improvement.
- 8293 3.2.2 Changes can be made before the publication of the final *Book of Praise*.
- 8294 3.2.3 The SCBP is tasked with the review and recommendation of songs for the *Book of*  
8295 *Praise*.

8296 3.3 Recommendation: To pass this wording of Psalm 149 on to the SCBP for review and  
8297 possible recommendation.

8298

8299 **ADOPTED**

8300

8301 **Article 183 – SCBP (*Book of Praise*) Report Section One Parts 1,2,3 (*Shorter LS Forms*)**

8302 **1. Material**

8303 1.1 Report of the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP).  
8304 (8.2.8.1).

8305 1.2 Letters from the following churches: Attercliffe (8.3.8.1.6), Aldergrove (8.3.8.2.1),  
8306 Barrhead (8.3.8.2.3), Caledonia (8.3.8.2.5), Calgary (8.3.8.1.12), Chilliwack (8.3.8.2.6),  
8307 Grand Valley (8.3.8.2.12), Guelph (Emmanuel) (8.3.8.1.31), Nooksack Valley  
8308 (8.3.8.2.13), Orangeville (8.3.8.2.14), Taber (8.3.8.1.42), Willoughby Heights  
8309 (8.3.8.2.17), Arthur (8.3.8.2.2), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.3.8.2.4),  
8310 Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.3.8.1.17), Elm Creek (8.3.8.2.8), Fergus (Maranatha)  
8311 (8.3.8.2.9), Flamborough (Redemption) (8.3.8.2.10), Guelph (Living Word)  
8312 (8.3.8.2.11), St. Albert (8.3.8.2.15), Surrey (Maranatha) (8.3.8.2.16).

8313 **2. Admissibility**

8314 2.1 The report was declared admissible.

8315 Grounds: It was mandated by the previous general synod and was submitted on time.

8316 2.2 The letters from the churches were all admissible.

8317 Grounds: These letters interact with a report to synod and were submitted on time.

8318 **3. Observations**

8319 3.1 GS 2022 (art. 43 gr. 3.1; art. 71 gr. 3.1.1, 3.3.1, 3.5.1) mandated the SCBP to:

8320 [3.1.1] Remove the bracketed qualifier “For the Second Service” from the  
8321 Abbreviated Form for the Celebration of the Lord’s supper.

8322 [3.1.2] Amend the wording and musical notation of Hymn 1 and the Apostles’ Creed  
8323 to the Committee’s recommendation.

8324 [3.1.3] Adopt the updated language for Hymn 55 as recommended by the  
8325 Committee.

8326 [3.1.4] Adopt the change of melody for Hymn 58 as recommended by the  
8327 Committee.

8328 [3.1.5] The Committee has noted these changes for the next publication of the *Book*  
8329 *of Praise* or an authorized augment.

8330 The SCBP reports that the above points were implemented.

8331 3.2 GS 2022 mandated the SCBP to “Study and propose appropriate changes to the forms  
8332 for Lord’s supper (Acts, Art. 120) per the following considerations:

8333 [GS 2019 art. 23 cons. 3.1]: RSE Nov. 2018 makes a valid point that the English  
8334 language has changed and therefore the use of masculine pronouns in the forms  
8335 for Lord’s supper could make them liable to misinterpretation.

8336 [GS 2019 art. 23 cons. 3.2]: General Synod has been served by SCBP in matters of  
8337 linguistic changes to the liturgical forms (see GS 2013 Art. 101). It would be  
8338 advisable to ask the Committee to study this and propose appropriate changes to  
8339 the Lord’s supper forms giving special attention to the personal nature of self-  
8340 examination. In this process the churches would have the opportunity to interact  
8341 with any proposed changes.

8342 [GS 2022, art. 120 dec. 3.8.1]: Fulfill as yet the directive of GS 2019 to study and  
8343 propose appropriate changes to the masculine pronouns used in Lord’s supper  
8344 forms.

8345 3.2.1 The SCBP evaluated four options for revising the self-examination section:

8346 3.2.1.1 retaining third-person masculine singular,

8347 3.2.1.2 using first-person plural cohortative (“Let us...”),

8348 3.2.1.3 second-person singular imperative (“You...”),

8349 3.2.1.4 third-person indefinite plural (“they/their”).

8350 3.2.2 The Committee judged the options that use the first-person plural cohortative  
8351 (3.2.1.2) and the second-person singular imperative (3.2.1.3) as the most viable,  
8352 due to their greater emphasis on personal address and scriptural alignment with 1  
8353 Corinthians 11:28.

8354 3.2.3 The first-person plural cohortative, was recommended, supported by: the general  
8355 use of first-person plural in the form, coherence with existing sections, avoiding  
8356 awkwardness and gender-political connotations of “they/their.”

8357 3.2.4 The SCBP recommends changing the introductory sentence under “Self-  
8358 examination” to, “In order that we may now celebrate this holy supper of the Lord  
8359 to our comfort, we must each first rightly examine ourselves.”

8360 3.2.5 The SCBP recommends changing the wording of the paragraph on self-  
8361 examination to read:

8362 3.2.5.1 “First, let us consider our sins and accursedness, so that we, detesting  
8363 ourselves, may humble ourselves before God. For the wrath of God against  
8364 sin is so great that he could not leave it unpunished, but has punished it in his  
8365 beloved Son Jesus Christ by the bitter and shameful death on the cross.

8366 3.2.5.2 Second, let us search our hearts whether we also believe the sure promise of  
8367 God that all our sins are forgiven us only for the sake of the suffering and  
8368 death of Jesus Christ and that the perfect righteousness of Christ is freely  
8369 given us as our own, as if we ourselves had fulfilled all righteousness.

8370 3.2.5.3 Third, let us examine our consciences whether it is our sincere desire to show  
8371 true thankfulness to God with our entire lives and, laying aside all enmity,  
8372 hatred, and envy, to live with our neighbours in true love and unity.”

8373 3.2.6 Only a few churches interacted with the proposed change, and the responses were  
8374 fairly evenly split between support and opposition.

8375 3.3 GS 2022 (art. 156) mandated the SCBP to “Provide shorter forms for the celebration of  
8376 the Lord’s supper” which are:

8377 a. Reformed in character;



- 8378 b. Comparable in content to the current forms;  
8379 c. Shorter than the current Abbreviated Form.
- 8380 3.3.1 The SCBP reviewed forms from sister churches and found that while some were  
8381 shorter, most lacked completeness. Only the RCUS form was comparable in  
8382 content, but it was longer than the current abbreviated form.
- 8383 3.3.2 The SCBP drafted two new short forms:
- 8384 3.3.2.1 Short Form #1: based on Scripture and Confessions (with and without  
8385 citations).
- 8386 3.3.2.2 Short Form #2: more concise and thematic, emphasizing covenantal and  
8387 confessional truths.
- 8388 3.3.2.3 Both forms aim to preserve the Reformed doctrine of the Supper, include  
8389 essential elements such as institution, explanation, self-examination,  
8390 admonition, communion, and prayer.
- 8391 3.3.2.4 The Committee suggested adding a “usage note” recommending that these  
8392 shorter forms be used in rotation with the long form to maintain doctrinal  
8393 richness over time.
- 8394 3.3.3 Several churches expressed appreciation for the availability of shorter forms,  
8395 especially for use in the churches where the Lord’s supper is celebrated more  
8396 frequently. These churches welcomed the reduced length, confessional clarity, and  
8397 liturgical usability of the new forms.
- 8398 3.3.4 Some churches expressed support for the adoption of the proposed shorter forms,  
8399 however most of these churches suggested there is a need for revision and  
8400 improvement.
- 8401 3.3.5 Other churches expressed opposition to the adoption of the proposed shorter forms  
8402 for various reasons, including the perception that changes are driven by perceived  
8403 cultural pressure rather than theological need, lack of reverence, missing  
8404 admonition and self-examination, and weak prayers.
- 8405 3.3.6 Some churches expressed support for the usage note.

#### 8406 **4. Considerations**

- 8407 4.1 With respect to the GS 2022 (art. 43 & 71) mandate, “Implementation of Synod  
8408 decisions on Committee proposals”, the SCPB has fulfilled the mandate of GS 2022.
- 8409 4.2 With respect to the GS 2022 (art. 120) mandate, “Study and propose appropriate  
8410 changes to the forms for Lord’s supper”:
- 8411 4.2.1 The SCBP fulfilled its mandate to explore the linguistic challenges associated with  
8412 the use of masculine pronouns in the Lord’s supper form and provided a thoughtful  
8413 analysis of available options.
- 8414 4.2.2 The recommended first-person plural cohortative aligns with the general tone and  
8415 structure of the existing Lord’s supper form, maintaining continuity and corporate  
8416 liturgical voice, while the strengthened introductory sentence effectively  
8417 safeguards the individual nature of self-examination.
- 8418 4.2.3 Although a number of churches expressed a preference for the second-person  
8419 imperative as more personal and direct, this grammatical form would introduce a

- 8420 tonal shift inconsistent with the rest of the form and could fragment the unified  
8421 language of the liturgy. The cohortative form, especially with the proposed  
8422 introductory revision, adequately addresses concerns about personal application.
- 8423 4.2.4 The two shorter forms drafted by the SCBP fulfill the core elements of the Synod  
8424 2022 mandate: they are Reformed in character, comparable in content to the  
8425 current forms, and shorter than the existing Abbreviated Form.
- 8426 4.2.5 By choosing to use the headings in our current form as guidelines, the SCBP  
8427 unnecessarily limited its study of the forms of sister churches to those which were  
8428 virtually identical, rather than to those which were comparable.
- 8429 4.2.6 While some churches expressed concern that the shorter forms lacked the doctrinal  
8430 depth or admonitory weight of the longer form, such concerns do not justify  
8431 rejecting the forms outright.
- 8432 4.2.7 A period of testing and feedback will allow churches to assess the forms in context  
8433 and provide meaningful input. Further refinement is best achieved through this  
8434 broader use and interaction.
- 8435 4.2.8 The inclusion of Scripture references in Short Form #1 was widely appreciated and  
8436 adds clarity and authority. Churches should have the flexibility to choose the  
8437 version (with or without citations) that best fits their local context.
- 8438 4.2.9 Concerns about the proposed “usage note”—particularly whether it constitutes an  
8439 undue limitation on local discretion—indicate that such a note should not be  
8440 included.
- 8441 4.2.10 Although some churches requested a broader collection of shorter forms, care must  
8442 be taken not to proliferate forms unnecessarily. Multiplying forms risks  
8443 undermining liturgical unity and could burden the churches with excessive  
8444 variation. The current shorter forms should be tested and evaluated before any  
8445 expansion is considered.

## 8446 **5. Recommendations**

8447 That Synod decide:

- 8448 5.1 To thank the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) for  
8449 its diligent work in fulfilling its task as mandated by GS 2022.
- 8450 5.2 To provisionally adopt the proposed revision to the self-examination section of the  
8451 Lord’s supper form, as indicated in observations 3.2.4 and 3.2.5, for use in the churches  
8452 until the next general synod, with the understanding that it is to be used on a testing  
8453 basis, not as finally adopted form.
- 8454 5.3 To provisionally adopt Short Form #1 and Short Form #2 for use in the churches until  
8455 the next general synod, with the understanding that it is to be used on a testing basis, not  
8456 as finally adopted forms.
- 8457 5.4 To mandate the committee appointed by GS 2025 (art. 175) to:
- 8458 5.4.1 Solicit feedback from the churches on the use of the two short forms;
- 8459 5.4.2 Evaluate the feedback and propose any necessary editorial refinements;
- 8460 5.4.3 Report to the next general synod with a recommendation regarding formal  
8461 adoption, revision, or discontinuation of the forms;

- 8462 5.4.4 To review the Lord’s supper forms of the United Reformed Churches of America  
8463 (URCNA), the Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ), the Orthodox  
8464 Presbyterian Church (OPC), and the Reformed Churches of the United States  
8465 (RCUS) with a view to proposing alternate forms for use within the churches;  
8466 5.4.5 To send this report to the churches no later than six (6) months prior to the next  
8467 General Synod;  
8468 5.5 To name this committee the “Committee on Liturgical Forms.”

8469

8470 **ADOPTED**

8471

8472 **Article 184 – Overture CCO Jun 2020: phrase “summarized in the confessions”**

8473 **1. Material**

- 8474 1.1 CCO Overture, dated June 5, 2020 (8.4.1.2).  
8475 1.2 Letter from Hamilton (Blessings), dated September 30, 2024, submitting the overture  
8476 directly to Synod, according to GS 2022 art. 78 (8.4.1.1).  
8477 1.3 Letters from the following churches: Ancaster (8.5.8.1), Arthur (8.5.8.2), Attercliffe  
8478 (8.5.8.3), Brampton (Grace) (8.5.8.4, 8.5.8.5), Burlington (Ebenezer) (8.5.8.6, 8.5.8.7),  
8479 Burlington (Fellowship) (8.5.8.8), Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (8.5.8.9), Calgary  
8480 (8.5.8.10), Carman East (8.5.8.11), Carman West (8.5.8.12), Chilliwack (8.5.8.13),  
8481 Dunnville East (8.5.8.14), Edmonton (Immanuel) (8.5.8.15), Fergus North (8.5.8.16),  
8482 Grand Rapids (8.5.8.17), Grand Valley (8.5.8.18), Houston (8.5.8.19, 8.5.8.20),  
8483 Kerwood (Grace) (8.5.8.21), Langley (8.5.8.22), Niagara South (8.5.8.23), Orangeville  
8484 (8.5.8.24), Ottawa Jubilee (8.5.8.25), Sardis (8.5.8.26), Smithville (8.5.8.27), Tintern  
8485 Spring Creek (8.5.8.28), Willoughby Heights (8.5.8.29), Winnipeg (Redeemer)  
8486 (8.5.8.30).

8487 **2. Admissibility**

- 8488 2.1 The overture was declared admissible.  
8489 Grounds: This overture was submitted directly by the Hamilton (Blessings) CanRC, as  
8490 authorized by the decision of GS 2022art. 78. GS 2022 had sustained an appeal  
8491 concerning this matter but ruled that the overture itself could not be adopted at that  
8492 time due to procedural grounds (lack of prior church interaction), instructing that a  
8493 church could resubmit the overture directly to GS 2025 after distributing it to all  
8494 churches.  
8495 2.2 The letters from the churches were declared admissible.  
8496 Ground: These letters interact with an overture to general synod and were received on  
8497 time.

8498 **3. Observations**

- 8499 3.1 The overture proposes to amend the questions in the liturgical forms for Baptism of  
8500 Infants, Baptism of Adults, and Public Profession of Faith by replacing the term  
8501 “confessions” with “Apostles’ Creed”. Thus, for example, the first question of the  
8502 Public Profession of Faith form would read, “First, do you wholeheartedly believe the

- 8503 doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the Apostles' Creed and taught here in this  
8504 Christian church?"
- 8505 3.2 GS 1977 gave the following mandate (among others) to the Committee on Translation  
8506 and Revision of the Confessional and Liturgical Forms, "to revise the Liturgical Forms  
8507 and to update the language, especially the Form for the Holy Supper and the Form for  
8508 the Solemnization of Marriage". The committee gave no recommendation to GS 1980 to  
8509 revise the liturgical questions of the baptism or public profession of faith forms. No  
8510 church requested a change to these forms.
- 8511 3.2.1 GS 1980 art. 129 cons. 10 simply states, "Consistency should be maintained with  
8512 respect to 'summarized in the Creeds'" but no explanation is given for switching  
8513 from "articles of the Christian faith" to "the Creeds".
- 8514 3.2.2 GS 1983 art. 145 cons. 4 gives revisions to the various forms including replacing  
8515 the term "creeds" with "confessions". Under the form for the baptism of infants,  
8516 the following is mentioned, 4A8 "In order to avoid misunderstanding, the word  
8517 'creeds' in the second question should be replaced by 'confessions'". (In the other  
8518 two forms, 4B4 and 4C3, the fact of the replacement is simply mentioned.) This  
8519 change was simply made at GS 1983 without any recommendation by the  
8520 committee or request by a church.
- 8521 3.2.3 GS 1986 art.144 dealt with a substantive appeal against this decision of GS 1983  
8522 to change "creeds" to "confessions". The appeal was denied without  
8523 substantiation, simply claiming that when LD 7 says that a Christian must believe  
8524 all that is promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic and  
8525 undoubted Christian faith teach us in a summary, "it does not suggest that this  
8526 basic summary excludes the further confession [sic] given in the Three Forms of  
8527 Unity". It did not appreciate that the "articles of the Christian faith" specifically  
8528 refers to the Apostles' Creed (cf. LD 7, QA 22).
- 8529 3.2.4 Subsequent appeals against the procedural errors were denied on the basis that the  
8530 change from "articles of the Christian faith" to "creeds" and then "confessions"  
8531 was merely linguistic (GS 1989 art. 161, cons. C1, and GS 1992 art. 121 cons. 3A  
8532 & art.122 cons. 3C).
- 8533 3.2.5 It is the conviction of this overture that previous Synods erred by declaring that the  
8534 change was merely linguistic.
- 8535 3.3 The overture gives the following grounds for its argument that the change from "articles  
8536 of the Christian faith" to "confessions" was wrong and not merely a linguistic change  
8537 and that therefore the change should be reversed and the original wording with articles  
8538 of the Christian faith referring to "Apostles' Creed" be restored.
- 8539 3.3.1 Throughout most of church history, the Apostles' Creed has been closely  
8540 connected to the sacrament of baptism, as infants of believing parents and adult  
8541 baptism takes place in the name of the triune God.
- 8542 3.3.2 The Apostles' Creed is referred to in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 7,  
8543 Q/A 22 as a summary of what a Christian must believe.
- 8544 3.3.3 The Apostles' Creed is what is referred to in the pre-1980 form as "the articles of  
8545 the Christian faith" – this expression is a direct quote from Heidelberg Catechism,  
8546 LD 7, Q/A 22.

- 8547 3.3.4 The use of “confessions” instead of “Apostles’ Creed” in the current form has led  
8548 to the erroneous idea of “confessional membership”, that one can only become a  
8549 communicant member of a CanRC if one unequivocally pledges allegiance to the  
8550 Reformed confessions (the Three Forms of Unity; cf. GS 1986 (art.144, cons. C2)  
8551 which explained the phrase “as taught here in this Christian church” as “one gives  
8552 allegiance to all the confessions of the church”). The overture argues that making  
8553 public profession of faith is not about giving allegiance to specific theological  
8554 documents, but rather about responding to the personal promises of the triune God.  
8555 Dr. N. Gootjes notes that the phrase “taught here in this Christian church” refers to  
8556 the preaching and catechetical instruction of the church which was in line with the  
8557 Reformed confessions. Also from a historical perspective, those answering these  
8558 questions would not have had theological knowledge beyond the Apostles’ Creed  
8559 but they agree to accept and submit to Reformed teaching and preaching.
- 8560 3.3.5 At the end of section D, the overture clarifies the central role of the Reformed  
8561 confessions in the Church’s teaching: “The Canadian Reformed churches are  
8562 confessional churches and should remain so. Officebearers in the Canadian  
8563 Reformed churches subscribe to the Reformed confessions and should continue to  
8564 do so. The Scriptures, as faithfully summarized in the Reformed confessions, must  
8565 be preached and taught without apology. Members of local Canadian Reformed  
8566 churches, even those who dispute some confessional affirmations, must accept  
8567 Reformed teaching and preaching (so as to remain teachable and not promote  
8568 contrary teaching).”
- 8569 3.3.6 Switching back to “Apostles’ Creed” (equivalent to “articles of the Christian  
8570 faith”) from “confessions” will bring the CanRC into alignment with sister-  
8571 churches, for example, the URCNA. For instance, the Trinity Psalter Hymnal  
8572 (TPH) uses the phrase “articles of the Christian faith” in 5 out of 6 forms: in both  
8573 of the infant baptism forms and in both of the public profession of faith forms and  
8574 in one of the adult baptism forms. The other adult baptism form uses “confessions  
8575 of this church”.
- 8576 3.4 While some churches support the overture and agree with its argumentation, other  
8577 churches disagree with the overture or have some questions surrounding the following  
8578 matters:
- 8579 3.4.1 Some churches argue that the matter has been decided upon by previous general  
8580 synods and therefore should not be reopened.
- 8581 3.4.2 Some churches object that the confessions are essentially just an elaboration of the  
8582 Apostles’ Creed and therefore do not see a tension between the two, and see no  
8583 need to revert back to the original wording.
- 8584 3.4.3 Some churches object to the expression “impersonal theological formulations”  
8585 (Overture, Section B, p.4) and hold that an unnecessary false dilemma is created  
8586 between God’s personal promises and the confessions.
- 8587 3.4.4 Some churches are concerned that “Apostles’ Creed” is too minimalist for public  
8588 profession of faith.
- 8589 3.4.5 Some churches wonder how CO art. 61, which specifies that only those who have  
8590 made public profession of the Reformed faith shall be admitted to the Lord’s



- 8591                   supper, would function when “confessions” has been replaced by “Apostles’  
8592                   Creed”.
- 8593           3.4.6   Some churches wonder how church discipline for false teaching would function  
8594           when “confessions” has been replaced by “Apostles’ Creed”.
- 8595           3.4.7   Some churches are concerned with the confusion and possible weakened Reformed  
8596           confessional identity that might result among church members if the established  
8597           practice (for around 40 years) of the current question is changed back to the pre-  
8598           1980 version.
- 8599           3.4.8   Smithville believes that the change from “articles of the Christian faith” to  
8600           “confessions” arose from the broader context of the struggles in the Dutch  
8601           churches with respect to the necessity of confessional subscription in the second  
8602           half of the 1960s, and the decades which followed. Some of the undermining of the  
8603           authority of the confessions was thought to be trickling over to Canada as well and  
8604           therefore to ensure the confessional fidelity of the CanRC, it was felt to be a good  
8605           idea to switch to “creeds” and then “confessions” in the 1980s in Canada.
- 8606           3.4.9   Ancaster draws attention to GS 1971 art. 93, “The Churches should stick to the  
8607           soundly Reformed position of the first Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches  
8608           that the basis of the federation is the submission to the Word of God, in complete  
8609           binding of all its members, specifically its office-bearers and delegates to the  
8610           Creeds and the Church Order”.
- 8611           3.4.10   Ancaster further draws attention to an agreement between the CanRC and the  
8612           OPC, finalized in 2001: “The churches of the Reformation believe that they have  
8613           to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3) and  
8614           are called to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way  
8615           that are contrary to the teaching you have learned (Rom 16:17). Anyone who  
8616           answers the membership vows in the affirmative is bound to receive and adhere to  
8617           the doctrine of the Bible. The patristic church has summarized this teaching in the  
8618           Apostles’ Creed and the churches of the Reformation have elaborated on this in  
8619           their confessions. Every confessing member is bound to this doctrine and must be  
8620           willing to be instructed in it. (CCOPC Report to GS 1998; see *Acts of GS 1998*,  
8621           Appendix 8, p. 308; it was finally adopted by GS 2001 art. 45 dec. 5.5).

#### 8622   **4. Considerations**

- 8623           4.1   The Liturgical Forms for Baptism and Public Profession of Faith are vital instruments  
8624           for the edification and worship of the church and must accurately reflect the truth of  
8625           Scripture and the confessional basis of our faith in a manner that is clear, pastoral, and  
8626           according to the Church Order.
- 8627           4.2   The initial changes to the wording in 1980 and 1983 occurred outside the normal and  
8628           proper church orderly procedures for revising such fundamental documents. Church  
8629           order principles dictate that significant matters affecting the churches in common should  
8630           originate from the churches through overtures or synodical committee reports, allowing  
8631           for careful study and input from the congregations. The absence of such a process in  
8632           1980 and 1983 constitutes a serious procedural error that warrants revisiting the matter.
- 8633           4.3   When a serious procedural error has occurred in the past, integrity and truthfulness  
8634           demands that the situation be addressed and rectified. It is not appropriate to let such



- 8635 matters lie simply because, in the view of some churches, a desirable outcome has been  
8636 achieved. Matters cannot be considered settled and binding which rest on a  
8637 demonstrably erroneous foundation.
- 8638 4.4 While the confessions as a whole faithfully summarize the doctrine of God’s Word, the  
8639 Apostles’ Creed holds a unique historical and theological place as an ancient,  
8640 ecumenical, and baptismal creed. It succinctly summarizes the core truths of the gospel,  
8641 particularly concerning the Triune God and the work of Christ, which are central to  
8642 baptism (Matthew 28:19). Emphasizing this foundational creed in the baptismal and  
8643 profession questions for members aligns with the catholicity of the church, highlighting  
8644 the shared faith of the Church of all times and places.
- 8645 4.5 The language of our Reformed confession, the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord’s Day 7,  
8646 Q/A 22-23), in response to the question “what must a Christian believe?” uses the  
8647 phrase “articles of our catholic and undoubted Christian faith” and explicitly equates  
8648 this phrase with the Apostles’ Creed. It is fitting and appropriate that the questions in  
8649 the Liturgical Forms are consistent with the language found in our Confession,  
8650 supporting the use of either the original phrasing “articles of the Christian faith” or the  
8651 phrase “Apostles’ Creed” as its direct referent.
- 8652 4.5.1 Ancaster is correct that the phrase “impersonal theological formulations” is an  
8653 unnecessarily pejorative description of the Heidelberg Catechism’s expression of  
8654 faith. Certainly, the Catechism is a deeply personal confession of faith. The  
8655 Canons of Dort also offers much practical encouragement and comfort to the elect.  
8656 The point of the overture is that the increased depth and detailed explanation of the  
8657 Three Forms of Unity can potentially run the risk of obscuring the fact that at the  
8658 time the vows are made, it is a response to the clear personal promises of the triune  
8659 God.
- 8660 4.6 The phrase “and taught here in this Christian church” serves as a vital reference to the  
8661 teaching ministry of the church that expounds upon the doctrine summarized in the  
8662 Apostles’ Creed, which includes teaching from the confessions. Reverting to a phrase  
8663 equivalent to the original wording clarifies that the primary summary confessed at  
8664 foundational moments such as baptism and profession of faith, is the Apostles’ Creed,  
8665 which is then further explained and elaborated upon through the teaching of the  
8666 confessions within the church. This approach recognizes that there are different  
8667 expectations of members versus office-bearers (who subscribe to the confessions) while  
8668 still maintaining that the doctrine taught in the church is Reformed doctrine, rooted in  
8669 Scripture and summarized in the confessions. This is affirmed in the overture at the end  
8670 of point D.
- 8671 4.6.1 The vows made by members at their public profession of faith are distinct from the  
8672 confessional subscription required of office-bearers. The member is confessing to  
8673 believe the doctrine of Scripture taught in the church, not necessarily a working  
8674 knowledge of Reformed doctrines confessed in the Three Forms of Unity at a level  
8675 that enables one to teach and refute. As noted in the letter from Ottawa (Jubilee), if  
8676 the profession of faith were equivalent to confessional subscription, office-bearers  
8677 would not require a separate act of subscription as part of their ordination.
- 8678 4.7 Currently with the questions in the Baptism and Profession of Faith forms containing  
8679 “confessions”, there are members who answer the question, but do not fully

- 8680 comprehend the Reformed confessions. This is a significant problem and not an  
8681 uncommon one, which the church must avoid as much as possible.
- 8682 4.8 In a number of letters from the churches, some questions or objections are raised with  
8683 respect to the requirement in CO art. 61 for consistories to admit only those who have  
8684 made public profession of the Reformed faith to the Lord's supper. This CO article is  
8685 not undermined by stating "summarized in the Apostles' Creed and taught here in this  
8686 Christian church" in the liturgical questions. The "Reformed faith" is the doctrine taught  
8687 in the CanRC based on Scripture as summarized in the confessions. The phrase "taught  
8688 here in this Christian church" explicitly connects the confession of the Creed to the  
8689 confessional teaching context of the church, which for example explains the creed in the  
8690 Lord's Days 7-22. The questions in the Forms for Infant and Adult Baptism and  
8691 Profession of Faith must be understood and applied in the broader context of the  
8692 church's teaching ministry, which is bound by the confessions. The consistory's  
8693 examination process further ensures that the profession aligns with the Reformed faith.  
8694 Therefore, the proposed wording is consistent with the requirement of professing the  
8695 Reformed faith for admission to the Lord's supper.
- 8696 4.8.1 When the overture calls the concept of "confessional membership" an error, it  
8697 overstates its case. Members of the CanRC who have made public profession of  
8698 faith are bound by Reformed doctrine as found in the Three Forms of Unity since  
8699 those are the Reformed confessions to which the office-bearers have subscribed  
8700 and according to which the church preaches and teaches. In the first question of the  
8701 Form for the Profession of Faith, believers profess that they wholeheartedly  
8702 believe the doctrine of the Word of God ... taught here in this Christian church. In  
8703 so doing, they bind themselves to the church's teaching which is according to the  
8704 Three Forms of Unity. In answer to the fourth question, believers promise to  
8705 submit to the discipline of the church if it should happen that they become  
8706 delinquent in doctrine or life. The standard for judging such delinquency is the  
8707 Word of God as the church confesses it in the Three Forms of Unity.
- 8708 4.8.2 At the same time, it is true that the term "confessional membership" can be  
8709 misused in a way which obscures the catholicity of the church and can create the  
8710 mistaken impression that only those who have bound themselves to the Three  
8711 Forms of Unity can be true Christians.
- 8712 4.8.3 The term "confessional membership" should not be understood to exclude those  
8713 from membership who struggle, as yet, to affirm a particular point of Reformed  
8714 doctrine. The overture rightly points out that historically such individuals have still  
8715 been received into membership provided that they are educable and submissive to  
8716 the teaching of the church and they refrain from causing public discord or division.
- 8717 4.9 While the current wording has been in use for a significant period of some 40 years in  
8718 the churches, it should be noted that the Reformed churches have used the phrase  
8719 "articles of the Christian faith" for hundreds of years, since the late 1500s. For instance,  
8720 the 1566 Form for the Baptism of Infants by Dathenus uses the phrase "articles of the  
8721 Christian faith" in the second question; this phrase was used in the Forms published in  
8722 Psalters during the remainder of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and into the 17<sup>th</sup>. The post-acts of the  
8723 great Synod of Dort contain an adult baptism form which uses the same phrase.

- 8724 4.9.1 The argument that the word “confessions” is necessary in order to ensure a  
8725 “Reformed” profession of faith necessarily implies that from the late 1500s until  
8726 1980, Reformed consistories were admitting to the Lord’s supper members who had  
8727 not made public profession of the Reformed faith.
- 8728 4.9.2 It is significant to note that in the context of the previously mentioned struggles in  
8729 The Netherlands (which involved some desiring to loosen the ties to the Reformed  
8730 confessions), the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (liberated) (GKv) did not  
8731 change the questions in their forms from “articles of the Christian faith” to  
8732 “confessions” but retained “articles of the Christian faith.”
- 8733 4.9.3 The quote from GS 1971 art. 93 demonstrates that, when the CanRC still had the  
8734 phrase “articles of the Christian faith” in the questions in the forms of baptism and  
8735 profession of faith, this was in the context of an unapologetic and unequivocal  
8736 commitment to the Three Forms of Unity for members and specifically for office  
8737 bearers.
- 8738 4.10 With respect to the concerns raised about the pastoral impact of changing the wording  
8739 back, pastoral care and diligent teaching can mitigate confusion and help members  
8740 understand the relationship between the Apostles’ Creed and the Reformed confessions  
8741 as faithful summaries of God’s Word. The current wording, understood by some to  
8742 imply the requirement for a comprehensive understanding of the Reformed confessions,  
8743 can in fact create pastoral burdens for sincere believers that a return to the more  
8744 historically Reformed phrase can alleviate.
- 8745 4.11 Sustaining the overture rectifies past procedural errors and allows the churches to return  
8746 to a wording that is strongly supported by historical Reformed practice, the explicit  
8747 teaching of the Heidelberg Catechism, and a focus on the core gospel truths confessed at  
8748 Baptism and Public Profession of Faith, without abandoning the importance of the  
8749 confessions as guiding summaries of the doctrine taught in the church.

## 8750 **5. Recommendations**

8751 That Synod decide:

- 8752 5.1 To sustain the overture from Classis Central Ontario (CCO).
- 8753 5.2 To replace the words “summarized in the confessions” in the Form for the Baptism of  
8754 Infants, the Form for the Baptism of Adults, and the Form for the Public Profession of  
8755 Faith, with the words “summarized in the Apostles’ Creed”.
- 8756 5.3 To instruct the Standing Committee for the Publication of the *Book of Praise* (SCBP) to  
8757 update the wording of the above forms according to this decision.

8758

### 8759 **ADOPTED**

8760 L. Kok had his negative vote recorded.

8761

## 8762 **Article 185 – Convening Church Guidelines**

### 8763 **1. Material**

- 8764 1.1 Letter from the Aldergrove Steering Committee (12.1).
- 8765 1.2 Current Appendix 28 – Guidelines for General Synods.

8766 **2. Admissibility**

8767 2.1 The letter was declared admissible

8768 Grounds: It is from the steering committee of the convening church and regards the  
8769 operations of general synod.

8770 **3. Observations**

8771 3.1 Appendix 28, Section I.A currently permits the convening church to take “whatever  
8772 measures are needed” to improve synod operations but offers little specific direction.

8773 3.2 The Aldergrove Steering Committee provided helpful reflections based on experience,  
8774 including suggestions related to email organization, file management, spreadsheet  
8775 tracking, and coordination with the federation website.

8776 3.3 In our current system, the full agenda (including appeals and church correspondence) is  
8777 distributed to all synod delegates, while churches receive only the public portion of the  
8778 agenda (excluding appeals and correspondence from churches).

8779 3.4 A clearer and more detailed description of the convening church’s role in agenda  
8780 preparation would improve consistency, transparency, and efficiency in the lead-up to  
8781 general synod, while still respecting synod’s authority and the confidentiality of certain  
8782 materials.

8783 3.5 The Aldergrove Steering Committee raised the possibility of appointing a stated clerk to  
8784 assist with synod planning and transitions.

8785 **4. Considerations**

8786 4.1 It is desirable to assist future convening churches by explicitly outlining best practices  
8787 for agenda preparation and document handling.

8788 4.2 The proposed text provides such guidance without creating a new permanent office or  
8789 interfering with synod’s freedom to alter the agenda.

8790 4.3 Including distinctions between what is sent to delegates versus what is shared with all  
8791 churches preserves current confidentiality practices and honors ecclesiastical norms.

8792 4.4 Adopting this expanded description in Appendix 28 will promote greater continuity  
8793 between synods and relieve future convening churches of unnecessary guesswork.

8794 4.5 While the idea of a stated clerk reflects a valid concern for continuity and administrative  
8795 efficiency, these goals can be adequately achieved by strengthening the role of the  
8796 convening church within the existing polity.

8797 4.6 For the benefit of the churches and all synodically-appointed committees, establishing  
8798 the date of the next general synod in a timely fashion is important.

8799 **5. Recommendation**

8800 5.1 To revise the first paragraph of section 1.A of the Guidelines for General Synod (see  
8801 Appendix 28 of the *Acts of GS 2022*) to read as follows:

8802 5.1.1 The convening church shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. CO Art.  
8803 49). It shall give notice of this date to all the churches of the federation TWO  
8804 YEARS in advance of the date for the next General Synod. It shall also publish  
8805 this date at [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org).

- 8806 5.2 To replace the last paragraph of Section I.A of Appendix 28 – Guidelines for General  
8807 Synods with the following:
- 8808 5.2.1 The convening church shall take responsibility for preparing a provisional agenda  
8809 for synod. To this end, it shall receive and organize all submissions in an orderly  
8810 and transparent manner. This includes:
- 8811 5.2.1.1 Creating a synod-specific email address for all synod-related correspondence  
8812 and submissions.
- 8813 5.2.1.2 Acknowledging receipt of submissions and maintaining a tracking log that  
8814 records the source, subject, date received, and format of each item.
- 8815 5.2.1.3 Assigning each submission to a suitable agenda category (e.g., reports,  
8816 overtures, appeals, correspondence) and assigning each item a unique  
8817 provisional agenda number.
- 8818 5.2.1.4 Standardizing document formats (e.g., searchable PDF) and applying  
8819 consistent file naming conventions that reflect the agenda number, topic,  
8820 source, and date.
- 8821 5.2.1.5 Coordinating with the federation’s website committee to ensure that all  
8822 public materials are posted consistently and accessibly while also ensuring  
8823 confidentiality of delegate only items.
- 8824 5.2.1.6 Preparing a shared digital folder system for synod delegates, organized by  
8825 agenda categories and item numbers, containing all submitted materials in  
8826 downloadable form.
- 8827 5.2.1.7 Distributing the provisional agenda and supporting materials as follows:
- 8828 5.2.1.7.1 To all synod delegates: the full agenda with hyperlinks to all supporting  
8829 documents, including appeals and church correspondence.
- 8830 5.2.1.7.2 To all churches and the federation’s website: the full agenda with  
8831 hyperlinks only to public materials (i.e., reports and overtures). Items  
8832 such as appeals or correspondence from individual churches are to be  
8833 listed in the agenda but not made publicly available.
- 8834 5.2.1.7.3 Sending the provisional agenda to the churches and federation website  
8835 6 months and 6 weeks before synod.
- 8836 5.2.1.7.4 Sending provisional agendas to the delegates at intervals of  
8837 approximately 6 months, 4 months, 3 months, and 6 weeks prior to  
8838 synod.

8839  
8840 **ADOPTED**

8841  
8842 **Article 186 – GS 2022 Finances**

8843 **1. Material**

- 8844 1.1 Report re GS 2022 cover letter (Guelph (Emmanuel)) (8.2.1.1).  
8845 1.2 Financial Report GS 2022 (Guelph (Emmanuel)) (8.2.1.2).  
8846 1.3 Audit [Review] Report re GS 2022 (Guelph (Living Word)) (8.2.1.3).

8847 1.4 Calgary letter re GS 2022 (8.3.1.2).

8848 **2. Admissibility**

8849 2.1 The reports were declared admissible.

8850 Grounds: They were mandated by a general synod and were received on time,

8851 2.2 The letter from Calgary was declared admissible.

8852 Grounds: It pertains to these reports and was received on time.

8853 **3. Observations**

8854 3.1 The Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC submitted a financial report for GS 2022, which  
8855 included revenue and expenditures shared between RSW and RSE, in accordance with  
8856 synod decisions.

8857 3.2 A review of these financial records was performed by members of Guelph (Living  
8858 Word), who confirmed that the books appeared to be in good order and followed the  
8859 guidelines laid out in the *Acts of GS 2022*.

8860 3.3 Calgary submitted a letter of appreciation for the financial work of GS 2022.

8861 3.4 A cover letter from Guelph (Emmanuel) accompanied the financial report and review,  
8862 submitted as per the mandate from GS 2022.

8863 3.5 The financial documents are included in Appendix 22.

8864 **4. Considerations**

8865 4.1 The financial responsibilities for GS 2022 were carried out in a diligent, transparent,  
8866 and cooperative manner.

8867 4.2 The review provides confidence that the funds were handled appropriately.

8868 4.3 It is fitting for Synod to recognize the service of the churches and members involved.

8869 **5. Recommendations**

8870 That Synod decide:

8871 5.1 To receive the financial report and review of Synod 2022 with thankfulness and to  
8872 include these materials in the *Acts of GS 2025* (see Appendix 22).

8873 5.2 To thank the Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC for its financial administration and  
8874 submission of the report.

8875 5.3 To thank the Guelph (Living Word) CanRC for conducting the review.

8876 5.4. To note with appreciation the letter of appreciation from the Calgary CanRC.

8877

8878 **ADOPTED**

8879

8880 **Article 187 – General Fund**

8881 **1. Material**

8882 1.1 Report of the General Fund as administered by Carman East. (8.2.12.1).

8883 1.2 Report of the review of the General Fund by Carman West. (8.2.12.2).



8884 **2. Admissibility**

8885 2.1 The reports were declared admissible.

8886 Grounds: Although received after the deadline of 6 weeks prior to general synod, they  
8887 both were mandated by the previous general synod and are necessary to be dealt with  
8888 for the good functioning of the General Fund.

8889 **3. Observations**

8890 3.1 GS 2022 art. 32 appointed the Carman East CanRC to administer the General Fund for  
8891 the period 2022–2024.

8892 3.2 The financial report submitted by Carman East indicates:

8893 3.2.1 Total assessments received from the churches: \$99,366.87.

8894 3.2.2 Total expenses: \$129,968.96.

8895 3.2.3 Closing bank balance as of December 31, 2024: \$7,364.71.

8896 3.2.4 The fund was used for expenses including: Committee on Ecumenical Relations,  
8897 *Book of Praise* expenses, website committee costs, printing, and bank charges.

8898 3.3 The Carman West CanRC was delegated to review the financial records. On February  
8899 25, 2025, two elders from Carman West met with the bookkeeper and confirmed that  
8900 the books and statements were in good order.

8901 3.4. Carman East notes that Sr. Hilly Kooiker stepped down from her role as treasurer and  
8902 was replaced by Sr. Jolene Bouwman.

8903 3.5 The reports of both churches were received past the six-week deadline mandated by GS  
8904 2022 with no explanation given. The fiscal year for the General Fund currently ends  
8905 December 31 each calendar year.

8906 **4. Considerations**

8907 4.1 Carman East has faithfully executed the mandate it received from GS 2022 and has  
8908 maintained accurate and transparent records of the General Fund.

8909 4.2 The review conducted by Carman West affirms the integrity and correctness of the  
8910 financial statements submitted.

8911 4.3 Acknowledgment is appropriate for both the work of the treasurer and the church  
8912 overseeing the fund, and for those who reviewed it.

8913 4.4 In the interest of transparency and accountability to the churches, it would be good for  
8914 both reports to be distributed to the churches at least 6 months in advance of the next  
8915 general synod. To do that effectively, it would be good to adjust the fiscal year to  
8916 September 30. This would give sufficient opportunity for the two churches to formulate  
8917 their reports in time to meet this new reporting deadline.

8918 4.5 Because such financial reports may contain sensitive information, it is best that they are  
8919 not immediately published on the federation website. Rather, they should first be dealt  
8920 with by the next general synod which can then decide if and how to publicize such  
8921 reports.

8922 **5. Recommendations**

8923 That Synod decide:

- 8924 5.1 To receive with gratitude the financial report submitted by the Carman East CanRC  
8925 regarding the General Fund for the years 2022–2024.
- 8926 5.2 To express its appreciation to Sr. Hilly Kooiker for her years of service as treasurer, and  
8927 to Sr. Jolene Bouwman for taking over this responsibility.
- 8928 5.3 To thank the Carman West CanRC for reviewing the financial records and confirming  
8929 their accuracy.
- 8930 5.4 To discharge the Carman East CanRC from its responsibilities for the General Fund for  
8931 the years 2022–2024.
- 8932 5.5 To mandate the Carman East CanRC to undertake the process of adjusting its fiscal  
8933 reporting year to September 30 and to complete this no later than 2027.
- 8934 5.6 To mandate both churches to report to the next general synod on their activities no later  
8935 than six (6) months prior by sending their reports to the convening church with the  
8936 request for that church to send both reports to all the churches in the federation  
8937 forthwith (but, for greater clarity, not to publish them on the federation website).
- 8938 5.7 To require that before any synodical committee submits expenses to the General Fund,  
8939 someone from within that committee must first verify those expenses.
- 8940

8941 **ADOPTED**

8942 *See Appendix 23 for the General Fund Report.*

8943

8944 **Article 188 – Appointments**

8945 Synod went into closed session. Rev. S.C. Van Dam left the meeting while his appointment to  
8946 the Board of Governors was discussed.

8947 **1. Material**

- 8948 1.1 Submissions from: RSE 2024 (9.1.1), RSW 2024 (9.1.2), the Board of Governors of  
8949 CRTS (9.1), the CWeb (9.6.1), the CER (9.3.1), the SCBP (9.4.1).
- 8950 1.2 Two letters from Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) (9.8.1; 9.12.1).

8951 **2. Admissibility**

- 8952 2.1 All submissions were declared admissible as they pertain to the appointment of  
8953 individuals to synodical committees and the appointment of churches as synodical  
8954 committees.

8955 **3. Recommendations**

8956 That Synod make the following appointments:

- 8957 2.1 Board of Governors (BoG) of the Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary (CRTS):
- 8958 2.1.1 Academic Committee:
- 8959 2.1.1.1 From Eastern Canada: Dr. Jeff Temple (2031), Rev. Clarence VanderVelde  
8960 (2028); Rev. Ian Wildeboer (2034);  
8961 Alternates: Rev. T. Vandergaag; Rev. J. VanWoudenberg (in that order);
- 8962 2.1.1.2 From Western Canada: Rev. S. Carl Van Dam (2034); Rev. Doug  
8963 Vandeburgt (2034); Rev. Julius VanSpronsen (2031);

- 8964 Alternates: Rev. Calvin Vanderlinde, Rev. Rick Vanderhorst (in that order).
- 8965 2.1.2 Finance and Property Committee:
- 8966 2.1.2.1 Adrian Bartels (2031), Mike Bork (2034), Paul Broekema (2034), Alan
- 8967 Datema (2028), Herman Post (2031);
- 8968 2.1.2.2 Substitute: Brad Schutten; Jeff Jans (in that order).
- 8969 2.2 Committee for Pastoral Training Program Funding (CPTPF):
- 8970 2.2.1 The Guelph (Emmanuel) CanRC.
- 8971 2.3 Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER):
- 8972 2.3.1 Rev. Hendrik Alkema (2034), Stuart Boeve (2034), Rev. Gerrit Bruintjes (2034),
- 8973 Harry de Boer (2031), William Gortemaker (2034), Rev. Marc Jagt (2028), Dr.
- 8974 Karlo Janssen (2028) (Convener), Rev. Andrew Pol (2031), Henry Schouten
- 8975 (2028), Dr. Jeff Temple (2028), Rev. Steve Vandavelde (2028), Kasper VanVeen
- 8976 (2034).
- 8977 2.4 Standing Committee for the Publication of the Book of Praise (SCBP):
- 8978 2.4.1 Chris de Boer (2031), Rev. Ryan Kampen (2031), Brian Vanderhout (2028), Carl
- 8979 Oosterhoff (2028), James Teitsma (2034), Rev. Rodney Vermeulen (2034)
- 8980 (Convener).
- 8981 2.5 Committee on Bible Translations (CBT):
- 8982 2.5.1 Rev. Jeff Poort (2028), Rev. Tyler VanderGaag (2031).
- 8983 2.6 Committee for the Official Website (CWeb):
- 8984 2.6.1 Reuel Feenstra (2034), Al Gortemaker (2031), Rev. Jeff Poort (2031) (Convener),
- 8985 Rosalyn Poort (2031).
- 8986 2.7 Committee for Needy Students of Theology (CNST):
- 8987 2.7.1 The Grassie (Covenant) CanRC.
- 8988 2.8 Committee on Liturgical Forms:
- 8989 2.8.1 Dr. Reuben Bredenhof (convener), Dr. Ben Faber, Rev. Tyler Vandergaag;
- 8990 Alternates – Raoul Kingma, Dr. Karen Dieleman.
- 8991 2.9 Ad hoc Committee to Propose Guidelines for Appeals at General Synod:
- 8992 2.9.1 Rev. Jan DeGelder, Rev. Eric Kampen (convener), Harold Olij; Alternate – Rev.
- 8993 John VanWoudenberg.
- 8994 2.10 Ad hoc Committee on GS Committees Complying with Church Order and CRA:
- 8995 2.10.1 Dr. Karlo Janssen (convener), Kevin VanDelden, Oliver Hansma, Eric
- 8996 Vandergriendt.
- 8997 2.11 Address Church:
- 8998 2.11.1 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC.
- 8999 2.12 Archive Church:
- 9000 2.12.1 The Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC.
- 9001 2.13 Church to Inspect the Archives of General Synod:
- 9002 2.13.1 The Burlington (Fellowship) CanRC.
- 9003 2.14 General Fund:

- 9004 2.14.1 The Carman East CanRC.  
9005 2.15 Financial Review of the General Fund:  
9006 2.15.1 The Carman West CanRC.  
9007 2.16 Churches for Days of Prayer ad CO Art. 54:  
9008 2.16.1 The Burlington Waterdown (Rehoboth) CanRC (and, once merged with the  
9009 Burlington (Ebenezer) CanRC, the new combined church) and the Edmonton  
9010 (Providence) CanRC.  
9011 2.17 Financial Review of GS 2025:  
9012 2.17.1 The Langley CanRC.  
9013 2.18 Committee for Publication of the Acts:  
9014 2.18.1 The first and second clerks of GS 2025.  
9015 2.19 Convening Church for the Next General Synod:  
9016 2.19.1 The Glanbrook (Trinity) CanRC.

9017  
9018 **ADOPTED**

9019  
9020 Synod returned to open session.

9021  
9022 **Article 189 – Motions by the Clerks of GS 2025**

- 9023 1. That the following decisions of GS 2025 be declared confidential Acts: Articles 105, 106,  
9024 and 138.  
9025 **Ground:** Each of these deals with matters involving sensitive personal information that has  
9026 never been made public and which, in view of the 9th commandment, ought not to be made  
9027 public.  
9028 2. That the following decision of GS 2025 be declared a public act: Article 137 (Appeal re GS  
9029 2022 confidential acts).  
9030 **Ground:** Although this appeal references previous appeals about confidential matters,  
9031 Willoughby Height’s appeal deals strictly with procedural matters and does not contain  
9032 information that would expose matters of confidence.  
9033 3. In line with a decision of GS 2007, GS 2025 confirms “the practice that inadmissible  
9034 material will not be included in the archives of [general] synod” (*Acts of GS 2007*, art. 19).

9035  
9036 **ADOPTED**

9037  
9038 **Article 190 – Sensitive Agenda Materials**

9039 A notice was read from the convening church to remind all delegates to destroy sensitive  
9040 materials. Announcements were made regarding rides to airports.

9041

9042 **Article 191 – Concluding Matters**

9043 **1. Censure as per CO art. 34**

9044 1.1 The chairman stated, with deep thankfulness to the Lord, that censure as per CO art. 34  
9045 was not needed. He gave thanks for the fact that a good spirit of brotherly cooperation  
9046 was evidenced throughout Synod, even when opinions differed.

9047 **2. Financial Matters**

9048 2.1 Synod members were reminded to submit their expenses to the treasurers appointed by  
9049 the Convening Church.

9050 **3. Adoption of the Final Articles of the Acts**

9051 3.1 Members of Synod were requested to review the *Acts* received and to forward any  
9052 further corrections to the first clerk. The executive members of Synod will review and  
9053 adopt the final articles of the *Acts*.

9054 **4. Publication of Acts**

9055 4.1 It was noted that the first and second clerks had been appointed to prepare the *Acts of*  
9056 *GS 2025* for publication. Synod allowed an official version of the acts to be made  
9057 available on the website as soon as available. A copy of the *Confidential Acts* will be  
9058 sent to each church, including a suggestion from the Second Clerk regarding how a  
9059 consistory might deal with these *Acts*.

9060 **5. Approval of Press Release**

9061 5.1 The press release will be prepared by the vice-chairman and approved by the executive  
9062 members of Synod for publication. For the text of the Press Release, see Appendix 24.

9063

9064 **Article 192 – Closing**

- 9065 1. The Chairman spoke some words in closing, expressing appreciation for the oneness in faith  
9066 and for the deliberative nature of this synod. He reflected on some of the more significant  
9067 decisions take by this synod, such as those regarding the *Book of Praise* and the  
9068 establishment of Ecclesiastical Fellowship (EF) with the Reformed Churches [The  
9069 Netherlands] (GK) and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC).
- 9070 2. He informed the meeting that as gift for the convening church the executive had  
9071 commissioned a landscape painting by sr. Sheila VanDelft, a member of the Aldergrove  
9072 CanRC. The painting will be of a south Aldergrove landscape expressing the unity, order,  
9073 and spiritual direction of the churches as they were gathered here in Aldergrove. The  
9074 painting is to be completed by mid-summer.
- 9075 3. The Vice Chairman thanked the Chairman for his excellent service.
- 9076 4. The Chairman read 2 Thessalonians 3:16, led in prayer and had the meeting sing the  
9077 Doxology (Hymn 8).

9078

9079 *Thus General Synod 2025 was closed,*  
9080 *for the agenda had become acta.*

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – Opening Address by Rev. R. Schouten**

Text: Colossians 1:18 — “And he is the head of the body, the church.”

Brothers,

As we begin our work together this week, it’s good—essential, really—to pause and remember who the church belongs to. We all know the answer. But we need to hear it again: Christ is the head of the body, the church.

That means we’re not here to take control.

We’re not here to defend our turf or push our ideas.

We’re not even here to "represent" the church in some political sense.

We’re here because Christ still leads his church—and we want to follow him.

We’re not starting with motions or proposals. We’re starting with surrender.

We’re not gathered to assert ourselves, but to listen—together—for the voice of our Shepherd.

And Christ still leads his church—not by impressions or private insight, but by his clear and sufficient Word.

He speaks through the Scriptures, and by his Spirit he brings that Word to bear on our hearts, our minds, and our work.

He has not stepped back.

He hasn’t delegated the hard parts.

He hasn’t gone silent.

He’s present. And he reigns.

And that changes everything.

It means we don’t need to carry the weight of the church on our shoulders.

It’s not ours to fix or to preserve.

Our calling is simply to be faithful.

To pray.

To speak truthfully.

To listen carefully.

To submit ourselves—again and again—to what Christ has already said.

Synod isn’t about negotiating safe outcomes or building compromise coalitions.

It’s about seeking, humbly and honestly, the mind of Christ.

And when the church listens to his voice in Scripture and walks in his truth, that truth carries weight—not because we agreed on it, but because he made it known.

That’s what gives this week its weight, and its hope.

Yes, there are difficult matters ahead.

Yes, we’ll need wisdom, patience, even courage.

But we are not alone.

We are not in charge.

Christ is the Head.

He is still nourishing his body.

Still sanctifying her.

Still leading her with wisdom, power, and love.



- 9126 So as we begin this week, let's do so not with anxiety, and not with pride—  
9127 but with deep gratitude, and a readiness to be led.
- 9128 Christ is the head of the body, the church.  
9129 That's not just our confession.  
9130 That's our comfort, our compass, and our joy.
- 9131 So let's take up the work before us with reverence, with humility, and with confidence—because  
9132 our Head reigns.
- 9133  
9134

9135 **Appendix 2 – Reformed Churches [The Netherlands] (GK) - Address by Rev. Rik Douma**

9136

9137 Aldergrove, May 6th, 2025

9138

9139 Chairman, members of this Synod, and beloved brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ,

9140

9141 On behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches your Synod has just decided to adopt the  
9142 recommendation of your Committee on Ecumenical Relations concerning a sister-church-  
9143 relation with Gereformeerde Kerken settled in the Netherlands. On behalf of Reformed  
9144 Churches, and our Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad (BBK), I express gratitude,  
9145 and pass on greetings from our churches.

9146

9147 It is something to be much thankful for, that you as Synod decided to accept our call to establish  
9148 ecclesiastical fellowship with Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. And even adopted to  
9149 maintain a ‘category A’ relationship with our churches. That sounds to be a very green light.

9150

9151 In some sense this relation is new. For this ecclesiastical fellowship is with a bond of reformed  
9152 churches in the Netherlands that unified October last year. But in another sense this relationship  
9153 continues what has been before. And, as you could imagine, there is heartfelt gratitude among  
9154 those whom in the past have been on Canadian soil on behalf of reformed churches in the  
9155 Netherlands. Regarding that I willingly pass on warm greetings from Rev. Aalzen de Jager,  
9156 whose name is familiar among the older generation in your churches. There was a sound  
9157 ecclesiastical fellowship with the Reformed Churches Liberated in the past. Sadly, those  
9158 churches were hijacked by people with unbiblical stances on hermeneutics and ethics.

9159

9160 But our good and faithful Lord has preserved reformed churches in the Netherlands. And,  
9161 eventually, the historical bond between Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and Canadian  
9162 Reformed Churches has not been broken. But it has been restored and re-established between us  
9163 as an unbreakable fellowship of believers, reformed brothers and sisters in Christ.

9164

9165 It is not by merit, but by free grace of the Lord that we have received this ecclesiastical  
9166 fellowship with you. And because He has preserved us in the one catholic faith, we can relate our  
9167 churches to the same foundation in Jesus by trusting and living His Word. And for that, we  
9168 praise God from whom all blessings flow with thankfulness for this ecclesiastical fellowship.

9169

9170 Furthermore, what can we, as two confederations of churches, expect of this ecclesiastical  
9171 fellowship? More than having a chair at the table of each other’s Synod, more than enjoying  
9172 hospitality of brothers and sisters in their homes and at their tables, more than those is the  
9173 blessing of sharing the cup of thanksgiving, when we are in the occasion of enjoying table  
9174 fellowship at the table of the Lord in each other’s churches.

9175

9176 Beside that, in what ways can we love and help each other as neighbours, while there is a  
9177 geographical distance? Some have suggested that, for instance, nowadays it is far easier to  
9178 collaborate regarding education. Specifically with regard to educating brothers for the ministry.  
9179 To help training them by online courses or having offline experiences abroad. That might be  
9180 something in which you can help our relatively small confederation of churches. That is, indeed,  
9181 different in comparison to the past. Our ecclesiastical fellowship is equal in dignity, but not equal  
9182 in resources compared to the past.

9183

9184 We do not feel ashamed of being in the minority, because the riches in which we both have an  
9185 equal share is the gift of the Spirit of being faithful to Christ and His Word. And for the true love  
9186 and faithfulness that springs from Him, expressed by you towards reformed churches in the  
9187 Netherlands, we thank God.

9188

9189

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**9190 Appendix 3 – Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) (FCC) - Letter by Rev. Graeme Craig**

9191

9192 Greetings from the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

9193

9194 Greetings in the blessed name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

9195

9196 I write on behalf of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) to convey to you the fraternal  
9197 greetings of the FCC. Regrettably, we are not able to send a Delegate to attend your Synod  
9198 meeting in Aldergrove BC in May this year. There had been hopes that we might have someone  
9199 in Western Canada at the time who would be able to represent us, but this is now not the case.  
9200 Please be assured that our absence at this time is not due to any lack of interest in the CanRef.  
9201 Whist distance means that our contacts are limited, we appreciate the ability to encourage one  
9202 another in the Gospel, and your steadfast adherence to the historic confessions of the  
9203 Reformation. In a day of decline in the Dutch-speaking Churches, with the embracing of a false  
9204 hermeneutic, the acceptance of the error of women’s ordination and the toleration of homosexual  
9205 relationships within the professing body of Christ, we are thankful that you have remained firm  
9206 in your commitment to Biblical principles and practice. May the Lord keep us faithful in dark  
9207 and difficult days. Thus, although labouring in another part of the world, we are labourers  
9208 together with you in the bonds of the Gospel.

9209

9210 As you will be aware, Scotland is in a dreadful state spiritually. Secularism has overwhelmed us  
9211 and we are a nation in rebellion against God, led by leaders who do not know their right hand  
9212 from their left. This is exemplified in the promotion of ungodly and harmful sexual ideologies,  
9213 attempts to legislate for called “assisted dying” which appear to be having success, and threats to  
9214 free speech and the promotion of the Gospel through proposed “conversion-therapy bans”. How  
9215 we need the Lord to pray that there may yet be a turning of the tide and a return to the Gospel of  
9216 our blessed Lord.

9217

9218 As a Church we are struggling with a lack of manpower, though are thankful that we have men  
9219 from the UK, and also from France, Spain and the USA who are training for the Ministry. While  
9220 on the home front we struggle to maintain our witness, we have encouragements overseas. The  
9221 USA Presbytery, largely based in the south and south-east is growing in strength, with people  
9222 being drawn to a robust confessionalism, simple, biblical worship, and preaching which is  
9223 experimental as well as evangelistic. It would not be surprising if they were able to become a  
9224 sister denomination of their own in the near future. The work in Spain, France and Portugal  
9225 prospers with ministers in each country and 6 preaching places. There is also the mission work in  
9226 Sri Lanka. This grows from strength to strength and with an increasing number of preaching  
9227 stations and people wishing to gain theological training. Additionally, in God’s providence, a  
9228 Congregation in Nobleford, Alberta has come into being. A group of believers initiated this work  
9229 and subsequently approached the FCC for support, believing that it was here they fitted in the  
9230 best. This unsought for development may be a means of increased contacts between our  
9231 Churches given that it bring us geographically closer to one another.

9232

9233 While the encouragements overseas may not be reflected in Scotland, we seek to battle on,  
9234 remaining faithful to the position of the Scottish reformation and the heirs of the Disruption. We  
9235 have need of prayer that the Lord would supply our need and return the land of Knox and “the  
9236 book” back to himself.

9237

9238 May the Lord bless the work of the Canadian Reformed Churches and use you for his glory.

9239

9240 With warm Christian greetings,

9241 Yours sincerely,



9242

9243 Graeme Craig

9244

9245 Clerk to the Ecumenical Relations Committee

9246 & Principal Clerk of Assembly

9247

9248

9249 **Appendix 4 – Reformed Calvinist Churches in Indonesia (GGRCI) – Address by Rev.**  
9250 **Yonson Dethan**

9251  
9252 Esteemed brothers,

9253  
9254 First of all, let me glorify our triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for His love, protection,  
9255 and care that I might be here being with you in this synod.

9256  
9257 Secondly, on behalf of our federation the Calvinist Reformed Churches of Indonesia, I would  
9258 like to thank you for your invitation that I may come here on behalf of our federation. We would  
9259 like to give our Christian greetings to you all from our brothers and sisters of our federation to  
9260 you all. We hope and pray that your synod might go well, that the Lord may grant you wisdom,  
9261 that you can collect wisdom and decide with a biblical decision to build the church of our Lord  
9262 Jesus Christ.

9263  
9264 I would like to thank Mr. Chairman and also all of you that we all have fifteen minutes to give  
9265 the speech. Why I say this is because sitting in the chairs I got sleepy. We don't say anything, we  
9266 just listen to you, so now talking longer makes me wake up. Please forgive me if I talk a bit  
9267 longer here because of jetlag, it is hard for us to stay awake. I was in committee two, I got  
9268 sleepy, I thought "what should I do? I was hoping I could talk but I cannot talk." Once at the end  
9269 of talking I clapped my hands just to wake me up because of the jetlag I guess, as now in  
9270 Indonesia it is morning time, so it is hard for me to stay awake.

9271  
9272 Let me continue a bit about our federation. Maybe some of you already read the report from your  
9273 committee. Our federation being established in 1950, and we grow in reformed practice but we  
9274 live in the middle of Muslim country. As you know, Indonesia is the largest Muslim country with  
9275 close to 300 million people. So it is not easy for us to bring the gospel there, but we try our best  
9276 to bring the reformed teaching in our country. Recently, we are reaching out to people in Java,  
9277 maybe some of you know Java Island has 150 million people there. In my place that I'm  
9278 working, it's called East Java. Just in 1 state we have 50 million, so only that state is larger than  
9279 your country. So Indonesia is such a big mission field that is good to reach out.

9280  
9281 Being in your midst here, I would like to share with you our struggles and our war so that you  
9282 may know. As sister churches, we are supposed to help each other not only prayer. But I wonder  
9283 if we could hold hands together. We have become sister churches since 2019, I remember I was  
9284 there in Alberta, in Edmonton. But I wonder what should we work together, specifically in  
9285 mission area. We are so happy that you send your delegations, Dr. Andrew Pol came to our  
9286 synod recently and before, and then Rev. Versteeg also came over to attend at our synod, and we  
9287 are so happy for that. But I wonder if we should do more than just coming to synod, attending  
9288 synod, prayer for the other, but I think the kingdom of God should be more than that. So I would  
9289 like to address you to please also think together "how can we work together as sister churches?"

9290



9291 We are doing mission work in the island of Java, also in the island of Sempu, the island of  
9292 Timor. As you know Indonesia has about 17 thousand islands. So it is a lot of Islands that have  
9293 more than 700 languages. But even though we have so many islands and languages, we still like  
9294 to reach those people, specifically the Muslims and the pagans. I come from a family, my father  
9295 was the first generation to come to faith, and we are the second generation. But even though we  
9296 are still a young church, we still like to bring the gospel to reach the Indonesian. So I wonder if  
9297 that is possible that your federation and our federation should put time together to reach those  
9298 Indonesians. And maybe you can learn from us as well, I read from the news that there are a lot  
9299 of Muslims coming from Middle East countries to your country here. Maybe you can learn from  
9300 us, or maybe we can do the work together. I do not know, you will decide that but I would like  
9301 you to please put some time to work together for the kingdom of God.

9302

9303 I would also like to share with you my happiness because working in Indonesia is not easy. I just  
9304 recently had some problems with a Muslim family because of reaching out to some students that  
9305 come to our church. Because those students came to faith, and we were planning to baptize them,  
9306 but then the family didn't like, so they are looking for me. They are going to do something there.  
9307 So we can't do the baptism because of that tension. But that's just one example of the situation  
9308 that we are facing.

9309

9310 You know, sometimes we as reformed, we fight so much in our church order things, and church  
9311 politics, sometimes I think that it's sad if we fight too much on church politics but we miss the  
9312 most important thing which is: bringing the gospel to the unbelievers and Muslims. I mention  
9313 this because you might know in the report from your committee about our relationship with some  
9314 of your church here that established the mission church in West Timor. There are some tensions  
9315 that we are facing that for me, that is just wasting time. Because the most important is reaching  
9316 out to people. So now I think this is the golden opportunity for us to address to you to please  
9317 pray and please think together, "what is the focus of being sister churches?" I think the purpose  
9318 is that we hold hands together, if anything is wrong, let us sit down, talk together, find the  
9319 solution, forgive each other, and lets continue to work!

9320

9321 I do not need to tell you in detail because that is not proper, but I think that you know in the  
9322 report that we should think together and find the solution together so that we can show to the  
9323 world, specifically to the Muslim people, the good witness of bringing the gospel. Specifically as  
9324 reformed brothers and sisters, we show to the people we reformed people have lots of love, have  
9325 lots of forgiveness, we have lots of peace. I think that is the most important for being sister  
9326 churches.

9327

9328 The next thing I would like to also thank you for is to come to us to attend at our synod. We are  
9329 going to hold our synod this year as well in the month of October. If that is possible, please send  
9330 your delegations to come to our synod. But please if that is possible when your delegation  
9331 comes, lets try to talk to together brotherly, find the solution, and please maybe we can talk  
9332 together about how to win the Indonesians, hopefully if you can agree with that. Through this  
9333 time I would like you to please think about spending more time to reach more people together in

9334 our country, because we are just small federations. But we love to do the work, and love to work  
9335 together with you.

9336

9337 By saying that I would like to invite you to please come to our synod in October, the GGRI, our  
9338 sister church, is going to do synod in October as well, they are going to do it October 21-25, so  
9339 in order to save your time we are going to do it after that, so then if you send your delegation just  
9340 one time you can attend two synods together with our synod.

9341

9342 As a delegate, I am so happy to come not only to see you all here but like my brother Rev. Karl  
9343 Van Dam mentioned we were in theological seminary together. I counted almost 30 years, right  
9344 Karl? So 30 years alone feels like we already feel old, so I am so happy I can see all my  
9345 colleagues here, Rev. Karl Van Dam, Rev. Karlo Janssen, and so many of you here I can mention  
9346 your name, Mark over here, Henry.

9347

9348 But for me, its such a wonderful time to see you. When I graduated from the theological, we  
9349 called it at the time the theological college in Hamilton, I never thought I would be coming here  
9350 to see my friends, because coming from a poor country it is hard to fly. But God is so amazing.  
9351 Now I'm here! I get to see my friends and you all, and we can enjoy fellowship together. I do not  
9352 want to forget something Rev. Douma, 3 years ago in our synod we terminated your old  
9353 federation as well because of the women in the office and those kind of developments. But now  
9354 seeing you come here and seeing the Canadian Reformed Churches accepted you as sister  
9355 churches, is good news for us too, to tell our brothers and sisters about this good news.

9356

9357 So thank you so much for giving us this example, and I saw that Mr. Chairman looked at me so I  
9358 am going to finish my speech. Finally I'd like to thank you all for this, and may the Lord bless  
9359 you richly, and that the synod may go well, and that you may make it good, great, wonderful,  
9360 biblical decisions to build the church of God.

9361

9362 Let me finish this speech by giving you the word of God from Romans chapter 11:36: "From  
9363 Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen."  
9364 Thank you.

9365

9366

9367 **Appendix 5 – Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) - Address by Rev. Travis**  
9368 **Grassmid**

9369  
9370 Esteemed fathers and brothers of the Canadian Reformed Churches,

9371  
9372 It is with joy that I bring to your assembly the greetings from your brethren of the Reformed  
9373 Church in the United States. How precious it is to enjoy the sweet fellowship of believers,  
9374 members of one church, redeemed through the blood of our precious Savior Jesus Christ.

9375  
9376 As the Holy Spirit through His servant David so beautifully speaks in the 133<sup>rd</sup> Psalm:

9377  
9378 *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like*  
9379 *the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, The beard of Aaron, running*  
9380 *down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, descending upon the*  
9381 *mountains of Zion; For there the LORD commanded the blessing -- Life forevermore.*

9382  
9383 It was with admiration and a certain amount of awe that I perused the thousands of pages of  
9384 documents pertaining to this General Synod! It is evident that you are committed to conducting  
9385 the ministry of the church in an honest, respectful, honorable and workmanlike manner; as you  
9386 serve the Lord, and His people. You stand as a beautiful example of the faithful work of the  
9387 church. We are privileged to share a fraternal church relationship with you all. Thank you.

9388  
9389 As our names suggest, although we share one faith, we are largely divided by a border, although  
9390 with a couple of notable exceptions. Yet that border should not, and does not, extend to dividing  
9391 the Christian unity which our two bodies enjoy. For example, we have been blessed by the  
9392 regular contact which your brother Will Gortemaker has fostered with our Inter-Church  
9393 Relations Committee. Additionally, recently we have been able to communicate with members  
9394 of this body concerning the development of a denominational songbook; we were encouraged  
9395 and humbled at the thoughtfulness of reaching out to your fraternal denominations and seeking  
9396 advice. That stands as a good example of how we can be a blessing to one another.

9397  
9398 By way of regular communication between committees and the Christian fellowship which is  
9399 fostered by rubbing elbows with one another at Classis and Synod meetings, the natural result of  
9400 growing trust between our churches is becoming evident. I know that there have been a couple  
9401 occasions of inviting ministers from one another's pulpits to lead worship, and we should  
9402 probably encourage more of this in the future where feasible. In these simple ways, not only the  
9403 officers of the church, but also the members of our churches grow in our trust and love for one  
9404 another.

9405  
9406 2025 is a big year for the RCUS, as we are celebrating 300 years of God's faithfulness towards  
9407 us. In anticipation of this milestone, we have added family events to coincide with synod so that  
9408 we can unite in praising God for His faithfulness to His church. So as to better accommodate this

9409 celebration, we have moved the convening of synod to the second week of June, and  
9410 concurrently hosting celebratory events for the whole family in Rapid City, South Dakota.

9411  
9412 I recognize that you all are committed to meeting until business concludes, I understand that this  
9413 could take two to three weeks; but this year the RCUS has committed to an abbreviated synod  
9414 meeting. It is our stated desire to conduct the necessary work of synod in a three-day session. In  
9415 order to accomplish this goal, the Standing Committees of Synod, although not officially  
9416 constituted until synod begins, are still being encouraged to conduct as much of their preliminary  
9417 work in these weeks leading up to synod, so as to streamline the business of synod once we are  
9418 constituted.

9419  
9420 I commend this body for your careful attention to detail and for the orderly manner in which  
9421 business is conducted. You have a large docket of business, but it is the business to which God  
9422 has called you, and for the care and nurture of His church. As such, we will keep you in prayer,  
9423 and seek to be an encouragement to you as you faithfully conduct your business. Thank you so  
9424 very much for the wonderful hospitality which you have shown; from being picked up from the  
9425 airport, to the friendly hosts whom we enjoy for the week, to the fellowship, discussions and  
9426 provision here at the synod location. You are very gracious to your guests, and we pray that we  
9427 can likewise reflect our appreciation for you all as we enjoy the presence of your delegates to our  
9428 upcoming synod meetings.

9429  
9430 May God continue to bless this convening of General Synod Aldergrove 2025, as you labor  
9431 faithfully for our glorious Lord.

9432  
9433 In Christ,  
9434 Travis Grassmid,  
9435 For the Reformed Church in the United States.

9436  
9437

9438 **Appendix 6 – Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ) - Address by Rev. David Stares**

9439

9440 *Tēnā koutou kātoa, e mihi ana ki a koutou i tēnei hui, he hui tino hirahira.*

9441

9442 Greetings to you all. It is a privilege to be here and to address this very important assembly.

9443

9444 I bring warm to greetings from your sister churches and from your brothers and sisters in Christ  
9445 in the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. As the brother kindly mentioned, my name is David  
9446 Stares, and I serve as the pastor of the Reformed Church of Masterton, who send you their  
9447 greetings as well.

9448

9449 Although I've been in New Zealand for several years now, I was born and raised in St.  
9450 Catharines, and I spent most of my youth at Trinity United Reformed Church. I hope you won't  
9451 hold that against me!

9452

9453 As I stand here today, I do so as the third representative of the RCNZ to attend a synod of the  
9454 Canadian and American Reformed Churches since the formal beginning of our sister-church  
9455 relationship in 2007.

9456

9457 So, who are we?

9458

9459 For those who may not be familiar with our churches: the Reformed Churches of New Zealand  
9460 began in 1953 with just three congregations. We are founded on the Three Forms of Unity—the  
9461 Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort—and we later adopted the  
9462 Westminster Confession of Faith as well.

9463

9464 Today, we are 22 instituted churches, along with several church plants, totaling around 3,600  
9465 professing and baptized members.

9466

9467 The relationship between our churches had its start in 2002, when a little rural church in New  
9468 Zealand—my own congregation, the Reformed Church of Masterton—brought an overture to  
9469 Synod suggesting we pursue a sister-church relationship with the CanRC. That overture was  
9470 approved, and you graciously reciprocated in 2007, officially establishing the bond we now  
9471 enjoy.

9472

9473 Since then, we've worked together in various areas, most notably in Papua New Guinea. We are  
9474 thankful that the Lord continues to bless this mission. The work being done through the  
9475 Reformed Churches Bible College is bearing fruit, not only in the lives of the students, but also  
9476 in the growth of local congregations on the ground. This is good gospel work—and we are  
9477 privileged to be co-labourers with you in it.

9478

9479 We were also very grateful for the presence of Rev. de Gelder at our most recent synod, and for  
9480 the gracious and encouraging words he shared. Personally, we in Masterton were especially  
9481 thankful that he took the time to lead services in our congregation.

9482  
9483 Our pulpits are regularly blessed by visiting ministers from your churches. My congregation  
9484 remembers well Rev. Jack Moesker and Rev. John Ludwig, no doubt among others across your  
9485 churches.

9486  
9487 We have also been enriched by the ministry of two graduates of your seminary: Rev. Matthias  
9488 Schatt, who was ordained in Bishopdale (Christchurch) in November 2023, and Rev. Kevin Star,  
9489 ordained in North Shore (Auckland) in November 2024.

9490  
9491 But the benefits of our relationship extend far beyond the pulpit.

9492  
9493 For a variety of reasons, New Zealand has become a bit of a destination, and it’s not  
9494 uncommon to find former members of your churches among us—some visiting, others settling  
9495 permanently. In these cases, we see one of the most tangible blessings of a sister- church  
9496 relationship: that families and consistories can have confidence knowing that their loved ones are  
9497 being shepherded in a faithful church across the globe. That parents can rest assured their  
9498 children and grandchildren are leaving for a sister church is no small comfort. A comfort shared  
9499 when our members come to you and yours come to us.

9500  
9501 But there’s an even greater reason, isn’t there?

9502  
9503 When our Lord Jesus gave his commission, it was a command that knows no borders. It isn’t the  
9504 Canadian Commission, or the American Commission, or even the Kiwi Commission. It is the  
9505 Great Commission. And as we seek to fulfill it, we go out—not alone—but together.

9506  
9507 As Paul writes in Philippians 1:27, we are “striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.”  
9508 In Matthew 9:36–38, we read:

9509  
9510 “When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and  
9511 helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful,  
9512 but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers  
9513 into his harvest.’”

9514  
9515 These words were true in Jesus’ day, and they remain just as true in ours. We in the RCNZ pray  
9516 for you, and we ask that you would also pray for us—because we both want to see Christ  
9517 proclaimed in every corner of this world.

9518  
9519 And it is a delight to him and a blessing from him when brothers dwell in unity.



9520

9521 For all these reasons we are eager to maintain and deepen our relationship with the Canadian and  
9522 American Reformed Churches.

9523

9524 And so I leave you with this blessing from Hebrews 13:20–21:

9525

9526 “Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great  
9527 shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good  
9528 that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus  
9529 Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.”

9530

9531

9532 **Appendix 7 – Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) - Address by Rev. Robert E. Tarullo**

9533

9534 Aldergrove, British Columbia, May 7, 2025

9535

9536 Mr. Chairman, Fathers and Brothers,

9537

9538 It is a pleasure to bring you greetings from your brethren of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church,  
9539 grace to you and peace in the faithful, sovereign, and all powerful name of our resurrected,  
9540 exalted, and reigning Savior Christ Jesus the King.

9541

9542 The apostle John records for us Jesus' high priestly prayer wherein the unity that the church has  
9543 in Christ would be more and more expressed and made manifest in her earthly activities. David  
9544 sings of "how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity." But Paul suggests that this  
9545 unity that we have, that we know is good and pleasant, is also hard to maintain, when he says,  
9546 "be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." To that end, we are so very  
9547 thankful for the way the Lord has blessed us with over two decades of shared commitment to the  
9548 whole counsel of the Word of God. The Lord has blessed us in our co-laboring with you through  
9549 North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) and the International  
9550 Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), which includes a shared commitment, with the Free  
9551 Reformed Churches of Australia, of visiting the Korean Presbyterian Church Kosin every three  
9552 years. And we look forward to how the Lord might open other opportunities for us to serve side-  
9553 by-side in the work of gospel ministry.

9554

9555 Our next general assembly is scheduled for June 4-10, 2025, at Trinity Christian College in Palos  
9556 Heights, Illinois, just outside of Chicago. The agenda contains several administrative and judicial  
9557 appeals, as well as the report of a special study committee on Criminal history and Officer  
9558 Qualifications.

9559

9560 By way of updates from our last assembly, the General Assembly of the OPC met with a full  
9561 agenda in June of 2024 in Seattle, Washington. Some items of interest include:

- 9562 1. We received the Report of the Special Committee to Help Equip Officers to Protect the  
9563 Flock, erected by our assembly a few years ago, it deals with matters related to how the  
9564 church might better protect the church from sexual predators and domestic violence.
- 9565 2. We dealt with one judicial appeal and nine complaints on appeal.
- 9566 3. Our foreign missionary endeavors include sending missionaries to Asia, Ethiopia, Haiti,  
9567 Uganda, Ukraine, and Uruguay. There is now a greater emphasis on the Mobile  
9568 Theological Mentoring Corps where we seek to train up church leaders in the Reformed  
9569 faith in various parts of the world, including now regularly helping to train church leaders  
9570 in Austria/Switzerland, Colombia, Hungary, India, and South Sudan. We also have a new  
9571 key role called the Regional Foreign Missionary whose work is broad and focused on  
9572 making contacts in a particular region of the world. At this point, we have one Regional  
9573 Foreign Missionary in Africa making contacts throughout Africa to help determine how  
9574 we might serve the broader church. The OPC continues to seek additional missionaries.

- 9575 Our Committee on Foreign Missions described our current fields as “severely  
9576 understaffed.” Pray for the Lord to raise up men from within and outside of the OPC to  
9577 fill this urgent need.
- 9578 4. Our Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension provided financial support for  
9579 thirty-six “fields”: ten new mission works, twenty continuing mission works, four church  
9580 planting interns, and two special evangelistic projects.
- 9581 5. The Committee on Diaconal Ministries remains active leading the ministry of mercy  
9582 within the OPC and internationally, as well as providing training tools for local deacons.
- 9583 6. As well, through the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations, the OPC  
9584 invited the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Central and Eastern Europe into our closest  
9585 ecumenical relationship, Ecclesiastical Fellowship. We are currently in Ecclesiastical  
9586 Fellowship with twenty-one churches, including you, corresponding relations with twelve  
9587 churches, and Ecumenical Contact with fifteen churches.
- 9588 7. You may also be interested in learning about some of the resources through our  
9589 Committee on Ministerial Care available to the OPC (subjects like sabbaticals, pastoral  
9590 burnout, pastor/wife retreats, pastors’ wives conferences, and several white papers on a  
9591 variety of subjects pertinent to pastoral well-being), which are also useful to others as  
9592 well. You can find out more about them at OPC.org.
- 9593 8. Additionally, our Statistician reported that as of the end of 2023, the OPC now has 17  
9594 presbyteries, 305 congregations, and 36 mission works. We saw a modest 2.75% increase  
9595 in overall membership to a little more than 33,320 members. Slow and steady, by his  
9596 grace, the Lord continues to build his church, and we’re thankful to be a part of that  
9597 work.

9598

9599 Thank you for your faithful labors for Christ’s church. I have delighted in the fellowship through  
9600 conversations and devotionals with you. I am so appreciative of your deliberative care for each  
9601 subject under consideration. We are so thankful for your faithfulness evident here at this General  
9602 Synod. Let us pray together to the end that we “...be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in  
9603 the bond of peace.” It’s for Christ’s church to remember that “there is one body and one Spirit—  
9604 just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—one Lord, one faith, on  
9605 baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

9606

9607 May the Lord bless you and keep you in your continued deliberations throughout this synod, may  
9608 his face of favor shine upon you and bless you with the bond of peace in Christ, our one Lord.

9609

9610 Thank you and may God’s grace and peace remain on you.

9611

9612 Rev. Robert E. Tarullo  
9613 Member of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations,  
9614 Pastor Westminster OPC, Countryside, Illinois

9615  
9616

9617 **Appendix 8 – United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA) - Address by Rev.**  
9618 **Jason Vanderhorst**

9619  
9620 Thank you for having me here, it's a privilege to address you on behalf of the United Reformed  
9621 Churches. Certainly I do feel very at home here given some of that background that you just  
9622 heard, but you also have made me feel very welcome here along with all the other fraternal  
9623 delegates, so thank you for the warm welcome and the way you've allowed us to participate so  
9624 far this week. Impressed with your thoroughness, somewhat overwhelmed by amount of written  
9625 material put before you in comparison to what we see, different ways of doing things and I've  
9626 been impressed so far in the tone in which you've addressed one another and have been  
9627 encouraged by that this week.

9628  
9629 I will just say a few words here at the beginning here of the state of our relationship.

9630  
9631 By God's grace, there is a lot to be thankful for within the URCNA, although just like any other  
9632 church body, we have congregations that are struggling, we certainly have many that are  
9633 thriving, and we praise God for that. One happy example of a church in my mind is Ascension  
9634 Reformed Church in Cincinnati Ohio, who has planted more than one church since they were a  
9635 church plant themselves not all that long ago, and they hope to actually have an Ohio river valley  
9636 classis come out of classis eastern US. That is their prayer, and they are working towards that so  
9637 that will be a happy situation in our federation.

9638  
9639 Our recent synod was largely uneventful in the best sense of that word. Study committees  
9640 completed two reports and those were adopted for pastoral advice, and I think many of you know  
9641 that, but that was probably the most notable thing that came out of it. So we now have a report, a  
9642 pastoral advice, on digital media and worship, and also one on human sexuality.

9643  
9644 So with a lesser known body, I would probably give more background. I have done that in  
9645 different contexts, but we have much history that is shared together, we are known to one  
9646 another, and increasingly we are aware – even involved in – each other's mission endeavours, we  
9647 read each other's periodicals and combine for events, and we even intermarry!

9648  
9649 At NAPARC (I have the privilege of being at NAPARC), what we do there is kind of like a  
9650 family reunion. All the different denominations come, and we have these meetings. The heart of  
9651 the NAPARC meeting is the bilateral meetings where one denomination or federation meets with  
9652 another. When we as URC meet with people, it kind of feels like a bunch of cousins getting  
9653 together. But when the URCNA meets with the Canadian Reformed committee members, it feels  
9654 like brothers meeting together. There is a closeness that is not quite there on any other level.  
9655 Incidentally, I think that helps begin to answer the concern that Tintern brought up in a  
9656 communication to you, but I'll save that for a later time otherwise.

9657  
9658 But the question that is before us is "now what?" That's a question before us because of our  
9659 mandate as a committee, it says that "with a view toward complete unity" we do our work.

9660 Different members respond to this differently within our churches, but that mandate indicates  
9661 that we are not satisfied with where we are at, and so we have you in phase 2 relationship with  
9662 us, but phase suggests that there is further growth and development that may be possible. So we  
9663 do rejoice in all that we have together that is good, but still that question remains, “Now what?”  
9664

9665 This impulse is rooted in Scripture, in the prayer of Jesus in John 17. Jesus prays to the Father:  
9666 “that they may be one, even as we are one,” and also he says “that they may become perfectly  
9667 one.” So this has been debated as to whether this means a call to full organizational unity, but I  
9668 actually think that is of no consequence, because regardless of where we will end up, the  
9669 ecumenical imperative here is clear: we are to be as united as possible. So whether that’s  
9670 organizationally united in a formal way, or organically united through our relationships. That is  
9671 the case.  
9672

9673 Your year-end Clarion included a well-written, I thought, “state of the union” article, as it was  
9674 called, that emphasized unity without uniformity. We in the United Reformed Churches are  
9675 eager to see what this line of thinking means for the decisions that you will make here, and also  
9676 for the short and medium term future of your churches. I can testify from much experience in the  
9677 Fraser Valley that the Canadian Reformed churches here are not uniform in their approach to the  
9678 worship service and the various circumstances within it. And yet the elements are there. Your  
9679 confessional statements, our forms of unity, helpfully grounding, and guarding, and guiding  
9680 orthodox thinking and practice within the churches. So that is true for your churches, but what is  
9681 true for your churches and how you relate with one another is also true of our two federations.  
9682 For while we are not the same in every expression of doctrine and practice, the core tenants of  
9683 Christianity are the same, and not only that, of course, but also the particular reformed  
9684 understandings of those tenants. So yes we do have some different emphases, whether that is to  
9685 do with covenant, or preaching, or the sacraments, and these are important to be aware of and  
9686 discuss, but we hold together to the three forms of unity, and so we share that same ground,  
9687 guard, and guide as we seek to faithfully follow God’s Word.  
9688

9689 So having affirmed this, what is the way forward? Now what? That question still sits there. What  
9690 remains in the way of full organizational unity?  
9691

9692 So we have been finding out as an interchurch committee within the URC that at NAPARC  
9693 we’ve hit a wall with many federations and denominations. It is not that our work is unfruitful,  
9694 because it is fruitful, a good example of that is the stimulating conversations we’ve had with the  
9695 Heritage Reformed Church about the nature of experiential preaching. And we are building trust  
9696 and appreciation with them but we are who we are, they are who they are, and you are who you  
9697 are, and you can say the same about the RCUS, and the PCA, and the OPC, and the ERQ, and so  
9698 on.  
9699

9700 We have discussed revisiting the dream of NAPARC functioning as a super synod as it were,  
9701 with certain matters in common discussed in a more robust and consequential way. The reaction  
9702 to our feelers that we’ve put out to that have been lukewarm at best. We know that there is a lot  
9703 of work to do if there is to be any progress in that direction. But barring something like that,

9704 barring progress in an effort like this for more organizational unity, what other progress could be  
9705 made?

9706

9707 Well I think John 17 indicates two areas that we would do well to give our energies to as United  
9708 Reformed Churches and Canadian Reformed Churches together. And I think that if we were to  
9709 grow in these respects it would be real indicators of progress. So the first is grow in the truth.  
9710 This is Jesus' prayer to the Father in verse 17, he says, "Sanctify them in the truth." So what is  
9711 the truth? Well it is God's Word, that we use God's Word, we confess God's Word, we believe  
9712 that we preach God's Word and teach what is in accord with sound doctrine, the truth. Yet we  
9713 can always be sanctified further, can't we?

9714

9715 Sanctification is progressive, that's the nature of it, its an ongoing work that will only be  
9716 complete when we are in glory. So there are areas where the URC can grow in a greater  
9717 understanding and application of the truth. And there are areas where the CanRC can grow in  
9718 greater understanding and application of the truth. So may we grow in our ability to point these  
9719 things out to one another, I think that can be one of our areas of focus, so that were we are  
9720 particularly strong in the truth, we intentionally make an effort to encourage one another in this  
9721 and celebrate this with one another. Not so that we can pat ourselves on the back, it is not about  
9722 that and make ourselves feel good, but so that we can acknowledge one another to the praise and  
9723 honour of God.

9724

9725 So perhaps from your part this would look like increased, specific engagement with the URC  
9726 doctrinal affirmations and pastoral advice papers. We were encouraged by your recent meeting  
9727 of Regional Synod West which did just this as they interacted with our two most recent study  
9728 committee reports that I just mentioned, and that was an encouragement to us. But we have also  
9729 noted that, historically, your committee has been hesitant to speak on behalf of your churches, no  
9730 doubt there is some wisdom in this, but with that notwithstanding perhaps it would be worth  
9731 stretching yourselves in this respect for the sake of our inquiring minds.

9732

9733 So increased attention to the truth will serve the purpose of uniting further, that was the first  
9734 thing: Grow in the truth.

9735

9736 The second thing is from John 17, that we would grow in love. This is also Jesus' prayer, it's  
9737 throughout that chapter, the ground of the relationship within the Trinity, so the ground of God's  
9738 relationship with us is love. And so he says, Jesus does, in verse 26, may "the love with which  
9739 you have loved me... be in them."

9740

9741 Now we do have a great love, there is a great love among many members and churches within  
9742 our respective federations. I can just think of how at Synod Escondido your primary  
9743 representative expressed his love for us to the synod in no uncertain terms. And then I went up  
9744 there to respond with him, and we had a massive bear hug, two very tall men, hugging in front of  
9745 our synod, and that is symbolic of the love we share. The love is real between us.

9746



9747 Could that love be deepened? I think so. Over time, of course, that can happen. Continued  
9748 positive experience grows us in love, but intentionally we can do this. We can take great effort to  
9749 speak of each other's practices more positively. There is one example where we can improve on  
9750 this from both sides is in relation to music, which of course is a notable topic at this synod.

9751  
9752 I have not defended the Genevan tunes so much as when I left the Canadian Reformed churches.  
9753 I have defended them so often in the later part of my life here. I've heard many URC people  
9754 speak poorly of the Genevan tunes. Whether they are easy or hard, familiar or unfamiliar, our  
9755 preference or not – is it helpful when a URC person does that and puts them down? Is that the  
9756 most loving way to interact with our CanRC brothers and sisters? I think we have room to grow  
9757 on this.

9758  
9759 Canadian Reformed people have, by and large, responded very positively to the TPH, and of  
9760 course us in the URC and the OPC are gratified to hear that, yet there does continue to be an  
9761 element of looking down on the book for how many hymns it has, and also for it's lack of "Book  
9762 of Praise-ness" – you know what I mean – as if no songbook can match the high level attained by  
9763 the Book of Praise. So I would humbly ask you, is this helpful? Is this most loving?

9764  
9765 As I conclude, thank you for the time that you've given me. In your CER's report, it states this:  
9766 "URCNA Synod Escondido 2024 entertained a recommendation from CERCUC to set aside funds  
9767 in order to remove financial hinderances for the pulpit exchanges between distant URC and  
9768 CanRC. For various reasons the recommendation was not adopted." Our committee was quite  
9769 disappointed in this, we thought this was going to be a really helpful step to work towards  
9770 bridging that gap where we have not experienced each other because we are so far apart from  
9771 each other, but our synod did not decide to put funds toward that. Looking at that it shows us that  
9772 we have a lot of work to do. Nevertheless, we are thankful for our relationship with you. The  
9773 CanRC is dear to many of our ministers and our members, and we know and feel that this is  
9774 mutual on your part. So may God work in us by His Spirit to draw us closer together in truth and  
9775 in love, so that also the minority of people who are less warm to the relationship would grow in  
9776 understanding, appreciation, affinity, and unity. I say this with optimism, hopeful optimism, for  
9777 the Spirit is at work in our federations, and the Holy Spirit bears the fruit of love.

9778  
9779 As we are rooted in Christ, this is the case. Verse 26: "May the love with which you have loved  
9780 me... be in them, and I in them" is how Jesus prays. So beloved brother delegates, our prayer for  
9781 you and your churches is that you may be Christ-centered, not culture-centered, not outreach-  
9782 centered, not even merely Word-centered, but Christ-centered. And as your uncompromisingly  
9783 centered on him, you will be relevant in the culture we live in. As you are firmly fixed on him,  
9784 you will understand the Word and apply it well. And as you are deeply rooted in him, you will be  
9785 faithful and fruitful in all your missional endeavours. For in him, all the treasures of wisdom and  
9786 knowledge are found. So may God bless you richly, in Christ!

9787

9788

9789 **Appendix 9 – Reformed Church of Quebec (ERQ) – Address by Rev. Blaise Désiré**  
9790 **Tsabang Fomena**

9791  
9792 May 7, 2025

9793  
9794 Canadian and American Reformed Churches  
9795 General Synod Aldergrove 2025

9796  
9797 Dear beloved and esteemed brothers in Christ,

9798  
9799 My name is Blaise Tsabang. I know a few people in this room given my participation at two  
9800 NAPARC Assemblies in the past years. For the majority who do not know me, I am pastor in  
9801 Église Réformée de la Rive-Sud (ERRS), one of the of the five churches of the Église réformée  
9802 du Québec (ERQ). The ERQ Inter-church Relations Committee appointed me to represent our  
9803 churches and say a few words on their behalf.

9804  
9805 In the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, receive the warm fraternal greetings from your  
9806 French-speaking brothers and sisters, members It is a great privilege and honor to be in your  
9807 midst to attend this 2025 General Synod of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches here  
9808 in Aldergrove.

9809  
9810 We are thankful for this opportunity to enjoy Christian fellowship, hear reports of the Lord’s  
9811 work in your midst, and to pray with and for one another. We are happy to walk along with  
9812 sisters churches who do not temper with the Word of God. Brothers who are courageous to put  
9813 an end to a fraternal relationship when the other party does not display a high view of the  
9814 Scriptures and who at the same time are honest to reconsider the case when new information  
9815 comes in.

9816  
9817 As you know already, the Église réformée du Québec (ERQ) is the only French-speaking  
9818 confessional witness in the province of Quebec. The ERQ pastors and elders subscribe to the  
9819 Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession of Faith. They frequently use the Canon  
9820 of Dort and the Belgian confession in their sermon preparation as well. The ERQ is composed of  
9821 350 souls worshipping in five local congregations. While we are very small, the Scriptures remind  
9822 us that as we gather before the throne of God and of the Lamb, we are a part of that “great  
9823 multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and  
9824 languages.” (Revelation 7:9) What a glorious comfort which fills our hearts with joy!

9825  
9826 We thank our gracious God for this opportunity to address your synod and to update you on  
9827 latest developments so that you might actively intercede for the Lord’s work in our midst. As we  
9828 receive news about your churches, we will inform our synod and encourage our churches to pray  
9829 for the Spirit’s blessing upon your kingdom service.

9830

9831 The Lord of the Church is raising up new workers for the harvest. I, your servant, Blaise  
9832 Tsabang, was called and ordained to serve the Église réformée de la Rive-Sud (Charny) in 2021  
9833 after 3 years training at Farel Institute in Montreal. In the recent period, we have been blessed by  
9834 a significant growth since our membership went from 64 members including infants to 112. A  
9835 growth that comes along with some challenges as well (just to name a few, calling new men to  
9836 the office of Elder and Deacon, finding a bigger sanctuary to sit all the members and visitors  
9837 each Sunday). Fortunately, Farel Institute is selling the building where we worship, and we are in  
9838 the process of acquiring it and making some renovation to meet our current needs.

9839

9840 A year ago, we celebrated the ordination of our brother Christian Cruchet. Rev. Cruchet was  
9841 trained at the Faculté Jean Calvin in France. After completing a two-year internship at the St.  
9842 Georges church, the congregation called him as their next pastor. Pastors Mario Veilleux and  
9843 Paulin Bédard, who are members of the same church, continue to serve the ERQ churches as  
9844 they enter their retirement years.

9845

9846 Our greatest need is for more men to be called to the ministry. Besides pastors Veilleux and  
9847 Bédard, our brothers Patrice Michaud and John Zoellner are also semi-retired, even as they  
9848 regularly preach and serve their local congregations.

9849

9850 We have also experienced the departures of younger pastors. Rev. Karis Mpindi, who served the  
9851 Église réformée St-Jean (Montreal) for nearly a decade, returned to Grand Rapids, Michigan  
9852 where he is pursuing a doctoral degree at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary. Lord willing,  
9853 brother Mpindi will take up his father's work, teaching at a seminary in the Democratic Republic  
9854 of Congo. In another situation, Rev. Ben Westerveld stepped down from the pastoral ministry of  
9855 the Église réformée St-Marc (Quebec City) to serve as director and professor of Farel, the  
9856 institute of Reformed theology serving Quebec province.

9857

9858 On a sadder note, after serving the St-Paul congregation (Repentigny) for 5 years, Rev. Olivier  
9859 Imbernon left the ERQ to plant a church associated with Communion of Reformed Evangelical  
9860 Churches (CREC).

9861

9862 These are difficult times in ERQ. In addition to these departures, the ERQ has experienced and  
9863 continues to experience several tensions, particularly in interpersonal relations: between elders  
9864 and pastors; between consistories and congregations; between church members. Some difficult  
9865 decisions have had to be made, involving long discussions. We covet your prayers for  
9866 compassionate understanding, mutual forgiveness, and brotherly reconciliation. Pray that our  
9867 heavenly Father would “deliver us from evil” – from the evil one and his attacks against his  
9868 people.

9869

9870 At present, three of the five ERQ congregations are vacant. Of the five students associated with  
9871 Farel, none are actively pursuing the pastoral ministry. There is a crying need for pastors. Our  
9872 Lord and Saviour reminded us that the harvest is great, but the labourers are few. Admittedly, in  
9873 Quebec, the harvest is no “bumper crop.” Very few individuals demonstrate interest for the

9874 Gospel, and all too many covenant children wander from the faith. The harvesting requires  
9875 intense pastoral labour. We need many faithful, zealous, loving labourers. Please join us,  
9876 brothers, in obeying the Lord's exhortation: "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out  
9877 laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2).

9878

9879 On a more positive note, we do praise our Lord for the work of his grace in the lives of his  
9880 people. During the restrictions related to the COVID epidemic and afterwards, we have received  
9881 new converts into our churches. Covenant children have made profession of faith, are getting  
9882 married, and bearing a new generation of covenant children. We are particularly thankful for the  
9883 addition of many immigrant believers to our churches. Our congregations are colourful,  
9884 including brothers and sisters from Cameroun, Congo, Colombia, Brazil, Madagascar, Quebec,  
9885 the United States, France, Germany, Switzerland, etc. We are thankful for this foretaste of the  
9886 multitude without number before the throne of God and the Lamb, coming from every nation,  
9887 tribe, language and people.

9888

9889 We also give thanks to our Lord for the growing interest in Reformed theology beyond the walls  
9890 of our churches. In November 2024, we celebrated the launch of the Reformation Study Bible in  
9891 the French language, a translation project underwritten by Ligonier Ministries. The Montreal  
9892 event attracted more than 400 believers from a wide variety of churches. The Reformation Study  
9893 Bible sold out in three months! Furthermore, the Reformed courses taught by Farel regularly  
9894 receive students from Baptists and Pentecostal assemblies.

9895

9896 With respect to the spread of Reformed teaching, we should most certainly mention Ressources  
9897 chrétiennes. This online French language library of Reformed literature is associated with your  
9898 Reformation Study Center in South Africa. Rev. Paulin Bédard continues to direct and oversee  
9899 this ministry which includes nearly 8,000 articles which believers throughout the French-  
9900 speaking work can easily research, consult and download in PDF format. Please extend our  
9901 sincere thanks for the prayers and financial support of your churches.

9902

9903 Your synods have repeatedly encouraged "the churches to support the ERQ prayerfully and  
9904 financially in their missionary endeavours and special projects." However, we would bring to  
9905 your attention that offerings taken to support the ERQ synod and our local congregations has  
9906 significantly declined in the past ten years. The Reformed mission in Quebec is an expensive  
9907 endeavor. Congregations can barely pay their own pastors, let alone their building rentals. We  
9908 would encourage your deacons to prayerfully consider adding the ERQ to their regular offerings  
9909 schedule.

9910

9911 We pray for the Lord's blessing upon your synod, its deliberations and its decisions. We also  
9912 pray for a blessing upon your fellowship as brothers of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

9913

9914 With brotherly affection,

9915 Rev. Blaise Désiré Tsabang Fomena

9916

9917 **Appendix 10 – Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church (ARPC) - Address by Rev. Aaron**  
9918 **De Boer**

9919

9920 Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the privilege of addressing General Synod Aldergrove and for the  
9921 warm fellowship among you this week.

9922

9923 Fathers and brothers, on behalf of my fellow ministers and elders in the Associate Reformed  
9924 Presbyterian Synod, I bring you greetings in the name of THE Minister of the Great  
9925 Congregation, He who is “not ashamed to call [us]...brothers,” we greet you the name of Jesus  
9926 Christ, the LORD, our Savior and King!

9927

9928 My name is Aaron De Boer, minister of the gospel at the lone ARP congregation in Washington  
9929 state, Bethany ARP, just about thirty miles Southeast of here in the Mount Baker foothills. I  
9930 represent a unique area of ARP proximity to the Canadian Reformed Churches, a short drive  
9931 from Lynden, Nooksack Valley, and the congregations of Lower Mainland, BC, as well as an  
9932 effort to reach into parts of the Pacific Northwest which still do not have the Reformed witness,  
9933 and God willing, plant a presbytery in days to come.

9934

9935 We want to thank you for your earnest investment in getting to know and establish a bond of  
9936 trust with the ARP. We thank you for sending your emissaries the Rev. Dr. Jeff Temple and Rev.  
9937 Gerrit Bruintjes to our beloved Bonclarken Retreat Center in the North Carolina mountains now  
9938 several times. I have to say that Jeff has been your faithful mouthpiece, we have truly come to  
9939 love Jeff for his expressions of Christian affection, genuine spiritual unity shared among serious  
9940 Reformed believers, and we have come to love his unique sense of humor, that he does not hold  
9941 back in his formal addresses! It is possible, that the brothers of the ARP have come to believe  
9942 that all CanRCs are...just like Jeff Temple!... And so, they love all of you, very much!

9943

9944 We praise God who by His Word and Spirit has preserved you and preserved the witness of your  
9945 distinctly Reformed faith and practice in an increasingly hostile land. Be encouraged as pilgrims,  
9946 for “the steadfast love of the LORD endures forever!”

9947

9948 Our synod has experienced of late the mixture of the Christian life, of both great joy and also  
9949 burdens. We thank you for remembering us in your prayers.

9950

9951 At our last synod we considered a study report initiated by our own Canadian Presbytery as they  
9952 had observed a steady presence of secret societies like the Freemasons intruding into the  
9953 household and family of God. After considering the report, much of which included wisdom  
9954 mined for other NAPARC churches, the 220 th General Synod succinctly declared, that  
9955 Freemasonry is incompatible with Christianity.

9956

9957 We had to take up a weighty judicial matter stemming from a complex trail of sin that had  
9958 hidden in our Second Presbytery. A minister who was accused of grievous abuses, but had  
9959 disrupted the judicial process by excommunicating himself. Further investigation revealed that  
9959 judicial missteps and some patterns of unholy allegiances and even retribution had hindered



9960 those sins from coming into the light. Synod, which is an appellate court had no appeal to hear,  
9961 no plaintiff to restore. Because of the failure of process, after significant deliberation, we  
9962 exercised our constitutional authority to create, dissolve and rearrange presbyterial boundaries.  
9963 We dissolved our Second Presbytery and redistributed her ministers and congregations into  
9964 neighboring presbyteries, a process which went smoothly, and just a small number of ministers,  
9965 and sadly two congregations chose not accede to the Synod and removed themselves from our  
9966 fellowship.

9967

9968 More recently we have confronted the sin of Kinism, which was being labeled, “racial realism”  
9969 by two ministers now removed from our Grace Presbytery. This serious error was being  
9970 promoted as though connected to the gospel of our Lord, but in fact is no gospel at all and had  
9971 sewn serious division in one of our congregations.

9972

9973 While it saddens me to have to publicly share these burdens, we do so that you might bear them  
9974 with us, and nonetheless we thank God even for His chastening. These events have caused good  
9975 men to endure having mud thrown at them, particularly as it happens too often these days, from  
9976 dark anonymous corners of the internet, we believe what as our Westminster Standards teach,  
9977 that these difficult efforts have been effective for making Christ’s Church “more pure.” The  
9978 Word and Spirit of our God having entrusted to us the “keys of the kingdom,” has allowed us to  
9979 demonstrate to the world what your own confession elegantly calls, the “third mark of the true  
9980 church.”

9981

9982 Our joys come from slow but steady success in planting ordinary means of grace, Psalm-centric,  
9983 Sabbatarian churches both in North America and through our various foreign missions. We  
9984 continue to cling to our most principal distinctive, which came from our origin in the Marrow  
9985 Controversy in Scotland in the early 1700s, the Free Offer of the gospel. It is worth noting to  
9986 Continental brothers that even that phrase from The Marrow of Modern Divinity, that most warm  
9987 piece of theological writing which revitalized the preaching of the ministers of the Associate  
9988 presbytery 300 years ago was itself borrowed language. That notion, of “The Free Offer of the  
9989 Gospel” is owed to the Canons of Dort which say, “the command to repent and believe, ought to  
9990 be declared and published...promiscuously.”

9991

9992 Lord willing, this year we will spawn what will be our third daughter synod, as our Canadian  
9993 Presbytery, with whom many of you are well acquainted, will become their own national synod  
9994 and endeavor to redirect previously shared resources and energy into further church planting and  
9995 indigenous ministerial training on this side of the line, less encumbered by the practical and  
9996 fiduciary challenges of being a bi-national denomination.

9997

9998 We will miss these dear brothers very much but are exploring ways to commit to greater  
9999 international unity with the ARP Synods of Mexico, Pakistan (115,000 members amidst a  
10000 predominate Hindu and Islamic culture), the United States, and Canada. Thank you for pledging  
10001 swift contact with the future ARP of Canada when, if the Lord wills, they organize this coming  
10002 Fall.



10003

10004 Brothers we are encouraged in many ways, and especially by the prospect of growing closer to  
10005 you.

10006

10007 To that end I'd like to take the opportunity to address what seem to be the two main questions  
10008 that you and your people have about us in the ARP. The first that I have been asked is about our  
10009 worship. The ARP was once a communion utilizing exclusive Psalmody, but since the mid-  
10010 twentieth century has been a Psalm-centric denomination. Let me quote a few lines from our  
10011 Directory of Public Worship: "all music used in the worship service shall be under the authority  
10012 of the minister and session." "Music offered merely for human entertainment or pleasure has no  
10013 place in a worship service." "The Psalms of the Holy Scripture ought to be used regularly in the  
10014 public worship of God." "Other hymns may also be used, provided that their content is in  
10015 agreement with the Word of God, particularly the Psalms, and the doctrinal standards of the  
10016 Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church." Perhaps some of that language will offer some utility  
10017 to you. Across the ARP will find a continuum of practice in our churches, my own congregation  
10018 sings the Psalms and a handful of New Testament canticles, all a cappella, while in most of our  
10019 churches you will encounter worship very similar in style and content to our brothers in the  
10020 URCNA and OPC.

10021

10022 The second matter which you men have been openly asking about is a provision in our Form of  
10023 Government which reads as follows, "Unless otherwise determined by the Session, the Diaconate  
10024 shall be chosen from male members of that congregation. The Session of each congregation shall  
10025 determine whether women can serve as deacons in their own particular congregation. In either  
10026 case, the Church shall not neglect the raising up of qualified men to serve in this position." Our  
10027 definition of a deacon is defined as "one of sympathy and service."

10028

10029 Please understand that since the founding of the ARP in America, in 1782 there has never been  
10030 an opening of the teaching and ruling offices to women. The provision which came to be in 1969  
10031 was one for local sessions to determine a use for unique situations where the elders set a person  
10032 apart for mercy or helps, conferring no spiritual authority. Some have cited evidence of women  
10033 deacons in the New Testament church. Some have cited John Calvin in this matter in the way in  
10034 which he seems to describe certain elements of woman-to-woman widow care, and even a  
10035 service less known in our society, but that of a wet-nurse, as a type of diaconal office.

10036

10037 I think a comment on presbyterian polity may also be helpful here. Where in Continental,  
10038 Consistorial polity, the diaconate is called upon from time to time to sit with the consistory as the  
10039 council and function as a deliberative, decision-making assembly. Not so in our system, the  
10040 diaconate strictly serves at the pleasure of the session of elders, but does not deliberate, and is  
10041 not an authoritative court of the church.

10042

10043 Your CER report rightly states that the provision is infrequently used in our churches, less than  
10044 ten percent. There is no requirement to do so, it is not a litmus test, it has never been "required,"  
10045 It is not an ARP distinctive, it is not an article of our faith, it is not sine-qua-non for us, in fact it

10046 is a holdover from a complicated time in 20th century American Presbyterian history which is  
10047 dying out among us, particular among the younger generation. In fact, I am free to express my  
10048 conscience on the matter that though I disagree with the provision, and am allowed to teach  
10049 against it, and will declare to you that though I believe this provision to be a minor error, I will  
10050 continue to labor with my bothers as we work it out. We would ask you to patiently bear with us  
10051 as well, as we work it out, much in the way that you have agreed with the brothers in the ERQ.

10052

10053 What are definitive markers of being an ARP, are the promiscuous broadcasting of the seed of  
10054 the gospel, our Marrow theology, the free offer of the gospel, the inerrancy of holy scripture,  
10055 regulated Reformed worship, the promotion of the Reformed confession, and a warm, Reformed  
10056 catholicity toward the true church, the household and family of God.

10057

10058 May the LORD continually guard and bless your labors, I am thankful for the privilege of seeing  
10059 God's benediction upon you in this assembly.

10060

10061

10062 **Appendix 11 – Free Church of Scotland (FCS) - Letter by Rev. Malcolm Macleod**

10063

10064 To the esteemed Moderator, Fathers and Brothers gathered in General Synod

10065

10066 Free Church of Scotland – Greetings

10067

10068 On behalf of the Free Church of Scotland, we send greetings to you in the name of the Lord  
10069 Jesus Christ as you gather in General Synod on Tuesday 6 th May 2025. We gratefully  
10070 acknowledge our relationship together as churches united in our faith and in the body of Christ.

10071

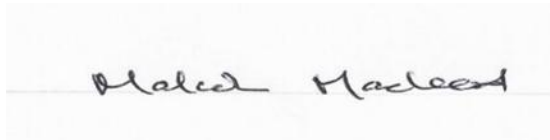
10072 As your Synod is convened in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great Head of the Church, it  
10073 will be our continued prayer that the Lord will bless you and guide you in your deliberations as  
10074 you seek faithfully to serve Him in the government of His church. We also pray that the Lord  
10075 will bless your Ministers and congregations with vision and grace as they seek to serve your  
10076 people in the gospel.

10077

10078 Thank you.

10079

10080 Yours in the Lord on behalf of the Free Church of Scotland Interchurch Relations Committee



10081

10082 Malcolm Macleod

10083 Principal Clerk

10084

10085

10086 **Appendix 12 – Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America – Address by Johnathan**  
10087 **Kruis**

10088

10089 Brothers, on behalf of the RPCNA, I bring greetings in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the  
10090 only King and Head of the church.

10091

10092 We praise God for your testimony of boldly proclaiming the gospel and upholding the riches of  
10093 the Reformed faith in a context that is increasingly antagonistic to the truth.

10094

10095 Some updates on the RPCNA:

- 10096 • 2025 marks the 50th Anniversary of NAPARC. The RPCNA has the privilege of hosting  
10097 the 2025 meeting and have laid plans to commemorate the event with a special address  
10098 by Dr. Chad Van Dixhorn. This will take place at Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA on  
10099 November 12, 2025 and will be open to the public.
- 10100 • We have had modest growth in the membership of the denomination. Over the last 20  
10101 years we've had a deliberate emphasis on outreach and church planting, please pray for  
10102 us in these endeavors.
- 10103 • With many new, young congregations we also have, on average, smaller congregations,  
10104 each needing elders and pastor. There is certainly a need in every age for pastors and  
10105 elders to serve the flock of Christ. Pray for men for the ministry!
- 10106 • You would perhaps be most interested in the forming of a new Canadian reformed  
10107 denomination, as we sent out our Canadian churches to form the Reformed Presbyterian  
10108 Church of Canada in March 2023. I am encouraged to read of your desire to make contact  
10109 with that denomination and pursue relationship.
- 10110 • One of the more significant things coming before our Synod this year is a study  
10111 committee report considering our current practice of ordaining women to the office of  
10112 deacons, a non-authoritative office of mercy ministry under the supervision of the elders.  
10113 Please pray for us as we deliberate on that matter.

10114

10115 I am personally very thankful for the Canadian Reformed churches and not only because I  
10116 married one of her daughters.

10117

10118 Through dating and marrying a member of this very congregation I was exposed to a rich  
10119 heritage of confessional piety and the Lord used the Canadian Reformed church to stir in me a  
10120 greater love for God's Word, for the Church and for Worship.

10121

10122 I wouldn't normally bring up a distinctive on which we differ when giving greetings, but you  
10123 seem to be asking the question this Synod, and so if I could be so bold as to encourage you with  
10124 all love and respect, to not forget that God himself has provided the book of praise for his church  
10125 in the middle of your Bibles.

10126

10127 Praise God that we can rejoice together that ultimately what makes our worship pleasing before  
10128 our Holy God is that we are covered in the precious blood of Christ through faith.

10129

10130 As you make your deliberations we encourage you not to capitulate to the spirit of the age that is  
10131 antiauthoritarian, bows to expressive individualism and devalues the past. Look to your roots, the  
10132 sound forms of words that summarize the faith, our rich heritage. But also don't blindly follow  
10133 tradition. Our prayer for you is, what we ask that you would pray for us, that as bodies our  
10134 decisions would be made with principled conviction formed by the truth of God's Word, and not  
10135 out of fear, not for pragmatism, not for innovation, not out for tradition, not to appease the  
10136 majority, not to appease the next generation, and certainly not to appease the world, but guided  
10137 by the Spirit of Wisdom through the Word.

10138

10139 May the Lord guide you in all wisdom, and let us rejoice in your own unity in the gospel as a  
10140 federation.

10141

10142 We would ask that we continue to seek fraternity, grounded in the unity that we do share in  
10143 Christ. May we always be pursuing greater expression of that unity, while seeking to maintain  
10144 conviction and purity of doctrine.

10145

10146 In closing I'd like to read a portion of our covenant of 1871 related to pursuing unity. This was a  
10147 commitment made by our denomination when trying to solidify our identity as a North American  
10148 denomination. <sup>[11]</sup><sub>[SEP]</sub>“That, believing the Church to be one, and that all the saints have communion  
10149 with God and with one another in the same Covenant; believing, moreover, that schism and  
10150 sectarianism are sinful in themselves; and inimical to true religion, and trusting that divisions  
10151 shall cease, and the people of God become one Catholic church over all the earth, we will pray  
10152 and labor for the visible oneness of the Church of God in our own land and throughout the world,  
10153 on the basis of truth and of Scriptural order.

10154

10155 Considering it a principal duty of our profession to cultivate a holy brotherhood, we will strive to  
10156 maintain Christian friendship with pious men of every name, and to feel and act as one with all  
10157 in every land who pursue this grand end. And, as a means of securing this great result, we will by  
10158 dissemination and application of the principles of truth herein professed, and by cultivating and  
10159 exercising Christian charity, labor to remove stumbling-blocks, and to gather into one the  
10160 scattered and divided friends of truth and righteousness.

10161

10162 Brothers, know that you are not alone in your deliberations, and in ministry. You are friends of  
10163 truth and righteousness. Thank you and praise God for your bold testimony of proclaiming God's  
10164 word and delighting in his commandments. By God's grace, may you continue to do so.

10165

10166

10167 **Appendix 13 – Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA) – Address by Rev.**  
10168 **Jack Schoeman**

10169

10170 Esteemed brethren

10171

10172 It is a great honour and privilege for me to address your synod meeting.

10173

10174 I was asked to do so by our denominational Interchurch Relations Committee. I am not currently  
10175 a member of this committee, but I serve the Emmanuel Free Reformed Church in Abbotsford  
10176 (about 15 minutes away) and therefore in good Dutch fashion it seemed financially prudent to  
10177 delegate someone local rather than spend hundreds of dollars on travel expenses by bringing in  
10178 someone from out of province.

10179

10180 I should also mention that I am here with my friend and colleague Rev. John Koopman who is  
10181 the pastor of the Free Ref Church in Chilliwack (which is about 40 minutes east of here) and who  
10182 (by the way) is an alumnus of your Theological College.

10183

10184 Part of me feels very much at home with you. I have a longstanding connection to your churches.

10185

10186 When I was young (which is a few years ago now), my parents sent me and my older sister to  
10187 John Calvin School on Dynes Rd in Burlington (which I believe has since been torn down) and  
10188 then I attended Guido de Bres High School in Hamilton.

10189

10190 Those were some of the best years of my life. I benefitted greatly from the education I received  
10191 there (especially from Dr Oosterhoff who imparted to me a great love of history) and Dr Bill  
10192 Helder who imparted to me a love of English literature and (strangely enough) Latin. I even had  
10193 a Canadian Ref girlfriend for a while!

10194

10195 As your report on Ecumenical Relations indicates, the relationship between our two federations  
10196 has had its ups and downs over the years. Our golden age was in the early to mid 90s (even  
10197 before we had formal ecclesiastical contact at the federative level).

10198

10199 At that time a document was produced entitled “A Call for Ecclesiastical Unity Between the  
10200 Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches of North America.” If memory  
10201 serves, the document was written largely by Dr. James Visscher (then pastor of the Langley Can  
10202 Ref Church) and Dr. LW Bilkes, then the pastor of the Emmanuel Free Reformed Church in  
10203 Aldergrove (now Abbotsford) which I currently serve, but there were spaces for signatures from  
10204 representatives of the Cdn Ref and Free Ref Churches of Langley, Aldergrove and Chilliwack.

10205

10206 The document called on our respective synods to effect a merger of the Cdn Ref and Free Ref  
10207 churches into a new federation called – get this - “The United Reformed Churches of North



10208 America"! (This was before the URC was born).It laid out the grounds for such a merger and  
10209 contained statements about the covenant, preaching, Bible translation, the Book of Praise, the  
10210 Church Order, the Liturgical Forms, the training of ministers, and Interchurch Relations.

10211  
10212 To my knowledge, the document was never signed by the local consistories or presented to either  
10213 of our two synods. But it was an ambitious plan.

10214  
10215 Remarkably, around the same time the consistory of the Langley Can Ref Church even made a  
10216 decision to the minister of the Emmanuel FRC in Abbotsford to preach on their pulpit. BTW: I  
10217 have been pastoring in Abbotsford for over 10 years but still have not received an invitation!  
10218 Although in fairness, we have never extended such an invitation to any of you either.

10219  
10220 Contacts were discontinued in the early 2000s but they were resumed in 2017 and they have been  
10221 going well ever since. I think there are two reasons for this:

- 10222  
10223 1. You have changed (for the better)
- 10224 a. There is a welcome softening of your position on the pluriformity of the church (or at  
10225 least some of its practical consequences). When I was younger I heard a lot (also at  
10226 school) about how the Cdn Ref church was the only true church and that we in the  
10227 FRC were wrong for not joining with the Cdn Ref. And if a member of one of your  
10228 churches left to join a Free Ref church it was publicly announced that that person has  
10229 left the church of Jesus Christ. Thankfully I don't hear that kind of talk much  
10230 anymore. Today we can sit down together as brothers. That makes it much easier for  
10231 us to dialogue.
  - 10232 b. There is also a welcome shift (at least among some) in your view of preaching. There  
10233 are voices in your federation (welcome voices I might add) that are cautioning against  
10234 a strictly redemptive historical approach to preaching in favour of a more experiential  
10235 approach. I refer to a series of articles entitled "Redemptive Historical Preaching  
10236 Today" published in the Clarion back in 2018 by Dr Arjan de Visser which I read  
10237 with great interest and thankfulness.
  - 10238 c. I have even heard a few sermons from some of your ministers warning  
10239 hypercovenantalism, emphasizing that the promises of the covenant are not  
10240 automatically fulfilled in the hearts and lives of covenant children together with a call  
10241 to repent and believe and the need to be born again. I am thinking here especially of a  
10242 sermon by Dr G.H. Visscher which he preached at the Bethel Cdn Ref Church in  
10243 Toronto on Feb 26, 2023 (available on YouTube). I was so excited to hear this that I  
10244 sent the sermon to all of my colleagues in the FRC and HRC urging them to listen to  
10245 it and to give God thanks for this development. This resonates with us and gives us  
10246 hope that the issues that we have been discussing with you for many years are starting  
10247 to bear some fruit.
  - 10248 d. In addition, we have observed among some of your ministers a growing interest in the  
10249 Puritans.

10250

10251 All this is to say (as mentioned earlier) that you have changed – and for the better. I think it is  
10252 fair to say we have far more in common today than we did 30 or 40 or even 20 years ago.

10253  
10254 Does that mean that we are ready for pulpit exchanges or even advancing our level of contact? I  
10255 cannot speak on behalf of our synod, but having been raised in the FRC and serving as a minister  
10256 for almost 25 years I don't think we would be quite ready for that. We find (notwithstanding the  
10257 positive developments I just mentioned) a kind of covenantal optimism among you that makes us  
10258 uneasy. You seem to emphasize the certainty of the promises of God in the Cov of Grace to the  
10259 point that it comes across (to us at least) that these promises are automatically fulfilled in the  
10260 hearts and lives of all covenant children head for head, leading to an overly optimistic view of  
10261 the congregation and a corresponding downplaying of the call to conversion and the need to be  
10262 born again.

10263  
10264 Again, this is changing. But if I read our churches correctly, it will have to change a lot more  
10265 before we would be ready to move to the next level much less open our pulpits to all of your  
10266 ministers. So we still have much to talk about.

10267  
10268 2. But we have also changed.

10269  
10270 Historically the FRC has been quite insular – partly, I think, because we are so small and  
10271 therefore somewhat afraid of being overshadowed up by our much larger cousins, but also  
10272 because we have always been very concerned (and still are) about presumption and an overly  
10273 optimistic view of the Cov of Grace.

10274  
10275 Having said that, over the years we have come more and more to appreciate our Presbyterian and  
10276 Reformed brethren and realize that we have a lot to learn from them – including your own  
10277 federation. We also experience a growing spiritual kinship with many of them – and you -  
10278 through our contacts at the ICRC, NAPARC.

10279  
10280 We have also come to realize – as you have – that the real enemy is not each other. The real  
10281 enemy is the world which is attacking the church with every increasing ferocity requiring us to  
10282 work together more closely. This too is a positive development.

10283  
10284 We have also noted with interest some other developments in your federation such as the  
10285 discussion you had several years ago about women voting and especially your willingness to  
10286 accept in your federation daughter churches that consciously and deliberately depart from the  
10287 historic, Canadian Reformed standards of worship. This surprise us and makes us wonder where  
10288 this will eventually lead.

10289  
10290 We have also taken note of your decision to end your full corresponding relationship with your  
10291 mother church in the Netherlands.

10292 As you may know, we are facing the same decision when it comes to our own mother church, the  
10293 CGK, which, sadly, is on the verge of imploding.

10294  
10295 These are painful developments.

10296  
10297 May the Lord have mercy on both federations and call them back to Biblical faithfulness.

10298  
10299 Some of the times in your agenda for this meeting also deserve comment.

10300  
10301 I observed that you are struggling with some of the same issues that we are struggling with.

10302  
10303 There are, for example, several overtures dealing with the Liturgical Forms.

10304  
10305 Our own denomination has been in the process of revising and updating our Forms and  
10306 Confessions. We have also had a lengthy discussion about the Apostles Creed including the  
10307 phrase “He descended into hell”.

10308  
10309 You also have several overtures dealing with what may be sung in your worship services. You  
10310 may be interested to know that our churches, in conjunction with the Prot Ref Churches and the  
10311 Heritage Ref Churches, recently completed an overhaul of the 1912 Psalter.

10312  
10313 Our synod (which meets in June) will consider a recommendation to expand the singing of more  
10314 Scripture Songs in our worship services. Perhaps these are areas in which we can work more  
10315 closely together.

10316  
10317 Let me say in closing that our churches value our contacts with you. Let’s keep meeting.

10318  
10319 Let’s keep getting to know each other and understand each other better.

10320  
10321 In the meantime, let us seek to work together as much as possible in areas of common interest.

10322  
10323 While we have our differences, we have much more in common. We share part of the same  
10324 history. We love and cherish the same creeds, confessions and forms. We have a similar order of  
10325 worship and church life. But most importantly we love and preach the same Saviour for poor and  
10326 needy sinners. He suffered and died for our sins so that we might have life. All praise and thanks  
10327 to Him!

10328  
10329 I commend you to the Lord with the words of Ephesians 3:14–19

10330 “ For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15 from whom the  
10331 whole family in heaven and earth is named, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches

---

10332 of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ  
10333 may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be  
10334 able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—19 to  
10335 know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of  
10336 God.”

10337

10338 May the Lord bless you all and may He bless this synod and the Canadian and American  
10339 Reformed Churches.

10340

10341

10342 **Appendix 14 – Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA) – Address by Rev. Anthon**  
10343 **Souman**

10344  
10345 Brother chairman,

10346  
10347 It feels quite familiar for us as delegates of the FRCA to be here in your midst. This church  
10348 building is well known to me, I have preached here several times in the past. Both my colleague  
10349 Rev, Bredenhof and I have served as minister of the Word here in a congregation in the Fraser  
10350 Valley, as well as in other Canadian Reformed Churches. We know quite some delegates present  
10351 here.

10352  
10353 And that is not only true for us, but for many ministers within the FRCA. And not only ministers,  
10354 also many other members of our churches have strong bonds with the Canadian Reformed  
10355 Churches.

10356  
10357 The FRCA considers the Canadian Reformed Churches as our closest sister church. We send our  
10358 students to the same seminary, in Hamilton, Ontario. There is a lot of traffic back and forth  
10359 between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the FRCA. Several members of the FRCA  
10360 married someone from the Can RC. Until recently, we made use of the Canadian Reformed Book  
10361 of Praise. And there is a good cooperation in mission work in several areas of this world between  
10362 the Canadian Reformed Churches and the FRCA.

10363  
10364 And we also very much appreciate the warm contacts that our delegates have had at several of  
10365 the assemblies of our mutual sister churches.

10366  
10367 It is therefore with gratitude and joy that we bring you the greetings of the Free Reformed  
10368 Churches of Australia. In many of our churches this General Synod was brought before the  
10369 LORD in our prayers on this past Sunday. We pray that God may grant you His blessings and  
10370 that His name will be glorified by this assembly.

10371  
10372 The Free Reformed Churches of Australia have seen continued growth over the past three years.  
10373 Three new congregations could be instituted in the metro Perth, which brings the total of  
10374 congregations in the FRCA to 19, with a total membership of just over 5500. It may be of  
10375 interest to mention that, just as you see in Canada, we also may receive a growing number of  
10376 new members from non-Dutch background.

10377  
10378 With the growth of the number of congregations also the number of vacancies has grown. At the  
10379 moment we have six vacancies for ministers of the Word. As you may know there was usually a  
10380 lot of traffic back and forth of ministers between Canada and Australia. Since the FRCA do not  
10381 have their own seminary, we depend on ministers and students coming from Canada to serve in  
10382 Australia. However, recent changes by the government in the granting of visas to ministers make  
10383 it difficult, almost impossible, for Australian churches to call Canadian ministers. Therefore, we

10384 have to focus on Australians who are either serving in Canada or graduating from the seminary.  
10385 We are therefore thankful to the Lord of the Church that we could see several Australian brothers  
10386 moving to Canada to attend the seminary in Hamilton, and we are grateful for the work that is  
10387 being done at the seminary.

10388

10389 At the Synod in Darling Downs in 2024, the FRCA decided to continue sister church relations  
10390 with the CanRC according to the established rules.

10391

10392 Some more decisions that Synod Darling Downs made and may be of interest to you are:

- 10393 • A second tier of church relations was adopted. Synod acknowledged that sometimes it is  
10394 just not possible to maintain a full sister church relationship with a church federation  
10395 which we acknowledge as true and faithful church and with which we have some form of  
10396 cooperation. For those situations we have introduced the form of ecclesiastical contact.  
10397 To enter into a sister church relationship the synod decided to use the criteria ‘Faithful’,  
10398 ‘Meaningful’, and ‘Manageable’. If a relationship is faithful and meaningful, but not  
10399 sufficiently manageable, then the contact relationship of ‘Ecclesiastical Contact’ can be  
10400 extended to this federation.
- 10401 • Synod Darling Downs also decided to send observers to the ICRC for the next two  
10402 conferences in 2026 and 2030. We acknowledge here with gratitude the strong  
10403 encouragement which we received from your committee as well your delegates at the  
10404 Synod.
- 10405 • Synod decided to work towards the establishment of an Australian Seminary in the long  
10406 term. Long term means around 2040. This must be done in close cooperation with the  
10407 Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary and the establishment of an Australian  
10408 Seminary must not be detrimental to CRTS.
- 10409 • Of note here is that at the moment many of the Australian students preparing to go to  
10410 CRTS are being trained by Rev. Anderson in the languages Greek, Hebrew, and Latin.  
10411 The church of Rockingham decided, with the cooperation of other churches in the  
10412 federation, to set Rev. Anderson apart for the training of future seminary students in these  
10413 languages, so that they will be well prepared when they begin their training at the  
10414 seminary.
- 10415 • With regard to the situation in the Netherlands, the synod decided to work towards a  
10416 sister church relationship with the DGK and GKN once they become a united federation.  
10417 Deputies are also mandated to monitor the situation in the Netherlands with respect to  
10418 other reformed churches in the Netherlands, especially those that have left or are still  
10419 leaving the former RCN. Seeing the supplementary report of your committee regarding  
10420 the churches in the Netherlands, we believe that it is very much aligned with that decision  
10421 and we hope for a good cooperation between your committee and our deputies with  
10422 regard to the situation in the Netherlands.

10423

10424 As deputies, we received the mandate to monitor developments within the CanRC for mutual  
10425 benefit, especially regarding church polity, liturgy, and other areas that deputies might identify.  
10426 We notice that there are several proposals on your agenda in those areas. We hope to be able to  
10427 have our input on these matters and to encourage you in this to continue in the Reformed paths



10428 that both our federations have gone until now. We realise that the Canadian Reformed Churches  
10429 are living in a different situation than the Free Reformed Churches. You have many contacts and  
10430 relationships with other federations in North America, which undoubtedly has an impact on how  
10431 you do things within your churches. We also notice that there is a growing influx of new  
10432 members from non-Dutch background, which is beautiful, but also has its challenges which you  
10433 will have to consider in many areas. We, as much as possible, want to support and encourage you  
10434 in these discussions and pray that you will make your decisions in faithfulness to the Lord of the  
10435 Church.

10436

10437 Several of the items on your agenda have our special interest.

10438

- 10439 1. The proposal of the CER regarding sister church relationships, and the change of the  
10440 church order. This matter was on the agenda of the FRCA synod Darling Downs as well,  
10441 as I mentioned before. However, we note that your proposal also mentions the  
10442 involvement of local churches in exercising relationships with other churches, where the  
10443 FRCA kept the matter of relationship entirely at the level of the synod. We are interested  
10444 in hearing the discussion on this matter, and what the practical consequences are for us as  
10445 deputies of the FRCA if it comes to certain relationships, which are maintained at the  
10446 local level.
- 10447 2. We note your growing number of relationships with church federations in North  
10448 America. Among those relationships we are especially interested in your relationship  
10449 with the URCNA and the OPC, because we also are in contact with these church  
10450 federations and may benefit from your knowledge of and experience with these churches.
- 10451 3. The changes to the Book of Praise: As FRCA we have since recently our own Book of  
10452 Praise, which still looks very much like the Canadian Book of Praise. As such changes to  
10453 your Book of Praise do not directly affect us anymore. However, we are still interested in  
10454 what is happening in our sister churches, with regard to liturgical changes, not only to the  
10455 psalms and hymns but also to the forms in your Book of Praise. Also here we note the  
10456 proposal to give more freedom to local consistories to approve songs to be sung in the  
10457 worship services. We follow this discussion with keen interest.
- 10458 4. There are several relationships with sister churches outside of North America which we  
10459 have in common. We are thankful that we can meet several of their delegates here at this  
10460 assembly.

10461

10462 Brother chairman,

10463

10464 It is a joy for us as delegates of the FRCA to be here in your midst and to experience the unity in  
10465 faith in our triune God. We work for the same goal, for God's glory and the gathering of His  
10466 Church. A lot of the struggles we are dealing with we have in common, and we can encourage  
10467 each other in that. That is why we are given to each other as sister churches.

10468

10469 We thank you for the interest you have shown in the FRCA and its work, as we can read about it  
10470 in the reports, as well as by sending a delegation to our latest synod in Darling Down. We are  
10471 grateful for the encouragement we could receive, and we in turn are here to encourage you to

---

10472 remain faithful to the Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ. We hope to be able to serve  
10473 you with advice and we pray that God may bless your deliberations and the decisions you make.

10474

10475 May our sister church relationship continue to flourish so that we may work together in God's  
10476 kingdom.

10477

10478 Thank you, chairman.

10479

10480

10481 **Appendix 15 – Free Reformed Churches in South Africa (FRCSA) – Address by Rev.**  
10482 **Johan Bruintjes**

10483

10484 Brothers, Delegates of Synod, Esteemed Guests,

10485

10486 On behalf of the Free Reformed Churches of South Africa, I bring you heartfelt greetings in the  
10487 name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—He who is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

10488

10489 We are gathered here not merely as delegates of the different churches, but as delegates of the  
10490 one holy catholic church - called by God Himself to be living stones in the glorious temple He is  
10491 building. Each of you is taking your place in God’s unfolding story, walking in the good works  
10492 He has prepared for you during these weeks of deliberation. May the Lord bless His church-  
10493 building work through your labor.

10494

10495 Though the world has been shaken over the past year—particularly in the geopolitical realm - the  
10496 church remains as united as ever across every tongue, tribe, nation, and language. Physically, we  
10497 are located on opposite sides of the globe. But spiritually, we are one family: sharing one Lord,  
10498 one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all.

10499

10500 Many of you around this table I consider not only brothers in Christ but dear friends and co-  
10501 laborers. At our own Synod in 2024, we were grateful for the wisdom and encouragement  
10502 brought by your fraternal delegates—Rev. Temple and Rev. Bruintjes (who happens to share my  
10503 last name!). These personal connections give tangible expression to our fraternal bonds, and we  
10504 are thankful to God for this rich Christian fellowship.

10505

10506 As I perused your agenda, I was struck by the range of matters you have been called to  
10507 consider—from discussions on Article 55 to the duration of synod meetings, from baptismal  
10508 forms to theological education. Although our context is different there is overlap, and I would  
10509 like to briefly highlight several topics close to our hearts.

10510

10511 **Theological Education**

10512 The relationship between our churches has been particularly visible in the area of theological  
10513 education. The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few! As a small federation, we have long  
10514 wrestled with how best to train our students for the ministry. A decade ago, we signed a  
10515 memorandum of understanding with CRTS to begin sending our students there for theological  
10516 training. We are deeply grateful for your support—both in prayer and financial assistance.

10517

10518 It has been a joy to witness the growth in our students as they return to intern among us. This  
10519 close relationship with CRTS has also encouraged more young men to consider the call to the  
10520 ministry. We thank the Lord for your kind and generous support.

10521

10522 At our most recent synod, we also had a lively discussion on the future of theological education  
10523 in South Africa. In August, we plan to host a federation-wide conference to develop a unified  
10524 vision for theological training. This includes evaluating whether our current model remains the  
10525 most suitable for our context for the long term.

10526

#### 10527 Mission Work

10528 In a country marked by staggering unemployment, widespread poverty, corruption, and crime,  
10529 the gospel of the resurrected Christ offers a powerful and hope-filled contrast. And we rejoice  
10530 that the Lord is opening hearts to receive that gospel. Since your last synod, two new mission  
10531 churches have been instituted in South Africa.

10532

10533 However, as mission work expands, funding has decreased. Historically, Dutch churches  
10534 supported up to 95% of our mission efforts. That support has declined to around 50% and is  
10535 increasingly directed toward deed ministry. Furthermore, once a mission church is instituted, this  
10536 external support typically ends.

10537

10538 This shift presents both challenges and opportunities to forge new partnerships and to grow in  
10539 our ownership of the work. Please pray with us as we seek a sustainable, faithful model for  
10540 church planting and mission work in our country.

10541

10542 We are also thankful for the ongoing support of individuals and churches involved in the  
10543 Reformational Study Centre. This ministry continues to expand and is being used by God to  
10544 touch the lives of thousands across the world. I encourage you to check out their website.

10545

#### 10546 Relations with Churches in Africa

10547 We are delighted to grow in our involvement with ICRC Africa, which allows us to strengthen  
10548 ties with churches closer to home. African churches have much to contribute to the global body  
10549 of Christ and, by God's grace, represent one of the fastest-growing segments of the worldwide  
10550 church.. Praise be to God!

10551

10552 Locally, we are also working more closely with the Reformed Churches of South Africa  
10553 (GKSA), who are fellow members of the ICRC. At the local level, we are grateful for pulpit  
10554 exchanges and, at the synodical level, for a memorandum of cooperation. We look forward to  
10555 deepening our relationship both locally and nationally.

10556

#### 10557 Relations with Churches Abroad

10558 We continue to benefit greatly from our participation in the International Conference of  
10559 Reformed Churches (ICRC). In October 2024, the Cape Town Free Reformed Church hosted the  
10560 ICRC Africa Regional Conference. It was a joy to welcome brothers and sisters from across the  
10561 continent to share resources and deepen our unity in Christ. For a small federation like ours, the  
10562 ICRC is a vital means of expressing our Reformed confessional unity globally.

10563 Our relationship with the GKv officially ended on May 1, 2023, with the merger between the  
10564 GKv and the NGK. Synod Mamelodi 2024 marked the first time in our history that no one from  
10565 the GKv was present. However, from the aftermath of that merger has arisen a newly formed  
10566 federation—the Gerformeerde Kerken. As of our last synod, this federation had not yet been  
10567 officially constituted. Therefore, our synod resolved to extend the sister-church invitation to their  
10568 first official synod in 2026.

10569

10570 Hymns

10571 At our last synod, we adopted a document titled *Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly*. This  
10572 was prepared in response to various objections raised over the years regarding the use of hymns.  
10573 The document is written in an accessible way for the average church member and affirms our  
10574 belief that hymnody is not only beneficial but essential for singing the full riches of Christ and  
10575 our life in Him.

10576

10577 This in no way diminishes our love for the Psalms. On the contrary, we treasure the Psalms  
10578 deeply and are grateful for the rich heritage we share with you in that regard.

10579

10580 Closing

10581 In closing, as I reflect on the weighty matters before you, I pray that God would grant this  
10582 assembly the wisdom from above—that wisdom which is, as James writes, “first pure, then  
10583 peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere”  
10584 (James 3:17). I am thankful that I have seen the wisdom from above among you.

10585

10586 Be assured of our continued prayers and deep affection. We are very grateful for our relationship  
10587 and love you in Christ. To God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus, both now and  
10588 forever.

10589

10590

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10591 **Appendix 16 – Heritage Reformed Congregations (HRC) – Address by Rev. John Procee**

10592

10593 [Not available (yet)]

10594

10595



10596 **Appendix 17 – Kosin Presbyterian Church in Korea (KPCK) – Letter from Rev. Jeong**  
10597 **Tae-jin**

10598

10599 Greetings to the Canadian Reformed Church General Assembly

10600

10601 I sincerely congratulate the Reformed Church of Canada, united in the Lord Jesus Christ, on the  
10602 gracious hosting of the General Assembly.

10603

10604 We are called in the same Reformed faith, standing firmly on the Word of God and walking  
10605 together in love for the Church of Christ. I pray that this General Assembly will strengthen that  
10606 faithful journey and be filled with precious blessings that build up the Church of the Lord.

10607

10608 May the Lord grant wisdom and discernment to all participants in the General Assembly, so that  
10609 the will of God may be clearly revealed in every decision and discussion. I also hope this  
10610 Assembly will further clarify the identity of the Reformed faith in Canada and serve as an  
10611 opportunity to shine the light of the gospel in unity with brother churches around the world.

10612

10613 Though we are far apart, we join you as one in heart and prayer, earnestly hoping that the Lord's  
10614 grace and peace will abound over this General Assembly.

10615

10616 Pastor Jeong Tae-jin

10617 President, General Assembly of the Kosin Presbyterian Church

10618

10619

10620 **Appendix 18 – Reformed Churches in Brazil (IRB) – Letter from the Committee for**  
10621 **Contact with Churches Abroad - IRB**

10622  
10623 Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

10624  
10625 We send you warm fraternal greetings, in the name of our Lord and Savior, as dear sister  
10626 churches here in Brazil.

10627  
10628 On behalf of the Igrejas Reformadas do Brasil (Reformed Churches of Brazil) our Committee for  
10629 Relations with Churches Abroad (CCIE-IRB) would like to thank you for the invitation for us to  
10630 send a delegation to your Synod. It has certainly always been our desire to be able to be  
10631 represented at these important assemblies, as a sister church. However, we regret that we are  
10632 unable to send a delegate this time to represent our churches at this Synod.

10633  
10634 We, too, will be having our Nacional Concílio (synod) from May 19 to 23, to be held in  
10635 Holambra - São Paulo. We covet your prayers as we consider a very full agenda, including  
10636 matters of significant importance, such as relations with other churches in Brazil, theological  
10637 matters, relations with other foreign churches and two examinations for the ministry of the Word.

10638 We sincerely pray that the Lord of the Church, Jesus Christ, through His Word and Holy Spirit,  
10639 guide your deliberations and decisions in such a way that they may edify the churches in your  
10640 country and thus bring honor and glory to our God and Father in heaven.

10641  
10642 May the Canadian Reformed Churches remain faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ and thus be a  
10643 blessing to many in your country and beyond.

10644  
10645 May God grant you his peace and blessings.

10646  
10647 On behalf of the Reformed Churches of Brazil,  
10648 CCIE - Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad - IRB

10649  
10650

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10651 **Appendix 19 – Reformed Churches in Indonesia (GGRI) – Letter from Rev. Pila Njuka**

10652

10653 Mr. Chairman and all delegates.

10654

10655 First of all, we are terribly sorry for our very late letter of greetings to your Synod. We received  
10656 the invitation a few months ago. It is a privilege for us to be invited to your Synod as one of your  
10657 sister churches around the world. We would like to attend your Synod, but because we are unable  
10658 to fund for our trip, by way of this letter we send you our greetings. We commend you to our  
10659 Triune God that you may make good decisions according to God’s Word and our Church Order  
10660 for the benefit of our churches and especially for the glory of our God.

10661

10662 We pray and hope that our relationship as sister churches may be strengthened and that we may  
10663 help each other in our own capacities. Have a blessed Synod and God be with you all.

10664

10665 Chairman Rev. Pila Njuka

10666

10667

**Appendix 20 – Mandate for the Archive Church**

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**Mandate for the Church appointed to maintain  
the Archives of the General Synods  
of the Canadian Reformed Churches**

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From the first General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Synod Homewood in 1954, General Synods have expressed the desirability of maintaining the records of their meetings, the decisions made and all the supporting documents used as rationale for making the decisions. This is in line with the requirements of keeping archives as expressed in Church Order Article 43. In order to consistently preserve and maintain the materials from general synods and from committees appointed to serve general synods, General Synod appoints a church responsible for collecting and preserving the material in an archive. For continuity, the Burlington-Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church is the designated Archive Church and is to be re-appointed by each General Synod.

10683

The Archive Church shall adhere to the following mandate adopted by General Synod:

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- A. The Archive Church shall appoint a person to be the Archivist, who is responsible for the work of collecting and maintaining the archives.
- B. The Archive Church shall provide a suitable secure place for keeping the archives, and shall supply filing cabinets and whatever other items are required. Costs are to be reimbursed from the General Fund.
- C. The Archive Church shall submit a report on the condition and activity of the archives to each General Synod six months prior to convocation.
- D. The Archive Church shall, within three months of the end of each General Synod, send a letter to each committee requesting that they submit for the archives any materials more than ten years old, and which they no longer need for their duties as committees of General Synod. The materials submitted are left to the discretion of the committees, which may decide to keep their own archives to facilitate their duties.
- E. The archives of General Synod shall contain the following materials in hard copy pertaining to General Synods:
  - One copy of the acts of each General Synod;
  - One copy of all the reports of the committees of General Synod and their sub-committees;
  - One copy of all correspondence regarding the calling of General Synod sent by the church responsible for calling General Synod;
  - One copy of the credentials of the delegates to General Synod;
  - One signed copy of all the correspondence to and from each General Synod filed in binders, particular to each General Synod, and in the order of the agenda of the General Synod;
  - One copy of all material from the committees and their sub-committees, including meeting minutes, correspondence, and documents; and

- 
- 10709                   - One copy of each annual yearbook of the Canadian and American Reformed  
10710                   Churches.
- 10711                   The materials shall be properly catalogued in an index to facilitate reference.
- 10712           F.   Non-confidential documents of the General Synod archives may be obtained as  
10713           photocopies at the expense of the person requesting them.
- 10714           G.   The archives shall be made available for inspection by the delegates from the church  
10715           appointed by the previous General Synod to inspect the archives and submit a report to  
10716           the next General Synod.
- 10717
- 10718

10719 **Appendix 21 – Proposal re inclusion of non-CanRC theological students**

10720

10721 Esteemed Brothers,

10722

10723 We would like to raise for your assembly what we believe is either a grey area or perhaps more  
10724 accurately an as-yet unmapped area when it comes to our ecclesiastical fellowship with other  
10725 churches and that is this: what precisely is the standing of our mutual theological students who  
10726 are licensed to preach among the churches of their respective federations? Does being licensed to  
10727 preach (or: speak an edifying word, CO Art 21) in one federation mean that such a student is  
10728 automatically licensed to preach in the other federation (which is in EF)? What about when a  
10729 student has sustained a preparatory examination and is available for call in one federation—may  
10730 he preach in the interim in a sister church? May he be called by a sister church?

10731

10732 We have inquired of both CRTS and the CER secretary and in both cases received the answer  
10733 that no rules or guidelines appear to have been established for these kinds of situations as yet.  
10734 This has brought about uncertainty and some confusion in our own council when wondering if  
10735 we could invite a URCNA student to preach. Uncertainty was experienced also at our Classis  
10736 Ontario West meetings where our classis has dealt with requests from South African students  
10737 (who are students at CRTS) to accept their credentials as students who have received permission  
10738 to speak an edifying word from a classis in South Africa. Does this sort of thing need to be done  
10739 for every student of a sister church? That would be tedious to say the least.

10740

10741 As our churches engage in more inter-church relations, and as theological students from various  
10742 church federations appear to be quite mobile, we can expect to encounter more and more of these  
10743 kinds of situations and so it would be good for all parties to have a clear agreement in place  
10744 among our sister churches. We believe that if it can be determined that our mutual students share  
10745 the same level of theological training and undergo an equivalent examination at a broader  
10746 assembly, that it would be fitting to agree together as sister churches to allow one another's  
10747 licensed students to preach on each other's pulpits. We bring this to the attention of GS 2025 to  
10748 point out an over-looked aspect of our ecclesiastical fellowship and to ask that this matter be  
10749 included in some appropriate place in the mandate of the CER, work then made of it and reported  
10750 to the churches ahead of GS 2028 where then a decision(s) can be made, the Lord willing.

10751

10752 With that as background we propose the following:

10753 **1. Observations**

10754 1.1 Currently the rules for EF adopted by the CanRC do not touch on the area of students of  
10755 theology who have sustained a licensure exam or a preparatory exam at a broader  
10756 assembly.

10757 1.2 Licensed students of theology from some sister churches (such as the URCNA, FRCSA,  
10758 FRCA, OPC, and the RCNZ) do live at times in proximity to CanRCs and could be  
10759 available to preach on our pulpits. Students licensed in various other sister churches  
10760 (such as the ERQ, FCS, FCSC, GGRI, GGRCI, IRB, PCK, KPCA-Kosin, and the



- 10761 RCUS) have not, to the best of our knowledge, to date lived in proximity to the CanRCs  
10762 but could potentially in future.
- 10763 1.3 Licensed students of theology from the CanRCs could also at times live in proximity to  
10764 a sister church (such as the URCNA, FRCSA, FRCA, OPC, and the RCNZ) and could  
10765 be available to preach on their pulpits. To the best of our knowledge, to date no CanRC  
10766 theological student licensed in our federation has lived in proximity to various other  
10767 sister churches (such as the ERQ, FCS, FCSC, GGRI, GGRCI, IRB, PCK, KPCA-  
10768 Kosin, and the RCUS) but could potentially in future.
- 10769 1.4 Article 21 of the Church Order reads: “Besides those who have been permitted,  
10770 according to Article 8, to speak an edifying word, others may be given such consent in  
10771 accordance with general ecclesiastical regulations, for their own training and in order  
10772 that they may become known to the congregations.”
- 10773 1.5 Concerning students of theology seeking the right to speak an edifying word in the  
10774 churches, GS 1971 (Art 76) decided they could do so on the following conditions:
- 10775 1.5.1 “They shall submit the request for such permission to the Classis.
- 10776 1.5.2 They shall not do so unless they have completed at least two years of theological  
10777 studies.
- 10778 1.5.3 They shall present a good attestation from ‘the Church to which they belong.’
- 10779 1.5.4 They shall present a certificate from ‘the Faculty of our Theological College that  
10780 they have satisfactorily completed at least two years of studies at the College.’
- 10781 1.5.5 They shall deliver a sermon at the Classis and shall be interrogated on the  
10782 Reformed doctrine.
- 10783 1.5.6 If, as a result of this examination, the Classis decides to grant their request,  
10784 permission shall be given for a period not exceeding twelve months, and that under  
10785 the condition that the student shall submit his sermons to and discuss them with the  
10786 Lecturer in the Diaconological department at our College.”
- 10787 1.6 Concerning the overall length of the course of study for theological students in the  
10788 MDiv program, GS 1974 (Art 171) added a year of introduction to “secure a thorough  
10789 knowledge of the languages of Holy Writ as a necessary condition for further study,”  
10790 thus extending the program from three to four years. This in turn meant that the  
10791 minimum “two years of theological studies” became three years.
- 10792 1.7 Concerning students of theology seeking the right to speak an edifying word in the  
10793 churches, concerning, GS 2019 (Art 85) decided “That this permission or licensure be  
10794 granted under the following conditions:
- 10795 [1] That the student present a letter to classis from the Canadian Reformed  
10796 Theological Seminary (CRTS) that he has successfully completed two years of  
10797 studies in an approved M.Div. program;
- 10798 [2] That the student sustain an appropriate ecclesiastical exam and supply whatever  
10799 documents the classis may require;
- 10800 [3] That the student desire to enter gospel ministry, if called to such by the churches;
- 10801 [4] That in the summer immediately following classical permission or licensure—  
10802 whether this be after either the student’s second or third year of studies—the  
10803 student must follow a summer internship during which he will work under a

- 10804 particular minister or ministers who will serve as his mentor or mentors and will  
10805 approve his practice sermons prior to delivery (i.e., the licensure is initially not to  
10806 be regarded as a broad permission to access all pulpits or to provide pulpit supply  
10807 to vacant churches, but first of all to undergo practical training);
- 10808 [5] That the mentor write a report for the Professor of Ministry and Mission at CRTS  
10809 regarding the student's progress and his suitability for ministry, while the elders, as  
10810 well as any minister or seminary professors present for the student's practice  
10811 preaching, submit evaluations of the student's preaching and leading of the  
10812 worship services to the Professor of Ministry and Mission at CRTS;
- 10813 [6] That the license to speak an edifying word be valid for 12 months, with the  
10814 possibility of one or two 12-month renewals, if a written request is made by the  
10815 student to the same classis which granted him licensure, before the 12-month  
10816 period elapses;
- 10817 [7] That during the academic year that follows a summer internship, CRTS students  
10818 who have received permission to speak an edifying word be expected to discuss  
10819 with their mentors on the CRTS faculty whether and how much to honour requests  
10820 from the churches to lead the worship services and speak an edifying word (so that  
10821 their mentor at CRTS may assist them with advice towards maintaining school and  
10822 family obligations);
- 10823 [8] That all other regulations remain in place, such as that new practice sermons made  
10824 outside of the internship periods and before a student graduates from CRTS be  
10825 subject to approval by the Professor of Ministry and Mission at CRTS, or by a  
10826 minister recommended by the Senate and appointed by the Board of Governors.”
- 10827 1.8 Concerning students of theology seeking eligibility for call in the Canadian Reformed  
10828 Churches (by way of a preparatory examination) GS 1958 (Art 188 – later amended by  
10829 GS 2022, see the Acts of GS 2022, Appendix 23) decided that the following documents  
10830 must be presented to classis:
- 10831 “I.2.a Proof that the student has successfully completed the required course of study as  
10832 referred to in the decisions of Homewood-Carman 1958 (Acts, Art.151).
- 10833 I.2.b An attestation from the church or churches to which the students has belonged for  
10834 the last three years.”

10835

## 10836 2. Considerations

- 10837 2.1 There is a need within both our own federation of churches and those of our sister  
10838 churches for students of theology to be further trained in the practice of preaching by  
10839 speaking an edifying word within regular worship services. Since students of theology  
10840 who have obtained a license to preach from within our own federation as well as those  
10841 from various sister churches with whom we have contact could potentially be called  
10842 upon to speak an edifying word, it would be fitting, helpful, and mutually advantageous  
10843 if we as a federation could come to an agreement with our sister churches regarding  
10844 giving permission to one another's students to speak an edifying word within each  
10845 other's churches.

- 10846 2.2 There is a need within both our own federation of churches and those of our sister  
10847 churches to have clarification concerning whether students of theology who have  
10848 sustained the appropriate preparatory examination (at the appropriate broader  
10849 assembly) may be called to the ministry by a church in the other's federation. It would  
10850 be fitting, helpful, and advantageous if we as a federation could come to an agreement  
10851 with our sister churches regarding the appropriateness of calling one another's  
10852 candidates for the ministry.
- 10853 2.3 Within the Canadian Reformed Churches, our students of theology have to meet certain  
10854 criteria before they may speak an edifying word as listed in Observations 5, 6, and 7. On  
10855 the principle of fairness and impartiality (Prov 24:23), it would be fitting to discuss with  
10856 each sister church whether the criteria in that federation is essentially equivalent to our  
10857 criteria (and vice versa) and on the basis of a basic equivalency to work out a  
10858 memorandum of understanding with each sister church giving permission for each  
10859 other's students to speak an edifying word in each other's churches, as invited. If  
10860 discussions show that such equivalency does not currently exist, it would be good to  
10861 discuss with such a church what can be done to move toward a basic equivalency of  
10862 such criteria and a future agreement.
- 10863 2.4 Within the Canadian Reformed Churches, our students of theology have to meet certain  
10864 criteria before they may be declared eligible for call as listed in Observation 6. On the  
10865 principle of fairness and impartiality (Prov 24:23), it would be fitting to discuss with  
10866 each sister church whether the criteria in that federation is essentially equivalent to our  
10867 criteria (and vice versa) and on the basis of a basic equivalency to work out a  
10868 memorandum of understanding with each sister church giving permission for the calling  
10869 of each other's candidates for the ministry. If discussions show that such equivalency  
10870 does not currently exist, it would be good to discuss with such a church what can be  
10871 done to move toward basic equivalency of such criteria and a future agreement.
- 10872 2.5 It would be fitting and wise for the CER to prioritize the pursuit of such agreements  
10873 with those churches where our mutual students have already been living in proximity to  
10874 one another, as mentioned in Observation 2. Over time it would be fitting for the CER  
10875 to discuss this matter with all our remaining sister churches (see Observation 3), or even  
10876 future sister churches as other ecclesiastical relationships may ripen into formal  
10877 fellowship, prioritizing the ones with whom such preaching opportunities regarding  
10878 licensed students of theology as well as the calling of one another's candidates for the  
10879 ministry have realistic potential, as determined by the CER.

10880

### 10881 **3. Recommendations**

10882 That GS 2025 decide to mandate the CER to:

- 10883 3.1 Discuss with the following sister churches (as a matter of practical priority) what  
10884 criteria their students of theology must meet to be granted a license to preach (or: speak  
10885 an edifying word) and whether these criteria are essentially equivalent to the criteria for  
10886 such students in the Canadian Reformed Churches: the URCNA, FRCSA, FRCA, OPC,  
10887 and the RCNZ.
- 10888 3.1.1 If essential equivalency of criteria is agreed upon, to draw up a memorandum of  
10889 understanding with said church with the aim of securing permission for each

- 10890 other's students to preach in each other's churches, and to present this agreement  
10891 to the churches six months prior to the next general synod for its approval.
- 10892 3.1.2 If essential equivalency is not found, to continue discussing with said church what  
10893 can be done to move toward such essential equivalency, and to report on the  
10894 progress of these discussions to the churches six months prior to the next general  
10895 synod.
- 10896 3.1.3 To undertake, over time, the same discussion (with the same goal of a  
10897 memorandum of understanding) with each of the rest of our current or future sister  
10898 churches, prioritizing the churches where our mutual students have realistic  
10899 potential to live in proximity to one another and thus serve on each other's pulpits  
10900 as determined by the CER, and presenting either a memorandum of agreement or  
10901 else reporting on the progress of discussion to the churches six months prior to the  
10902 next general synod.
- 10903 3.2 Discuss with the following sister churches (as a matter of practical priority) what  
10904 criteria their candidates for the ministry must meet to become eligible for call, and  
10905 whether these criteria are essentially equivalent to the criteria for such candidates in the  
10906 Canadian Reformed Churches: the URCNA, FRCSA, FRCA, OPC, and the RCNZ. To  
10907 undertake the same discussion with the rest of our current or future sister churches over  
10908 time, prioritizing the churches where our mutual candidates have realistic potential to be  
10909 called by one another's churches.
- 10910 3.2.1 If essential equivalency of criteria is agreed upon, to draw up a memorandum of  
10911 understanding with said church regarding this matter and present it to the churches  
10912 six months prior to GS 2028.
- 10913 3.2.2 If essential equivalency is not found, to continue discussing with said church what  
10914 can be done to move toward such essential equivalency and to report on the  
10915 progress of these discussion to the churches six months prior to GS 2028.
- 10916 3.2.3 To undertake, over time, the same discussion with the rest of our current or future  
10917 sister churches, prioritizing the churches where our mutual students have realistic  
10918 potential to be called by one another's churches as determined by the CER, and  
10919 reporting on the progress to the churches six months prior to GS 2028.

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10924 Brothers, thank you for considering our request. We pray the Lord to equip you all with his  
10925 wisdom and grace to decide well upon this and all matters on your agenda.

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Yours in the Lord,  
On behalf of Ancaster council,  
Rob Wieske (clerk)

10931

## Appendix 22 – Report of the Guelph-Emmanuel CanRC re finances of GS 2022

### General Synod 2022 - Financial Summary Report

Revenue	Budget	Actual		
		RSW	RSE	Total
Funding from Regional Synods	85,890.00	50,000.00	30,000.00	80,000.00
Refund Excess Funds to Regional Synods	-	18,279.09	-	7,889.97
	85,890.00	31,720.91	22,110.03	53,830.94
<b>Expenditures</b>				
Correspondence	533.00	1,424.76	1,424.76	2,849.52
Facilities	19,377.00	7,315.93	7,315.93	14,631.86
Hospitality - Food	8,520.00	3,898.71	3,898.71	7,797.43
Hospitality - Accomodations	-	-	-	-
Hospitality - Travel Local	1,598.00	125.38	125.38	250.76
<i>Hospitality - Travel Delegates (note 3)</i>	<i>16,973.00</i>	<i>10,168.31</i>	<i>755.14</i>	<i>10,923.45</i>
IT	18,889.00	5,754.98	5,754.98	11,509.95
<i>Lost Wage Reimbursement - Delegates (note 3)</i>	<i>20,000.00</i>	<i>2,000.00</i>	<i>2,250.00</i>	<i>4,250.00</i>
HST Unrecoverable (note 4)		964.48	585.13	1,549.61
GST Unrecoverable (note 5)		68.36	-	68.36
<b>Total Expenses Disbursed</b>	<b>85,890.00</b>	<b>31,720.91</b>	<b>22,110.03</b>	<b>53,830.94</b>
<b>Balance</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

- 1 All expenses are shared between the Regional Synods as outlined in General Synod Guelph 2022 - Act 42.
- 2 Accordingly all approved expenses are shared 50/50 with exception of cost for delegate to make attendance (travel and loss wages).
- 3 *Lost Wage Reimbursement and Travel Cost to Travel to Convening Church is covered directly by delegating body at rates they each determine. Refer to General Synod Guelph 2022 - Act 2 for delegates and their delegating body.*
- 4 31% of HST expenses are unrecoverable for tax input credits.
- 5 50% of GST expenses are unrecoverable for tax input credits.

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10935 **Appendix 23 – General Fund Report**

10936 General Synod Aldergrove 2025

10937

10938 RE: Financial Report for General Fund from January 1, 2022 to December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024

10939 Esteemed Brothers,

10940 The church of Carman East was appointed by GS Guelph-Immanuel 2022, Article 32 to  
10941 administer the General Fund and to collect funds as required from the churches.

10942 An email address ([generalfundcarmaneast@gmail.com](mailto:generalfundcarmaneast@gmail.com)) is used for requests for  
10943 reimbursement to the treasurer, and mail should be addressed to the Carman East church  
10944 address at Box 164, Carman, MB R0G 0J0.

10945 Sr. Hilly Kooiker was appointed as treasurer of this fund in 2019. At her request to be relieved of  
10946 these duties, we have appointed sr. Jolene Bouwman to this task.

10947 To administer this fund the churches were assessed per communicant member: 2022 - \$1,  
10948 2023 - \$4, 2024 - \$4. Further detail has been provided below.

10949

10950 **General Fund January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2024**

10951

10952 Bank balance January 1, 2022	35,650.33
10953 Assessment from the churches	99,366.87
10954	135,017.20

10955 **Expenses**

10956 Book of praise	2,237.18	
10957 CER	101,271.86	
10958 ICRC	7,534.31	
10959 Website comm	8,142.89	
10960 Premier Printing	10,482.33	
10961 Bank Charges	300.39	
10962 <b>Total expenses</b>	129,968.96	-129,968.96
10963		2,316.47 Acct Payable
10964 <b>Bank Balance December 31, 2024</b>	<b>7,364.71</b>	



Len Bergsma - Chairman



Jordan Vanderveen - Clerk

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10968 **Appendix 24 – Press Release General Synod 2025**

10969 [To be inserted]

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10972 **Appendix 25 – Guidelines for General Synods<sup>1</sup>**

10973 **1. Convening and Constitution of Synod**

10974 1.1 The convening church<sup>2</sup> shall set the date on which Synod shall meet (cf. CO Art. 49). It  
10975 shall give notice of this date to all the churches of the federation TWO YEARS in  
10976 advance of the date for the next General Synod. It shall also publish this date at  
10977 [www.canrc.org](http://www.canrc.org).

10978 The convening church shall publish the date along with the rule:

10979 All material for Synod should be received by the convening church in paper or digital  
10980 format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks prior to the  
10981 convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall ensure that one  
10982 signed copy is available for the archives of General Synod.<sup>3</sup> Material received after  
10983 this date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the  
10984 reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.<sup>4</sup>

10985 1.2.1 The convening church shall take responsibility for preparing a provisional agenda  
10986 for synod. To this end, it shall receive and organize all submissions in an orderly  
10987 and transparent manner. This includes:

10988 1.2.1.1 Creating a synod-specific email address for all synod-related correspondence  
10989 and submissions.

10990 1.2.1.2 Acknowledging receipt of submissions and maintaining a tracking log that  
10991 records the source, subject, date received, and format of each item.

10992 1.2.1.3 Assigning each submission to a suitable agenda category (e.g., reports,  
10993 overtures, appeals, correspondence) and assigning each item a unique  
10994 provisional agenda number.

10995 1.2.1.4 Standardizing document formats (e.g., searchable PDF) and applying  
10996 consistent file naming conventions that reflect the agenda number, topic,  
10997 source, and date.

10998 1.2.1.5 Coordinating with the federation’s website committee to ensure that all  
10999 public materials are posted consistently and accessibly while also ensuring  
11000 confidentiality of delegate only items.

11001 1.2.1.6 Preparing a shared digital folder system for synod delegates, organized by  
11002 agenda categories and item numbers, containing all submitted materials in  
11003 downloadable form.

11004 1.2.1.7 Distributing the provisional agenda and supporting materials as follows:

11005 1.2.1.7.1 To all synod delegates: the full agenda with hyperlinks to all supporting  
11006 documents, including appeals and church correspondence.

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<sup>1</sup> Given changes made by GS 2025 to these Guidelines and given that the Guidelines used a ‘numbering’ system that mixed Roman numerals, letters, and Arabic numerals, the executive decided post GS 2025 to renumber the Guidelines using just Arabic numerals.

<sup>2</sup> GS 2022 adopted a further set of Guidelines for the Convening Church. See GS 2022 Appendix 29.

<sup>3</sup> GS 2019 Art. 122, among others replacing a change made by GS 2013 Art. 176.

<sup>4</sup> GS 1995 Art. 111; GS 2004 Art. 118.

- 11007 1.2.1.7.2 To all churches and the federation's website: the full agenda with  
11008 hyperlinks only to public materials (i.e., reports and overtures). Items  
11009 such as appeals or correspondence from individual churches are to be  
11010 listed in the agenda but not made publicly available.
- 11011 1.2.1.7.3 Sending the provisional agenda to the churches and federation website  
11012 6 months and 6 weeks before synod.
- 11013 1.2.1.7.4 Sending provisional agendas to the delegates at intervals of  
11014 approximately 6 months, 4 months, 3 months, and 6 weeks prior to  
11015 synod.<sup>5</sup>
- 11016 1.3<sup>6</sup> Correspondence from the convening church, including the notice of convocation,  
11017 agendas, reports, and proposals may be sent to the churches and/or delegates as digital  
11018 files. However, in order to maintain the confidentiality of potentially sensitive material,  
11019 personal appeals as well as other documents which contain personal information (e.g.,  
11020 letters of appointment) must be sent from the convening church as password-protected  
11021 digital files.<sup>7</sup>
- 11022 1.4 The convening Church shall send the first Provisional Agenda to all the Churches at  
11023 least six months prior to convocation.
- 11024 1.5 All material submitted to the convening Church together with a copy of the current  
11025 Guidelines for General Synods shall be sent to all delegates and the first alternates.<sup>8</sup> All  
11026 material submitted to Synod, including Reports, Appeals, Overtures which quote any  
11027 foreign language source must provide in the text of the submission a full English  
11028 translation and in a footnote the citation in the original language.<sup>9</sup>
- 11029 1.6 All material for Synod should be received by the convening church in paper or digital  
11030 format (searchable text PDF as much as feasible) no later than six weeks prior to the  
11031 convocation date of general synod. Those submitting material shall ensure that one  
11032 signed copy is available for the archives of General Synod.<sup>10</sup> Material received after this  
11033 date shall ordinarily not be added to the agenda unless Synod is satisfied that the  
11034 reasons given for later arrival are reasonable.<sup>11</sup>
- 11035 1.7 Since matters on the agenda of general synod involve the churches in common, regional  
11036 synods shall distribute copies of adopted overtures to all the churches in the federation  
11037 no later than five months prior to the convening of a general synod.<sup>12</sup>
- 11038 1.8 The minister of the convening Church or its counselor shall act as chairman until Synod  
11039 has been constituted.
- 11040 1.8.1 He shall call the meeting to order in an ecclesiastical manner (cf. Art. 34, CO);

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<sup>5</sup> GS 2019 Art. 122, GS 2025 Art. 185. Given it's own subsection number in 2025.

<sup>6</sup> What is now 1.3 was I.B in the 2022 Guidelines, 1.4 was I.C, and so on.

<sup>7</sup> GS 2013 Art. 176.

<sup>8</sup> GS 1986 Art. 76; GS 1995 Art. 111.

<sup>9</sup> GS 1989 Art. 131.

<sup>10</sup> GS 2019 Art. 122, among others replacing a change made by GS 2013 Art. 176.

<sup>11</sup> GS 1986 Art. 162; GS 1995 Art. 110.

<sup>12</sup> GS 2010 Art. 35, 174.

- 11041 1.8.2. He shall have the credentials examined as to whether General Synod can be  
11042 constituted.
- 11043 1.9 Officers of Synod shall be chosen by ballot in this order: chairman, vice-chairman, first  
11044 clerk, and second clerk, with consideration made to avoid the reappointment of the same  
11045 individuals to the same position for more than two (2) consecutive synods. Election to  
11046 office is to be by majority of valid votes cast.<sup>13</sup>
- 11047 1.10 Although advice can be requested in particular matters, advisory members shall not be  
11048 appointed.<sup>14</sup>
- 11049 1.11 The convening church shall arrange to have people present during Synod to assist the  
11050 clerks in preparing the Acts and to do other paperwork.<sup>15</sup>
- 11051 **2. Duties of the Officers**
- 11052 2.1 The Chairman
- 11053 2.1.1 The chairman shall see to it that business is transacted in the proper order and is  
11054 expedited as much as possible, and that members observe the rules of order and  
11055 decorum (cf. CO 34, 35).
- 11056 2.1.2 He shall call the meeting to order at the appointed time, call the roll and shall see  
11057 to it that each session is properly opened and closed.
- 11058 2.1.3 He shall welcome fraternal delegates or other guests and respond to greetings  
11059 received or appoint other members for this purpose.
- 11060 2.1.4 He shall place before Synod every motion that is made and seconded, in accord  
11061 with the accepted order; and he shall clearly state every question before a vote is  
11062 taken, so that every member may know on what he is voting.
- 11063 2.1.5 If the chairman feels the need to speak on a pending question, he shall relinquish  
11064 the chair to the vice-chairman for that period of time. While holding the chair, he  
11065 may speak to state matters of fact or to inform Synod regarding points of order.
- 11066 2.1.6 He shall have, and duly exercise, the prerogative of declaring a motion or a person  
11067 out of order. If his ruling is challenged, it shall be submitted to Synod for decision  
11068 by majority vote.
- 11069 2.1.7 The chairman shall retain his right to vote on any question.
- 11070 2.1.8 In case of a point of order, the chairman must make a ruling at once. This ruling  
11071 may be reversed by a majority of Synod, if any member is dissatisfied with the  
11072 ruling of the chair and appeals to the floor.
- 11073 2.1.9 The chairman shall close the Synod with appropriate remarks and prayer (CO 34).
- 11074 2.2 The Vice-Chairman
- 11075 2.2.1 The vice-chairman shall, in the absence of the chairman, assume all his duties and  
11076 privileges.

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<sup>13</sup> GS 2025 Art. 139.

<sup>14</sup> GS 2007, Art. 147.

<sup>15</sup> GS 2010, Art. 174.

- 11077 2.2.2 The vice-chairman shall render all possible assistance to the chairman as  
11078 circumstances require.
- 11079 2.2.3 He shall prepare the Press Release.
- 11080 2.3 The First Clerk
- 11081 2.3.1 Every morning, after the roll call, he shall present the *Acts* of the previous day.
- 11082 2.3.2 He shall keep a proper record of the business of Synod. This record should  
11083 ordinarily contain:
- 11084 2.3.2.1 The opening and closing of sessions and roll call.
- 11085 2.3.2.2 All motions whether carried or defeated.
- 11086 2.3.2.3 All final reports of committees and all decisions of Synod.
- 11087 2.3.2.4 Any document or part of debate or address that Synod by a majority vote has  
11088 decided to insert in the *Acts*.
- 11089 2.3.3 He shall not include in the *Acts* any motion that was withdrawn.
- 11090 2.4 The Second Clerk
- 11091 2.4.1 The second clerk shall serve in the absence of the first clerk.
- 11092 2.4.2 He shall render assistance to the first clerk as circumstances require.
- 11093 2.4.3 He shall handle outgoing mail on behalf of Synod.
- 11094 **3. Synodical Committees**
- 11095 3.1 Advisory Committees of Synod
- 11096 3.1.1 The officers of Synod shall propose advisory committees, with a convener, to  
11097 serve for the duration of Synod.
- 11098 3.1.2 The officers of Synod shall propose an arrangement of matters on the agenda to the  
11099 appropriate committees.
- 11100 3.1.3 All reports shall be distributed in ample time before they are presented for  
11101 discussion.
- 11102 3.1.4 The committee reporter shall present the reports.
- 11103 3.1.5 If there is a minority report as well as a majority report, both reports shall be given  
11104 into discussion, but the majority report shall be voted upon first.
- 11105 3.1.6 During the discussion, the task of defending the report shall rest primarily with the  
11106 reporter of the committee. Other committee members shall receive the privilege of  
11107 the floor to elaborate on or clarify any point.
- 11108 3.1.7 In order to facilitate the discussion on a pending issue, the chair shall ordinarily  
11109 call for the discussion in two parts (rounds). In the first part opportunity is given to  
11110 members to express remarks related to the issue in question. In the second or  
11111 following parts, members may react to the discussion or the issue in question.
- 11112 3.1.8 The discussion may be extended by discretion of the chairman or by a decision of  
11113 Synod.
- 11114 3.1.9 If anyone has been requested to advise Synod on any matter, he shall address  
11115 synod on this point only when asked to do so by the chair.
- 11116 3.2 (Inter-)Synod Committees

11117 3.2.1 All committees appointed by Synod shall see to it that they send a copy of their  
11118 report in digital format to each of the local churches.<sup>16</sup>

11119 **4. Rules of Order**

11120 4.1 Closed Sessions of Synod

11121 4.1.1 A closed session shall ordinarily mean a session where members of Synod and  
11122 office-bearers may be present. This shall be used in delicate or unusual situations.

11123 4.1.2 A closed-restricted session shall, as a rule, mean a session where members of  
11124 Synod only may be present. This shall only take place when Synod judges that  
11125 such a course is dictated by due regard for personal honour or the welfare of the  
11126 Churches in extremely delicate situations.

11127 4.2 Main Motions

11128 A main motion is one which presents a certain subject for consideration or action.

11129 4.2.1 A main motion is acceptable under the following conditions:

11130 4.2.1.1 The mover has been recognized by the chair.

11131 4.2.1.2 The motion has been seconded.

11132 4.2.1.3 The motion is also presented in writing.

11133 4.2.2 A main motion is not acceptable if another main motion is before Synod or if it  
11134 conflicts with any decision already made by Synod.

11135 4.2.3 A notice of motion may be given during the discussion.

11136 4.3 A Motion to Amend

11137 This is a proposal to alter a main motion in language or in meaning before final action is  
11138 taken on the motion.

11139 4.1.1 A motion to amend may propose any of the following: to strike out, to insert, or to  
11140 substitute certain words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs.

11141 4.1.2 A motion to amend is not a proper amendment if it nullifies the main motion or is  
11142 not germane to it.

11143 4.1.3 A motion to amend an amendment is permissible and is called a secondary motion.

11144 4.4 Call for a Division of the Question

11145 At the request of one or more members of Synod, a motion consisting of more than one  
11146 part must be divided and voted upon separately, unless Synod decides that this is not  
11147 necessary.

11148 4.5 Objection to Consideration of a Question

11149 If any member is not satisfied with the ruling of the chair, the matter is referred to  
11150 Synod for a decision.

11151 4.6 Right of Protest

11152 It is the right of any member to protest against any decision of Synod. Protest should be  
11153 registered immediately, or during the session in which the matter concerned was acted  
11154 upon. Protests must be registered individually and not in groups. Members may, if they

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<sup>16</sup> GS 1995 Art. 110; GS 2013 Art. 176.



- 11155 feel the need, ask to have their negative vote recorded. Such requests must be made  
11156 immediately after the vote is taken.
- 11157 **4.7 Motion to Bring Matters Once Decided Again Before Synod**
- 11158 Any member of Synod, for weighty reasons, may move to have a matter reconsidered,  
11159 which was previously decided. The purpose of this motion is to propose a new  
11160 discussion and a new vote.
- 11161 **4.8 Discussion**
- 11162 4.8.1 To obtain the floor, a speaker must be recognized by the chair.
- 11163 4.8.2 If any member has spoken twice on a pending issue, others who have not yet  
11164 spoken twice shall, as a rule, be given priority by the chair.
- 11165 4.8.3 When the chairman believes that a motion under consideration has been debated  
11166 sufficiently, he may propose cessation of debate. If a majority of Synod sustains  
11167 his proposal, discussion shall cease and the vote shall be taken.
- 11168 4.8.4 Any member of Synod, when he deems a matter to have been debated sufficiently,  
11169 may move to close the discussion. Should a majority be in favour, the vote shall be  
11170 taken, but only after those who have already requested the floor have been  
11171 recognized.
- 11172 **4.9 Voting**
- 11173 4.9.1 It is in the freedom of the chair to determine how the vote is to be taken: by calling  
11174 the roll (in any order) or by show of hands.<sup>17</sup>
- 11175 4.9.2 Voting about persons shall be by ballot.
- 11176 4.9.3 Voting about delicate matters and other matters of a critical nature shall also be by  
11177 ballot.
- 11178 **5. Revision**
- 11179 These Synodical Guidelines may be suspended, amended, revised or abrogated by a majority  
11180 vote of Synod.
- 11181

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<sup>17</sup> GS 2010 Art. 174.

11182 **Appendix 26 – Guidelines for the Convening Church of a General Synod Regarding Synod**  
11183 **Expenses**

11184 *Last revised: GS 2022*

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11186 1. Funding: The convening church shall set up a General Synod Account and appoint a  
11187 treasurer. The treasurer shall contact the treasurers of the Regional Synods for funding to  
11188 cover all expenses pertaining to the General Synod. Expenses will be shared between the  
11189 two Regional Synods on a 50/50 basis. (See Yearbook for treasurers of each Regional  
11190 Synod).

11191 2. Operational Expenses: Operational expenses incurred as a direct result of hosting the  
11192 General Synod which do not have a net benefit post-synod to the convening church will  
11193 be reimbursed at cost. This includes but is not limited to IT, facilities, and  
11194 correspondence.

11195 3. Travel for fraternal delegates and invited observers as invited by the interchurch relations  
11196 committee(s):

11197 3.1 Travel to Synod: Cost for travel is the responsibility of the delegating body.

11198 3.2 Transportation during Synod: The convening church will arrange transportation to and  
11199 from the airport, train station, or bus depot and provide transportation to General  
11200 Synod and incidental travel during the Synod. Submission for costs incurred in  
11201 providing transportation in connection with General Synod are to be reimbursed at the  
11202 CRA rate.

11203 4. Accommodations: For delegates, fraternal delegates and invited observers as invited by  
11204 the interchurch relation committee(s):

11205 4.1 Accommodations are arranged by the convening church via rental and/or billeting.  
11206 Accommodations can include support for the spouse of a delegate;

11207 4.2 Submissions for reimbursement of the rentals are administered via the General Synod  
11208 budget administered by the convening church.

11209 5. Meals:

11210 5.1 Meals are exclusively for the members of General Synod and invited guests via the  
11211 venue of the General Synod or arranged by the convening church via billeting;

11212 5.2 Reimbursements for meal expenses are administered via the General Synod budget  
11213 administered by the convening church.

11214 6. At the conclusion of Synod, the books will be reviewed by the church appointed for that  
11215 purpose. A financial report is to be submitted to the next Synod.

11216

11217 **Appendix 27 – Rules for Ecumenical Relationships**

11218 **Rule 1**

11219 Level 1 – Ecclesiastical Fellowship

11220 At a federative level, the following shall apply by decision of General Synod:

11221 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship – Category A** is with other churches of Reformed Confession  
11222 according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with churches with which we have  
11223 **intense contact**. This relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable by:

- 11224 (1) Exchange of fraternal delegates at major assemblies.
- 11225 (2) The exercise of mutual concern and admonition with a view to promoting Christian  
11226 unity and whenever feasible striving for ecclesiastical unity.
- 11227 (3) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another.
- 11228 (4) Pulpit fellowship.
- 11229 (5) Reception of members at the Lord’s supper according to local regulations.
- 11230 (6) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to local regulations.
- 11231 (7) Consultation on issues of joint concern, particularly prior to instituting changes in  
11232 doctrine, worship and governance which might affect the basis of the fellowship.
- 11233 (8) Joint action in areas of common responsibility.
- 11234 (9) Exchange of relevant ecclesiastical materials, including:
- 11235 a. The Minutes/Acts of major assemblies;
- 11236 b. Yearbooks/Directories of the churches;
- 11237 c. The most recently published edition of the Confessional Standards;
- 11238 d. The most recent published edition of the Church Order;
- 11239 e. The most recently published edition of an approved psalter, or psalter-hymnal.

11240 **Ecclesiastical Fellowship - Category B** is with other churches of Reformed Confession  
11241 according to CO art. 50. This relationship is maintained with churches with whom we have **less**  
11242 **intense contact** for geographical, linguistic, or historical reasons. This relationship is to be  
11243 exercised where possible and desirable by:

- 11244 (1) Welcome of fraternal observers at appropriate major assemblies.
- 11245 (2) Agreement to respect the procedures of discipline and pastoral concern of one another.
- 11246 (3) Pulpit fellowship.
- 11247 (4) Reception of members at the Lord’s supper according to local regulations.
- 11248 (5) Reception of members into the local congregation, according to according to local  
11249 regulations.
- 11250 (6) Communication on issues of joint concern.
- 11251 (7) Review relevant ecclesiastical materials and monitor faithfulness to the Reformed  
11252 confessions.

11253 Level 2 – Ecclesiastical Contact

11254 **Ecclesiastical Contact** is with other churches of Reformed Confession with which we do not  
11255 have Ecclesiastical Fellowship. Such churches may include churches with membership in

11256 NAPARC, or the ICRC, as well as other churches as determined by general synod. This  
11257 relationship is to be exercised where possible and desirable by:

- 11258 (1) Meetings, both formal and informal, of delegates to the meetings of NAPARC and the  
11259 ICRC and on other occasions that may arise.
- 11260 (2) Mutual labours as members of NAPARC and the ICRC in the discharge of the purposes  
11261 of the council/conference.
- 11262 (3) Welcome of fraternal observers at major assemblies.
- 11263 (4) Other duties as directed by general synod.

11264 The Committee on Ecumenical Relations (CER) shall periodically review our ecumenical  
11265 relationships to ensure we are honouring our commitments to each other. Furthermore, the CER  
11266 may make recommendations, without prejudice, to General Synod regarding the optimal  
11267 placement of federations within these categories.

11268 **Rule 2**

11269 In circumstances where no Ecclesiastical Fellowship (Rule 1, Level 1) exists, churches may  
11270 engage in ecumenical relationships with other local churches as per CO art. 50, in accordance  
11271 with the following protocols:

- 11272 (1) Pulpit fellowship may occur with the concurring advice of classis.
- 11273 (2) Reception of members at the Lord's supper according to local regulations.
- 11274 (3) Reception of members into the local congregation according to local regulations.
- 11275 (4) Churches shall give an account of their ecumenical activities to their respective classis.

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**Church Order of the Canadian Reformed Churches**

As last revised by GS 2025

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**I. Introduction**

**ARTICLE 1: Purpose and Division**

For the maintenance of good order in the church of Christ it is necessary that there be offices and supervision of doctrine; assemblies; worship, sacraments, and ceremonies; and discipline.

**II. Offices and Supervision of Doctrine**

**ARTICLE 2: The Offices**

The offices are those of the minister of the Word, of the elder, and of the deacon.

**ARTICLE 3: The Calling to Office**

No one shall take any office upon himself without having been lawfully called thereto.

Only male members who have made profession of faith and may be considered to meet the conditions as set forth in Holy Scripture (e.g., in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1) shall be eligible for office.

The election to any office shall take place with the cooperation of the congregation, after preceding prayers, and according to the regulations adopted for that purpose by the consistory with the deacons.

The consistory with the deacons shall be free to give the congregation the opportunity beforehand to draw the attention of the consistory to brothers deemed fit for the respective offices.

The consistory with the deacons shall present to the congregation either as many candidates as there are vacancies to be filled, or at the most twice as many, from which number the congregation shall choose as many as are needed.

Those elected shall be appointed by the consistory with the deacons in accordance with the adopted regulations.

Prior to the ordination or installation the names of the appointed brothers shall be publicly announced to the congregation for its approbation on at least two consecutive Sundays.

The ordination or installation shall take place with the use of the relevant forms.

**ARTICLE 4: Eligibility for the Ministry**

**A. Eligibility**

Only those shall be called to the office of minister of the Word who

1. have been declared eligible for call by the churches;
2. are already serving in that capacity in one of the churches; or
3. have been declared eligible in, or are serving in, one of the churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a sister-church relationship.

**B. Declared Eligible**

Only those shall be declared eligible for call within the churches who

1. have passed a preparatory examination by classis,<sup>18</sup> which examination shall not take place unless those presenting themselves for it submit the documents necessary to prove that they are members in good standing of one of the churches and have successfully completed a course of study as required by the churches;

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<sup>18</sup> GS 2022 (Art. 143 Dec. 3.4) amended the words “by the classis in which they live” to “by classis”.

- 11316 2. have served in churches with which the Canadian Reformed Churches do not maintain  
11317 a sister-church relationship, and have been well tested for a reasonable period of time  
11318 and examined by the classis in which they live, with due observance of the general  
11319 ecclesiastical regulations adopted for that purpose; or  
11320 3. have been examined according to the rule described in Article 8.

11321 **C. Calling Twice**

11322 The approval of classis shall be required for a second call to the same minister regarding  
11323 the same vacancy.

11324 **D. Counsellor**

11325 When a vacant church extends a call, the advice of the counsellor shall be sought.

11326 **ARTICLE 5: Ordination and Installation of Ministers of the Word**

11327 **A.** Regarding those who have not served in the ministry before, the following shall be  
11328 observed:

11329 1. They shall be ordained only after classis has approved the call. Classis shall approve the  
11330 call

11331 a. upon satisfactory testimony concerning the soundness of doctrine and conduct of  
11332 the candidate, signed by the consistory of the church to which he belongs;

11333 b. upon a peremptory examination of the candidate by classis with satisfactory  
11334 results. This examination shall take place with the cooperation and concurring  
11335 advice of deputies of the regional synod.

11336 2. For the ordination they shall show also to the consistory good testimonials concerning  
11337 their doctrine and conduct from the church(es) to which they have belonged since their  
11338 preparatory examination.

11339 **B.** Regarding those who are serving in the ministry the following shall be observed:

11340 1. They shall be installed after classis has approved the call.

11341 For this approbation as well as for the installation the minister shall show good  
11342 testimonials concerning his doctrine and conduct, together with a declaration from the  
11343 consistory with the deacons and from classis that he has been honourably discharged  
11344 from his service in that church and classis, or from the church only, in case he remains  
11345 within the same classis.

11346 2. For the approbation by classis of a call to those who are serving in one of the churches  
11347 with which the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain a sister-church relationship a  
11348 colloquium shall be required which will deal especially with the doctrine and polity of  
11349 the Canadian Reformed Churches.

11350 **C.** Further, for the approbation by classis of a call, the calling church shall submit a declaration  
11351 that the proper announcements have been made and that the congregation has given its  
11352 approval to the call.

11353 **ARTICLE 6: Bound to a Church**

11354 No one shall serve in the ministry unless he is bound to a -certain church, either to be stationed in  
11355 a certain place, or to be sent out for the gathering of the church from among the heathen or from



11356 among those who have become estranged from the gospel, or to be charged with some other  
11357 special ministerial task.

11358 **ARTICLE 7: Recent Converts**

11359 No one who has recently come to the confession of the Reformed religion shall be declared  
11360 eligible for call within the churches unless he has been well tested for a reasonable period of time  
11361 and has been carefully examined by classis with the cooperation of the deputies of the regional  
11362 synod.

11363 **ARTICLE 8: Exceptional Gifts**

11364 Persons who have not pursued the regular course of study shall not be admitted to the ministry  
11365 unless there is assurance of their exceptional gifts of godliness, humility, modesty, good intellect,  
11366 and discretion, as well as the gift of public speech.

11367 When such persons present themselves for the ministry, classis, after the approval of regional  
11368 synod, shall examine them in a preparatory examination and allow them to speak an edifying  
11369 word in the churches of the classis; and further deal with them as it shall deem edifying, with  
11370 observance of the general ecclesiastical regulations adopted for this purpose.

11371 **ARTICLE 9: From One Church to Another**

11372 A minister, once lawfully called, shall not leave the church to which he is bound to take up the  
11373 ministry elsewhere without the consent of the consistory with the deacons and the approval of  
11374 classis.

11375 On the other hand, no church shall receive him unless he has presented a proper certificate of  
11376 release from the church and the classis where he served, or of the church only, if he remains  
11377 within the same classis.

11378 **ARTICLE 10: Proper Support**

11379 The consistory with the deacons, as representing the congregation, shall be bound to provide for  
11380 the proper support of its minister(s).

11381 **ARTICLE 11: Dismissal**

11382 If a minister of the Word is judged unfit and incapable of -serving the congregation fruitfully and  
11383 to its edification, without there being any reason for church discipline, the consistory with the  
11384 deacons shall not dismiss him from his service within the congregation without the approbation  
11385 of classis and the concurring advice of the deputies of regional synod, and not without proper  
11386 arrangements regarding the support of the minister and his family for a reasonable period of  
11387 time.

11388 If no call is forthcoming in three years, he shall be declared released from his ministerial status  
11389 by the classis in which he served last.

11390 **ARTICLE 12: Bound for Life**

11391 Inasmuch as a minister of the Word, once lawfully called, is bound to the service of the church  
11392 for life, he is not allowed to enter upon another vocation unless it be for exceptional and  
11393 substantial reasons, of which the consistory with the deacons shall judge, and which shall receive  
11394 the approval of classis with the concurring advice of deputies of regional synod.

11395 **ARTICLE 13: Retirement of Ministers**

11396 If a minister of the Word retires because of age, or because he is rendered incapable of  
11397 performing the duties of his office on account of illness or physical or mental disability, he shall  
11398 retain the honour and title of minister of the Word. He shall also retain his official bond with the  
11399 church which he served last, and this church shall provide honourably for his support. The same  
11400 obligation exists towards a minister's widow and/or dependents.

11401 Retirement of a minister shall take place with the approval of the consistory with the deacons and  
11402 with the concurring advice of classis and of deputies of regional synod.

11403 **ARTICLE 14: Temporary Release**

11404 If a minister, because of illness or for other substantial reasons, requests a temporary release  
11405 from his service to the congregation, he can receive the same only with the approval of the  
11406 consistory with the deacons and shall at all times be and remain subject to the call of the  
11407 congregation.

11408 **ARTICLE 15: Preaching in Other Places**

11409 No one shall be permitted to preach the Word or to administer the sacraments in another church  
11410 without the consent of the consistory of that church.

11411 **ARTICLE 16: The Office of Ministers of the Word**

11412 The specific duties of the office of minister of the Word are thoroughly and sincerely to proclaim  
11413 to the congregation the Word of the Lord, to administer the sacraments, and publicly to call upon  
11414 the name of God in behalf of the whole congregation; also to instruct the children of the church  
11415 in the doctrine of salvation, to visit the members of the congregation in their homes, and to  
11416 comfort the sick with the Word of God; and further, with the elders, to keep the church of God in  
11417 good order, to exercise discipline, and to govern it in such a manner as the Lord has ordained.

11418 **ARTICLE 17: Equality Among the Ministers of the Word**

11419 Among the ministers of the Word equality shall be maintained with respect to the duties of their  
11420 office and in other matters as far as possible, according to the judgment of the consistory and, if  
11421 necessary, of classis.

11422 **ARTICLE 18: Missionaries**

11423 When ministers of the Word are sent out as missionaries, they shall be and remain subject to the  
11424 Church Order. They shall report and give account of their labours to the church which sent them  
11425 and shall at all times remain subject to its calling.

11426 It shall be their task, in the specific region assigned to them or chosen by them in consultation  
11427 with the church that sent them, to proclaim the Word of God, to administer the sacraments to  
11428 those who have come to the profession of their faith, teaching them to observe all that Christ has  
11429 commanded his church, and to ordain elders and deacons when this appears feasible, according  
11430 to the rules given in the Word of God.

11431 **ARTICLE 19: Training for the Ministry**

11432 The churches shall maintain an institution for the training for the ministry. The task of the  
11433 professors of theology is to instruct the students of theology in those disciplines which have been  
11434 entrusted to them, so that the churches may be provided with ministers of the Word who are able  
11435 to fulfil the duties of their office as these have been described above.

11436 **ARTICLE 20: Students of Theology**

11437 The churches shall endeavour that there be students of theology, extending financial aid to those  
11438 who are in need of it.

11439 **ARTICLE 21: An Edifying Word**

11440 Besides those who have been permitted, according to Article 8, to speak an edifying word, others  
11441 may be given such consent in accordance with general ecclesiastical regulations, for their own  
11442 training and in order that they may become known to the congregations.

11443 **ARTICLE 22: The Office of Elder**

11444 The specific duties of the office of elder are, together with the ministers of the Word, to have  
11445 supervision over Christ's church, that every member may conduct himself properly in doctrine  
11446 and life according to the gospel; and faithfully to visit the members of the congregation in their  
11447 homes to comfort, instruct, and admonish them with the Word of God, reproving those who  
11448 behave improperly. They shall exercise Christian discipline according to the command of Christ  
11449 against those who show themselves unbelieving and ungodly and refuse to repent and shall  
11450 watch that the sacraments are not profaned. Being stewards of the house of God, they are further  
11451 to take care that in the congregation all things are done decently and in good order, and to tend  
11452 the flock of Christ which is in their charge. Finally, it is the duty of elders to assist the ministers  
11453 of the Word with good counsel and advice and to supervise their doctrine and conduct.

11454 **ARTICLE 23: The Office of Deacon**

11455 The specific duties of the office of deacon are to see to the good progress of the service of  
11456 charity in the congregation; to acquaint themselves with existing needs and difficulties and  
11457 exhort the members of Christ's body to show mercy; and further, to gather and manage the  
11458 offerings and distribute them in Christ's name according to need. They shall encourage and  
11459 comfort with the Word of God those who receive the gifts of Christ's love, and promote with  
11460 word and deed the unity and fellowship in the Holy Spirit which the congregation enjoys at the  
11461 table of the Lord.

11462 **ARTICLE 24: Term of Office**

11463 The elders and deacons shall serve two or more years, according to local regulations, and a  
11464 proportionate number shall retire each year. The place of the retiring office-bearers shall be taken  
11465 by others, unless the consistory with the deacons judges that the circumstances and the benefit of  
11466 the church render it advisable to have them serve another term, or to extend their term, or to  
11467 declare them immediately eligible for re-election.

11468 **ARTICLE 25: Equality to Be Maintained**

11469 Among the elders as well as among the deacons equality shall be maintained with respect to the  
11470 duties of their office, and also, as far as possible, in other matters, of which the consistory shall  
11471 judge.

11472 **ARTICLE 26: Subscription to the Confession**

11473 All ministers of the Word, elders, deacons, and professors of -theology shall subscribe to the  
11474 confessions of the Canadian Reformed Churches by signing the form(s) adopted for that purpose.

11475 Anyone refusing to subscribe in that manner shall not be ordained or installed in office. Anyone  
11476 who, being in office, refuses to do so shall, because of that very fact, be immediately suspended

11477 from office by the consistory with the deacons, and classis shall not receive him. If he obstinately  
11478 persists in his refusal, he shall be deposed from office.

11479 **ARTICLE 27: False Doctrine**

11480 To ward off false doctrines and errors which could enter the congregation and constitute a danger  
11481 to the purity of its doctrine or conduct, the ministers and elders shall use the means of  
11482 instruction, of refutation, of warning, and of admonition, in the ministry of the Word as well as  
11483 in Christian teaching and family visiting.

11484 **ARTICLE 28: Civil Authorities**

11485 As it is the office of the civil authorities to promote in every way the holy ministry, so all office-  
11486 bearers are in duty bound to impress diligently and sincerely upon the whole congregation the  
11487 obedience, love, and respect which are due to the civil authorities; they shall set a good example  
11488 to the whole congregation in this matter, and endeavour by due respect and communication to  
11489 secure and retain the favour of the authorities towards the church, so that the church of Christ  
11490 may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way.

11491 **III. The Assemblies**

11492 **ARTICLE 29: The Ecclesiastical Assemblies**

11493 Four kinds of ecclesiastical assemblies shall be maintained: the consistory, the classis, the  
11494 regional synod, and the general synod.

11495 **ARTICLE 30: Ecclesiastical Matters**

11496 These assemblies shall deal with no other than ecclesiastical matters and that in an ecclesiastical  
11497 manner.

11498 A major assembly shall deal with those matters only which could not be finished in the minor  
11499 assembly or which belong to its churches in common.

11500 A new matter which has not previously been presented to that major assembly and is common to  
11501 its churches may be put on the agenda by one of its churches.

11502 **ARTICLE 31: Appeals**

11503 If anyone complains that he has been wronged by the decision of a minor assembly, he shall have  
11504 the right to appeal to the major assembly; and whatever may be agreed upon by a majority vote  
11505 shall be considered settled and binding, unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God  
11506 or with the Church Order.

11507 **ARTICLE 32: Credentials**

11508 Delegates to the major assemblies shall bring with them their credentials, signed by those  
11509 sending them; they shall have a vote in all matters except those in which either they themselves  
11510 or their churches are particularly involved.

11511 **ARTICLE 33: Proposals**

11512 Matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new  
11513 grounds.

11514 **ARTICLE 34: Proceedings**

11515 The proceedings of all assemblies shall begin and end with calling upon the name of the Lord.

11516 At the close of major assemblies, censure shall be exercised over those who in the meeting have done  
11517 something worthy of reproof, or who have scorned the admonition of the minor assemblies.

11518 Furthermore, each classis, regional synod, or general synod shall determine the time and place of the next  
11519 classis, regional synod, or general synod respectively and appoint the convening church for that meeting.

11520 **ARTICLE 35: President**

11521 In all assemblies there shall be a president whose task it is to present and explain clearly the  
11522 matters to be dealt with, to ensure that every one observe due order in speaking, to deny the floor  
11523 to those who argue about minor things or who let themselves be carried away and cannot control  
11524 their strong emotions, and to discipline those who refuse to listen.

11525 In major assemblies the office of the president shall cease when the assembly has ended.

11526 **ARTICLE 36: Clerk**

11527 A clerk shall be appointed whose task it shall be to keep an accurate record of all things worthy  
11528 to be recorded.

11529 **ARTICLE 37: Jurisdiction**

11530 The classis has the same jurisdiction over the consistory as the regional synod has over the  
11531 classis, and the general synod over the regional synod.

11532 **ARTICLE 38: Consistory**

11533 In all churches there shall be a consistory composed of the ministers of the Word and the elders  
11534 who, as a rule, shall meet at least once a month. As a rule the ministers of the Word shall preside.  
11535 If a church is served by more than one minister, they shall preside in turn.

11536 **ARTICLE 39: Consistory and the Deacons**

11537 Where the number of elders is small, the deacons may be added to the consistory by local  
11538 arrangement; this shall invariably be done where the number of elders or the number of deacons  
11539 is less than three.

11540 **ARTICLE 40: Constitution of a Consistory**

11541 In places where a consistory is to be constituted for the first time or anew, this shall be done only  
11542 with the advice of classis.

11543 **ARTICLE 41: Places without a Consistory**

11544 Places where as yet no consistory can be constituted shall be assigned by classis to the care of a  
11545 neighbouring consistory.

11546 **ARTICLE 42: Meetings of Deacons**

11547 When the deacons meet separately, as a rule once a month, to deal with the matters pertaining to  
11548 their office, they shall do so with calling upon the name of God. They shall give account of their  
11549 labours to the consistory.

11550 The ministers shall acquaint themselves with the work of the ministry of mercy and, if need be,  
11551 may visit these meetings.

11552 **ARTICLE 43: Archives**

11553 The consistories and the major assemblies shall ensure that proper care is taken of the archives.

11554 **ARTICLE 44: Classis**

11555 Neighbouring churches shall come together in a classis by delegating, with proper credentials, a  
11556 minister and an elder, or, if a church has no minister, two elders. Such meetings shall be held at  
11557 least once every three months, unless the convening church, in consultation with the  
11558 neighbouring church, concludes that no matters have been sent in by the churches which would  
11559 warrant the convening of a classis. Cancellation of a classis shall, however, not be permitted to  
11560 occur twice in succession.

11561 In these meetings the ministers shall preside in rotation, or one shall be chosen to preside;  
11562 however, the same minister shall not be chosen twice in succession.

11563 The president shall ask whether the ministry of the office--bearers is being continued, whether  
11564 the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured, and whether there is any matter in  
11565 which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their  
11566 church.

11567 The last classis before regional synod shall choose the delegates to that synod.

11568 If two or more ministers are serving a church, those who have not been delegated shall have the  
11569 right to attend classis in an advisory capacity.

11570 **ARTICLE 45: Counsellors**

11571 Each vacant church shall request classis to appoint as counsellor the minister it desires as such,  
11572 to the end that he may assist the consistory in maintaining good order and especially may lend  
11573 his aid in the matter of the calling of a minister; he shall also sign the letter of call.

11574 **ARTICLE 46: Church Visitors**

11575 Each year classis shall authorize at least two of the more experienced and able ministers to visit  
11576 the churches in that year.

11577 It shall be the task of these visitors to inquire whether all things are regulated and done in full harmony  
11578 with the Word of God, whether the office-bearers fulfil the duties of their office faithfully as they have  
11579 promised, and whether the adopted order is being observed and maintained in every respect, in order that  
11580 they may in good time fraternally admonish those who are found negligent in any thing, and that by their  
11581 good counsel and advice all things may be directed towards the edification and preservation of Christ's  
11582 church.

11583 They shall submit a written report of their visits to classis.

11584 **ARTICLE 47: Regional Synod**

11585 Each year some neighbouring classes shall send delegates to meet in a regional synod. If there  
11586 are two classes, each classis shall delegate four ministers and four elders. If there are three  
11587 classes, the number shall be three ministers and three elders. If there are four or more classes, the  
11588 number shall be two ministers and two elders.

11589 If it appears necessary to convene a regional synod before the appointed time, the convening  
11590 church shall determine the time and place with the advice of classis.

11591 The last regional synod before the general synod shall choose delegates to that general synod.

11592 **ARTICLE 48: Deputies of Regional Synod**

11593 Each regional synod shall appoint deputies who are to assist the classes in all cases provided for  
11594 in the Church Order, and, upon the request of the classes, in cases of special difficulties.



11595 These deputies shall keep proper record of their actions and submit a written report to regional  
11596 synod, and, if so required, they shall give account of their actions.

11597 They shall not be discharged from their task before and until regional synod itself discharges  
11598 them.

11599 **ARTICLE 49: General Synod**

11600 The general synod shall be held once every three years. Each regional synod shall delegate to  
11601 this synod six ministers and six elders.

11602 If it appears necessary to convene a general synod before the appointed time, the convening  
11603 church shall determine the time and place with the advice of regional synod.

11604 **ARTICLE 50: Ecumenical relationships**

11605 Ecumenical relationships with other churches of Reformed confession shall be entered into  
11606 where feasible and be maintained according to the rules adopted for this purpose by general  
11607 synod. On minor points of ecclesiastical governance and practice churches shall not be rejected.

11608 **ARTICLE 51: Mission**

11609 The churches shall endeavour to fulfil their missionary task.

11610 When churches cooperate in this matter, they shall, as much as possible, observe the division into  
11611 classes and regional synods.

11612 **IV. Worship, Sacraments, and Ceremonies**

11613 **ARTICLE 52: Worship Services**

11614 The consistory shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord's day.

11615 The consistory shall ensure that, as a rule, once every Sunday the doctrine of God's Word as  
11616 summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism is proclaimed.

11617 **ARTICLE 53: Days of Commemoration**

11618 Each year the churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the  
11619 birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as his outpouring of the  
11620 Holy Spirit.

11621 **ARTICLE 54: Days of Prayer**

11622 In time of war, general calamities, and other great afflictions the presence of which is felt  
11623 throughout the churches, a day of prayer may be proclaimed by the churches appointed for that  
11624 purpose by general synod.

11625 **ARTICLE 55: Psalms and Hymns**

11626 The 150 Psalms of the Bible are foundational to the church's worship and are to be sung  
11627 frequently in the worship services. General Synod shall adopt metrical versions of the psalms  
11628 and shall approve hymns for inclusion in a song book which shall, as a rule, have the principal  
11629 place in the worship of the church. The Consistory may also approve the singing of alternate  
11630 settings of the psalms and additional hymns, provided they are in harmony with the Word of God  
11631 as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity.

11632 **ARTICLE 56: Administration of Sacraments**

11633 The sacraments shall be administered only under the authority of the consistory, in a public  
11634 worship service, by a minister of the Word, with the use of the adopted forms.

11635 **ARTICLE 57: Baptism**

11636 The consistory shall ensure that the covenant of God is sealed by baptism to the children of  
11637 believers as soon as feasible.

11638 **ARTICLE 58: Schools**

11639 The consistory shall ensure that the parents, to the best of their ability, have their children attend  
11640 a school where the instruction given is in harmony with the Word of God as the church has  
11641 summarized it in her confessions.

11642 **ARTICLE 59: Baptism of Adults**

11643 Adults who have not been baptized shall be incorporated into the Christian church by holy  
11644 baptism upon their public profession of faith.

11645 **ARTICLE 60: Lord's Supper**

11646 The Lord's supper shall be celebrated at least once every three months.

11647 **ARTICLE 61: Admission to the Lord's Supper**

11648 The consistory shall admit to the Lord's supper only those who have made public profession of  
11649 the Reformed faith and lead a godly life.

11650 Members of sister churches shall be admitted on the ground of a good attestation concerning  
11651 their doctrine and conduct.

11652 **ARTICLE 62: Attestations**

11653 Communicant members who move to a sister church shall be given, after previous  
11654 announcements to the congregation, an attestation regarding their doctrine and conduct, signed  
11655 on behalf of the consistory by two of its members.

11656 In the case of non-communicant members such an attestation shall be sent directly to the  
11657 consistory of the church concerned.

11658 **ARTICLE 63: Marriage**

11659 The Word of God teaches that marriage is a union between one man and one woman.

11660 The consistory shall ensure that the members of the congregation marry only in the Lord, and  
11661 that the ministers—as authorized by the consistory—solemnize only such marriages as are in  
11662 accordance with the Word of God.

11663 The solemnization of a marriage may take place either in a private ceremony or in a public  
11664 worship service. The adopted Form for the Solemnization of Marriage shall be used.

11665 **ARTICLE 64: Church Records**

11666 The consistory shall maintain church records in which the names of the members and the dates of  
11667 their birth, baptism, public profession of faith, marriage, and departure or death are properly  
11668 recorded.

11669 **ARTICLE 65: Funerals**

11670 Funerals are not ecclesiastical but family affairs, and should be conducted accordingly.

11671 **V. Christian Discipline**

11672 **ARTICLE 66: Nature and Purpose**

11673 Since church discipline is of a spiritual nature and, as one of the keys of the kingdom of heaven,  
11674 has been given to the church to shut and to open that kingdom, the consistory shall ensure that it  
11675 is used to punish sins against both the purity of doctrine and the piety of conduct, in order to  
11676 reconcile the sinner with the church and with his neighbour, and to remove all offence out of the  
11677 church of Christ—which can be done only when the rule given by our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17  
11678 is followed in obedience.

11679 **ARTICLE 67: Consistory Involvement**

11680 The consistory shall not deal with any matter pertaining to purity of doctrine or piety of life that  
11681 is reported to it unless it has first ascertained that both private admonitions and admonitions in  
11682 the presence of one or two witnesses have remained fruitless, or that the sin committed is of a  
11683 public character.

11684 **ARTICLE 68: Excommunication**

11685 Anyone who obstinately rejects the admonition by the consistory or who has committed a public  
11686 sin shall be suspended from the Lord's supper. If he continues to harden himself in sin, the  
11687 consistory shall so inform the congregation by means of public announcements, in order that the  
11688 congregation may be engaged in prayer and admonition, and the excommunication may not take  
11689 place without its cooperation.

11690 In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

11691 In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been  
11692 obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned.

11693 In the third public announcement a date shall be set at which the excommunication of the sinner  
11694 shall take place.

11695 In case a non-communicant member hardens himself in sin, the consistory shall in the same  
11696 manner inform the congregation by means of public announcements.

11697 In the first public announcement the name of the sinner shall not be mentioned.

11698 In the second public announcement, which shall be made only after the advice of classis has been  
11699 obtained, the name and address of the sinner shall be mentioned and a date shall be set at which  
11700 the excommunication of the sinner shall take place.

11701 The time between the various announcements shall be determined by the consistory.

11702 **ARTICLE 69: Repentance**

11703 When someone repents of a public sin or of a sin which had to be reported to the consistory, the  
11704 latter shall not accept his confession of sin unless he has shown real amendment.

11705 The consistory shall determine whether the benefit of the congregation requires that this  
11706 confession of sin shall be made publicly and, in case it is made before the consistory or before  
11707 two or three office-bearers, whether the congregation shall be informed afterwards.

11708 **ARTICLE 70: Readmission**

11709 When someone who has been excommunicated repents and desires to be again received into the  
11710 communion of the church, the congregation shall be informed of his desire in order to see  
11711 whether there are any lawful objections.

11712 The time between the public announcement and the readmission of the sinner shall be not less  
11713 than one month.

11714 If no lawful objection is raised, the readmission shall take place with the use of the form for that  
11715 purpose.

11716 **ARTICLE 71: Suspension and Deposition of Office-Bearers**

11717 When ministers, elders, or deacons have committed a public or otherwise gross sin, or refuse to  
11718 heed the admonitions by the consistory with the deacons, they shall be suspended from office by  
11719 the judgment of their own consistory with the deacons and of the consistory with the deacons of  
11720 the neighbouring church. When they harden themselves in their sin or when the sin committed is  
11721 of such a nature that they cannot continue in office, elders or deacons shall be deposed by the  
11722 judgment of the above-mentioned consistories with the deacons. Classis, with the concurring  
11723 advice of the deputies of regional synod, shall judge whether the ministers are to be deposed.

11724 **ARTICLE 72: Serious and Gross Sins on the Part of Office-Bearers**

11725 As serious and gross sins which are grounds for the suspension or deposition of office-bearers  
11726 the following are to be mentioned particularly: false doctrine or heresy, public schisms,  
11727 blasphemy, simony, faithless desertion of office or intrusion upon that of another, perjury,  
11728 adultery, fornication, theft, acts of violence, habitual drunkenness, brawling, unjustly enriching  
11729 oneself, and, further, all sins and serious misdemeanours that rate as ground for  
11730 excommunication with respect to other members of the church.

11731 **ARTICLE 73: Christian Censure**

11732 The ministers, elders, and deacons shall mutually exercise Christian censure and shall exhort and  
11733 kindly admonish one another with regard to the execution of their office.

11734 **ARTICLE 74: No Lording It over Others**

11735 No church shall in any way lord it over other churches, no office-bearer over other office-  
11736 bearers.

11737 **ARTICLE 75: Property of the Churches**

11738 All property, both real and personal, which belongs to the churches comprised respectively in  
11739 classes, regional synods, and general synods in common, shall be held in trust for such churches  
11740 in equal shares by deputies or trustees appointed for that purpose from time to time by the  
11741 appropriate classis, regional synod, or general synod, and such deputies or trustees shall be  
11742 bound by the terms of their appointment and instruction and are subject to being discharged by a  
11743 subsequent classis, regional synod, or general synod.

11744 **ARTICLE 76: Observance and Revision of the Church Order**

11745 These articles, which regard the lawful order of the church, have been adopted with common  
11746 accord. If the interest of the churches demand such, they may and ought to be changed,  
11747 augmented, or diminished. However, no consistory, classis, or regional synod shall be permitted  
11748 to do so, but they shall endeavour diligently to observe the articles of this Church Order as long  
11749 as they have not been changed by a general synod.

11750

11751 **Forms of Subscription<sup>19</sup>**

11752 **Form to be used in the local congregation:**

11753 We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word, elders and deacons of the Canadian Reformed  
11754 Church at \_\_\_\_\_, do, by our subscription, declare sincerely and in good  
11755 conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole doctrine contained in the  
11756 Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort fully agrees with the Word  
11757 of God.

11758 We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without  
11759 contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all  
11760 errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute  
11761 and help prevent such errors.

11762 If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part  
11763 of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly  
11764 or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if  
11765 necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if  
11766 we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

11767 If at any time the consistory, classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and  
11768 in order to maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further  
11769 explanation of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply  
11770 under the penalty of suspension.

11771 However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of  
11772 appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of consistory or classis or regional synod.

11773 **Form to be used at classis meetings:**

11774 We, the undersigned, ministers of God's Word belonging to Classis \_\_\_\_\_, do, by  
11775 our subscription,

11776 declare sincerely and in good conscience before the Lord that we heartily believe that the whole  
11777 doctrine contained in the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dort  
11778 fully agrees with the Word of God.

11779 We promise, therefore, that we will diligently teach this doctrine and faithfully defend it without  
11780 contradicting it publicly or privately in teaching or writing. We also declare that we reject all  
11781 errors conflicting with the doctrine expressed in these confessions and promise to oppose, refute  
11782 and help prevent such errors.

11783 If at any time in the future it should happen that we would disagree with this doctrine or any part  
11784 of it, we promise that we will not propose, teach, preach or publish our opinion, either publicly  
11785 or privately; rather, we will first make this known to the consistory and the classis, and if  
11786 necessary to the broader assemblies, for judgment. We are willing to submit to their decision; if  
11787 we refuse we will by that very fact be suspended from our office.

11788 If at any time the classis or regional synod, upon sufficient grounds of suspicion and in order to  
11789 maintain the unity and purity of the teaching, would decide to require of us a further explanation

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<sup>19</sup> GS 2016 Art. 54.

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11790 of our views, we do hereby promise that we are always willing and ready to comply under the  
11791 penalty of suspension.

11792 However, we reserve the right of appeal if we believe ourselves wronged. During the time of  
11793 appeal we will acquiesce in the decision of classis or regional synod.

11794